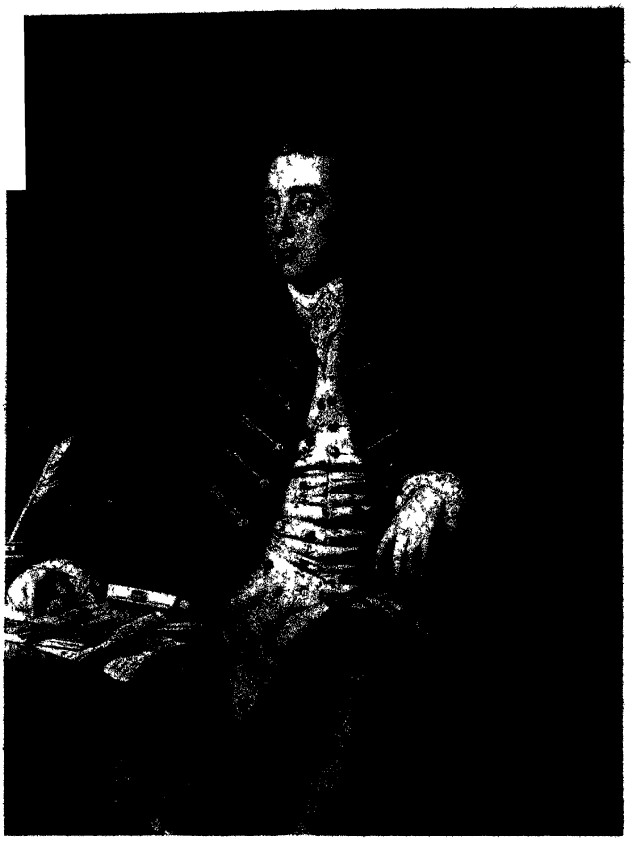
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LIFE OF THE
RIGHT HON. WARREN HASTINGS.



WARREN HASTINGS.

Painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds, P.R.A., between 1764 and 1768;
and engraved by T. Watson, 1775.

LIFE OF WARREN HASTINGS

First Governor-General of India

COLONEL G. B. MALLESON, C.S

AUTHOR OF

"THE LIFE OF LORD CLIVE," "HISTORY OF THE INDIAN MUTINY,"

"THE DECISIVE BATTLES OF INDIA," ETC.

WITH PORTRAIT



LONDON: CHAPMAN & HALL, 1

1895

DEDICATION.

October 15, 1894.

MY DEAR MACLEAN,

A dedication has been styled "the most graceful privilege of an author." In the present case the privilege is mine: the grace lies in your acceptance of my wish that I should be allowed to dedicate my book to you, partly as a token of the great esteem I have for you as a friend; but chiefly because in you I have long recognized a fellow-countryman who, during his residence in the East, gained a more complete and inner knowledge of the natives of India than any one it has been my fortune to meet, and whose happy freedom from official trammels has enabled him to give expression to opinions which the ordinary Anglo-Indian mind dares neither to conceive nor to utter.

As a race, the natives of India are difficult to read; but you have read them; you have mastered the nature which is so apparently frank, and yet so ingeniously subtle. You then will not only be able to understand the inner motives of many of the natives referred to in this book, but, in the action of Warren Hastings, you, I am confident, will recognize the only method in which intrigues, born of the disposition I have described, can be met and baffled. Further, in the character, soon, I hope, to be resumed by you, of a member of the House of Commons, you will be able to apply your special talents to the maintenance of that Empire which you know so well, and the ever-increasing difficulties of the administration of which the successors of Warren Hastings are called upon to face and to overcome.

Believe me, my dear Maclean,

Yours very sincerely,

G. B. MALLESON.

J. Mackenzie Maclean, Esquire.

PREFACE.

REVIEWING, on the 25th of February, 1892, the remarkable work by Sir John Strachey, just then published, entitled "Hastings and the Rohilla War," the *Times* concluded its highly appreciative remarks with an assertion, which, though it may be true, is but little complimentary to the sound judgment and love of justice of the English people.

"To say," writes the reviewer, "that he [Sir John Strachey] has vindicated Warren Hastings against the invectives of Burke and the other managers of the famous Impeachment, against the calumnies and inaccuracies of Mill, against the involuntary misrepresentations of Macaulay, is to say little. He has re-written an important chapter of Indian history, and exemplified the true spirit in which that history should be written. But it is all in vain, we fear. History has little chance against rhetoric, and Indian history has never been made interesting to English readers except by rhetoric. In spite of all that Sir James Stephen did some years ago, and all that Sir John Strachey has now done, Macaulay will still hold the field, and his picture of Warren Hastings will still be accepted as authentic by that body of readers who care less for truth than for effect."

Language such as this, proceeding from such a source, ought not, even though we may acknowledge its truth, to deter others from attempting to complete the vindication of the character and conduct of a man who rendered services to his country so striking that the results have been felt, and are felt still, in every corner of the Empire; and who was repaid by calumnies which, though disproved in his lifetime, have still been made, by the rhetoric to which the *Times* refers, to cling to his memory. Warren Hastings redressed in India the ineptitudes, and worse, of which, during the same period, the British House of Commons was guilty. Whilst Lord North, guiding that House, was losing an empire in the new

world, Warren Hastings was engaged in establishing in India the solid foundations upon which a greater dominion might be established. More even than that. By precept and by example he was working to build up a model foreign policy, a policy which the greatest of his immediate successors—Lord Cornwallis, with respect to Típu Sultan; Marquess Wellesley, with regard to the same fanatical chief, to the Nizam, and to the Maráthás; Lord Moira, afterwards Marquess of Hastings, to the Maráthás and Pindárís—had the wisdom to accept and to carry out, with the results we witness in the present day. Such is the main claim of Warren Hastings to the gratitude of the British nation. But strange as it may appear, this is the very claim which "the distorted perspective" of Macaulay's picture so alters and transmogrifies that it is unrecognizable by the majority of the British nation. Great artists, indeed, have done what they could to restore portions of the drawing to its original shape—Sir James Stephen in the matter of Nandkumár, and Sir John Strachey in that of the expulsion of the Rohílas. They have accomplished wonders. Yet, according to the *Times*, the majority of the British nation prefers "distorted perspective" to true drawing, when such a perspective produces results which dazzle and excite it.

But English readers cannot combine to exclude for ever the truth from their minds. I cannot help thinking that if Sir John Strachey had had the leisure to devote his great talents to the completion of the story of the career of which his book has given us but a fragment, the rhetoric of Macaulay must have yielded to his incisive pen. Had he taken in hand such a task, this book, I need scarcely add, would not have been written; I should have preferred to read the product of a master's hand. But he has not done so; and although the entire career of Warren Hastings has been very ably vindicated by Captain Trotter in the "Rulers of India" series, and has been recorded, though I venture to think without much sympathy with the subject, by Sir Alfred Lyall in the "English Men of Action" series, there remains room for a work which, dealing mainly with the political career of the subject, should, by the light of Sir John Strachey's vindication, of Sir James Stephen's examination, of the

Forrest papers, of the official correspondence, and of letters, some of which have not been published, present to the public, on a scale sufficiently ample, a biography which shall enable those curious on the subject to watch the Governor-General in the Council-chamber; to follow him into his study; to share his thoughts as he reads the letters of his masters and of his agents; above all, as he opens those from his malevolent colleagues in Calcutta, and casts a glance over the reports of the doings of their aiders and abettors in London.

Never in the history of the world has a man, nominally possessed of so high an office, been subjected to so many insults; been bearded to his face by an opposition so bitter, so unprincipled, so wanting in good manners. How Hastings bore with them; how he maintained an even front against difficulties and dangers which but a few men would have faced; how he wore down, one by one, his implacable enemies until the sole survivor, beaten at every point, proceeded to England to exchange the personal insolence of the Calcutta Council-chamber for the slower but more malignant process of parliamentary backbiting; how Hastings, still careful to look his enemies in the face, struggled, at first almost alone, opposed by the bearers of the greatest names in our parliamentary history, and, never tiring, wore them out too; how the highest tribunal in the land, starting with a strong prejudice against him, finally acquitted him, honourably, of the charges which malice, ignorance, and baffled hatred had combined to formulate; how then, accepting the situation which most unjustly barred to him the continuance of employment in the service of his country, Hastings pursued a calm career, his life made happy by the society of his wife and his friends; by occasional excursions in literature; by managing his estate, rebuilding his house; by attending to the wants of his poorer neighbours; never complaining; never railing against fortune; believing always that posterity would render him the justice denied to him by some of the most highly placed among his contemporaries; until at an age, far in excess of the period ordinarily allotted to man, he died in the possession of all his faculties, tended by his much-loved wife and the friends who had adhered to him in all the phases of his fortunes;—this is the heroic story I have striven

to set forth in these pages. I have spared no pains to ensure truth in all the details of the narrative. The story had been long overladen with its opposite, and I feel bound to forewarn the intending reader that the Warren Hastings of this book is neither the unprincipled schemer of Lord Macaulay's narrative, nor the son of Zeruiah, painted by Sir Alfred Lyall. Indeed, it seems to me that Hastings possessed none of the characteristics of the turbulent relatives of King David. The sons of Zeruiah were men of blood, of violence; they were treacherous, cruel, and avowedly without principle. Warren Hastings was essentially a man of peace, of order, of recognized methods. When forced into hostility he was ever open and straightforward. In his nature there was not one feeling akin to treachery. Can any one imagine, on the other hand, a son of Zeruiah carrying on, day after day, week after week, without rancour, without even an expression of impatience, that long struggle in the Calcutta Council-chamber, opposed and insulted by a dominant majority? How long a time would have elapsed before he would have had recourse to violence? But Hastings only turned once upon his main adversary. He turned when it was necessary to inform Francis of his opinion of his crooked action. His patience was exhausted. But the method he took under great provocation was not the method which would have commended itself to a son of Zeruiah. It is true that Hastings waged war, but the candid reader will be forced to admit that he waged it only when either it was forced upon him, or when an opposite conduct would have led, in all probability, to the loss of the provinces committed to his charge.

It is, then, neither of an unprincipled schemer nor of a son of Zeruiah that an account will be found in these pages. The truest definition of the hero of this story is that provided in anticipation by Horace—

"Justus et tenax propositi Vir."

Had Hastings been any other, he could neither have prevailed against his many enemies; nor would it have been possible for him to lay the foundations of the British-Indian Empire.

G. B. M.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	The Family of Hastings—The Birth and Early Days of Warren Hastings	1
II.	The Condition of India on the Arrival there of Warren Hastings	9
III.	The Early Experience of Mr. Hastings in India—The Condition of Bengal	25
IV.	Mr. Hastings at Murshídábád	35
V.	The Invasion of Bihár by the Sháhzádá (afterwards the Emperor Sháh Álam)—Mr. Hastings joins the Calcutta Council	50
VI.	Mr. Hastings as Member of Council, 1761 to 1765—The Events that characterized that Period	64
VII.	Mr. Hastings in England—He is appointed Member of Council at Madras, and returns to India—The State of Affairs in the Madras Presidency on his Arrival—Is nominated to succeed Mr. Cartier in Bengal ...	81
VIII.	The Bengal Presidency, from the First Departure of Warren Hastings to his Return as Governor in April, 1772	92
IX.	Mr. Hastings' Two Years of Civil Administration in Bengal—The Introduction of the New Order	97
X.	The Frontier Policy of Mr. Hastings, 1772-1774—The Nawwáb-Wazír of Oudh—The Rohílas	115
XI.	The Progress and Close of the Rohíla War	137
XII.	The Malignity of Champion—The Policy of Hastings on other Borders	155
XIII.	The New Constitution for India—The Arrival of the New Judges, and of the New Members of Council—Characters of the Latter—Their Landing and their Reception ...	167
XIV.	Junius on Horseback	175
XV.	The Foreign Policy of the Triumvirate—Their Action with respect to Oudh	188
XVI.	The Triumvirate attack the Internal Policy of Hastings—The Story of Nandkumár, and how he aided them ...	197

CHAPTER		PAGE
XVII.	THE TRIAL OF NANDKUMÁR AND ITS CONSEQUENCES	221
XVIII.	NINE MONTHS OF CONSTANT JARRING — OUDH — BOMBAY — MADRAS—DISPUTES BETWEEN THE SUPREME COURT AND THE COUNCIL, AND BETWEEN HASTINGS AND HIS COLLEAGUES—COLONEL MONSON DIES	242
XIX.	COLONEL MACLEANE'S ACTION IN ENGLAND ON BEHALF OF HASTINGS, AND ITS RESULT—ACTION OF HASTINGS BEFORE THE RESULT BECOMES KNOWN—CLAVERING CLAIMS THE POST WHICH HE DECLARES TO HAVE BEEN VACATED BY HASTINGS—THE RIVAL COUNCILS—THE TRIUMPH OF HASTINGS AND ITS CONSEQUENCES—HASTINGS MARRIES THE BARONESS IMHOFF —DEATH OF GENERAL CLAVERING—THE ARRIVAL OF MR WHELER	263
XX.	THE SECOND MARÁTHÁ WAR—THE WAR IN SOUTHERN INDIA	285
XXI.	THE COAST WAR	310
XXII.	HOW HASTINGS MET THE DIFFICULTY OF RAISING FUNDS FOR HIS WARS—HIS PROPOSALS TO CHÉT SINGH, RÁJÁ OF BANÁRAS—HIS DUEL WITH FRANCIS AND ITS CONSEQUENCES —THE GREATNESS OF HIS WAR ADMINISTRATION ...	328
XXIII.	HASTINGS AND IMPEY—THE QUARREL WITH THE SUPREME COURT AND ITS SETTLEMENT	351
XXIV.	HASTINGS AND CHÉT SINGH AT BANÁRAS—THE ARREST OF CHET SINGH—THE OUTBREAK AND ITS CONSEQUENCES ...	359
XXV.	THE NAWWÁB-WAZIR OF OUDH MEETS HASTINGS AT CHANÁR—HASTINGS DEVOTES THE PRESENT HE RECEIVED FROM HIM TO THE SERVICE OF THE STATE—NATURE OF THE SETTLEMENT MADE WITH THE NAWWÁB—HASTINGS RESTORES TO THE NAWWÁB THE PROPERTY OF WHICH THE BEGAMS HAD UNJUSTLY DEPRIVED HIM	375
XXVI.	MR. HASTINGS AGAIN IN CALCUTTA—HIS NEW COUNCILLORS—LORD MACARTNEY—PROCEEDINGS REGARDING HASTINGS IN ENGLAND TO THE BEGINNING OF 1784	391
XXVII.	THE CLOSING SCENES OF MR. HASTINGS' ADMINISTRATION IN INDIA—PITT'S INDIA BILL—HASTINGS QUITS INDIA ...	405
XXVIII.	HASTINGS ARRIVES IN ENGLAND—A WEEK AFTER HIS ARRIVAL EDMUND BURKE GIVES NOTICE OF HIS INTENTION TO MAKE A MOTION REGARDING HIS CONDUCT IN INDIA—PRIVATE LIFE OF HASTINGS IN ENGLAND—THE DEBATES AND THE IMPEACHMENT	440
XXIX.	THE TRIAL IN WESTMINSTER HALL—ITS PHASES AND ITS RESULT	463
XXX.	SOME SIDE-LIGHTS OF THE TRIAL	485
XXXI.	AFTER THE TRIAL	500
XXXII.	DAYLESFORD	508
XXXIII.	WARREN HASTINGS DIES—SOME FEATURES OF HIS CHARACTER	524

THE LIFE OF WARREN HASTINGS.

CHAPTER I.

THE FAMILY OF HASTINGS—THE BIRTH AND EARLY DAYS OF WARREN HASTINGS.

To no public man who devoted his life and talents to the service of his country is the Latin motto, "Mens æqua in arduis," more applicable than to the subject of this biography. Few statesmen have been more successful in their official career; few have been more calumniated and persecuted subsequently to the close of that career; no Englishman has met more ingratitude from his country; not one has been more firmly supported by the innate greatness of his character. The last century indeed presents striking examples of the treatment meted out by France and England to the great men who struggled to gain a permanent empire for the one and the other in India. France sinned greatly in this respect. The stories of La Bourdonnais and Dupleix dying in misery and want, their claims rejected, their services unrecognized; of Lally broken on the wheel, gagged and manacled, have excited universal indignation. But Great Britain can ill afford to cast a stone at her brilliant neighbour. The French adventurers were really condemned because they had failed. The Anglo-Indian statesmen who baffled all their plans, and founded an empire on their failure, were persecuted for the measures they had taken to ensure success—measures which further investigations have shown to have been absolutely necessary. It is only during the last few years that the clouds of prejudice and ignorance have been dispersed, and Englishmen have been

able to recognize the greatness of the men whose services their forefathers had decried, but who had done more for Great Britain than many of the statesmen at whose feet they had bowed with humility.

Of all these great men not one was greater than Warren Hastings; not one did more for the success of the venture in India forced upon his country; not one issued from his enterprise with cleaner hands. The inscription placed by the affectionate care of his wife on the memorial tablet erected by her in Westminster Abbey tells in a few words the bare outline of the great achievements of the first Governor-General of India. There are probably but few educated Englishmen who have not read it, but it will always bear repetition.

"Selected," it runs, "for his eminent talents and integrity, he was appointed by Parliament, in 1773, the first Governor-General of India; to which high office he was thrice re-appointed by the same authority. Presiding over the Indian Governments during thirteen years of a most eventful period, he restored the affairs of the East India Company, from the deepest distress, to the highest prosperity, and rescued their possessions from a combination of the most powerful enemies ever leagued against them. In the wisdom of his councils and the energy of his measures, he found unexhausted resources, and successfully sustained a long, varied, and multiplied war with France, Mysore, and the Mahratta States, whose power he humbled, and concluded an honourable peace; for which, and for his distinguished services, he received the thanks of the East India Company, sanctioned by the Board of Control. The kingdom of Bengal, the seat of his Government, he ruled with a mild and equitable sway, preserved it from invasion, and, while he secured to its inhabitants the enjoyment of their customs, laws, and religion, and the blessings of peace, was rewarded by their affection and gratitude; nor was he more distinguished by the higher qualities of statesman and patriot than by the exercise of every Christian virtue. He lived many years in dignified retirement, beloved and revered by all who knew him, at his seat in Daylesford, in the county of Worcester, where he died in peace, in the 86th year of his age, August the 22nd, in the year of our Lord 1818."

It will be my task, in this volume, to describe in sufficient detail the great achievements adverted to in this graceful inscription. But before I enter upon a theme so vast and so engrossing, I desire to show the reader what sort of a man he was who accomplished successes so great with resources often improvised on the moment; to refer briefly to the race of which he was so eminent an ornament; to

describe his career from his childhood to the hour when he was launched in India, a youth just seventeen, in January, 1750, seven years before Plassey had been fought. The story of the life after retirement from the service, and of the mode in which he met the persecution which ensued, will follow. The volume will conclude with the narrative of the splendid greatness of his declining years. In this chapter I propose to deal with the family, and the pre-Indian career of Mr. Hastings, that is, with the first seventeen years of his life.

In the dedicatory portion of the inscription on the Warren Hastings' monument in Westminster Abbey, quoted in the preceding page, Mrs. Hastings refers to her late husband as "descended from the elder branch of the ancient and noble family of Huntingdon." Tradition assigns the honour of being the founder of this family to the famous Danish pirate Hastings, vanquished by King Alfred. It is an ascertained fact that the Hastings family had been some time settled in England at the time of the Conquest; that at a later period it divided itself into two branches, the one represented by the Earl of Pembroke, the other by the Earl of Huntingdon; that a representative of this latter branch, in the reign of Henry II., held property at Daylesford. We hear of a subsequent representative of the family, Sir Milo, or Miles Hastings, of Daylesford com. Wigorn, residing there as lord of the manor in the reign of Edward I. The succession continued unbroken until long after the reign of Charles I., the family retaining the patronage of the living of Daylesford. During the troublous times of the Civil War the Hastings family espoused the cause of the King, and fought and bled and raised money for Charles I. and his son. Their efforts greatly lessened the resources of the lords of the manor of Daylesford, nor, when the King obtained his own again, did they receive any return for the sacrifices they had made. The year following the Restoration, 1661, the representative of the family at Daylesford was John Hastings, known as "John Hastings of Daylesford in Worcester, and of Telford in Oxfordshire." He married a daughter of Thomas Penyston, of *Coggs in* Oxfordshire, and gave the name of Penyston to his eldest son and successor. This son's son took orders. and in 1701

was presented by his father to the living of Daylesford. He married the following year Priscilla Gardiner, of Ginting.* By her he had four children—Penyston, born in 1704; Priscilla, born in 1706; Howard, 1711; and Samuel, 1715. The eldest of these, Penyston, was educated for the Church, and sent to Balliol College, Oxford, where he matriculated. Whilst he was yet young misfortunes had come upon the family. In 1715 his father had been compelled to sell Daylesford, and had migrated to the neighbouring village of Churchill, across the Oxford border. There, still holding the benefice of Daylesford, he lived till 1752.

Meanwhile, in 1730, the son, the younger Penyston Hastings, had married Hester Warren, daughter of the proprietor of Stubhill, a small estate near Twining, in Gloucestershire. She died in the house at Churchill shortly after having given birth to her second child, who, in memory of her, was named Warren. The elder child was a daughter.

Warren Hastings was born on the 6th of December, 1732. His father, broken-hearted by the death of his wife, migrated shortly afterwards to one of the West India Islands, leaving Warren to his grandfather's care. The boy remained at Churchill under that care until his eighth year. Lord Macaulay has drawn a striking picture of the dreams which agitated his heart during those early days. He was, the reader must recollect, at Churchill, within an easy distance of Daylesford, of which place his grandfather was the rector. The country, fertile almost beyond belief, produced in its waving golden corn, in its fruits, and in its wild flowers, some of Nature's choicest marvels. Amongst these the boy would wander during his hours of leisure.

"The daily sight of the lands which his ancestors had possessed," writes Lord Macaulay, "and which had passed into the hands of strangers, filled the boy's young mind with wild fancies and projects. He loved to hear stories of the wealth and greatness of his progenitors, of their splendid housekeeping, their loyalty, and their valour. On one bright summer day the boy, then just seven years old, lay on the bank of the rivulet which flows through the old domain of his house to join the Isis. Then, as three score

* For the true record of the family history I am indebted to the admirable monograph on Warren Hastings, by Sir Charles Lawson, published in *The Journal of Indian Art and Industry* for July, 1892.

and ten years later he told the tale, rose in his mind a scheme which, through all the turns of his eventful career, was never abandoned. He would recover the estate which had belonged to his fathers. He would be Hastings of Daylesford. This purpose, formed in infancy and poverty, grew stronger as his intellect expanded and as his fortune rose. He pursued his plan with that calm but indomitable force of will which was the most striking peculiarity of his character. When under a tropical sun he ruled fifty millions of Asiatics, his hopes, amid all the cares of war, finance, and legislation, still pointed to Daylesford. And when his long public life, so singularly chequered with good and evil, with glory and obloquy, had at length closed, it was to Daylesford that he retired to die."

I have already stated that besides his father his grandfather had had two sons, Howard and Samuel, and one daughter, Priscilla. Of these Howard had obtained a post in his Majesty's customs, and was in better circumstances than the other members of the decayed family. In his comparative prosperity he bethought him of his nephew Warren, and believing that parts such as he gave indications of possessing could not be fully developed in a village school, he removed him, just when he had completed his eighth year, from Churchill, brought him to London, and placed him in a small scholastic establishment at Newington. There he was well taught, but the food doled out to the inmates of the school was of the poorest quality, so that whilst the mind of the boy was being enriched, his body received most inadequate sustenance. It is probable that the semi-starvation to which Warren was here subjected stunted his growth and weakened his constitution. He was kept there more than two years, and was then transferred to the famous school of Westminster, then at the height of its renown. The head-master was Dr. Nicholls, and among his schoolmates were Lord Shelbourne, afterwards first Marquis of Lansdowne, the poet Cowper, the notorious Churchill, and Sir Elijah Impey. Here Warren rapidly distinguished himself, alike for the sweetness of his temper, his attention to learning, his progress in classic literature, and his prowess as a swimmer and as a rower. He made many friends, and attracted the attention of the masters, especially of the head-master, by his mental aptitude and his great powers of application. In 1747, when he was still only fourteen, he gained the first place in the examination for the King's

Scholarship, a success which secured for him the distinction of having his name engraved in gilt letters on the wall of his dormitory, young Impey gaining the fourth place. The future seemed to the boy bright with undefined hope, when suddenly the death of his uncle Howard deprived him of the basis on which his prospects rested. A distant kinsman named Chiswick, a director of the East India Company, came forward to take the place of Uncle Howard, but with the fixed idea in his mind to send the boy to India. In that country, entering the Civil Service, he would find, he knew, a profession ready to his hand, whereas, without fortune and without any commanding influence, he would find the road in England hard and stony, leading to no certain success. He proposed, then, to remove Warren at once, and, despite the remonstrances and more of Dr. Nicholls, who was most anxious to retain his most promising scholar, even if he should have to bear the cost himself, he carried out his purpose. How Warren appreciated the kindly action of Dr. Nicholls may be gathered from the following remarks recorded in a paper which he intended as the commencement of his autobiography, but of which he wrote but four pages.

"My uncle Howard," he wrote, "to whom I am indebted for my education, and for every other care of me which good principles, unimpelled by natural affection, could dictate, died in the year 1748. I was soon after taken from school. I hazard the imputation of vanity in yielding to the sense of gratitude and justice which is due to the memory of my revered master, Dr. Nicholls, to relate that, when I waited upon him to inform him of that purpose of my guardian, he, in the most delicate manner, remonstrated against it, adding that if the necessity of my circumstances was the only cause requiring my removal, and I should continue at school, he would undertake that it should be no expense to me. I have been told that similar instances of his bounty were carried into effect. I could not profit by it." *

But all was in vain. The offer of Dr. Nicholls promised no career beyond that of a schoolmaster. Had Mr. Chiswick been influenced by the enthusiasm of the head-master, the future of his young relative would not have riveted the

* Sir Charles Lawson, in the monogram previously referred to, introduces the quotation I have made with the following interesting statement: "When he was an old man Hastings commenced his autobiography, but wearied of the task after filling four pages. Those pages were found among his papers after his death, and have been shown to me by Miss Marion Winton, of Steeple Aston, Oxfordshire, grand-niece of Mrs. Hastings."

attention of the world. To other hands would have been entrusted the task of saving and remodelling British India, and it is more than possible that those other hands might have failed to grasp the real points of the situation. The obstinate persistence of Chiswick, ungenial as it seemed at the time, sent Warren Hastings to a career in which he rendered services to his country, the value of which it is difficult to over-estimate. Little could Chiswick foresee the result of his action. Though Madras had been captured by the French, and the fortunes of that presidency were at their lowest ebb, there was no cloud in Bengal. The relations between the Subahdar of that province and the English settlers were at the time most cordial. In that part of India service usually meant clerkship—a clerkship of the character of that upon which, but four years previously, a young Englishman, named Robert Clive, had entered at Madras.

There can be no claim to prescience, then, on the part of Mr. Chiswick. He looked only for his ward to work in the English settlements on the coasts of India, receiving a sufficiency whilst the work should last, and ultimating probably in the securing of a competence. Far, then, from acceding to the wishes expressed that his kinsman should continue residence at Westminster, he thought it wiser that he should renounce the Classics in order the better to store the mind of the young man with such knowledge as might be useful in the career he contemplated for him. Book-keeping and caligraphy should supersede Horace and Juvenal. With this view he removed the young man from Westminster, and consigned him to the care of Mr. Thomas Smith, writing-master of Christ's Hospital. In due course Hastings obtained a certificate from that gentleman to the effect that he had gone through a regular course of merchants' accounts. He acquired likewise the facility of writing well and clearly. But in knowledge of finance he made no progress, and his ineptitude in this respect remained with him to the end.*

It was customary, apparently, in those days, that a candidate for a writership in the service of the East India Company should make a written application for it, the

* Lawson's "Monograph," pp. 13, 14.

letter to be in his own handwriting. The application submitted by Hastings proves the excellence of the instruction in caligraphy he had received from Mr. Smith. In his case the application was but a form, for Mr. Chiswick had arranged the result. The writership was granted, and in January, 1750, a few weeks after he had reached the age of seventeen,* he sailed in the good ship *London* for Calcutta. He reached his destination in the month of October.

* He was born, it will be recollected, on the 6th of December, 1732.

CHAPTER II.

THE CONDITION OF INDIA ON THE ARRIVAL THERE OF WARREN HASTINGS.

BENGAL, the province to which the *London* was conveying Warren Hastings during more than eight months of 1750, had been, so far as the English were concerned, quite free from the troubles and turmoil which were then agitating Southern India. The acquisition of their chief settlements in Bengal had been made by other means than those which had obtained in Bombay and Madras. Whilst the former had been conveyed to Great Britain as the dower of the Princess of Portugal, whom Charles II. had espoused, and Madras on the ordinary conditions of landlord and tenant, the village of Chatánatí and its immediate surroundings, subsequently known under the comprehensive name of Calcutta, had been assigned in gratitude for the skill of an English doctor, displayed at a very opportune moment. To understand thoroughly the career of Warren Hastings, it is so necessary that the reader should have a clear knowledge of the early deeds of our countrymen in Bengal, and of the condition of that province immediately prior to his arrival in India, that I make no apology for introducing here a brief but succinct account of its history from the date on which the places I have mentioned came into the possession of the British.

In the year 1620 the East India Company had despatched two agents to visit and report upon the facilities which the province of Bengal offered for commerce. These two agents visited the important centre of Patná, always, during the rule of the Mughals, a city of large influence. It would seem that the troublous times frightened the agents, or rather

disposed them to regard Patná as likely to afford but little protection to peaceful merchants. The date will convey to the mind of the reader that they had reason for their hesitations, for the visit was made during the declining years of the Emperor Jahángír, when his son Sháh Jahán was in árms against him, and when the army of the latter was actually engaged in attempting to conquer Bengal. The agents remained at Patná until some time in 1621, when, finding the situation becoming worse instead of better, they quitted the province. Some years of internal hostilities followed, but the war was finally concluded in 1625 by the defeat of Sháh Jahán and his submission to the Emperor. Three years later the death of Jahángír gave Sháh Jahán the succession to the throne of Akbar. Apparently he was not at the outset well inclined to favour foreign settlers, for in 1631 we find him giving directions to his general Kásim Khán to attack Huglí, an important emporium in the district and on the river of the same name,* and expel thence the Portuguese, who had occupied it since 1537. Kásim Khán carried out his orders to the letter. After besieging the town for three months he stormed it, with enormous loss to the Portuguese, two thousand of them perishing by the sinking of their boats in the river. Seven years later Sháh Jahán appointed his second son, Sultán Shujá, to be viceroy of the three provinces of Bengal, Bihár, and Orísá. One of the first acts of this Prince was to change the seat of government from Gaur, now famous for its ruins and its tigers, to Rajmahall, which he called Akbarnagar, after the real founder of his dynasty.

This happened in the year 1639. Five years later (1644) † there occurred an event at Agra, which induced the Emperor Sháh Jahán to make an application to the English authorities at Surat, on the river Taptí, the capital of the district of the same name, then the chief commercial town in India, much frequented by vessels from Europe. It would appear that the clothes of the favourite daughter of the emperor had caught fire, and her body had been severely burnt before

* The town of Huglí is twenty-three miles north of Calcutta.

† Some writers have given the date of this incident as 1639, but Bruce, who had access to all the official papers, gives the date as stated above, and that date has been adopted by the most careful authorities. *Vide* Bruce's "Annals of the East India Company," vol i. p. 406.

the flames could be extinguished. Amongst the hakíms, or native doctors, who attended her not one possessed the skill to cure her. The fame of the English as healers was then prevalent in India, and the Emperor, when his own doctors had failed him, despatched an express to Surat to request that the best of the English surgeons might be ordered immediately to Agra. It happened that the good ship *Hopewell*, the surgeon of which was Gabriel Boughton, was then lying off the town. Boughton had a considerable reputation, and was at once selected to proceed on the mission. He joined the Emperor's camp not far from Agra, saw the princess, and had the good fortune to cure her. In gratitude for his services, transcendent as he regarded them, Sháh Jahán asked Boughton to name his own reward. Boughton, whose mind was full of the failure of his countrymen to open out a satisfactory trade with Bengal, knowing that, at the time of his mission, they were actually debating whether they should not abandon the small port of Piplí,* the only one they had the Imperial authority to use for trading purposes, recognized that an opportunity had come to him such as might never recur to place the trading affairs of the East India Company on a substantial and permanent basis. Instead, then, of asking a personal reward he besought the Emperor to give permission to his countrymen to trade in Bengal free of all duties, and to establish factories in that province. Sháh Jahán at once granted a *farman* or royal patent to that effect. Armed with this, Boughton proceeded at once to the Court of Sultán Shujá, Viceroy of Bengal, at Rajmahall.

His arrival there was opportune. One of the royal ladies of the haram was suffering from a pain in her side, and the native doctors had been unable to give her effective relief. Boughton tried and succeeded. In gratitude Shujá extended to Boughton his protection, aided him in his endeavours to introduce British trade in Bengal, and granted to the English his special protection during the whole time of his viceroyalty, which extended with but one break, when he was sent specially to Kábul, to 1657.

During the twenty-two years that followed, the government

* Piplí lies ninety miles south-west of Calcutta. It is on the left bank of the river Subárnárekhá, ten miles above its fall into the Bay of Bengal.

of Bengal alternated between the contending factions which represented the sons of Sháh Jahán; nor was it until the successful candidate for the empire, Aurangzeb, appointed, for the second time, Shaista Khán to be Subahdar of the three provinces, that order was completely restored (1679). But in the interval the French, the Dutch, and the Danes had taken advantage of the surrounding anarchy to establish themselves permanently in Bengal, the first having built a factory at Chandranagar, twenty-two miles above Calcutta; the second one at Chinsurá, twenty miles north of that place; and the Danes one at Srirampur, nearly opposite Barrackpur, fourteen miles from the English chief settlement. Nor had the English been idle. They had established a factory at Huglí, agencies at Patná * and Kásimbazár, and, a little later, at Dháká and Baleswar (Balasor).

In 1681 the Governor of the Company's settlement in Bengal was Mr. Hedges. He resided at Huglí, and was allowed a guard of a corporal and twenty English soldiers. For a time the relations of the settlers with the ruling powers were peaceful; but very speedily the power of the English excited the jealousy of the Subahdar, Shaista Khán, and in 1685 he peremptorily refused an application made by the then Governor, Mr. Gyfford, under whom the corporal's guard of twenty soldiers had developed into a force of two hundred and fifty men, to acquire some station within the province which the English might fortify. Mr. Gyfford and his successors gave way before the anger of the Viceroy, but the Court of Directors resented their too timid policy, and promptly fitted out a fleet of ten ships of from seventy to twelve guns each, the command of which they gave to a captain on their establishment named Nicholson, bestowing on him the rank of Vice-Admiral, and instructing him to transfer, on his arrival in the Huglí, the command to the Governor of their settlement in Bengal, with the title of Admiral and Commander-in-Chief of the land forces. Nicholson was further directed to take measures for the increase of the Company's forces to ten companies aggregating a thousand men. The

* The agent at Patná was specially charged with the duty of procuring saltpetre, urgently required in England on account of the Civil War then raging.

Court also took measures that his fleet should be augmented, by the vessels actually on the spot, to nineteen ships.

The fleet, delayed by storms, and shorn by one reason or another of three of its most efficient ships, those especially which were carrying the largest number of troops, reached the mouth of the Huglí in September, 1686. Job Charnock was the Governor of the Company's possessions. He had received reinforcements from Madras, and had raised some companies of Portuguese infantry, known in those days from their head-dress as topasses. These had English officers to command them. On the arrival of the fleet being signalled, Charnock sent orders that the ships should ascend to Huglí, and showed every determination to carry out the orders he had received from England.

Meanwhile Shaista Khán had concentrated a considerable force in the vicinity, the command of which he had bestowed upon the faujdar or chief officer of the Huglí district. For the moment he seemed inclined to temporise, but on the 28th of October, an affray, begun accidentally, but which shortly developed into a pitched battle, took place between the men of the two armies, and in this the English gained a complete victory,* leaving sixty of the enemy dead on the field besides many wounded; they also stormed a battery of eleven guns, all of which they spiked or destroyed. Nicholson, meanwhile, had carried the town of Huglí, but had forbidden his men to pillage it, for which act of mercy he was sharply called to account by the Directors in England.

Shaista Khán was more surprised than intimidated by the result of this first contest in Bengal between the settlers and the natives, and confined himself for the moment to the issuing of orders for the seizure of the British factories throughout the province. Meanwhile he sent messengers to hasten the arrival of more seasoned troops than those who had been worsted in the recent encounter. Governor Charnock was too wise to await, in an unfortified position, the result of an attack in which he would be enormously outnumbered. Taking with him, then, all the stores and property of the Company, and all the ships of the fleet, he moved down to

* Bruce's "Annals of the East India Company," vol. ii. p. 579; Stewart's "History of Bengal," pp. 314, 315.

the little village of Chatánatí, on the site of that portion of the present city of Calcutta which extends from the Mint to the Soba Bazaar, and began to intrench himself. Shaista Khán continued to negotiate, but only apparently to gain time, for, in February of the following year, he despatched a considerable army to Huglí, under his best general, Abdul Samad Khán, with instructions to expel the English from Bengal, or to destroy them. As successful defence was impossible, Charnock moved with his stores and garrison to Injalí, a low flat island at the mouth of the Ganges, covered with long grass, the abode of deer and tigers. On his way Charnock captured many Mughal vessels, damaged as much as possible the resources of the Subahdar, and was able to secure quantities of grain.

To the vicinity of Injalí he was followed by Abdul Samad, but in vain. Injalí was a pestiferous place, and about as unpleasant a residence as it was possible to conceive; but it was safe against all the attacks that a Mughal army could make against it. Abdul Samad soon recognized that his best ally was the climate. After a few futile efforts to storm the place then, he drew off his army, and left the English force to the effect of bad air, filthy water, and tigers.

These allies speedily cleared away one half of the followers of Job Charnock. The remainder would have doubtless followed, but, in pursuance of the peremptory orders of the Emperor Aurangzeb, whose shipping on the western coast was suffering severely from the hostile action of English cruisers, Shaista Khán gave evidence of a desire to treat. In fact, he made overtures to Charnock. These the Englishman gladly entertained. Both parties were in the most conciliatory of tempers; and, finally, on the 16th of August, 1687, a treaty was signed, by which it was agreed that the English should return to their former possessions; that the duty which Shaista Khán had laid upon their exports of saltpetre should be remitted; that they should have a tract of land at Uluberiá on the right bank of the Huglí, fifteen miles south of Calcutta, with permission to erect there magazines and docks for their shipping. The only concession demanded from the English was the restoration of the Mughal vessels they had detained on their way to Injalí. Charnock

and the remnants of the English at once proceeded to Uluberiá, began there the construction of docks, and after a stay there of three months, returned to Chatánatí. This brought them to the very end of 1687.

Scarcely, however, had they returned thither when the renewal of hostilities on the Malabar coast roused the anger of Aurangzeb (March, 1689). Shaista Khán, in consequence, sent peremptory orders to Charnock to quit Chatánatí with his entire following and to proceed to Huglí, there to use neither stone nor brick in the construction of their dwellings. Charnock remonstrated, but matters were rendered most unpleasant for him by the arrival, off the coast, of fifteen ships, of various kinds, under the command of Captain Heath, with full powers to act. Heath, a man of violent temper, instead of using his force to support the remonstrances of Charnock, attacked and plundered Baleswar (December, 1689), and by this action so roused the anger of Aurangzeb, that that sovereign issued the most peremptory orders to extirpate the English, to seize all their property, and to permit no settlement of them in his dominions. It is probable that these orders would have been carried out but for the fact that Shaista Khán, old and failing in health, took the opportunity to resign his office, and that his successor, Ibráhím Khán, son of the famous Ali Mardan Khán, was a man of a kind and gentle disposition. Under his mild sway Charnock and his followers, who had retired to Madras, were permitted to return to Chatánatí. This they did on the 24th of August, 1690, and early the following year they received from the Imperial Court a prescript authorizing the re-establishment of all their former factories, granting them power to trade throughout the provinces, free from duties of every description, on paying an annual tribute of three thousand rupees. As for Chatánatí they might reside there, but they were forbidden to fortify it.*

On the death of Job Charnock in 1692, Bengal was made

* It is interesting to note the cause of this sudden change of policy on the part of Aurangzeb. He had very soon found that war with the English meant the destruction of his commerce, the cutting off of all intercourse with the Arabian coasts, and the diminution of his revenues. Being a man of an eminently practical mind, he came to the conclusion that his animosity might be too dearly paid for.

subordinate to Madras, and there came into operation a plan hatched in England in 1692, in virtue of which a sort of peripatetic Governor for all British India was appointed. He was directed to proceed from factory to factory, and issue such orders as might seem to him advisable. He was to be called "General," and his head-quarters were to be at Fort St. George, but it was contemplated that he should be as much as possible on the move. The first dictator of this description, Sir John Goldesborough, arrived at Madras early in 1693. Fortunately for the welfare of the factories in Bengal he did not live long to enjoy his large powers, for after having established economies which, if persisted in, would have ruined the settlements, he died in January, 1694.

Five years later events happened in Bengal which tended, ultimately, to the strengthening of the position of the English in that province. The mildness of the rule of Ibráhím Khán, a mildness often bordering on fatuity, had encouraged evil-doers to rise in revolt, and these were at the outset so successful that they actually besieged the faujdar of Jesur in the town of Hugli. In his distress the faujdar granted permission to the Dutch at Chinsurá, to the French at Chandranagar, and to the English at Chatánatí, to fortify their respective factories. Meanwhile Aurangzeb, indignant at the lax conduct which had permitted the rebellion, had removed Ibráhím from office, and had nominated his son, a gallant soldier, Zabardast Khán, in his place, until his own grandson, Prince Azímu-sh-Shán, should arrive to exercise permanently the office of Subahdar. Before Azímu-sh-Shán could arrive, Zabardast Khán had reasserted the Emperor's authority, and had defeated the rebels in several encounters. Well would it have been had he been allowed to finish the war. But in the very crisis there arrived Azímu-sh-Shán, and this Prince, indolent and avaricious, put an immediate stop to hostilities, and behaved to Zabardast with so much haughtiness that the latter quitted the army, taking with him the flower of the troops. This was the opportunity of the English. They despatched from Chatánatí the ablest member of their Council, Mr. Stanley, with instructions to obtain from the Subahdar further grants of lands contiguous to those which they were holding, and for power to exclude

from their possessions all interlopers, that is, Englishmen or others not in the service of the Company. Stanley succeeded. By the bribe of sixteen thousand rupees he obtained the grant of the villages of Chatánatí, Govindpur, and Kálíghátá, but the interlopers bribed highly to secure absolute free-trade, and carried that point against Stanley. It required another payment in cloth of the value of eight hundred rupees to secure the actual transfer. The three villages, contiguous to each other, were then merged into one large town, known for upwards of two centuries to the world as Calcutta.*

The English hastened to erect a fort to protect the united villages, for the rebels were again in the field. It was completed in 1700, and, after the reigning King of England, was called Fort William. It remained the chief defence of the factory until, one year after, it had been taken by Siraju'd daulah, when it was abandoned, and a new fort commenced by Clive on a more favourable site (1757).

Three years later (1703) occurred a revolution in Bengal. To assist his inefficient grandson, Azímu-sh-Shán, in the duties of the Subahdárí, the Emperor Aurangzeb had nominated a very able man, Murshíd Kulí Khán, the son of a poor Brahman who had become a Musalman and had risen to the highest grades, to be Diwan or Prime Minister in Bengal. The jealousy of the grandson was excited by this nomination, and various attempts were made by him to dispose of Murshíd by the dagger or the bowl. Ultimately, however, the grandson, under the orders of the Emperor, retired into Bihár, leaving Murshíd supreme in Bengal. Of this province he made Makhsusábád the capital, but, grafting on it his own name, called it Murshídábád, the city of Murshíd, a name by which it is known to this day.

The death of Aurangzeb in 1707 (February 21) brought about some changes in the administration of Bengal. There was as usual a contest for the succession. In the course of this contest, Azímu-sh-Shán, who had struck for the crown, was defeated and drowned (1712); Rashíd Khán, appointed, in 1712, Subahdar of the three provinces by Farrukhsiyar, the

* I have already noted the part which Chatánatí bore in this union. I may add that Govindpur represented the ground on which now stands Fort William, and Kálighátá the land not included in the other two.

ultimately successful candidate for the Imperial throne (1713), was defeated and killed near Murshídábád by Murshíd Kulí Khán, who thereupon was confirmed in his old office of Diwan, and, five years later, was nominated Subahdar of the three provinces. His treatment of the English was, however, so oppressive, that the latter resolved (1715) to despatch an embassy to the Emperor Farrukhsiyar, now, apparently, firmly established on his throne, to demand redress and fair treatment. The members of the embassy were Mr. John Surnam and Mr. Edward Stephenson. They were accompanied by Kwájah Sírbad as interpreter, and Mr. William Hamilton as surgeon. They took with them presents to the value of £30,000 sterling.

Then occurred one of those incidents which for the third time enabled the skill and science of the medical profession to render great service to England. When the members of the embassy arrived at Dehlí, they found the Emperor Farrukhsiyar suffering from a disorder which had baffled all his physicians, and prevented his marriage with the daughter of a Prince of Rajputáná. Desperate at the failure of his countrymen, the Emperor sent for Mr. Hamilton, and this skilled practitioner succeeded in curing him. The Emperor, after bestowing upon his benefactor some munificent presents, begged him to demand something that was the most at his heart, for that there was nothing he would refuse him. Hamilton, following the example of Boughton, asked him to grant the objects to secure which the mission had been despatched. These were the issue of a *farman* declaring that a passport signed by the chief English officer at Calcutta should exempt the goods specified therein from being stopped or examined by the officers of the Subahdar; that on requisition made to the officers of the Mint at Murshídábád, three days in the week should be devoted to the coinage of English rupees; that persons indebted to the Company, either in money or goods, should be delivered to the authorities at Calcutta on the first demand; that the English might be permitted to purchase the lordship of thirty-eight villages with the same immunities as those granted by Azímu-sh-Shán when they bought Calcutta. Farrukhsiyar, surprised at the moderation of Hamilton, granted all his demands, and

promised to sign the required *farman* as soon as the ceremonies of his marriage should be concluded. He kept his word.

The anger of Murshíd Kulí Khán at the complaisance of his sovereign was very great. Finding, however, that open opposition would lead to no results, he privately threatened the owners of the villages with his vengeance if they should accept any offers from the English, except such as he might sanction. He saw, indeed, that the possession by the English of the lordship of the thirty-eight important villages they demanded, would give them complete command of both banks of the river, and make them masters of the entire trade of the port. To conciliate this important personage the English accepted several modifications he proposed, and by public homage and private presents succeeded in gaining his friendship and protection.

Murshíd Kulí Khán died in 1725, having nominated as his successor his grandson, Sarfaráz Khán. Sarfaráz was the son of his daughter, married to Shujá-u-dín Khán, an Afshar of the same tribe as Nádir Sháh, born at Burhánpur, long the capital of Khandesh. Now, Shujá was a man of great influence, and Sarfaráz declined to take the office whilst his father should live. The actual successor to Murshíd, then, was Shujá-u-dín Khán. He ruled fourteen years, from 1725 to 1739. So far as concerned the English he left no record, for he respected their privileges, and did not interfere with them in any way. He enlisted in his service all the able men of the three provinces. Prominent among these were Hájí Ahmad and his brother, well known as Alí Vardí Khán. The latter married his three daughters to three influential noblemen, who were at once nominated to important posts. Alí Vardí himself proceeded as deputy of the Subahdar to Patná, thus getting possession of the province of Bihár. A son-in-law of the Subahdar, named Murshíd Kulí Khán, administered Dháká. Additions were made to the three provinces by the conquest of Típarah, of Dinájpur, and of Kuch Bihár, and these possessions were firmly held. When Shujá-u-dín died, in 1739, his power passed easily, and, as a matter of course, into the hands of his son Sarfaráz Khán.

But that year (1739) was a terrible year for India. It

witnessed the invasion of Nádir Sháh, the complete defeat of the Imperial troops, and the sacking of Dehlí. The first intimation received by Sarfaráz of these terrible disasters was the receipt of a summons from the Prime Minister of Nádir, to pay up three years' arrears of revenue. Not only did Sarfaráz comply, taking, as was natural, from the English the quota due to them; but he ordered coins to be struck in the name of the invader, and the *Khutba*, or prayer for the sovereign, to be read for Nádir Sháh in all the mosques. The more enlightened of his nobles resented this too prompt submission. They recognized that it was a far cry from Dehlí to Bengal; that the Khorásání invader had come to plunder the capital, not to stay in India; and, headed by Ali Vardí Khán, they rose in arms against Sarfaráz. In the battle which followed, fought at Gheriá in January, 1741, Sarfaráz was killed. The government of the three provinces then devolved upon Ali Vardí. To obtain the confirmation of his title he at once despatched one karor and seventy million of rupees to the Mughal Emperor at Dehlí. This timely present secured for him his nomination as Subahdar of the three provinces, with titles significant of the esteem in which he was held at the Imperial Court.

Ali Vardí was a very strong man. For fifteen years, from 1741 to 1756, he ruled the three provinces with a firmness and vigour unsurpassed by any of his predecessors. It is necessary to record with some slight detail the events of his reign, for it was in the course of it that Warren Hastings landed in India.

The first act of Ali Vardí was to clear the province of Orísa of the partisans of the late Subahdar. This he accomplished in 1741, though the effort required two expeditions and two victories. On the second occasion the victory was complete, and after having installed Muhammad Masum Khán as his deputy in that province, Ali Vardí hoped that his difficulties in that part of his government were over.

But they were not. The successful invasion of Nádir Sháh had given a fatal blow to the Mughal rule in India. To that rule the Maráthás, then in the very zenith of their power, aspired to be the successors. The rich provinces ruled over by Ali Vardí especially excited their greed; and

of those provinces Orísá offered, from its position, the greatest facilities for attack. The fact, moreover, that, during the greater part of 1741, hostilities were raging in that province had not escaped their attention, and before the close of that year they had decided to strike a serious blow for its conquest. Raghuji Bhonslé, the ruler of Birár, who had already distinguished himself by his raids in the Dakhin, organized the expedition. The execution was entrusted to the hands of Bashkar Pandit, a leader of repute, and forty thousand men, who followed his standard. Bashkar entered Orísa towards the end of the year, and marched straight on Mednipur,* where Ali Vardí was encamped with the army which had but just pacified the province.

Alí Vardí's force was not large enough to encounter the tried cavalry of Bashkar Pandit. He therefore fell back as speedily as he could on Murshídábád, harassed during four days by the Maráthá horsemen, who, like the Cossacks of 1812, excelled especially in pursuing a hastily retreating foe. On the fourth day he halted at Katwá, to become famous in the time of Clive, twenty miles south of Plassey, and there was joined by his son-in-law, Nawázish Muhammad, with considerable reinforcements. He was in a position now to make a stand, and he resolved to act in a manner which should make the Maráthás remember and repent their temerity.

Meanwhile the leader of the Maráthá army, exalted to fierce enthusiasm by the retreat of Ali Vardí, had taken possession of Mednipur, of Bardwán, and of the whole Orísá country as far as Baleswar (Balasor). Advancing in a westerly direction, he had occupied Birbhum and Rajmahall, spreading so much terror among the inhabitants that they hurried in crowds to Calcutta to implore the protection of the English. The latter, not unwilling, applied to Alí Vardí for, and obtained, permission to dig a wide and deep ditch and throw up an intrenchment round their chief settlement. The work was intended to have a length in circumference of seven miles, and to be supported at intervals

* Mednipur, incorrectly written Midnapore, formed at that period a portion of the province of Orísá. At a later period the district of which it was the chief town, and which bears the same name, was transferred to Bardwán, in Western Bengal. The town rests on the Kasai river.

by small redoubts to protect the bridges and salient angles. During the six months which immediately followed three miles of the ditch were dug, but as no enemy appeared, the work was abandoned, never to be resumed. Some traces of it still remain. A slight wall of defence was at the same time erected round the Company's factory at Kásim-bazár.

Meanwhile Alí Vardí, still at Katwá, had given breathing time to his army; had brought his reinforcements into line; had then attacked the Maráthá camp, had stormed it; and then, in the Napoleonic manner, had pursued the beaten enemy unrelentlessly back to Mednipur. There Bashkar Pandit, reinforced in his turn, attempted to make a stand. But there was no resisting the impetuous onslaught of Alí Vardí. The Maráthás were defeated with great slaughter, and abandoned all their conquests.

This happened towards the close of 1742. But the war was not over. Enraged by the defeat of his lieutenant, Raghuji Bhonslé led, the following year, another army into Bengal. To oppose him Alí Vardí applied for aid to the liege lord of Raghuji, the Peshwá, Bálájí Ráo. The latter, in consideration of the payment of a large sum of money, agreed to render that aid. Meanwhile Raghuji Bhonslé had detached Bashkar Pandit with twenty thousand cavalry to beat up the quarters of Alí Vardí. Bashkar pushed as far as Mankirá, near Murshídábád, where Alí Vardí lay with his whole army. The Subahdar, doubting the issue of a battle, resolved to have recourse to the more certain method of treachery. He accordingly invited the Maráthá chief to an interview, at which he might be attended by nineteen of his principal officers, to confer with an equal number of his own nobles. Meanwhile he placed men in ambush to assail the invited at a given signal. The plot succeeded. Bashkar Pandit and his officers came, and were assassinated. Alí Vardí then attacked the leaderless Maráthá army, routed it, and pursued it as far as Katwá.

Thus did the second Maráthá invasion collapse. But its failure only paved the way to new enemies. Mustafá Khán, Alí Vardí's principal general, rebelled against his master in 1745; and it was only by very strenuous exertions that, in the same year, he was defeated and slain. The four quarters

of his dead body were hung as a warning over the four gates of the city of Patná. The following year, 1746, was a year of comparative peace. There was no Maráthá invasion; there were no internal troubles, and Alí Vardí was enabled to devote his leisure hours to arranging for the marriage of his grandchildren. Amongst those whose weddings were celebrated was Siráju'd daulah, afterwards so conspicuous in connection with the English.

The year 1747 witnessed a third Maráthá invasion. These turbulent warriors entered Orísa and seized the important district of Katak,* in the very centre of the province. Alí Vardí sent Mir Jafar, afterwards so notorious in the time of Clive, to expel them, but, for some reason difficult to fathom, Mir Jafar retreated to Bardwán, leaving the enemy unmolested. Then ensued negotiations which constitute an episode in Indian history of a character of which the oriental nature has given many examples. Alí Vardí, enraged at the conduct of Mir Jafar, sent one of his most trusted nobles, Atáu'llah, to supersede him and carry out his orders. Atáu'llah attacked and defeated the Maráthás at Bardwán, whither they had followed Mir Jafar; then, seeking the latter, he offered to make him Governor of Bihár, if he would aid him in deposing their joint master, Alí Vardí. As the offer probably included the succession of Atáu'llah to Alí Vardí in the higher position, Mir Jafar refused it. Alí Vardí, however, was so incensed with Mir Jafar for his retreat without fighting that he removed him from his command.

But a year and a half later (1749) he restored him. The occasion was peculiar. A small body of influential Afghán nobles, living in Bihár, assassinated the brother of the Subahdar, Hájí Ahmad, and the third of his three sons-in-law, Zainu'd dín, for some private feud. Alí Vardí, replacing Mir Jafar in his command, marched against the murderers, defeated them, and slew two of their chiefs. Their women and children he treated with the greatest kindness, and set them free. Feeling old age creeping on him, he then appointed his grandson, Siráju'd daulah, to be Governor of Bihár; his second son-in-law, Sayid Ahmad, to be faujdar

* Formerly erroneously spelt Cuttack. There is no "c" in the word, and the letter "a" is short in both syllables.

(Chief Commissioner) of Parniah; and he compelled Atáu'llah, whose intrigues he had discovered, to retire into Oudh. Nearly two years later Siraju'd daulah rebelled, but was forced to submit. In the same year (1751) Alí Vardí, weary of his contests with the Maráthás, who were again threatening Orísa, concluded a treaty with them, ceding to them the district of Katak,* and agreeing to pay them annually twelve lakhs of rupees as the *chauth* for Bengal.†

Five years later three deaths came to affect the fortunes of the family ruling in and over the three provinces. The first of these was that of Nawázish Muhammad, the eldest of the sons-in-law of Alí Vardí; the second was that of his brother, the second son-in-law, Sayid Ahmad, leaving one son, Shaukat Jang; the third was that of Alí Vardí Khán himself. This event happened on the 9th of April. He left as his successor not the grandson nearest in order of natural succession, but the son of Zainu'd din, who had been murdered by the Afgháns, named at his birth Mirzá Máhmud, but who had received from his grandfather in 1741 the more grandiloquent title of Siraju'd daulah Sháh Kulí Khán Bahádur. By the first of these five appellations he is best known to history. At the time of his accession Mr. Hastings had been five years and a half in India.

* The Maráthás held the Katak district till 1803, when it was conquered by the British.

† *Chauth* means "tribute," calculated on the fourth part of the revenue. It was often commuted, as on this occasion, for a fixed sum.

CHAPTER III.

THE EARLY EXPERIENCE OF MR. HASTINGS IN INDIA—THE CONDITION OF BENGAL.

THE general condition of the Company's affairs in Bengal has been recorded incidentally in the preceding chapter. We have seen how not only their fortunes but their very existence seemed to hang on the arbitrary will of the Subahdar of the provinces in which they had located their factories. Under Alí Vardí Khán they had prospered greatly. That ruler had noticed how the revenues of the provinces rose and fell, according as the commerce of the European settlers prospered or languished. His necessities had given them power to fortify their chief settlement, and he had set his face steadily against molesting them. When one of his generals, Mustafá Khán, the same who, in 1745, had deserted him after the repulse of the second Maráthá invasion, urged upon him the expulsion of the English from Bengal and the seizure of their property, and other influential members of his Court had supported Mustafá, Alí Vardí had answered, "What have these English done to me that I should use them ill? It is now difficult to extinguish the fire on land; but should the sea be in flames who could put them out?" There could not be a stronger testimony to the recognition by the Musalmán ruler of the basis on which the power of the English rested. To molest them would bring from across the seas hornets who would destroy them all. And who, in those early days in Bengal, possessed any knowledge at all about the strength and resources of the parent hornets' nest? To Alí Vardí and the thinking men of his Court it was clear, as it had been clear to the Emperor Aurangzeb, that there was a power beyond their seas possessed of infinite resources, strong in the excellence of their ships, and, as had been proved

at Huglí at an earlier period, and in Southern India during the latter years of Alí Vardí's viceroyalty, capable of performing marvels on land. His policy, then, during the whole period of his rule, had been, towards the English, a policy of peace and conciliation.

It may be convenient to note here the factories possessed by the English in Bengal at the time when, in October, 1750, Mr. Hastings arrived in India. They were then precisely as they continued to be at the death of Alí Vardí, five years and a half later. The English had, as their chief settlement and the residence of the Governor, the town of Calcutta, formed of the three villages mentioned in the last chapter, and now constituting one city with a native population rapidly approaching four hundred thousand souls, huddled together in low mud huts, the soil round which became in the rainy season of the consistency of a bog. For themselves the English had built better quarters overlooking the river. These quarters were surrounded by a brick wall and some bastions, called by courtesy a fort, and this fort was occupied by about two hundred soldiers, most of them sipáhís. The Governor, in 1756, was Mr. Roger Drake, a Quaker, and unfit on every ground to administer a settlement during troublous times.

More to the west, about two miles south of Murshídábád, the Muhammadan capital of Bengal, was the town, then a very flourishing town, of Kásimbazár.* Close to this town the English possessed a factory which they had, in a manner, fortified. The English affairs at this place were managed by a Council composed of the senior members of the service, presided over by the agent, who naturally was subordinate to the Governor and Council in Calcutta. The agent virtually represented British interests at the Court of the Subahdar.

At Huglí the factory established in 1640 existed little more than in name. At Baleswar (Balasore) in Orísá, where the Danes and Dutch had settled, the English had established a factory in 1642; but it had suffered from the invasions of the Maráthás, and in 1750 was decaying. The establishment at Piplí, made in 1634, had been abandoned

* The change in the course of the Bhágírathí river subsequently ruined the town.

in consequence of the silting up of the river Subánárekhá. There were, however, out-factories at Jagdiá and Dákhá.

The emoluments sanctioned by the East India Company for their servants in India were absurdly small. The Governor, upon whom mainly devolved the responsibilities of administration, received but £300 a year. The members of his Council received salaries ranging from £40 to £100 annually, the senior merchants £40, the junior merchants £30, factors £15, and writers only £5. But these salaries must be regarded simply as retaining fees, for the Company permitted their servants to trade privately, and the profits of such trade was often very great indeed. The system of taking presents from natives of position had not then been forbidden, and in many cases it was largely taken advantage of. It must be added that in addition to the salaries mentioned above, the Company allowed their servants free rations and a sufficient supply of madeira for their individual consumption. Promotion was generally very rapid, and to a man of marked ability the position was one not only full of hope, but was bound to ensure ultimate fortune.

Mr. Hastings reached Calcutta on the 8th of October, 1750, the Governor being then Mr. Drake; Mr. Watts the agent at Kásimbazár; Mr. Boddom agent at Baleswar; Mr. Amyatt was at Jagdiá; and Mr. Richard Beecher at Dákhá. Hastings remained two full years in Calcutta attached to the secretariat department. His duties consisted in assisting to keep the books of the Company, in superintending and ordering the warehousing of the goods for export, and in attending to all the details comprehended in the routine of clerkly work. He managed, however, to devote a fair portion of his time to the study of the Bengali language, which he learned to speak with facility. His contact with the ruling race, in the exercise of his official work, enabled him to attain likewise some knowledge of Urdu and of Persian. It must be remembered that, under the rule of the Muhammadan Viceroys, whilst Persian was the language of the Court, Urdu, a bastard compound of Persian and Hindi, was spoken generally by the commonalty outside of Bengal. There are but few details of the more than two years' sojourn of Mr. Hastings in Calcutta at this early period. It has been said that he

left no record himself, and in his after-life he rarely referred to those days of apprenticeship. Probably there was nothing to record. Secure of the friendship of Alí Vardí, the English in Calcutta could only watch with anxiety, but without any power to interfere, the course of events in Bengal, Bihár, and Orísa. Whilst Mr. Hastings was engaged in his plodding duties within the fort between 1750 and 1754, Alí Vardí was occupied in suppressing the rebellion of his grandson, in making a final settlement with the Maráthás regarding Orísa, and in making sure the succession. We can imagine the reports, brought by native dealers or received from Mr. Watts from Kásimbazár, regarding the changing fortunes of the Subahdar and his family; the dread expressed lest Alí Vardí should die; the hope that his successor might be a man of the stamp of his eldest son-in-law, then living. But the English could but watch, and hope, and fear. The daily warehousing must still go on. There was but the dull life of daily routine. Small wonder, then, that the record of this period of Mr. Hastings' life should show little more than a blank.

At this period the silk industry in Bengal and Bihár occupied largely the attention of the governing Council, and after due consideration it was decided, at the close of 1753, to despatch Mr. Hastings to Kásimbazár, under the orders of Mr. Watts and his Council, thence to proceed into the interior —as it was then called—to establish at a fitting place an *aurang*, or "silk-factory." Hastings proceeded thither early in 1754, and he was there in 1756, when, on the 9th of April, the death of Alí Vardí Khán and the succession of Siráju'd daulah changed the peaceful aspect of affairs.

At the *aurang* Mr. Hastings' life was to a great extent a life of isolation. He consorted chiefly with the natives of the province, making occasional visits to Kásimbazár and to a factory established by the Dutch in the neighbourhood, under the superintendence of Mr. Vynett. Such a life, far from being injurious, contributed probably, in a measure, to his future success. He learned to understand thoroughly the character of the people, their gentle ways, their devotion to their families, their superstitions, the mixture of simplicity and cunning which characterized them, their geniality and their humour. There it was too that he acquired that perfect

mastery of the native dialects which stood him in good stead throughout his career. For a man possessing a clear head and a strong character it was an excellent school.

Whilst Mr. Hastings was engaged in this district work his promotion still went on, and in 1755 he became a member of Mr. Watts's Council, but he was not at Kásimbazár when the event occurred which was to affect, in a very remarkable manner, the fortunes of the English in India.

A few weeks before his accession to the *masnad* the nominated successor to Alí Vardí Khán, the Nawwáb Siráju'd daulah, had sent to Calcutta to demand the surrender of one Kishn Ballabh, a wealthy Hindu, who had been his uncle's deputy in the government of Dákhá, but who, proceeding on leave to Murshídábád, had fled thence on receiving intimation of the intention of Siráju'd daulah to confiscate his property, and had taken refuge, with the permission of Mr. Drake, in Calcutta. The first messenger despatched by Siráju'd daulah brought with him neither letter nor credentials, and Mr. Drake declined to acknowledge him. This proceeding deeply mortified Siráju'd daulah, and he took advantage of some slight increase to the fortifications of Calcutta, made hastily on the receipt of the news that a rupture between France and England was imminent, to write to Mr. Drake to insist, not only that he would not proceed with the fortifications, but that he should demolish those he had already constructed. Siráju'd daulah was on his way at the head of his army to attack his cousin, Shaukat Jang, Nawwáb of Parniá, of whom he was jealous, when he received a letter from Mr. Drake explaining that the new fortifications were very slight, and were intended only as a precaution against a possible attack of the French. This reply so irritated the young Subahdar—for such he had now become—that he stopped his march on Parniá; sent a message to Mr. Drake threatening him and the English with annihilation for harbouring State offenders and disobeying his orders; despatched one of his generals, Rájá Dulab Rám, with three thousand men against Kásimbazár, and followed leisurely to Murshídábád.

Dulab Rám appeared before the factory of Kásimbazár on the 22nd of May, and at once invested it. But he committed

no further hostilities until, on the 1st of June, he was joined by the Subahdar, with the main body of the army. The senior officer of the fort, Mr. Watts, was not inclined to offer resistance to a serious attack. In fact, the defences were of the slightest description. The factory consisted of a quadrangle, with small bastions at the corners; the curtains,* which were built round ranges of warehouses, of which they formed the exterior wall, were only three feet thick; there was neither ditch nor outer defence, and the factory was surrounded by buildings which overlooked it, at a distance of about a hundred yards. The garrison consisted of forty-four regular soldiers, of whom twenty were Portuguese, and several Dutchmen, and two hundred and fifty native matchlockmen. There was but one officer, Lieutenant Elliot. The guns in the factory were of small calibre, the carriages were more or less decayed, and the ammunition did not exceed six hundred rounds.

Notwithstanding that the defences of Kásimbazár were so weak, Mr. Drake, who was shortly afterwards to distinguish himself by a dastardly flight from Calcutta, wrote, in reply to a demand for assistance, to the effect that they were sufficient for the purpose required; that the garrison was to make the best defence possible, and was only to retreat should it find the place untenable. But this reply never reached the garrison. Mr. Watts, who was a capable man, rightly deemed that the place was not defensible, and that an attempt to maintain it would not only be useless, but might damage greatly the fortunes of the English. Mr. Hastings was absent at his silk manufactory, and could not therefore exchange opinions with his chief. But it would seem, from a curious minute amongst his papers in the British Museum, that he regarded Mr. Watts's conduct as pusillanimous and abject. The Subahdar, on his arrival, had summoned that gentleman to surrender. Watts hesitated at first, but receiving a letter from Rájá Dulab Rám assuring him of his safety, he proceeded to the Subahdar's camp, accompanied by the surgeon, Mr.

* For the benefit of the reader unversed in military terms, I may state that the "curtain" represents that part of a rámpart which connects two contiguous bastions.

Forth. In the volume referred to, Mr. Hastings states that Mr. Watts appeared before the Subahdar "with his hands tied by a handkerchief." This abjectness did not, however, secure him from the reproaches of the young chief; nor from being compelled to sign a *muchalka*, or "bond," to the effect that within fifteen days the new works recently erected at Calcutta should be destroyed; that the recalcitrant servants of the Subahdar should be given up; and that the moneys alleged to have been illegally made by the abuse of the trade-passes granted to the Company should be refunded. This bond was signed by Watts and two members of his Council. The factory was then surrendered; but the Europeans were placed in confinement, and treated with so much harshness that the only officer among them, Lieutenant Elliot, unable to bear the humiliation, shot himself.

The *aurang* at which Mr. Hastings happened to be at the time proved no protection to him. He was taken prisoner and brought into Murshídábád. But the time he had spent in his solitary life had not been wasted. His knowledge of the languages, his cultivated intellect, and his generous instincts, had made him many friends among the natives generally, and amongst the less prejudiced nobles of the Subahdar's Court in particular. The same qualities had procured for him likewise the friendship and regards of Mr. Vynett, already referred to, the Dutch agent of a small factory in the vicinity, near the village of Kahánpur. By the intercession of these influential friends Hastings was released from arrest, and permitted to proceed whither he would.*

Meanwhile great events had happened. The story of the Subahdar's march on Calcutta, his investment of that town, the disgraceful flight of the leading members of the administration, the weak defence, and finally the capture and the treatment of the captured, are too well known to need further mention here. In the interval the news of the capture of Kásimbazár had reached Madras. The Government of that presidency immediately despatched to the Huglí a detachment of two hundred and thirty troops, under Major Kilpatrick. This detachment had been sent from England to provide for any disturbances which the then expected death of Alí Vardí

* See *Calcutta Review* for October, 1877. Mr. Beveridge's article.

Khán might occasion. But for some reason the detachment had been detained at Madras until the news arrived that the new Subahdar had taken Kásimbazár. This news reached Madras on the 15th of July. On the 20th, Major Kilpatrick and his men sailed in the *Delaware*, a ship belonging to the Company, and anchored off Faltá, a large village opposite the mouth of the Damudar river and then the site of a Dutch factory, on the 2nd of August.

Between that date and December there arrived at that village English refugees from the various factories, till then held for the East India Company. Thither came Mr. Boddom, the Company's agent at Baleswar, accompanied by two other gentlemen, and twenty-five English soldiers, commanded by Ensign Carstairs; Mr. Amyatt, the agent at Jagdiá, and with him four members of the Civil Service, Messrs. Pleydell, Verelst,* Smith, and Hay, escorted by twenty English soldiers under the command of Ensign Grainger Muir; from Dákhá, the agent of that factory, Mr. Richard Beecher, with Lieutenant Cudmore and six other gentlemen, three ladies, and twenty-four soldiers;† the refugees from Calcutta; and, finally, Mr. Warren Hastings.

The immediate want of the time was soldiers. The raw material for supplying such a want was ready to hand at Faltá, and neither our own countrymen nor their comrades, Armenians, Portuguese, the mixed race, and others, showed any feeling but one of alacrity in responding to the call made to them. Two corps were at once formed: the one composed of those who had served in the Calcutta militia, the Portuguese, the Armenians, and the mixed race constituting one; the other, comprising the members of the Civil Service, the superior class of Europeans, constituting a separate company. Amongst the latter was Mr. Hastings. To his adventures since reaching Murshídábád we must now turn.

After having been released from arrest by the intercession of Mr. Vynett and others, Hastings had opened at Murshídábád a correspondence with Mr. Drake at Faltá. He had

* Afterwards Lord Clive's successor in the government of Bengal.

† The arrivals from Dákhá had been made prisoners at that station, but had been treated with consideration, and ultimately made over to the agent of the French factory there. The French pleaded so strongly on their behalf that ultimately all of them were allowed to proceed to Faltá.

as a companion another Englishman, who had been similarly set free, a Mr. Chambers; and, shortly afterwards, he was able occasionally to see Mr. Holwell and some of the prisoners made at Calcutta, but sent to his own capital by the Subahdar. Of this intercourse Mr. Holwell writes:—

"We were not a little indebted to the obliging good-natured behaviour of Messrs. Hastings and Chambers, who gave us as much of their company as they could. They had obtained their liberty by the French and Dutch chiefs becoming bail for their appearance. This security was often tendered for us, but without effect."

Mr. Drake had written to Hastings to urge him to obtain from the Subahdar an order to the native villagers near Faltá to supply the refugees at that place with provisions. But Hastings deemed it as unwise as useless to approach the young prince in his then exalted attitude. He became, however, the medium of correspondence between the powerful Sett connection—the leading bankers of Murshídábád, who, watched by the Subahdar that he might seize an early opportunity to plunder them, in return hated and dreaded him—and the English at Faltá. This correspondence entailed, however, many dangers, and caused so much suspicion, that Hastings, foreseeing the probable result of a further stay at the Subahdar's Court, found it necessary to decamp. One evening, therefore, he made a rapid journey to the fortress of Chanár on the Ganges, and, embarking there on a native boat, descended the river, and ultimately joined his countrymen at Faltá.

There was little to occupy the time of the refugees but drill. They were at Faltá, expecting the reinforcements which were being organized at Madras to sail, under Clive and Watson, for the recovery of their factories. But week succeeded week and they came not. One could not spend the whole day in drill; and fortunately the presence of the ladies who had escaped from Calcutta, from Dákhá, and other factories, afforded consolation. Amongst these was the widow of a Captain Campbell, of the Company's service, and she, by her sweet manners and genial sympathy, attracted the attention of Mr. Hastings. He soon became engaged to her, and after Calcutta had been recovered, and the Subahdar,

having received his first great lesson in war from Clive, had begun his retreat towards his capital, he married her.

Mr. Hastings took part as a volunteer in the advance of the British troops under Clive and Watson at the end of December, 1756, which resulted in the recapture of Calcutta, January 2, 1757, and the beating up of the Subahdar's camp from Kásípur on the 4th of February following. He was near to Clive during that marvellous awakening which, on that second occasion, called forth all the energies of that daring and cool-headed leader. Subsequently, when it had become clear that nothing more for the moment was to be apprehended from the Subahdar, Hastings re-entered upon his civil duties. He remained in Calcutta in the performance of these until the relations of Clive with the Subahdar caused so great a tension as to require, in the opinion of the Englishman, a recourse to the arbitrament of the sword. He accompanied the English force in that memorable campaign which found its solution at Plassey. After that battle Clive directed Hastings to proceed to Murshídábád to act as assistant to Mr. Scrafton, whom he had nominated to be the English representative at the Court of the newly-appointed Subahdar, Mír Jáfar Alí Khán. In the interval, Hastings, as has been noted above, had married Mrs. Campbell.

CHAPTER IV.

MR. HASTINGS AT MURSHÍDÁBÁD.

MR. AND MRS. HASTINGS proceeded to Kásimbazár towards the close of 1757. He was, as has already been said, to act as second in the Council to Mr. Scrafton, the third member being Mr. Sykes. But he did not long remain only second. At the end of 1759, he received from Clive and the Calcutta Council his formal nomination to be Resident at the Court of Mír Jáfar, the duties attaching to which office he had performed since July or August, 1758.

What his life was at Kásimbazár may be gathered from a letter which he wrote to his old patron, Mr. Chiswick,* towards the end of 1758.

"I have received," he writes, "your favour of the 23rd of January, 1758, and am greatly obliged to you for the generous concern you express for my welfare." After condoling with his correspondent on the death of his wife, Hastings continues: "I was afraid the step I had taken in my marriage would not have appeared to you in the most prudent light. It is a very great addition to my happiness to find it has met your approbation. I told you when I first acquainted you with the news of my marriage, as every man would upon the same occasion, that I thought myself happy. I can now with much greater confidence repeat it, having, besides a great similarity in our dispositions, which I think must principally contribute to the happiness of the married state, experienced every good quality in my wife, which I always most wished for in a woman." Referring then to the birth of two children, he thus describes the duties of his office: "I have already informed you of my appointment as second in Council at the factory of Kásimbazár. My partner, Mr. Sykes, is the third, and the business of the Company's investment has been principally carried on through our hands since the late revolution. The beginning of last August produced another change in my situation. I have since that time resided at the station in the quality of agent for the

* The name of the addressee is written "Creswick," but the nature of the contents leaves no doubt in my mind that Mr. Chiswick, who succeeded his uncle in his guardianship when he was at Westminster, is intended.

Company's transactions with Government, which, if not the most profitable, is one of the most creditable employs in the service. I still retain the post of second Export Warehouse-keeper at Kásimbazár, where my family have continued to reside from my appointment to this place. I have met with considerable advantages in trade; if I live, and any fresh troubles commence in the country, I promise myself, with the blessing of God on my endeavours, a rapid return to my own country. One very remarkable event has happened since my last, in these parts: a very strong and noble fortification has been erecting in Calcutta,* the outworks of which will be finished, I hope, in another twelvemonth. I forgot whether I informed you that one of the articles of the treaty with the Nawwáb was, that the Company should possess a large tract of land to the southwards of Calcutta, paying the customary rents to the King's treasury. This acquisition, I hope, will be confirmed in a few days by a patent granted to the Company in the King's name, this having been the subject of the negotiations with the Darbar for the two months past. As the management of this affair has been entrusted principally to my care, and there is the greatest appearance of its terminating greatly to the advantage of the Company, I hope it may be a means of recommending me to your notice. My wife begs leave to present her respects to you, and joins me in the warmest wishes for your and your family's health and happiness."

The happiness so touchingly described in the letter from which I have quoted so largely was not to be of long duration. One child, a daughter, born on the 5th of October, 1758, was carried off by a sudden fit of sickness on the twenty-third day after her birth, before she had received a name. The other child, a boy, called George, never very strong, was sent to England, under the care of Mr. Sykes, in 1761, and arrived there in August of that year. He lived but three years longer, and the first news which greeted Hastings on his arrival in England, in 1765, was that of the death of his only son. His wife had been taken even earlier. The inscription on her tomb at Barhámpur,† seven miles from Murshídábád, records her death as having occurred on the 11th of July, 1759. It seems certain that there is a slight inaccuracy in the month, for we find Hastings, when writing to Clive in a letter dated the 4th of July, referring to the death of his wife as having occurred previously. The expression in this letter, "you have, I doubt not, heard of the misfortune which has befallen

* Alluding to the erection, by Clive, of the still existing Fort William.

† Barhámpur, properly Brahmapur, was the first substantial military station in Central Bengal. The site was selected in 1757, after the battle of Plassey, and the barracks were commenced that year. They took two years to build, but were not completely finished till 1767.

me in the loss of my wife," would seem to point, considering the distance and the slow methods of communication in those days, to the fact that Mrs. Hastings died in June, probably towards the end of that month.

Before her death, Mrs. Hastings had had the satisfaction of seeing the appointment of her husband to be Resident at Murshídábád. This event, though not, as I have said, formally announced till the end of 1759, really took place in August of the previous year. On the 12th of that month we find Hastings writing to Clive as follows :—

"Mr. Watts acquainted me when he was at this place" [Kásimbazár] "that he had orders from the Board of Calcutta to appoint me as Resident for the Company at Murshídábád in the room of Mr. Scrafton, who has accordingly delivered over the management of the affairs of this place to my charge."

Adding that he had been introduced to the Nawwáb and the principal persons of the city, but that, to obtain the necessary credit and influence, he desired to be furnished with letters from Clive himself to those persons, Hastings thus concluded his letter—

"As I look upon myself to be indebted principally to you for being elevated to this office, of whatever advantage it may prove to me with respect to my own private interests, I think it incumbent on me to make my sincere acknowledgments to you for your favourable intentions therein, which I cannot do better than by a constant attention to the business entrusted to my charge, and my earnest endeavours to promote the interests of the Company as far as my capacity will enable me, in which I hope I shall have the good fortune to meet with your approval."

Clive responded favourably, and sent him the letters he had asked for.

It is necessary to state here that shortly before Mr. Hastings had relieved Mr. Scrafton of his duties, there had occurred in the government of the Subahdar an event which in the present day would be called a crisis. It happened in this wise. After the battle of Plassey the new Subahdar, Mír Jáfar, unable at the moment to disburse to the English the sums they required and which he had agreed to pay, had given them assignments on the revenues of the districts of Bardwán, Nadyá, and Huglí. When, on the due date of these assignments, the Calcutta Council realized that only under great pressure the amounts would be paid, they

nominated an astute Brahman, named Nandkumár, to be their agent for the collection; invested him with full powers; and assisted him with police in English pay; on the condition that he, Nandkumár, should make himself responsible for the immediate payment to the Company of the full amount due. But, whilst conferring such large powers on Nandkumár, the Calcutta Council omitted to inform either the Rájá of Bardwán or their agent at Murshídábád of the full extent of those powers. It seems probable likewise that they did not apprise the Nawwáb, for Clive, writing on the subject, in reply to a remonstrance from Hastings, states that the appointment of Nandkumár had been settled at Murshídábád whilst he was there before he had any thought of asking him (Hastings) to accept the management of the Darbar affairs, and that his reason for desiring that the money should be paid at Huglí was to avoid giving the Nawwáb and the great men about him umbrage in seeing such large sums coming into the treasury and then sent out again for the use of the English. However this may be, it is clear that Nandkumár, whilst keeping his engagements with the English, exercised so much rapacity that the Diwán, Rájá Dulab Rám, remonstrated most strongly with him. Then Nandkumár, strong in the support of Calcutta, began to intrigue at Murshídábád for the removal of the to him obnoxious Minister. He succeeded so well that the Nawwáb removed Dulab Rám and nominated a more pliable politician, Rájá Ráj Ballabh, in his place.

Mr. Hastings was ignorant of the arrangements which had been made for the collection of the revenues of Bardwán, Nadyá, and Huglí when he succeeded Mr. Scrafton. Theretofore it had been the rule that the English Resident should exercise a general superintendence, in communication with the Diwán, over the collection of the revenues of the several districts. Hastings was first apprised of the change which had been made, by a letter from his predecessor, Mr. Scrafton, dated Calcutta, 25th August, which ran thus:—

"I am vexed when I write to you that Nandkumár is appointed Collector of the revenues of Bardwán, Nadyá, and Huglí, by the Committee. This takes Bardwán and Nadyá out of your power; you will have nothing more to do than collect for the other balances."

Very much annoyed, Hastings wrote on the 7th of September to Clive. The latter replied in the manner I have noted above. A little later occurred the crisis of which I have mentioned. Then, for the moment, the matter ended. But it is proper to add that, however impressed with the abilities of Nandkumár Clive may have been at that period, subsequent and more intimate association with him entirely removed that sentiment, for at a later period (1765) we find him writing to General Carnac, recording his conviction that Nandkumár would

"do no honour either to the Nawwáb or the Company in any great or eminent post, which he was never fitted or designed for; and I can give you unanswerable reasons against his being the principal person about the Nawwáb when I have the pleasure of seeing you."

The correspondence of Hastings with Clive shows that the former disapproved of the appointment of a man of the stamp of Nandkumár. He anticipated the judgment formed ultimately by Clive regarding the man. It is possible that an attempt made about this time to connect Nandkumár with a scheme for the assassination of Mír Jáfar, tended to excite the generous mind of Clive to exertions in favour of a man he knew to be unjustly accused, and he supported him with all his power, which was then supreme. But, at Murshídábád, in constant intercourse with the Nawwáb, Hastings enjoyed larger opportunities of testing the action and examining the motives of the shrewd Brahman; and there can be no doubt that he formed a very mean opinion of both. This opinion was shared by the Nawwáb. At a later period, when Mr. Hastings was occupying the highest position in the country, he referred, writing to the Court of Directors, to the opinion he had formed of the man in the days when he was Resident.

"From the year 1759 to the day when I left Bengal in 1764" [September 1, 1772], "I was engaged in a continued opposition to the interests and designs of that man" [Nandkumár], "because I judged him to be adverse to the interests of my employers."

Amongst the other matters to which Hastings gave his attention at this period was one affecting the title of the lands which had been assigned by the Nawwáb to the East India

Company. He ascertained that from some oversight these lands were held only by an unregistered grant from the Subahdar, whereas, to be held permanently and legally, it was requisite that the highest authority in the province should issue a patent, and that that patent should be entered in the great book recording all the tenures of land as the property of the Company. Neither of these conditions had been complied with. The mistake was at once rectified. As political matters turned out the error would not have produced evil results, for, a few years later, the three provinces were once again, and for the last time, subjected to the arbitrament of the sword. But if that had not been the case, if peace had continued, it would have been within the rights of the successor of Mír Jáfar to have refused to acknowledge a cession for which no patent had been issued, and no trace of the transfer of which was to be found in the State register.

The relations between Mr. Hastings and the Subahdar were not disturbed so long as Clive remained in India. The two Englishmen knew thoroughly the character of Mír Jáfar, his weaknesses, his real dread of the power which had made him, yet of the necessity he felt to lean on it for support. He required, however, a great deal of management. He would have shaken off the English yoke if he could have brought himself to believe that his efforts would be successful. He showed this very plainly in October and November, 1759, when the Dutch, with his secret concurrence, made a great effort to oust the English from their supremacy. But, fortunately, he was a man who took too long to make up his mind to be able to act with decision. In the second chapter of this book I have shown how, on a memorable occasion, he displayed this slowness of resolution when acting as chief general of Alí Vardí Khán. He gave another proof of it at Plassey, puzzling Clive by his caution; and, as Subahdar, he displayed it in all his larger dealings with the English. To manage him required, on the part of the Resident, a great exercise of tact, and fortunately, in Mr. Hastings, there was present a man who possessed that fine quality in perfection. Mír Jáfar was in constant want of money. He had paid very large sums indeed to the English, and his treasury was often empty. To test the validity of the demands he was con-

stantly making, Mr. Hastings at last made a thorough examination of the debtor and creditor account between the two principals, and discovered, to his surprise, that it stood in favour of Mír Jáfar. Large collections of English dues passed through his hands as Resident. Instantly he demanded and obtained the permission of Clive to pay over a lakh, then more than £10,000, to the Nawwáb, and, shortly afterwards, on the requisition of Mír Jáfar, paid in a second on his own responsibility, leaving the Company still a debtor.

The events occurring in his immediate vicinity had long since convinced Mír Jáfar that, but for the support of the English, and especially of Clive and Hastings, his life was not worth a month's purchase. No man knew this better than Hastings, and it formed one of the reasons which induced him, in August, 1759, to write to Clive and urge him to remain in India. Mír Jáfar was worn out; his son and projected successor, Míran, was one of the worst of men. No one could look for the continuation of peace and security beyond the death of Mír Jáfar. Clive was thoroughly cognizant of the danger of the situation. Writing to Hastings on the 21st of September, in reply to his letter of the previous August (1759), he says:

"Mír Jáfar's days of folly are without number, and he had long before this slept with his fathers, if the dread of our power and resentment had not been his only security. Sooner or later, I am persuaded the worthless young dog" [his son Míran] "will attempt his father's overthrow. How often have I advised the old fool against putting too much power into the hands of his nearest relative. Tell him from me that Rájá Ballabh" [the Diwan who, it will be remembered, had displaced Rájá Dulab Rám] "is an aspiring, ambitious villain; and if he does not get him removed from his son's presence he will push him to some violent and unnatural resolution."

It was the consciousness of the removal of the great security afforded by Clive's presence in India that prompted Mír Jáfar to exclaim, on his departure, that "it seemed as though the soul were departing from the body." Never was a more striking truth uttered. On the departure of Clive, in February, 1760, disorder succeeded order, and unscrupulous plunder became the order of the day of his successors.

Clive had selected Mr. Vansittart to succeed him as President of the Council, but Mr. Vansittart was at Madras,

and the chief place on his departure was filled by Mr. Holwell, Mr. Hastings remaining at Murshídábád. The other members of the Calcutta Council were Mr. Sumner (at a later period an unworthy co-adjutor of Lord Clive in Bengal), Mr. McGuire, Mr. Culling Smith, Mr. Playdell, Colonel Calliaud, and Captain Yorke. The last but one of these commanded the army, then conducting operations, presently to be referred to, against the forces of the Sháhzádá, son of the titular Emperor, engaged in the invasion of Bihár.

To Hastings at Murshídábád the change from a Clive to a Holwell was at once painfully perceptible. In dealing with Clive he had dealt with a master-mind, a man with a breadth of view, who comprehended at a glance all the points of a case, and who, though not always right in detail, never made a mistake in principle. Clive had given Hastings the largest powers, and had never interfered with the details of his action, recognizing always the soundness of the aims he put before himself. I have already noted how Hastings had, on his own authority, paid money due to the Nawwáb, even when money was wanting in Calcutta, and how Clive had upheld him. The fact is that both these men recognized, and made it a cardinal point of their policy to recognize, that Mír Jáfar was to be upheld as the figure-head until the time should come when, of necessity, probably on his death, the whole management, and the entire tenure of, the three provinces should devolve on the English, that is, on the English Crown.*

The natures of Mr. Holwell and his colleagues were utterly unable to grasp these ideas. Their one notion was to grasp all they could; to use Mír Jáfar as a golden sack into which they could dip their hands at pleasure. The letters from Holwell to Mr. Hastings abound with demands for money. "I am obliged," he writes in one of them (6th of May, 1760), "to press your obtaining at least one lakh of rupees, and that you will send it down with the utmost expedition." Hastings did all that lay in his power to render less pressing the demands he received on the treasury of the Nawwáb, who was often himself in great stress, when

* This policy was sketched by Clive in his famous letter to Mr. Pitt, dated the 7th of January, 1759.

an event came to his knowledge which changed his whole feelings with respect to Mír Jáfar. He discovered, or, at least, was informed, on evidence which seemed to him clear, that the Nawwáb had caused to be murdered the daughters of Alí Vardí Khán, and other ladies of rank, some of them closely connected with himself by marriage, in the most barbarous manner. On making this discovery Hastings wrote to Calcutta, and after reporting the murders and expressing his horror of the crime, added—

"I have hitherto been generally an advocate for the Nawwáb, whose extortions and oppressions I have attributed to the necessity of the times and the want of economy in his revenues, but if the charge against him be true, nó arguments can excuse or palliate so atrocious and complicated a villany, nor (forgive me, Sir, if I add) our supporting such a tyrant." *

Subsequent investigation proved that, although the ladies in question had been murdered, there was no absolute certainty that Mír Jáfar had any hand in the crime. Mr. Verelst, who was deputed to examine into the affair, came to the conclusion that the Nawwáb's part in the matter had been greatly exaggerated; that possibly he was free from all complicity. But the previous career of Mír Jáfar proves that he would not have been deterred from such a crime by any sentimental notions, had he thought that its commission would in any way benefit him. In those

* The murders were perpetrated at Dákhá, by direct orders from Míran, son and nominated successor of Mír Jáfar. The victims were Ghasítí Begam, daughter of Alí Vardí Khán, and widow of Sháh Ahmad Jang; her sister, Amíná Begam, widow of Sayid Ahmad Khán and mother of Siráju'd daulah; Murádu'd daulah, son of Kulí Khán, and adopted son of Sháh Ahmad Jang; and Lutf-ul Nissah, widow of Siraju'd daulah, and her infant daughter. See "Siyar-ul-Muthakerin," vol. ii.; see also Elliott's "History," vol. viii. pp. 428, 429. The author of the "Jami'u-t Tawaríkh," in the last-named, gives a further list of the men and women murdered by Míran. Regarding the deaths of the two sisters, Ghasítí and Amíná, he adds the following story: "The two sisters, after bathing and putting on clean clothes, cursed Míran, saying, 'O God, we have done no harm to Míran, who, having brought ruin on our family and deprived our brothers of their rights, is now about to put us to death. We pray that he may be struck dead by lightning for his cruel deeds.'" The chronicler adds, "Their prayer was heard; for Míran, after arriving in the vicinity of Hájípur, . . . a thunderbolt descended and struck him and his servant dead."

So far as I have been able to ascertain there is no record as to whether Míran obtained his father's consent to these atrocities; but the incident of the death of Siráju'd daulah, after Plassey, shows that, in such matters, Mír Jáfar was ever ready to give a free hand to his son.

days murder was one of sanctioned methods of Oriental politics.

A month later an event occurred which put to the test the foresight of Mr. Hastings. Míran, the son and nominated successor of Mír Jáfar, was struck dead by lightning. His death was a relief to every one, for, to use the language of Clive, he was so unworthy "as to make it almost unsafe trusting him with the succession." There were but two candidates for the vacant succession: the one a younger son of Mír Jáfar, a boy of very tender age, whose interests were to be represented by a Hindu, Rájá Ráj Ballabh, the same who had succeeded Rájá Dulab Ráo as Diwán, a man supreme in intrigue, utterly unscrupulous, but clever and quick-witted in the manner of his countrymen; and Mír Kásim Áli Khán, son-in-law of Mír Jáfar, very clever, very unscrupulous, but a real patriot, one who recognized the evils under which his countrymen were living, and who saw, or believed he saw, that it required only firmness and strength of character to remove them. Although, when occasion required, Mír Kásim could stoop to endeavour to ingratiate himself with those who, he foresaw, must ultimately become his enemies, he had a very courageous spirit, and in firmness of resolution was surpassed by no man. The respective merits of the two candidates may be described in a phrase: the one was an intriguer of the closet, the other a man of action; both, I have said, were alike unscrupulous.

It devolved upon Hastings to select the one of the two whom he might consider the most fitted to be nominated Prime Minister. At Murshídábád he had had many opportunities of judging both men; and, in his letter to Mr. Holwell, comparing their merits, he gave a decided preference to Mír Kásim. Mír Kásim consequently was appointed, and it is not too much to say that if, after his subsequent accession, the affairs of the Company had been conducted by even an approach to common honesty, the choice would have proved a happy one alike for the natives and the settlers. As it was, the action of the Calcutta Council precipitated the crisis which Clive, as he explained in his already quoted letter to Mr. Pitt, had distinctly foreseen.

Almost immediately after the selection of Mír Kásim there followed an event pregnant with important consequences to both races. As soon as it was known at Murshídábád that the new Governor, Mr. Vansittart, was expected daily at Calcutta (August, 1760), Mír Jáfar, who had accepted Mír Kásim as the presumptive heir to the Subahdárí, despatched that nobleman to Calcutta to welcome the new Governor, and to arrange with him some matters kept in abeyance pending his arrival. Once in the presence of the Calcutta Council, Mír Kásim, a man of great shrewdness and ability, read their characters as an open book, realized that they were thirsting for money, and eventually persuaded them that he was eminently fitted not only to succeed, but to displace Mír Jáfar. Accordingly, on the 27th of September, the Special Committee, which constituted the executive of the Calcutta Council, and which was composed of the men whose names I have given in a previous page, Mr. Playdell excepted, entered into a personal treaty with Mír Jáfar's representative, by which it was agreed: (1) That Mír Kásim should be nominated Deputy to the Subahdar, and possess the whole power and influence of the administration; (2) that during his own lifetime, Mír Jáfar should still enjoy the personal advantages and rank and honours of the Subahdárí, with a liberal allowance for his state and maintenance; (3) that Mír Kásim should receive the support of the English, and, when required, the aid of their forces; (4) that all the arrears of payments due by Mír Jáfar should be promptly discharged, and that to ensure such result, the districts of Bardwán, Mednípur, and Chitragáon should be assigned to the Company, who were to sustain the losses or realize the profits that might accrue from the difference between revenues of those districts actually obtained, and the sums for which they were given in assignment. Other advantages to the Company were stipulated: Mír Kásim was to redeem without delay, by money payments, a quantity of jewels which Mír Jáfar had pledged to the Company; he was to allow the Company to purchase, free of duty, one-half of the chunam produced at Silhat for three years (a most profitable concession); measures for peace or war with the Sháhzádá, son of the Emperor, and the means to obtain that

end, were "to be weighed in the scale of reason" between the contracting parties, "and it shall be so contrived by our joint counsels that he be removed from this country, nor suffered to get any footing in it." *

There were other conditions of a lighter character, not committed to paper; but there was one more weighty, and which probably exercised great influence with the members of the Special Committee. Mír Kásim promised verbally to pay to those members, as soon as he should be securely seated on the *masnad*—for no doubt was entertained but that Mír Jáfar would decline to accept the proffered situation—the following sums: to Mr. Vansittart, 500,000 rupees; to Mr. Holwell, 270,000; to Mr. Sumner, 255,000; to Mr. McGuire, 255,000; to Colonel Calliaud, 200,000; to Mr. Culling Smith, 134,000; to Captain Yorke, 134,000. It is due to add that Colonel Calliaud refused to accept his share, and left for England before any portion of the total payment had been disbursed. Mír Kásim, however, paid it to Mr. Vansittart, and that gentleman transmitted it to Colonel Calliaud's agents in England, so that ultimately he profited by the disgraceful transaction.

Whilst these transactions were going on, Mr. Hastings remained at his post at Murshídábád. Some months earlier he would have started with horror at the idea of despoiling, in so barefaced a manner, the Prince to whom he was accredited, and to whom the English were bound by the most solemn obligations. But Mr. Hastings had never been able to eradicate the conviction that the wholesale massacres of the inoffending ladies, perpetrated at Dákhá by Míran, had been sanctioned by Mír Jáfar, and he shrank with horror from the intercourse with him which his position required. He hailed then the revolution which replaced him by Mír Kásim. It did not devolve upon him, however, to acquaint the old Subahdar with the result of Mír Kásim's mission. Mr. Vansittart resolved to undertake that duty himself. Accordingly, he proceeded to Murshídábád three days after the signing of the treaty, reached Kásimbazár on the 14th of October, and the following day received the visit of Mír Jáfar. The task of a man of a sensitive nature who has to

* Text of the treaty, as shown in Vansittart's "Narrative."

break to a sovereign Prince—and the Subahdars of Bengal were virtually sovereigns—that he must dethrone him, cannot but be very painful. Such a nature Mr. Vansittart probably had; for, when he had enumerated to Mír Jáfar all the complaints which the English had against him, and the old man, acknowledging them all, promised, in a submissive manner, to initiate sweeping reforms and to introduce any measures the English might consider necessary, Mr. Vansittart, touched to the quick, wavered, and confined himself to recommending to the notice of the Subahdar Mír Kásim as a man who was the most fitting minister to aid him in the reforms he had indicated. Instead of taking the hint, Mír Jáfar, on returning to his palace, appointed as his Ministers three Hindus who were the personal enemies of Mír Kásim. These men so excited his fears of Mír Kásim that at a third * interview with Mr. Vansittart, held on the evening of the 18th, that gentleman had to employ the utmost persuasion to induce the Subahdar to receive Mír Kásim, and, when at last the latter was summoned to the presence, the Subahdar received him with every sign of dislike and jealousy.

It remained, then, to Mr. Vansittart to acquaint Mír Jáfar with the resolutions affecting him contained in the Calcutta treaty with Mír Kásim. These conditions were left with him, and he was given one day, the 19th, to consider them. When, on the very early morning of the 20th, no reply had been received by the English Governor, Colonel Calliaud, by Mr. Vansittart's order, crossed the river with a detachment of British force fresh from the campaign in Bihár, joined the troops commanded by Mír Kásim, and surrounded the Subahdar's palace. Calliaud then despatched to the Subahdar, by the hands of Messrs. Hastings and Lushington, a letter with which he had been provided, written by Mr. Vansittart, in which Mír Jáfar was required to dismiss his three favourites, and to resign the entire administration to Mír Kásim as his deputy and ultimate successor. In a paroxysm of rage Mír Jáfar refused to comply, declaring that he would resist to the last rather than accept Mír Kásim in the double capacity. But Hastings and Lushington soon convinced him of his utter powerlessness. Even then he

* There was a second interview on the 16th, but it was purely formal.

would have nothing to say to the proposal that was made to him. "If I am to be shorn of authority," he said in so many words, "I will not remain here to be at the tender mercies of Mír Kásim. No; let him have the whole power, and I will retire to a place under the protection of the English. Send me to Salar Jang* (Lord Clive); he will do me justice, or will let me go to Makka." This proposal was accepted; Mír Jáfar quitted the palace to become the guest of Colonel Calliaud. Calliaud conducted him on board a state-barge, on which, in accordance with his insistence, an English soldier was placed as sentry. The following morning he started for Calcutta, escorted by a company of English soldiers and two companies of sipáhís. On his reaching Calcutta, two houses at Chitpur, a suburb two and three-quarter miles from the capital, were placed at his disposal. In them he made his temporary home, receiving a liberal allowance settled on him by his successor.

Meanwhile, as soon as it had become known that Mír Jáfar had abdicated, the drums were beaten throughout Murshídábád in honour of Mír Kásim, and that nobleman was seated upon the vacated *masnad* and invested with all the insignia of the Subahdárí, under the title of Nasiru-l Mulk Imtiyazu'd-daulah, Mír Muhammad Kásim Ali Khán. He then received the congratulations of the chiefs among the English, and began his very eventful reign. The date was the 20th of October, 1760.

Amongst those who had approved of the change thus inaugurated was Mr. Hastings. He had lost, we have seen, all faith in Mír Jáfar; he believed in the good intentions of Mír Kásim. It is almost certain that if his counsels had guided the Calcutta Government during the days which followed the conclusion of the war with the Emperor, to be related in the next chapter, the immoral policy of that Government would not have driven Mír Kásim to appeal to arms. That policy would not have been pursued had the Calcutta Council remained constituted as it was when Clive left India. But, in August, 1761, a great displacement occurred. The Court of Directors, desirous of exercising discipline, replaced three councillors, men whose appetites

* Literally, the "Chief in Battle" (see Vansittart's "Narrative").

for gain had been satiated by others, three of whom thirsted for rupees. It happened in this wise. Before Clive had quitted India he had despatched a letter to the Court of Directors, signed by himself and four of his councillors, Messrs. Holwell, Sumner, McGuire, and Playdell, which charged them in language which, though true, they had the right to regard as intemperate, with harsh treatment of their servants in India; with using language regarding them alike unjust and unworthy; with exercising jobbery and favouritism. Furious at receiving such home truths, the Court resolved to punish the writers as severely as they could. Clive and Holwell were out of their reach; but Sumner, McGuire, and Playdell were in India. These, with one stroke of the pen, they removed from their offices and ordered to England. The action may have been just, but it was unfortunate. The three men in question were prepared to support Mr. Vansittart, who was in favour of an honest and temperate policy. They were succeeded by four gentlemen, Messrs. Cartier, Johnstone, Hay, and Hastings, the three first of whom, remembering how three of their predecessors had enriched themselves by the support they had given to Mír Kásim, thought only how to profit by a similar transaction, to be brought about by their policy. They therefore at once entered upon a policy of plunder; of so oppressing Mír Kásim as to force him to revolt. But before I relate how it came to be in their power to effect a new revolution, it is necessary, for the full understanding of the situation, to record that war with the Emperor, which, beginning shortly before the departure of Clive, was brought to a successful issue a few months before that change in the Government of Calcutta to which I have just adverted.

CHAPTER V.

THE INVASION OF BIHÁR BY THE SHÁHZÁDÁ (AFTERWARDS THE EMPEROR SHÁH ÁLAM)—MR. HASTINGS JOINS THE CALCUTTA COUNCIL.

I STATED a few pages back that the hostilities caused by invasion of the province of Bihár would be dealt with in this chapter. The reference will be as brief as may be consistent with the necessity of bringing the reader in touch with those external politics which contributed very greatly to sow dissensions between the Subahdar of the three provinces and the English.

Towards the close of 1759, before Clive had quitted India, the eldest son of the Emperor, afterwards known as Sháh Álam, writhing under the restraints placed on him by his father's Prime Minister, had escaped into Rohilkhand, and gathering to him there certain discontented chiefs of the part of India now known as the North-West Provinces, had made preparations for invading Bihár and laying siege to the city of Patná. These preparations had excited the greatest fear at the Court of Mír Jáfar, for he could not depend upon his own troops, who were considerably in arrear of pay; and the great bankers, the Setts, upon whom the Subahdars had been wont to rely in their distress, had taken umbrage at his unbusiness-like proceedings, and on the rumour of the threatened invasion had proceeded on a pilgrimage to Parisnáth, a small Jain temple in Chutiá Nágpur. In his agony the Subahdar applied first to the Maráthás. These failing him, he thought for a moment he might buy off the invaders. It was only when he realized that the remedy was worse than the disease that he threw himself on the English for aid.

Thus appealed to, Clive carefully examined the reports as

to the composition of the invaders' forces, the character of their commanders, and the probable celerity of their action; then, true to himself, he recognized that the one mode of defeating them was to march with all haste to meet them. At this conjuncture he himself received overtures from the rebel prince, calling upon him as a grandee of the Mughal empire, to assist his liege lord against Mír Jáfar. Clive replied that in that capacity he was indeed bound to assist the Emperor, but the Sháhzádá must be aware that he was in rebellion against his father, and that he, Clive, as a grandee, had but one duty, and that was to prevent him from occupying the city of Patná, and that duty he should perform. He was confirmed in this view by the receipt of letters from the Emperor, praying his assistance and that of the Subahdar against "his misguided and rebellious son." The English troops at once set out from Calcutta (February 25, 1758), and reached Murshídábád early in the following month. Colonel Clive arranged there with the Subahdar for the future proceedings of the allies, and, leaving him at the capital of the Subahdárí, marched with his own force, consisting of 450 Europeans and 2500 sipáhís, and with the native force commanded by Míran, the heir apparent, on the 13th of March, in the direction of Patná.

That city, meanwhile, held for the Subahdar by an influential Hindu known as Rájá Rám Narayan, was in imminent peril. Rám Narayan, easily listening to rumours, ready to act upon them before they had been confirmed, had been thoroughly upset by a report that M. Law was about to join the Sháhzádá with a body of sixty to seventy Frenchmen. Patná, he knew, was not very defensible, and Rám Narayan had a great dislike to fight for the party which would have ultimately to succumb. Under these circumstances he had moved with his force out of Patná, and had pitched his camp to the south of the city, in a position which would enable him to join either the invading army or that of Clive and the Subahdar—whichever, in his opinion, might have the best chance of ultimate success. It is due to him to add that at the time he took this step he was without information regarding the movements of the British troops, and he wrote at once to Clive and to the Subahdar to state that he was

waiting for reinforcements, and that as soon as these should arrive he would attack the enemy. It cannot be denied, on the other hand, that he wrote, almost in the same sense, to the Sháhzádá.

But a few days later, when the Sháhzádá had actually crossed the river Karmnásá and was approaching Patná, Rám Narayan determined to visit the Prince's camp, nominally as a friend, really to spy out the land. What he saw there decided him to stand fast in his alliance with the English. Thus resolved, he bent all his energies to induce the Sháhzádá to delay his advance as much as possible. For several days he succeeded; then, when the advance was actually ordered, he returned to Patná, nominally to prepare for the Prince's reception, actually to complete the defences of the city. Fortune favoured him, for when the invading force was actually at the very gates of the city, the intervention of the festival of Nau-roz—the New Year's Day, according to the Persian calendar—delayed the attack. When at last the assault could no longer be deferred, Rám Narayan, who had received advice of the rapid approach of Clive and his army, threw off the mask, and declared for the Subahdar. This unexpected announcement, followed by the repulse of the first assault, caused the invaders to adopt great caution; they made, indeed, on the 4th of April, a second assault, which was only just repulsed; but before they could make a third, there arrived in Patná (April 5) a small detachment of English sipáhís, commanded by Ensign John Matthews, an officer of great intelligence and ability. The arrival of this one Englishman so frightened the Sháhzádá that he at once raised the siege. He certainly would not have done so had the sipáhís arrived without their English commander.

Clive reached Patná on the 8th of April, and having restored the defences, marched towards the Karmnásá in pursuit of the enemy. But various causes had contributed to cause the Sháhzádá to retreat beyond the territories of the Subahdar. Clive therefore returned to Calcutta, leaving a small English garrison in Patná.

The energies of Clive were almost immediately required to defeat the invasion of the Dutch, made with the secret connivance of Mír Jáfar. But this had hardly been accom-

plished when a second invasion of the province of Bihár by the Sháhzádá recalled his attention to Patná. He himself was about to quit India for England, but before he left, he despatched to the threatened point Colonel Calliaud with a force of three hundred European infantry, fifty artillerymen with six field-pieces, and a thousand sipáhís. Calliaud, who left Calcutta on the 26th of December, reached Murshídábád on the 6th of January (1760). There he was introduced by Clive himself to the Subahdar, and, joined by the battalion of sipáhís stationed at Murshídábád, set out, closely followed by the Subahdar's troops, fifteen thousand strong, under Míran, for Patná on the 18th of January. Before he had reached that city Clive had quitted India.

The Sháhzádá had made desperate efforts to collect such a force as would render opposition unavailing. In this he had largely succeeded, and at the end of February he had reached the close vicinity of Patná with thirty-five thousand men. On his approach Rám Narayan had marched out of the city with all his available troops, including the English garrison, consisting of seventy Europeans with two guns, and eight companies of sipáhís, under Captain Cochrane, and had occupied a strong position, which he entrenched, not far from the city walls, close to the Dewá Nálá. Here he received orders from Calliaud to content himself with defending his position, and to hazard no engagement whatever until the English troops should arrive. Rám Narayan followed these instructions with marked success for some days, but the arrival of considerable bodies of native troops, raising the total number of his army to forty thousand men, so exalted him that, fired with the notion that he could gain a decisive victory before Calliaud could come up, he moved from his secure position (February 9) and offered battle to the enemy in the plains of Masimpur. He drew up his native forces in three lines, placing the small body of English in reserve, Captain Cochrane receiving orders to look to the safety of Rám Narayan. The battle that followed was hotly contested; but, finally, the desertion of the Baluchí soldiers in the service of Rám Narayan, and the flight of some of his influential supporters, gave the troops of the Sháhzádá (now, by the death of his father, claiming to be Emperor) a great advantage. This, pushed vigorously home, decided the

battle. Rám Narayan himself was in great danger, and but for the strenuous exertions of the handful of English soldiers and English sipáhís would have been left on the field. To secure his safety, and to stop as much as possible the pursuit of the enemy, the English party suffered greatly. They lost all their officers but one (Dr. Fullerton), more than half their sipáhís, and a larger proportion of the English soldiers. Dr. Fullerton put himself at the head of the survivors, spiked the two field-pieces, the carriages of which had broken down, and retreating, surrounded by the enemy, warded off every attack, and made good his entry into Patná. But for the folly of the Emperor, who halted his troops that the music might strike up a hymn of triumph, the enemy would have entered Patná that night. The short delay saved Rám Narayan.

That chieftain, thoroughly sobered by his defeat, exerted himself the next day and the day following, though severely wounded, to bring his men to the defences, and to render the city walls proof against attack. He endeavoured also to delay the enemy's operations by sending a humble message to the Emperor to tell him that but for his wounds he would have waited upon him at once. These tactics so far succeeded that the Emperor did nothing serious up to the 19th of February. On that day information reached him that the joint forces of Major Calliaud and Míran were within thirty miles of Patná. But not even this news spurred him to action. Two days later the rival forces were face to face, and Calliaud was anxious to bring on an immediate action. The delays of Míran, however, forced him to defer the battle to the following day. Then he attacked, and although the allied forces numbered but fifteen thousand men, and the Emperor had more than double, he obtained a great victory, called, from the larger of the two villages on the field on which it was fought, the victory of Sirpur. The enemy retreated sixteen miles. Had they been vigorously followed up they would have been totally destroyed; but Calliaud had no cavalry at his disposal, and Míran, who had, declined to employ his men on such a service.

Unpursued, the Emperor lay for some days at Bihár, a town in the province of the same name, sixteen miles from the field of battle. During this time Calliaud vainly urged

Míran to join him in a forward movement. At length, on the 29th of February, he consented, and the allies marched on Bihár, only to find, however, that the Emperor had quitted it two days earlier, and had proceeded by forced marches towards Bengal. Dreading lest he might be intercepted by the English, the Emperor, when he heard of their advance, quitted the line of the river, and struck across the hilly country to the south-east by tracts never before traversed by an army. Calliaud and Míran followed him, kept closely on his track, and on emerging from the hilly country reached a place which the Emperor had quitted but two days before.

Meanwhile Mir Jáfar, at the head of his own troops, and aided by a body of English troops commanded by Captain Spear, and which at the period at which we have now arrived numbered five hundred, had, after many changes of mind, taken up a position to the north of Bardwán, on the Ajai river, about midway between Bardwán and Katwá. The Maráthás, who had taken advantage of the war to occupy Mednipur, and to move towards Bardwán, were at Bishnpur, in the Bankurá district; a small party of sipáhís, commanded by Captain Maclean, consisting of two battalions returning from the northern Sirkars, was advancing towards Mednipur. Towards the troops so engaged or posted there marched the army of the Emperor, followed closely by the troops of Calliaud and Míran. The Emperor's army was within striking distance of the united force of Mir Jáfar and Captain Spear on the 1st of April. For a moment Sháh Álam was inspired with the happy idea of attacking it before Calliaud should appear on the scene; but he hesitated, and was lost. Three days later Calliaud and Míran joined Mír Jáfar and Spear on the Ajai. Calliaud at once despatched two hundred Europeans of Spear's force for the defence of Murshídábád, and persuaded Mír Jáfar to join him with all his forces in pursuit of the Emperor. On the 6th they reached Birpur after a long march. Calliaud, having ascertained that the Emperor lay within seven miles of him, and that the Maráthás were encamped close to the Emperor, proposed to attack at once; but Mír Jáfar declined, pleading the fatigue of the troops. Calliaud then asked for the loan of horses on which he could mount his Englishmen, who

would then undertake the attack alone, but he was again refused. The next morning, however, the allied forces marched to a point on the Damudar river opposite to the Emperor's encampment. Here Calliaud endeavoured to bring him to action; but as the Subahdar showed an unaccountable unwillingness to move, and still refused the aid of his cavalry, Calliaud was baffled. He inflicted, however, so great a fear on the Emperor that the latter drew off his troops and hurried to Bishnpur. Thence, on the 10th, he crossed the Damudar, in the hope of surprising Murshídábád; but learning that it was garrisoned by English troops, he hastened back into Bihár by the route by which he had come, thinking that at least he might surprise Patná. His movements had been kept so secret that some days elapsed before the direction he had taken became known to Calliaud. On learning that direction, the latter immediately despatched a small force under Captain Knox, an officer of proved merit, to march by the northern bank of the river to the capital of Bihár. On reaching a point opposite to it he was to cross the river and defend the city to the last. Calliaud had meanwhile picked up Maclean's detachments. He employed the following days in clearing the district of the Maráthás, who had not marched with the Emperor, and in endeavouring to prevent a junction with the latter of a rebel force under a noted partisan, named Kadam Husén.

Meanwhile despair reigned at Patná. Rám Narayan had heard of the Emperor's march, and he knew that with the small force at his disposal, consisting entirely of natives, he could not repulse a serious attack. To add to his troubles, a small force of Frenchmen, commanded by M. Law, marching to effect a junction with the Emperor, had arrived and encamped before the city walls. Fortunately for Rám Narain, Law, though a very brave men, was a most inefficient commander. Had he attempted the city he could have walked into it almost without opposition. But he never even summoned it. Seeing the walls well manned, he marched forward sixteen miles to the town of Bihár, and there halted, awaiting the arrival of the Emperor. When the latter arrived, the united forces then moved on Patná.

In that city the delay had contributed to the amelioration

of the military position. Rám Narayan had collected the best of his troops, and had assigned them posts, the defence of which required men who would fight valiantly. Dr. Fullerton had rallied all the English sipáhís who remained, and held them ready to undertake work requiring resolution; whilst Rájá Shitáb Rái, a Hindu chief, whose name will often recur, a man possessing to a supreme degree loyalty and courage, organized three hundred picked men, pledged to follow whithersoever he might lead. The preparations, however, were not quite complete when the Emperor and M. Law appeared before the city.

After five days of open trenches, the French very nearly succeeded in effecting an entry. The cannon of the invaders had not quite effected a breach on the south side when, one morning in broad daylight, Law furnished his men with scaling ladders and led them to the point which he believed, from the fact that the defences were still intact, would be but lightly guarded. The assailants had already reached the summit of the defences when Dr. Fullerton, to whom intimation of the attempt had been conveyed, rushed to the spot with his three hundred sipáhís and some writers of the English factory, and by a vigorous musketry fire and a timely discharge of rockets, drove back the enemy. Equally timely was a sortie which Shitáb Rái made at the same moment from the adjoining gate, and which, taking the Frenchmen in flank, completed their discomfiture. The next day Law renewed his attack. In pursuance of a combined plan he quickly moved his guns to a point opposite to the western face of the city, and thence, by a fierce cannonade, engaged the attention of the garrison, whilst Zainu-l Abidín Khán, one of the most efficient officers in the Emperor's army, assaulted the eastern face, where there was a practicable breach. The assailants had succeeded in gaining the top of the ramparts and in planting there their colours, when suddenly a Baluchí officer of the garrison, Purdil Khán, rallying his men, charged him with extraordinary fury. Both parties were hotly engaged, when Fullerton, attracted by the sound of firing, rushed to the spot, and after a fierce fight, in which Zainu-l Abidín was killed, drove back the assailants to their intrenchments.

The city, however, was in great danger, for the enemy's force was overwhelming, and the spirit of the garrison was weakened by the rumour that the rebel Kadam Husén might join the Emperor at any moment with large reinforcements. One morning it seemed as though their apprehensions would be realized. Clouds of dust covering an advance of troops were seen on the opposite bank of the river. The thought that the troops must be those of Kadam Husén was at first prevalent; but a few moments later the red uniform was distinguished, and it was recognized that it was the relieving force of Captain Knox which was approaching. Rám Narayan at once despatched boats and provisions for the party, and in these they were ferried across the river before the evening. Then ensued two events which gave striking testimony to the enormous prestige of the red broadcloth of England. The native historian, who was present, recorded :—

"All ranks gave up their apprehensions about the escalade and about the assault, and said openly that now the English were within their walls, the enemy would not dare to come to attack again."

The other event was not less significant. The Emperor raised the siege and retired to Gayá.*

But the relief of Patná was not the only service rendered by the gallant Knox to his country. Warned by Major Calliaud that the rebel Kadam Husén was proceeding by forced marches to join the Emperor, and that he himself could not overtake him, Knox collected his small force, and, to the amazement of Rám Narayan, who thought he was marching to certain destruction, crossed the Ganges, and marched to a point on which he was informed Kadam Husén was hurrying. Of all the garrison of Patná, only one section was bold enough to throw in its fortunes with him. This was Shitáb

* Knox had marched three hundred miles in thirteen days. To encourage his men he had led them on foot the whole way. The native historian, whose records I have consulted, was Mir Ghulám Husen Khán, a gentleman of high family at the Court of Dehlí, and who, with his father, had resided many years at the Court of the Subahdars of the three provinces. He wrote a history of the events occurring in Hindustán for seventy years, beginning from the death of Aurangzeb, entitled "Siyar-ul-Mutakherin," translated, "A Review of Modern Times." This work, which is accepted as an authority, has been rendered into English. A copy of the translation is before me as I write. I have to add, however, that the clearest record of the matter dealt with in this chapter is to be found in the late Colonel Broome's "History of the Bengal Army."

Raí and his small following of three hundred men, nearly all of whom were mounted, and who proved an important acquisition. After an attempt to surprise the enemy on the night of the 15th of June, which failed in consequence of the loss of his way by the guide, Knox encountered him the following morning in the open plain, numbering six thousand cavalry, ten thousand infantry, and thirty guns. He had with him but two hundred Englishmen, eight hundred trained sipáhís, five guns, and the three hundred men of Shitáb Raí. With this handful he attacked and totally defeated Kadam Husén, killing four hundred men, and capturing three elephants and four guns. Thoroughly mindful of the great maxim that a victory not followed up is but half a victory, Knox, notwithstanding the fact that his men had been marching all night and fighting all the morning, pursued the enemy till the evening, and blew up many of their ammunition waggons.

Kadam Husén eventually escaped with his valuables to the mountains of Nipál; Calliaud and Míran joined Knox near Patná. In the course of the campaign that immediately followed, Míran, who had been a hindrance and an obstruction to Major Calliaud, was removed from this world by a stroke of lightning. It was very shortly after this that Calliaud was summoned to Calcutta to meet Mr. Vansittart. Before he could arrive there the deposition of Mír Jáfar and his replacement by Mír Kásim had been resolved upon. How Major Calliaud carried into effect the mandate he received regarding the former has been recorded in the last chapter.

But the war was not over. Mír Kásim had succeeded Mír Jáfar, and Mír Kásim was a man very different in character from his predecessor and Míran. He was a man to be reckoned with; a soldier who knew what soldiers should be, and he was penetrated by the desire to make his soldiers at least the equal of the English-trained sipáhís. He had much to do. The Birbhum Rájá was in revolt, and his general, an able man, lay encamped at Kerwá with five thousand horse and twenty thousand foot. Here, in November, they were surprised by Captain White on their rear front, and, White's movement being immediately followed by an attack in front from Captain Yorke and Mír Kásim, the defeat was complete, and the whole province was speedily reduced to obedience.

It was on this occasion especially that Mír Kásim recognized the thorough inferiority of his own troops to the English-trained sipáhís, and he formed on the spot the resolution to introduce into his army, as soon as possible, the discipline which constituted the strength of his allies. This victory was followed up by one equally decisive over the Kharakpur Rájá,* who almost alone of the petty chiefs of eastern Bihár, had continued his opposition to the new Subahdar.

There was now only the Emperor to encounter. At this critical period, January, 1761, Colonel Calliaud, who had conducted the operations I have recorded, with marked ability, proceeded to take up the chief command in Southern India, and made over command of the troops in Bengal to Major Carnac. Major Carnac's object was to drive the Emperor from Bihár. He accordingly marched early in January, followed closely by Mír Kásim, whose troops were still undisciplined and inclined to mutiny, and reached the village of Suán, about five miles to the west of the town of Bihár, on the 15th. There he found the Emperor's troops drawn up in position on the farther side of a branch of the little river Makání. Carnac crossed the rivulet, and, though doubting the fidelity of the Subahdar's troops, attacked the first hostile line so vigorously that it gave way. The second line, assailed with the same gallantry, promptly followed suit, as did likewise the third. The enemy, however, prepared for a more determined resistance in the plain beyond. There Carnac attacked them, his English troops in the centre, flanked on either side by a battalion of sipáhís, the guns at intervals, and a battalion of sipáhís and the few cavalry forming a reserve. His assault, favoured by a fortunate shot from one of his guns, which wounded the elephant upon which the Emperor was seated and killed the mahout, was most successful. The enemy gave way on all sides; the main body of the French, astonished at the coolness and gallantry of their opponents, gave way in a panic, and left M. Law, some thirteen officers, and a handful of men, standing firm to bear the brunt of the attack of the whole English force. These gallant Frenchmen had resolved to

* The Kharakpur hills lie south of Mungér, a place selected by Mir Kásim to be his capital in supersession of Murshídábád.

sell their lives as dearly as possible, when Carnac, animated by that chivalrous feeling which, as Mr. Disraeli once told the House of Commons, "has found its last refuge in the breast of the British officer," galloped up, and pointing to the enormous odds against them, invited them to yield as prisoners. This M. Law and his men would only agree to on condition of being allowed to retain their arms. Carnac conceded this condition.

The defeated Emperor retreated northward with the design to surprise Patná, which he knew to be feebly guarded. But Carnac, suspecting this design, succeeded by forced marches in getting between him and the city, and thus forced him to march through a country which had already suffered greatly from the exactions of his officers. Carnac followed him with so much vigour that on the 29th of January the Emperor, who had previously refused conditions of peace, sent his Minister, Faizu'llah Khán, to solicit terms. Carnac replied that he should have to refer the conditions of peace to the Calcutta Council, but suggested certain preliminaries which would favour the acceptance of reasonable propositions. He did not, however, abate one jot of the energy of his pursuit, and on the 2nd of February came up with the Emperor's camp. Disregarding a request from that sovereign to delay the attack, he moved forward, when the Emperor and his whole army fled in consternation, not stopping until they had covered twenty miles. This was but the beginning of the end. The Emperor conceded many points, and on the 6th of February an interview took place between him and Carnac on a spot between the two camps, in the vicinity of Gayá. The next day the Emperor visited the English camp, and was so pleased with his reception that he moved and pitched his camp close to theirs. All hostilities now ceased. After many negotiations, the latter of which took place at Patná, amongst which the English considered, and for some time favourably regarded, a proposal from Sháh Álam, that they should march with him to Dehlí, and place him on the throne of his fathers, matters became complicated by the arrival of the new Subahdar of the three provinces.

Mír Kásim, in fact, had been occupied, whilst Carnac was pursuing the Emperor, in settling the lower provinces of his

Subahdárí. His absence from the seat of war made no difference, he well knew, in the ultimate result; but the moment he heard that the Emperor was in daily intercourse with Carnac and with one of the members of Council, Mr. McGuire, who had been despatched to take up the agency of the Patná factory, he became very anxious regarding his own interests, knowing as he did that whatever concessions might be granted to the Emperor, would be made at his expense. He arrived at Baikhantpur, near Patná, on the 1st of March, and immediately had an interview with Carnac. It was a stormy one. Mír Kásim positively declined to visit Sháh Alam, of whom he professed to be in great dread, and both parties did not conceal the complaints they had to make, the one of the other. They showed this ill-feeling by petty reprisals during a few days. Finally Carnac persuaded Mír Kásim to give way regarding the visit, and the latter made his obeisance to the Emperor at the English factory. In return for this yielding, Sháh Alam invested Mír Kásim formally with the Subahdárí of Bengal, Bihár, and Orísá, the latter consenting to pay to his liege lord annually a sum of twenty-four lakhs of rupees. Shortly after, the Emperor quitted Bihár to obtain from the Nawwáb-Wazir of Oudh the assistance in recovering his ancestral throne, which the English, after much consideration, had refused him.

We have now almost arrived at the period when Mr. Hastings removed to Calcutta to take up there his duties as councillor. During the whole of the events narrated in this chapter he had maintained his post at Murshídábád, conducting there the duties which devolved upon a Resident at a native Court. He had given the greatest satisfaction to Clive; and his relations, after Clive's departure, with Mr. Holwell and Mr. Vansittart had been marked, on their part, by confidence and cordiality. It was only in August, 1861, that he was summoned to Calcutta to become a member of the Government. He proceeded thither, not actuated, as were the three gentlemen nominated to the Council at the same time, by any desire of illicit gain, but by the determination to do his duty. The prospects were not alluring. After the departure of the dismissed councillors (August, 1761), Mr. Vansittart stood almost alone in the Council; upon Mr. Culling-Smith alone

could he depend for efficient support. Before Hastings could reach the spot the majority had already given evidence of the policy they intended to pursue. They had bestowed the post of agent at Patná, at the moment the most important in their gift, on Mr. Ellis, a gentleman who personally disliked Mr. Vansittart, and who detested Mír Kásim. Vainly did the Governor, after Mr. Hastings arrived, present to the Council a code he had drawn up to guide Mr. Ellis in his political action. Though supported by Mr. Culling-Smith and Mr. Hastings, he was outvoted. Shortly afterwards, the resignation of Mr. Culling-Smith left Messrs. Vansittart and Hastings to combat without hope of success against men of their own Council, who were resolved at any cost to precipitate a revolution which, at the expense of justice, of honour, and of much bloodshed, would fill their pockets with ill-gotten gains. The part which Mr. Hastings took in these transactions will be recorded, as far as I have been able to trace it, in the following chapter.

CHAPTER VI.

MR. HASTINGS AS MEMBER OF COUNCIL, 1761 TO 1765—THE EVENTS THAT CHARACTERIZED THAT PERIOD.

MR. HASTINGS had accepted a seat in the Council with the one determination to do those things only which commended themselves to his conscience. He was in no way bound hand and foot to Mr. Vansittart's policy, but he gave him a general, often a very warm, support. The position of the Governor was a position of great difficulty, for, whilst he was held responsible for the acts of the Council, he had no power to override their decisions. In the Council he was only *primus inter pares*. The majority of votes decided every debated question. That reasoning sometimes changed opinions was proved shortly after Mr. Hastings had taken his seat, when the majority proposed that the foreign policy of the administration, which up to that time had been entrusted to the Governor alone, should become the common property of the whole Council. Not only did Hastings oppose this innovation, but he argued against it with so much ability that he won the majority to adopt his view. He offered a steady opposition likewise to the pretensions assumed by the members of Council to special privileges. To understand the mode in which these pretensions were urged, and for what purpose, it is necessary to revert to the strained relations which, after the retreat of the Emperor and the change in the *personnel* of the Council, grew up rapidly between Mír Kásim and the Calcutta governing body.

The first resolution which Mír Kásim had adopted, after the English troops had departed, was to be master in those parts of the three provinces, with the Subahdárí or viceroyalty of which he had been formally invested by the Emperor.

One of his earliest acts was to remove Rám Narayan from the administration of Patná. In the course of this narrative we have had occasion to judge of the merits and demerits of that official. In all his transactions he had displayed one marked characteristic—a determination to cast his lot with the side which he believed would ultimately prevail. Such a characteristic, though very common in the East and not unknown in Europe, renders impossible, on the part of the actual ruler, thorough confidence in the man who possesses it. Mír Kásim therefore thoroughly distrusted Rám Narayan. But he had other grounds of complaint against him. He found on examination that Rám Narayan had amassed, by means which would not bear examination, enormous riches. He was, moreover, too much mixed up with the English to be permitted to remain supreme in a place so important as Patná. Consequently, Mír Kásim relieved him of his office, and bestowed the chief command in Patná on a Muhammadan whom he could trust. Several of Rám Narayan's supporters and associates were involved in his fall, and suffered certain terms of imprisonment. The only one of these whose career had made him famous was the Rájá Shitáb Rái, whose gallantry in the field has been related in the last chapter. As bold in speech as he was when charging a foe, Shitáb Rái shut himself in his house, and whilst professing to reply to any charges that might be made against him, announced his intention of defending himself to the last man. Mr. McGuire, who was still acting as the English agent, pleaded with Mír Kásim on his behalf, and the Subahdar ultimately agreed that the Rájá should be sent to Calcutta to have the charges he brought against him examined by the Council. This was done, with the result that whilst Mír Kásim was precluded from injuring Shitáb Rái, and from confiscating his property, the latter was directed to quit the territories of the Subahdar. He therefore proceeded to Lakhnao, and thence joined the Emperor's camp.

Having settled the affairs of Patná, replenished his treasury, and paid off the most pressing of his obligations to the English, Mír Kásim turned his attention to the districts of Sáran, Champáran, and Tirhut, and to other tracts which, since his accession, had been neglected. By acts of necessary

vigour he put down the insurrection which had long been smouldering in those quarters, and replaced the obnoxious officers, who were mostly Hindus, by devoted Muhammadans.

It is now necessary to enter somewhat in detail into an examination of the proceedings which led to an open rupture between the Subahdar and the English. I have already stated that Mr. Ellis, who had succeeded Mr. McGuire in the charge of the Patná agency, was a man of a rude and violent temper, and that whilst he had a grudge against Mr. Vansittart, he positively hated Mír Kásim. Immediately after he had taken charge of the agency, this gentleman subjected the Subahdar to insults which were particularly galling to a man of a proud and sensitive nature. He assumed to himself, in the first place, the right to try and adjudicate upon all disputes which might occur between the servants of the factory and the subjects of the Subahdar, and insisted, in a rude and irritating manner, that his sentences should be carried out. He seized and sent to Calcutta, in irons, a servant of the native ruler, who, in accordance with prescriptive custom, had purchased five maunds of saltpetre, of which the English had the monopoly;* and when both Vansittart and Hastings remonstrated against this measure, their impetuous colleagues in Council demanded that the man should be whipped and deprived of his ears. I narrate this as a specimen of the method adopted by the English of those days in dealing with an independent Prince, for whose army they had the most profound contempt, and whom they hoped to coerce into resignation.

But Mír Kásim was not the man to be bullied into resignation. The treatment he received had the effect only of giving a very sharp edge to his resentment. He removed his residence to Mungér, a town on the right bank of the Ganges, three hundred and seventy-one miles by the river route from Calcutta, and containing a fort regarded in those days as possessing defensive strength. Once established there, he began the measures for the reorganization of his

* An exception to the monopoly, to the extent annually of twenty thousand maunds, had always been allowed to the Subahdar, though not expressly mentioned in the treaty. This quantity was required for the consumption of the Subahdar and his retainers. The five maunds mentioned in the text formed part of the twenty thousand.

army which he had long contemplated. First, however, he established a system of economic administration: suppressed useless offices and sinecures; put down bribery with a strong hand. By the beginning of 1762 he had paid all his obligations to the English, and had established a system of recruiting, of enlistment, and of attracting foreign adventurers, such as very shortly enabled him to have in hand an army as disciplined as were the English sipáhis, as well armed, and animated by the strongest feelings of patriotism. Had he been able at the same time to enlist English officers to command them, his soldiers would have been most formidable. There lay the only weak point. He established moreover a foundry for cannon. At the close of 1762 he had a trained army of twenty-five thousand infantry, a regiment of trained artillerymen, and many guns. His cavalry he rightly continued on the system known as the irregular system.

But, before this consummation had been reached, before even he had well established himself in his new capital, Mr. Ellis accused him of harbouring in his fort two European deserters, and actually despatched a company of sipáhís under a sergeant to search the fort. The Subahdar naturally refused admission to the English sipáhís, and complained to the Council in Calcutta of the outrage. Mr. Ellis, on the other hand, declared that the refusal to admit his sipáhís was an act of hostility. In the Calcutta Council there ensued a debate of extraordinary acrimony, Mr. Vansittart and Mr. Hastings alone condemning the action of Mr. Ellis. Finally the matter was compromised by the despatch of Lieutenant Gilbert Ironside * to search the fort, with the consent of the Subahdar; and of Mr. Hastings to Mungér, to endeavour to arrange the disputes between the Subahdar and Mr. Ellis, complaints, thanks to the intemperate action of the latter, being of constant occurrence.

On his way to meet the Subahdar, Mr. Hastings visited Murshídábád, Bhágalpur, and other places, inquiring at each of them into the working of the new system introduced by the Subahdar, and the general results of his administration. He discovered much that gave him a high opinion of Mír

* Ironside, after a most diligent search, found no English deserters in the fort; the only European in the place was a decrepit French invalid.

Kásim's honesty and ability, much that confirmed the unfavourable impressions he had formed regarding the actions of Mr. Ellis. He found that the grievances of which the Subahdar had complained with respect to the oppressions committed by the servants of the Company in permitting the English flag to be used to cover exportation of goods, and so to free them from the duty due to the Subahdar, were very real.

"I have been surprised," he wrote on the 25th of April, "to meet with several English flags flying in places which I have passed; and on the river I do not believe that I passed a boat without one. By whatever title they have been assumed (for I could only trust to the information of my eyes, without stopping to ask questions), I am sure their frequency can bode no good to the Nawwáb's revenues, to the quiet of the country, or the honour of our nation, but evidently tend to lessen each of them. A party of sipáhís, who were on the march before us, afforded us sufficient proof of the rapacious and insolent spirit of these people when they are left to their own discretion. Many complaints were made against them on the road, and most of the petty towns and sarais * were deserted on our approach, and the shops shut up from the apprehension of the same treatment from us."

But there were other matters not less compromising the British name. Mr. Ellis had complained that the Subahdar had condemned and executed certain natives, the servants of the Patná factory. On reaching that city Mr. Hastings ascertained that Mír Kásim had intercepted letters which had passed between the parties in question with the object of taking his life; that, on an investigation in open darbár, they had confessed their guilt and thrown themselves on his mercy; that there was therefore nothing to be said against the Subahdar's action. Mr. Hastings much wished to have a personal interview with Mr. Ellis, but that gentleman had taken the opportunity to visit a neighbouring district, and made that the excuse for avoiding him. Mr. Hastings did not the less, however, continue his investigations.

The conclusions he arrived at he embodied in an exhaustive report, which he addressed on the 26th of January, 1762, to Mr. Vansittart and his colleagues. In this he commented favourably on the action of the Subahdar; showed how he had employed his time and resources to the greatest

* Sarai or Sara means a caravanserai or inn; also a mansion.

advantage, reducing the revolted districts in the province of Bengal to obedience, placing garrisons in the strong places, and making the most prudent regulations regarding the collection of his revenues; how, moreover, he had forced all the irreconcilable landowners to quit his territories. He showed, moreover, that the foreign policy of Mír Kásim, far from being hostile to English interests, as had been represented, had been most judicious. He had simply concluded an extradition treaty with the Nawwáb-Wazír of Oudh for the mutual surrender of criminals. The whole of this report tended to prove that after the strictest examination, whilst Mír Kásim had acted as a prudent ruler, careful of the interests of his subjects, and had endeavoured to assure the integrity and quietness of his territories, Mr. Ellis had behaved towards him with the greatest discourtesy, and had sanctioned action on the part of his own countrymen which seriously affected the revenues rightfully accruing to the Subahdar.

To put an end to the system of legalized robbery which had been sanctioned, Mr. Hastings transmitted to the Governor the outlines of a system which he thought would be fair to both parties. Before I narrate the terms of this proposal, I must give a short account of the nature of the grievances of which Mír Kásim complained. It shall be very brief.

In the early months of 1758, Mír Jáfar had granted the farming of saltpetre to the English Company. Clive, who conducted the negotiation, had agreed that whilst the English were to have the monopoly, the Subahdar should have the right to reserve for himself an annual supply of twenty thousand maunds. Unfortunately this clause, agreed to verbally, and acted upon up to the time when Mr. Ellis became the Company's agent at Patna, had not been written down.

The system introduced by Clive, and worked as he had intended it should be worked, seemed fair enough. Gradually, however, abuses crept in, and it had come to be a practice that the English flag displayed upon a boat, the boat being guarded by men wearing the red broadcloth of the sipáhís, should be exempted from payment of duty, whatever might be the nature of the goods on board. This had been bad

enough when such exemption was permitted only to the higher officers of the Calcutta Government. But, in the time of Mír Kásim, the privilege had become so abused that the trade of his provinces had become thereby totally disorganized. The members of the Civil Service, not content with exercising the privilege granted to them, had begun to sell their rights to others. Matters had arrived at last at such a point that it was impossible for the revenue officers of the Subahdar to discover who had, or who had not the right to employ, in the manner described, the British flag. As to the sipáhís, it was so easy, with the connivance of the Calcutta Government, to dress men in the military garb, that the difficulties of the revenue officers gradually became insurmountable. Whenever those officers, confident that the boats in view were bogus boats, made a raid to stop them and to exact their dues, they were seized, taken to the nearest English agent, and punished. This system, pushed forward with the greatest vigour and ever-increasing consciousness of immunity, had ruined many of the largest native merchants. Whole districts had become disorganized, and the Subahdar's revenues from that most legitimate source had suffered an enormous declension. Vainly had Mír Kásim represented the cruel injustice to the Calcutta Government. The majority of the Council would do nothing. It had then been one of the instructions to Mr. Hastings, when he quitted Calcutta to visit Mír Kásim, that he should examine the matter on the spot and make a full report to the Council.

The remedies Mr. Hastings proposed were simple, well adapted to the repression of the abuses complained of. He proposed: 1st. That strict orders should be given to the head men of the police-stations on the river to require every English boat passing to produce a pass under the seal of the Government or of the chief of any subordinate factory, and that in case of refusal they should compel the boats to bring to. 2nd. That every boat flying English colours, not having a pass, should be stopped; that if the goods were English property, notice should be given to the chief of the nearest factory, that the matter might be inquired into; that if they were the property of a subject of the Subahdar, that Prince should deal with the case as he might think proper.

3rd. That strict orders should be given to the officers and chiefs of police of the Subahdar to remonstrate with any English factor who might commit an act of aggression, or who might otherwise interfere in the affairs of the native Government; and that, if they should refuse to hear reason, he might use force to compel them. 4th. That strict orders should be sent from Calcutta that neither the chief nor the servants of a factory were to intermeddle in the affairs of the native Government, and that the officers of that Government were to be likewise strictly enjoined not to obstruct the Company's business or oppress the people employed in it. 5th. That no contracts, farms, or other offices of Government should be granted to the factors of the Company. 6th. That the Company's factors be allowed an English flag at the place of their residence; but that the same privilege be not allowed to private factors, nor should they derive any advantage from being subjects of the Company. 7th. That no European should be employed in the country without a permission from the Calcutta Board, and without giving security that he would not interfere in the affairs of the native Government.

Before Hastings transmitted these proposals to Calcutta he showed them to the Subahdar. On the two first of them Mír Kásim remarked that experience had proved the inutility of giving to the officers concerned the proposed instructions. When they had up to a certain point been acted upon, the officer in charge of the boat had always refused to produce his pass, and when an attempt had been made by the police to enforce their instructions, a complaint had been made to the nearest factory of the indignity offered to the English flag, and English sipáhís had been despatched thence to seize the offender. The Subahdar further remarked, with the most perfect truth, that no arrangement could be satisfactory so long as the agents of the factories and their subordinates should posses the power, on every complaint of their factors, to send out parties of sipáhís to support the latter in their wrong-doing. Mr. Hastings admitted the validity of the objection, stating in his letter that "this evil is, therefore, first to be redressed." To the other articles the Subahdar gave his unqualified assent, but he desired that there should be added to the agreement an eighth article, to

the effect that the factors employed by the English should not force their goods on his subjects against their will or at their own prices, nor compel the workmen to provide goods for them at unreasonable rates; but that every man should be freely left to buy or sell as he might find his advantage in the one or in the other.

To the present generation it cannot fail to appear impossible that the proposals above cited, drawn up by the representative on the spot of the executive English Government, could be rejected by the Government which had despatched that representative. Certainly not one of the stipulations unduly favoured the Subahdar. Designed to assure fairness of dealing between two parties whose territories were in immediate contact, to prevent bullying and evasion of duty, they appealed to the honest instincts of every man in the country. But they raised a storm in the Calcutta Council, the fury of which it is difficult to exaggerate. The majority declared that the terms proposed were insulting to the honour of the English name, and declared that they, and they alone, had the right to specify the terms upon which they were prepared to carry on trade with the interior; that they would not tolerate for a moment the proposal that the Subahdar should have the power to stop any boat carrying the English flag, or that his officers should interfere with any persons claiming the protection of that flag, whether they were entitled or not to that protection. Despite then the protests of Mr. Vansittart, the majority rejected with disdain the compromise it had required, on the part of Mr. Hastings, three months of anxious labour to prepare.

The rejection of the scheme of Mr. Hastings had upon the Subahdar the effect of emphasizing his determination to resist, as best he could, pretensions unsupported by any treaty, and which were fraught with ruin to his subjects. Again did he represent to the Calcutta Council the necessity of arriving at an arrangement which should ensure fairness of dealing to both the contracting parties. Mr. Vansittart and Mr. Hastings were alike convinced of the rectitude of his intentions, of his sincere desire to put a final stop to complications which must end either in ruin to his subjects, or in a war, the issue of which was uncertain. Mír Kásim went even

further. He implored the Council to relieve him from the responsibilities of government if redress of the existing grievances were not to be granted, as to continue the system actually in force was impossible. Again there ensued in the Calcutta Council hot debates, the cause of order and fairness supported by Messrs. Vansittart and Hastings, that of greed and brute force insisted upon by the majority. Finally, it was determined that Mr. Vansittart should himself visit the Subahdar, and arrange personally with him some *modus vivendi*. Full powers were, as Mr. Vansittart believed, granted him by the Council to effect this result. But in that he was deceived. He reckoned upon the honour of men who had long previously forgotten the meaning of the word.

Mr. Vansittart quitted Calcutta in the autumn of 1762, and, proceeding to Mungér, found the Subahdar smarting under a keen sense of the indignities offered him by the majority of the Calcutta Council. He received the English Governor, however, with the greatest courtesy, and proceeded to discuss with him the new scheme which he and Mr. Hastings had formulated as the only one now remaining by which the aims of the Subahdar and the designs of the majority of the Calcutta clique could be in a manner reconciled. Mr. Vansittart's scheme secured for the servants of the Company the right to carry on inland private trade on the fixed duty of nine per cent. on all goods—that being considerably below the amount paid by merchants not in the service of the Company—and that to prevent abuses in the indiscriminate employment and transfer of passes, and in the use of false ones, they should be signed by the agents of the several factories through whose circles the goods should pass, and countersigned by the collecters of the Subahdar in the same circle. The scheme was more liberal to the servants of the Company than to the subjects of Mír Kásim; but the objections of the Subahdar did not point to that fact so much as to the conviction he had, based on past experience, that the conditions would be evaded. However, after much discussion, he agreed to give it a fair trial. He added, however, to Mr. Vansittart, that the scheme was the last he would entertain, for that if, after a fair trial, it should fail, he would abolish

all duties and establish freedom of trade throughout his territories.

With this treaty Mr. Vansittart returned to Calcutta on the 16th of January, 1763. At the first meeting of the Council after his arrival, he discovered how vain it is to trust to the honour of men who possess no sense of shame. He had been assured by the majority of the Council that he had their full authority to negotiate a treaty with the Subahdar. At the first meeting of the Council after his return that majority condemned every article of the treaty. The anger of the majority had been roused to fever heat by the fact that Mír Kásim, acting on the assurance of Mr. Vansittart that he had the authority of the Council to conclude terms with him,* had already acted upon the new treaty. The majority of the Council insisted therefore upon absolutely rejecting it. They went further, and declared that all goods under an English pass should go free, with the exception of salt, upon which they would pay two and a half per cent. duty. They further announced that all disputes should be referred to the English agents of the several factories, and—ignoring the fact that those agents were the parties chiefly concerned in the trade—that their decision should be final.

Mír Kásim had but just returned from an unsuccessful expedition to Nipál when he learned the action of the Calcutta Council. Furious at the breach of faith and injustice towards himself and his subjects perpetrated by men whom he had trusted, he, after considering the several points of the situation, put into execution the alternative he had announced to Mr. Vansittart, and abolished all transit duties throughout his dominions. He knew well the consequences of his action; that the establishment of free trade would deprive the English monopolists of their illicit profits; that it could not fail to end in war: but he felt, and felt rightly, that it was the only course open to him; and that even defeat, nay death itself, was preferable to the lingering torture to which the policy of the corrupt clique in Calcutta had subjected him before, and would subject him again.

Words fail to describe the savage anger of that clique and

* Mr. Vansittart had left with Mír Kásim a copy of the treaty with his signature attached thereto.

their supporters at the English factories when they read the decree of the Subahdar. Prominent amongst these latter was Mr. Ellis, the agent at Patná. This gentleman had already had many bickerings with Mír Kásim. He had a great fancy for political hot water, and he was always putting his foot into it. It happened that a short time previously the Kiladár or commandant of Patná for Mír Kásim had, at the request of Mr. Ellis, closed the city-gate nearest to the English factory on the ground that some deserters had entered the city by that gate. Finding some inconvenience accruing to the English by the closure he had himself requested, Mr. Ellis, a short time afterwards, requested that the gates might be reopened. But Mír Kásim, satisfied now that war with the English might break out any day, and that the reopening of the gate in question would confer an enormous advantage in a military sense to the occupants of the factory, not only refused to comply, but, in the exercise of his undoubted right, began works to strengthen the city wall on that side. Mr. Ellis, regarding this action as preparatory to hostilities, applied to the Calcutta Council for permission to take aggressive measures should his surmises prove correct. The application of Mr. Ellis was fully debated in Council. It was strongly opposed by Mr. Hastings and the Governor, but supported by the corrupt majority and carried. The two opponents of the measure, Messrs. Vansittart and Hastings, felt, however, so strongly the inadvisability and even the danger of placing the question of peace or war in the hands of a wayward and passionate man like Mr. Ellis, that they urged on the majority, and ultimately persuaded its members, to despatch to the Subahdar two members of the Council to confer with him, and to urge upon him the necessity of withdrawing the free-trade order, and of coming to an understanding on all the points in dispute, those referring to Patná included. Messrs. Amyatt and Hay were selected for this mission. They quitted Calcutta on the 4th of April, escorted by a company of sipáhís. Meanwhile Mr. Ellis was informed of the arrangement, and directed to take no hostile steps until the two members of the mission should have quitted the Subahdar's territories.

Messrs. Amyatt and Hay were delayed a few days at Murshídábád, but they reached Mungér on the 14th of May. They found Mír Kásim quite decided not to revoke his orders throwing open the inland trade. He was sick, he said, of making agreements which were disavowed almost as soon as they were signed. He had been prepared, he added, to execute loyally the convention made with Mr. Hastings, and, when the Calcutta Council would have none of that, then the agreement come to with, and signed by Mr. Vansittart. But, by rejecting that also, the Council had forced his hand, and compelled him to have recourse to the alternative of which he had at the time warned the Governor. But he was very civil, expressed his anxious desire to avoid war, although, he added, appearances seemed to indicate that the English were resolved to force it upon him. The negotiations were still progressing when the information reached Mungér that Mr. Ellis, far from obeying the orders of the Calcutta Council to refrain from all preparations whilst the conference should be sitting, was openly arming. Simultaneously with this information there arrived off Mungér several boats laden with arms and military stores, intended for the English at Patná. Putting together the arrival of these stores and the action of Mr. Ellis, the Subahdar arrived at the conclusion that the mission of Messrs. Amyatt and Hay was a blind to enable the English to supply Mr. Ellis with military stores, and that as soon as these should reach Patná he would commence hostilities. He immediately changed his action; and though he continued to treat the English envoys with civility and respect, he placed them under surveillance, at the same time detaining the boats. Receiving a little later certain information that Mr. Ellis really intended to attack Patná, the Subahdar insisted, as the only means of maintaining peace, that the English agency in that city should be removed to Mungér, where it would be immediately under his own eyes. The Calcutta Council, referred to on this point, refused to listen to the proposal for a moment. Meanwhile Mr. Ellis, believing that war was certain, warned his sipáhís, who were beginning to desert, to be ready for service on the 6th of June.

That date arrived, and still negotiations were progressing.

The hope of maintaining peace lessened, however, from day to day. Finally, in the middle of June, the Calcutta Council came to the conclusion that it was not advisable that their envoys should remain at Mungér, and ordered them to return. They followed this up on the 18th by orders to the troops to prepare to march; and, on the 28th, when events occurred which have still to be mentioned, they passed a resolution to depose Mír Kásim, and to replace on the *masnad* Mír Jáfar, on condition that the latter should confirm all the privileges originally made by Mír Kásim, as well as those which the latter now refused to sanction, including the securing to the English the whole inland trade.

Up to the 25th of June Mír Kásim had shown himself still averse from war, if it could be possibly avoided. On the 14th of June he had explained to Messrs. Amyatt and Hay his position; explained to them that the action of Mr. Ellis was precipitating matters; that the question of peace really depended on the removal of the English troops from Patná; and that, pending the decision of the Calcutta Council in his favour on that point, he had been forced to send troops to that city and to the district of Birbhum, in western Bengal. He had behaved, he declared, with the greatest consideration; had kept every one of his engagements; could the Company say the same? They were now forcing war upon him to obtain the monopoly of the inland trade, which would mean ruin to his subjects, and he would fight to the last rather than agree to it. He would permit Mr. Amyatt to return to Calcutta, but he would detain Mr. Hay and some other gentlemen as hostages for the safety of such of his officers as were in the hands of the English. Still desirous to avoid recourse to the arbitrament of the sword, Mír Kásim, four days later, had agreed to release the boat he had detained, and expressed to Mr. Amyatt his desire to make some concessions. But it was too late to renew negotiations. On the 25th the Subahdar learned that the Calcutta Council had ordered the English troops to be put in motion against him; that Mr. Ellis was attacking the city of Patná; and that it was war. Two days later his army was in the field.

The Subahdar had allowed Mr. Amyatt and seven of his companions to quit Mungér on the 23rd in boats, detaining

only Messrs. Hay and Culston as hostages. But two days later he received authentic information that Mr. Ellis, unable to restrain his impetuous nature, had commenced hostilities at Patná. Thereupon he despatched a party in swift boats to stop the boats which were conveying Mr. Amyatt and his companions to Calcutta. The Subahdar's squadron overtook that of the English officials near Murshídábád; its leader summoned Mr. Amyatt and his party to land or to surrender. Mr. Amyatt not only refused, but ordered his men to fire on the Subahdar's boats as they approached his own. His men obeyed, a fierce conflict ensued, which ended in the victory of the Subahdar's troops. The English and their followers were killed or made prisoners, with the exception of a hawáldar or native sergeant and two sipáhís, who made their way to Calcutta to tell there the dismal tale.

It is not my purpose to tell the story of the war which, precipitated by the unwise action of Mr. Ellis and the action of the Calcutta Council, ended, after some very hard-contested battles, in the defeat and flight of Mír Kásim. The English were fortunate in having as their chief commander in the field one of the ablest of the many illustrious soldiers who have illustrated the rise of the East India Company, Major John Adams,* and under his brilliant leading the war, which

* Colonel Broome, in his "History of the Bengal Army," pays the following tribute to this most deserving officer: "Among the numerous able and distinguished men who have upheld the honour of the English arms in this country [India] there is not one whose success is more remarkable than that of Major Adams. With a limited force, of the native portion of which the majority were raw recruits, ill-supplied with stores and with an empty treasure chest, he entered upon and brought to conclusion a campaign against a Prince who possessed the most perfect and regular army hitherto seen in India, consisting of disciplined and well-appointed infantry, an organized body of cavalry, and an excellent park of artillery manned by Europeans, with the further advantage of possessing every stronghold in the country, commanding the whole line of communication and supply, and, last though not least, possessing the regard and goodwill of the people who, whatever had been his other crimes, had reason to be grateful for the moderation and justice with which they had been invariably treated under his rule. In spite of these difficulties, Major Adams in little more than four months made himself master of the entire provinces of Bengal and Bihár, from Calcutta to the Karmnásá; expelled Mír Kásim from the country; dispersed his troops, having defeated them in two well-contested pitched battles in the open plain, against fearful odds; carried four strongly fortified positions by siege or assault; captured together between four and five hundred pieces of cannon, and supplied and equipped his army from the enemy's stores."

That the race has not degenerated was proved by the conduct of the countrymen of Major Adams during the Mutiny of 1857–8, under circumstances at the outset even more disadvantageous.

had been begun by Mr. Ellis on the 21st of July, at Patná, terminated by the capture by the English of the same city on the 6th of November of the same year. Rajmahall, Mungér, and other strong places had previously fallen. On the date just mentioned Mír Kásim had quitted Bihár to implore the protection and assistance of the Nawwáb-Wazír of Oudh and the Emperor. It has to be added that the war continued with that prince aided by Mír Kásim; that it was illustrated by the decisive battle of Baksar, gained by Major, afterwards Sir Hector, Munro, over the two allies and the Emperor Sháh Álam, on the 23rd of October, 1764; that by the following February the English had subdued the country as far as Allahábád, including Banáras and Chanár; that during the month following (March) they had overrun Oudh, had occupied Faizábád and Lakhnao, had beaten the enemy at Karrah and at Kalpí; that they finally forced the Nawwáb-Wazír to throw himself on their generosity. The whole territory thus conquered was then too vast to be annexed, but the result of the campaign, or, taking a broader view, of the war begun with Mír Kásim and continued with the Nawwáb-Wazír, was to advance the English frontier practically as far as Allahábád.

In the mean while the Calcutta Council had, as they had threatened, removed Mír Kásim from the office of Subahdar, and restored the worn-out Mír Jáfar to that position. This veteran intriguer had agreed to confirm the cession to the English of the three districts specified by Mír Kásim; to levy duties on the inland trade on all but the English, who were required to pay only a duty of two and a half per cent. on salt; to maintain a force of twelve thousand horse and the same number of foot; to pay thirty lakhs of rupees towards the expenses of the war; to make a donation of twenty-five lakhs to the army, and of half that sum to the navy; and, finally, to indemnify private individuals for all the losses they had suffered. It was regarding the working of the last clause, of a character so indefinite as to invite abuse, that Mr. Scrafton wrote that the Subahdar "was no more than a banker for the Company's servants, who could draw upon him as often and to as great an amount as they pleased." In point of fact, fifty-three lakhs of rupees were drawn from

him under the pledge given by the clause of which I am writing.

During the hostilities which followed the reinstatement of Mír Jáfar, the part taken by Mr. Hastings in the Council had been secondary. He entirely disapproved of the policy which had forced on the war, and he always expressed his opinion regarding it in his place in Council. Reproached on one occasion by a colleague, Mr. Batson, with having espoused the cause of Mír Kásim—told that he and Mr. Vansittart had, in that respect, acted as "hired solicitors"—Mr. Hastings had replied with an indignant denial. Upon this Mr. Batson behaved in a manner so disgraceful that even his colleagues were shocked, and forced him to make reparation. In his subsequent conduct Mr. Hastings proved that although he greatly regretted the conduct of his countrymen with regard to Mír Kásim, yet, after war had broken out, he acquiesced, though most unwillingly, in the necessity of deposing him. Matters, he felt, had reached such a point that it was a duel in which one side or the other, either Mír Kásim or the Company, must succumb. He remained in his place, consistently performing his official duties, making money by the trade then permitted, until the crowning victory of Baksar had given decisive victory to his countrymen. Then, with an income sufficient only for mere existence, earned in a manner on which not even the breath of calumny had cast a stain, he quitted Calcutta—I believe in February, 1765 *—hoping to obtain in England the rest which had failed him during his fourteen years of eventful life in India.

* Mr. Gleig states that he quitted India in the ship *Medway*, in company with Mr. Vansittart, in November, 1764. But Vansittart did not leave India till December, and the *Medway* sailed in February, 1765. The companions of Hastings in this vessel were two intimate friends, Mr. and Mrs. Hancock.

CHAPTER VII.

MR. HASTINGS IN ENGLAND—HE IS APPOINTED MEMBER OF COUNCIL AT MADRAS, AND RETURNS TO INDIA—THE STATE OF AFFAIRS IN THE MADRAS PRESIDENCY ON HIS ARRIVAL—IS NOMINATED TO SUCCEED MR. CARTIER IN BENGAL.

It seems, from the only sources upon which I have been able to draw, that Hastings left the greater portion of his acquired capital in India, invested in a manner which would render him an income sufficient for his wants. His friend and colleague at Murshídábád, Mr. Sykes, wrote of him that he had played his cards very badly, and had left his accounts in great confusion. It is certain, however, that shortly after his arrival in England, finding his sister who had married Mr. Woodman—who subsequently became steward to the Duke of Bridgewater—in poor circumstances, he gave her a thousand pounds; also, that discovering that the widow of his uncle Howard, who had given him his first start in life, had but a bare pittance, he purchased for her an annuity of two hundred a year—a sum much larger in those days than it would be regarded now.

But I am anticipating. One of the longings of Hastings when he resolved to revisit his native land was to see his only son George, whom, the reader will recollect, he had sent from Murshídábád to England in 1761, under the care of Mr. Sykes. The boy had been always delicate, but delicate boys often become strong men, and one of the consoling hopes of the voyage to Mr. Hastings was the prospect of clasping to his heart the child whose memory in all his fierce struggles had been a light to his path. It is impossible to describe his feelings of agony when, on landing in England, he learned that his boy had recently died; had died, in fact, whilst the

vessel which bore him was speeding to the British coast. Mr. Gleig states that "he carried the cloud on his brow during the entire period of his sojourn in England."

That sojourn extended over four years. There exist but few trustworthy records of the mode in which Mr. Hastings spent his time. All the information that has reached me tends to the conclusion that he lived a quiet, homely life, indulging greatly in his passion for literature, assisting Mr. Vansittart in his famous narrative of his experiences in Bengal, and giving to his relatives more largely than his means justified. It is on record that he made the acquaintance of Dr. Johnson. He propounded a scheme for ensuring the study of Persian in England. But there was before very long an end to this congenial life. His investments turned out badly, and his income became so reduced that, in 1768–9, he applied to the Court of Directors for re-employment. The reply was of a most flattering character. In terms of high appreciation * the Court nominated him to be a member of the Council of Madras, second to the Governor, Mr. Dupré. Mr. Hastings embarked for India to take up his post on the 23rd of March, 1769.

During the voyage a circumstance occurred which affected the whole subsequent life of Mr. Hastings. Amongst the passengers on board his ship, the *Duke of Grafton*, were Mr.† and Mrs. Imhoff, bound, with their child, for Bengal. They were, really, Baron and Baroness Imhoff, a well-born pair, whose circumstances did not permit them to maintain in Europe the position to which they were by birth entitled, and to whom India had the attraction which the unknown always have for those who suffer from the frowns of Fortune. From the valuable memoir which Sir Charles Lawson has contributed to the *Journal of Indian Art and Industry*,‡ we learn that—

* "Mr. Warren Hastings, a gentleman who has served us many years upon the Bengal establishment with great ability and unblemished character, offering himself to be employed again in our service, we have, from consideration of his just merits, been induced to appoint him one of the members of our Council at your presidency, and to station him next below Mr. Dupré." (Addressed to the Government of Fort St. George.)

† So entered in the list of passengers, which the energy of Sir Charles Lawson has unearthed at the India Office. Hastings is entered as "Warren Hastings, Esq., Deputy Governor of Fort St. George."

‡ Sir Charles Lawson informs us that he obtained this information from "a carefully compiled genealogical tree in the possession of Miss Winter."

"Baron Imhoff was seventeenth in direct descent from a crusader of the name of Hoff, upon whom a German Emperor bestowed a coat of arms, and conferred the prefix of 'Im,' in recognition of an act of great gallantry in the field. He was the third son of Baron Christopher Imhoff; and a near kinsman of Baron Gustave Imhoff, who was appointed Governor-General of the Dutch East Indies in 1740, and in whose honour a large silver medal, bearing his image, with an appropriate inscription, was struck. This medal was bequeathed to Sir Charles Imhoff, from whom it has descended to Miss Winter. Baron Imhoff married Marie Anne von Chapuset,* whose family, ennobled in Germany, is believed to have migrated from France to Germany after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. He had three children before he left Nuremburg for Bengal, namely, a son named Ernest, who died in infancy; the above-named Charles, then aged two; and a daughter named Amalie, who married General von Helwig, of the Prussian army, and achieved some distinction as an authoress. It was Charles who accompanied his parents to India."

That the baron and his wife were ill-matched there cannot be the shadow of a doubt. Whilst the former was boorish, impracticable, and small-minded, his wife was a woman of rare accomplishments, infinite tact, and great beauty. Macaulay describes her as possessing "an agreeable person, a cultivated mind, and manners in the highest degree pleasing." There must have been something very much above the common in her to have drawn from Sir Philip Francis, the bitter enemy of Hastings, the remark that she was really an accomplished woman, and deserved every mark of respect. That, at a later period of her life, she won the "warm regard of such severe moralists as King George the Third and Queen Charlotte, as well as of Fanny Burney and Hannah More," is, Sir Charles Lawson remarks, a proof that Macaulay's description of her is an accurate one. The last-mentioned authority states that "she despised her husband heartily," and there can be no doubt that he gave her reason for her contempt. Of her married life with the baron, Mr. Gleig wrote: "The union was one of those against which Nature protests, and which are never contracted without entailing on the ill-fated pair long years of discomfort if not of positive misery."

Such were the married pair with whom Mr. Hastings

* In the "Nouvelle Biographie Générale," tome ix., is a reference to the son of the Chapuset who emigrated and also distinguished himself as a mathematician.

was thrown in contact during his long voyage from England to Madras. There is no position in the world which gives so many opportunities for becoming acquainted with the character of others as such a voyage. Whilst the foibles of an individual come always to the front, sympathy, unselfishness, mental resources and adornments find remarkable opportunities for display. One of such opportunities occurred on this occasion, for Mr. Hastings was prostrated by sickness, and Madame Imhoff, with the consent of her husband, nursed him. The result was that before the end of the voyage the two felt attractions towards each other, the immense force of which neither could resist. It was arranged, either then or very shortly afterwards, that Imhoff, not at all unwilling—for a consideration—should commence a suit in Germany to divorce the baroness, who, on obtaining the relief, would then become the wife of Warren Hastings.

If the end justifies the means, then there is abundant justification for the action of the three parties concerned in this remarkable history. During the six years which elapsed between the presentation of the case for the divorce in the courts of Franconia, on the ground of incompatibility of temper—a ground there admissible—Baroness Imhoff lived a life in which scandal could find no ground of assault, whilst never was a marriage happier than that which, on obtaining the divorce, she concluded with Hastings. But, as Sir Alfred Lyall has pointed out in his interesting sketch,* the facts prove against Hastings a breach of the moral and social law "upon which every one must pass his own judgment according to his estimation of the gravity of such offences in the circumstances of this particular case." Sir Charles Lawson has made a very strong point when he says that though the pair were ill-matched, yet they might have made the best of their bargain, for the sake of the children, had they not encountered Warren Hastings. On the other hand, it may be affirmed with truth that not only was no one wronged, but all parties concerned benefited by the transaction. The poverty-stricken Imhoff, availing himself of the legal means open to him to dissolve a marriage which was most distaste-

* "English Men of Action: Warren Hastings." By Sir Alfred Lyall.

ful to him, returned to Germany, and married, the same year of the divorce, a lady of noble birth, and of congenial temper. The baroness made a very happy marriage; so, equally, did Hastings. The eldest son by the first marriage was provided for, and rose to high rank and a title in the British army. All the exigencies of society were duly observed by the two parties concerned until the sentence of the matrimonial court of Franconia reached Calcutta in 1775. The only effect during the interval noticeable upon Hastings was an increase in the gravity of his demeanour and a more marked reserve.*

The main work which Hastings took upon himself at Madras was of a similar nature to that to which he had devoted his energies in the earlier period of his service at Calcutta. He reformed the office of customs; made himself, *ex-officio*, Export Warehouse-keeper, his duty being to watch over and superintend the export trade. He found his colleagues in Council very congenial. "I never did business," he wrote of them after his experience of two years at the presidency, "with men of as much candour, or in general of better disposition." He added that he had lived with "much comfort among the people of this settlement;" and "I am flattered with the assurance that I shall leave more that are sorry than who are glad that they lose me."

The foreign policy of the Madras Presidency had long required, but had not obtained, the direction of a master mind. Southern India had been the battle-ground on which the French and English had fought, first for existence, afterwards for supremacy. The first war, which broke out on Indian soil in 1744, had, after many alternations of fortune,

* See Sir Charles Lawson's remarks on the absolute purity of the relations between Hastings and Madame Imhoff before their marriage. Hastings had many bitter and highly placed enemies, who would have rejoiced to be able to throw in his teeth and to denounce him as having married his mistress. But the facts were too palpable against them. The Imhoffs landed at Madras with Hastings, lived together for a year at Madras with good repute; Madame Imhoff then proceeded to Calcutta; there a house, No 7, Hastings Street, is recognized as the house in which she lived alone pending the receipt of the rule for divorce. That she lived there a life without a flaw has never been denied. On this subject I would recommend to the reader a most excellent little book, written by Dr. Busteed in 1882, entitled "Echoes from Old Calcutta." I must add that, on points well known, the extracts of Francis are full of inaccuracies. He puts down, for instance, the age of the lady at forty, when it was really less than that by ten years. He insinuates likewise actions which he never dared openly to assert.

terminated ten years later in securing to the English preponderance in the Karnátik. The second war, waged between 1757 and 1760, had ended by gaining for them predominance, not only in the Karnátik, but along the line of coast from Orísá to Cape Comorin. They had placed their puppet, Muhammad Ali, on the *masnad* of Arkát; had expelled the French; and had appropriated for themselves the rich province known as the northern Sirkars, comprising the districts of Ganjam, Vizagapatam, Godávarí, and Krishná. They had assured to themselves a large influence at the Court of the ruler of Haidarábád, thenceforth known in history as the Nizam. The only question before the English at Madras was whether those who had conquered could retain. Old dynasties had disappeared to make way for adventurers of a more vigorous type, and the new type was bent on conquest. Especially was this the case in the kingdom of Maisur, in which a daring soldier of fortune, a man of rough but very real genius, had raised himself to power on the deposition of Hindu dynasty, which had feebly governed that kingdom for ages, and had, by depredations on neighbouring territories weakly administered, greatly enlarged the borders of the ancient realm. This man's ambition knew no bounds. He had early recognized the English as the dangerous foe to the native princes of India, and he had in his heart resolved that as soon as he could rid himself of the complications which his annexing process had brought about with the Maráthás and the Nizam, he would, in alliance, if possible, with the French, bring all his power to bear on efforts to expel them from India.

Before the arrival of Mr. Hastings at Madras, Haidar Ali had given a very strong indication of the tendency of his warlike views. In 1766, having succeeded in buying off the Maráthás, he had concluded an alliance with the Nizam, and, at the head of a considerable army, had invaded the country below the ghâts or mountain-passes, which constituted the border-line between his territories and those of Muhammad Ali, and had attacked, near Changamah, an English force that lay there, commanded by Colonel Joseph Smith. Smith had anticipated the attack, for he knew that Haidar was in the neighbourhood, and he gave him so rough a reception that

Haidar had to retreat. Smith then effected a junction with Colonel Wood, and on the 26th of September (1767) encountered and defeated, near Trinomalai, the greatly superior numbers led by the Maisur adventurer.

Notwithstanding this defeat, Haidar resumed operations as soon as the season would admit, and though deserted by the Nizam, who, after the operations I have referred to, had satisfied himself of the superiority of the English, marched to the western coast, and there made many conquests. He returned, however, when he learned that the English were threatening Bangalore, and after various changes of fortune, he marched towards Madras, and so terrified the English Council that they despatched an English officer, in whom they had confidence, Captain Brooke, to his camp to propose terms of peace. Haider was not unwilling to come to terms, for he recognized that the hour for striking the decisive blow had not arrived. But he would not entertain for a moment the propositions insisted upon by the English in favour of their puppet, Muhammad Ali. Finding the English resolute on that point, he broke off negotiations, and made a movement, which, had it stood single in his history, would alone have stamped him as a supreme captain. Despatching the bulk of his army to retire westward by the Ahtur pass, he made, with six thousand chosen horse and a few running infantry,* a forced march towards Madras of a hundred and thirty miles, and reached St. Thomas's Mount, five miles from the English capital, in three days and a half. There, at his request, Mr. Dupré, the senior member of Council, came to meet him, and to Mr. Dupré Haidar dictated a treaty, which secured to him all his conquests, and procured an engagement that in case of either of the contracting parties being attacked, the other should march to his assistance. This, to the English, not very creditable episode occurred in March, 1769, the very month in which Mr. Hastings quitted England to join the Council at Madras.

The policy of the Madras Government had then been firmly settled before Mr. Hastings landed. There was peace

* The tradition of having running infantry was preserved at Maisur even up to the date of my leaving that country in 1876. I have never seen better long-distance runners than the picked men of that kingdom.

with the formidable Haidar Ali, but there was a binding obligation to defend him should he be attacked, and there were abundant indications that no long time would elapse before he would call upon the English to redeem their pledge, for the Peshwá was pressing him for moneys which were not due in their entirety, and which he had declined to pay. In other quarters foreign affairs did not wear a healthy appearance. The Nawwáb of Arkát, Muhammad Ali, alternately fawning, and alternately betraying the English who had made him, had contracted heavy debts, and these he was pressing the Company's agents to defray. The Nizám, too, always leaning on the power he deemed at the moment the strongest, had demanded and obtained from the English tribute for the northern Sirkars, which his predecessor had bestowed as a free gift on the French, and which the English, by the hand of the gallant Forde and his coadjutors, had wrested from that people. Matters were still further complicated by the foolish interference of the Crown. Utterly misconceiving the character and position of the Nawwáb of Arkát, the Crown had despatched a special envoy, Sir John Lindsay, to the Court of that potentate, with powers not communicated to the Madras Government, to advise and assist him. It can well be imagined that he became an ardent partisan of the Nawwáb, and supported him in his opposition to the Madras Government. This undermining of the power and influence of that Government produced effects which might even be called disastrous. It unduly puffed up Muhammad Ali, and caused him to treat the English executive with something very akin to contempt. The mischievous influence of the envoy was shown clearly when, in 1770–71, the Peshwá invaded Maisur, and Haidar Ali called upon the English to render him the assistance they were bound by treaty to afford. The Nawwáb, whose territories were contiguous to those of Haidar, at first announced his intention to join the Maráthás, and aid them to crush the ally of the English. When, with no little difficulty, he was persuaded to renounce such a course, he refused in the most positive manner to permit a passage through his dominions to British troops. The position for the Madras Council was rendered by this action extremely difficult, for Muhammad Ali was acting with the approval of

the English envoy at his Court. Nor was the situation perceptibly improved when Lindsay made way for Sir John Harland, who had received instructions to act in harmony with the Madras Government. There still remained two authorities independent of each other in Southern India, and of such a division of authority the Nawwáb of Arkát was just the man to take full advantage.

Another ruling of the home authorities contributed largely to weaken the hands of the Madras Government at this conjuncture. Whilst the Crown had deputed an envoy who could thwart its negotiations with Muhammad Ali, the Court of Directors had intimated their complete disapproval of the policy which had led to the late war with Haidar Ali, and had directed that thenceforth a policy of non-interference with native princes should be closely adopted. In point of fact the Madras Government had not adopted a policy of interference. In making lodgments in countries distant from the parent fatherland, it is very often absolutely necessary to make fresh conquests in order to maintain the territories already acquired. For that end the English had fought in the last war with Haidar. Owing to that marvellous forced march of Haidar, which enabled him to dictate the terms of peace on the heights close to Madras, they had not conquered, and they had maintained only the territories they had had on promising, in the most solemn manner, that they would assist Haidar should an enemy invade his territories. Now that the crisis had arrived they had two difficulties in their way. There was the refusal of Muhammad Ali, supported by the independent British envoy at his Court, to render the slightest assistance to a British force proceeding on the errand, and they had the orders of the Court of Directors to avoid all interference with the native powers. Under these circumstances they felt they could do nothing, and they did nothing. Although Haidar Ali had loyally communicated to them an offer made him by the Peshwá to join forces and sweep Southern India, and his refusal of that offer, they left him in the hour of his distress in the lurch. The consequence was that that ruler, after losing all his minor fortresses to the superior numbers of the Maráthás, was, after having been surprised and beaten at Chirkuli, compelled to flee almost

unattended to Seringapatam, and there accepted a peace from the Peshwá (June, 1772),* which cost him a payment in money and nearly half his territories. He attributed his defeat to the bad faith of the English. He had counted on the assistance they had promised, and when they broke their promise he swore never to forgive them. How he kept this oath, and to what severe straits he forced the Supreme Government of India at a most critical period of the administration of Mr. Hastings, will be told in its proper place.

Here I have but to record that whilst these events were progressing Mr. Hastings loyally supported the action of his Government. The fact must not be lost sight of, though it has been sometimes forgotten, that Mr. Hastings arrived at Madras some months after a defensive alliance had been made with Haidar Ali. He was not responsible for that alliance. But, the treaty existing when he arrived, he was in favour of acting in accordance with its provisions. The word of the British Government ought, he always insisted, to be as good as a bond. But to his mind the action of the Crown had paralyzed the motive power of the Madras Government. He rightly regarded the powers entrusted to the agent despatched by the Crown to its "ambassador" at the Court of the Nawwáb of Arkát as "unnatural."

"They were," he contended, "powers given not to extend British dominion, or increase the honour of the nation, but surreptitiously stolen for the visible purpose of oppressing the King's subjects and weakening the hands by which his influence is sustained in India."

The Madras Government could do nothing so long as there should exist a power behind the Madras Executive greater than that Executive itself. The presence of the envoy, he urged, "can do no good. He alienates the Nawwáb from the Company, and is the original cause of all the distress which you"—the Court of Directors, to whose chairman this letter was addressed—"have suffered, and are likely to suffer, in your finances."

In other ways the acquaintance obtained at this period with the politics of the southern presidency was in after years of the greatest advantage to Mr. Hastings. His mind was so constituted that when he took up a subject he was

* Four months after Mr. Hastings had quitted Madras for Bengal.

never content to acquire only a smattering of the various points lying under and surrounding it. He must go to the basis; he must search the cause, probe the policy to the bottom, and then endeavour to propound the true remedy. He had the satisfaction of realizing that his denunciation of Crown envoys to a powerful ruler in the Madras Presidency produced its effect. Those envoys were discontinued to the great abatement of powerful intrigue. Not, alas! to the discontinuance of intrigue altogether, for the unauthorized British partisans still remained to inflame the mind of the Nawwáb against his benefactors and protectors. But even in the reforms he accomplished Mr. Hastings effected much. In other matters, in, for example, the regulating of the terms of trade with the native producers, his measures bore golden fruits. The plan which he transmitted to the Court of Directors for sanction in this respect produced a marked effect in the revival of industries which neglect and mal-administration had caused to decay. To Hastings likewise is due the first suggestion of building a pier at Madras.

Mr. Hastings was engaged in the performance of these and kindred duties when, in January, 1772, he received intimation from the Court of Directors that he had been nominated Governor of Bengal, and requiring him to proceed thither without delay. The causes which combined to induce this nomination, and the state of Bengal at the time, will form the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE BENGAL PRESIDENCY, FROM THE FIRST DEPARTURE OF WARREN HASTINGS TO HIS RETURN AS GOVERNOR IN APRIL, 1772.

I HAVE told in the sixth chapter how Mr. Hastings quitted Bengal for England in the very early days of 1765. Little more than two months later (May 3rd) Lord Clive arrived in Calcutta to make a clean sweep of the men whose policy and action had covered the British name with opprobrium; to purify Bengal; to endeavour to improve the status of the Civil Service, by placing its members in such a condition as to render them independent of trade for their means of living; to crush a dangerous mutiny in the English army; to fix the frontier and establish a foreign policy which should guide his successors; and to place on a firm basis, actually though not nominally, the relations between Calcutta and Murshídábád. It forms no part of this biography to describe in detail the action of Lord Clive in all these respects. In every matter which rested only on his iron will to accomplish, he was successful. But the Court of Directors declined to endorse, as thoroughly as he desired, his proposals regarding the salaries of the Civil servants. In all that related to the internal economy of the presidency he left matters not very much better than they had been when Mir Kásim, to remove the evil, rushed upon the war which ended in his expulsion from the three provinces. Whilst the native administration directed from Murshídábád was as bad as administration could well be, the servants of the English Company retained, under a modified form, their monopoly of the inland trade; still connived at the irregular use of passes, described in a previous chapter. Whatever improvement there had been had not been *ab radice*, and could not be

so, until the Company's servants should be deprived of the permission to engage in trade.

Such was the condition of affairs when Mr. Verelst * succeeded Lord Clive. Verelst possessed many qualities fitting him for the task of governing. He was a thoroughly honest man, and experience of the administration of the three districts which Mír Kásim had ceded to the English had initiated him into the manner in which Bengal had been misgoverned. He had reformed those evils; he had largely increased the revenues of the districts; and now, appointed to be chief of the entire administration, he strove to mature the system inaugurated by Lord Clive, of whom, in that respect, he had been the trusted councillor, by which English supervisors were to be nominated to every district to keep a watch over the native collectors.

He had scarcely taken up the reins of office when the effect of the reform in the covenants introduced by Lord Clive and sanctioned by the Court became manifest.

"The anti-trading covenants," he wrote, "have entirely changed the character of India. It is no longer one vast mercantile house, but has stepped into the dignity of a sovereign power."

But this rise in position was more nominal than real. Though the permission to trade had been modified, the permission still existed. The germ of the evil still remained; and though Verelst honestly strove to lessen its effects, he met with so many difficulties that he made but little headway, and finally handed over the three provinces to his successor in a worse condition than they had been when he assumed charge.

Prominent among these difficulties were the rise of the European adventurer and the increasing scarcity of specie.

Of the former it is only necessary to state here that Verelst had to encounter one of the most dangerous specimens of the class in an individual named Bolts, who had been a member of the Civil Service, and who, having been compelled to resign, began a system of intrigue with the native princes on the border, such as led to considerable

* See an article in the *Calcutta Review*, entitled "Governor Verelst;" also Mr. Talboy Wheeler's "Early Records of British India," full of important matter.

complications. The scarcity of specie led to far more serious difficulties. The real cause no doubt was the absolute want of confidence of the natives of the three provinces in the English character and the English administration. The terrible corruptions of the period between the first and second administrations of Clive had told their tale. Never in the history of the world had the English name sunk so low. The Court of Directors had done nothing to repair this evil. On the contrary, as Mr. Verelst pointed out to them in a memorandum which he drew up in 1769, the local government had been repeatedly and peremptorily forbidden to avow any public authority over the officers of Government in their own names, and had been enjoined to retain their primitive character of merchants with the most scrupulous delicacy. Verelst added:—

"The consequences are but too evidently exemplified in the decline of commerce and cultivation, the diminution of specie, and the general distress of the poor; a train of evils which could only have sprung from the above causes. . . . Experience must convince the most prejudiced that to hold vast possessions, and yet to act on the level of mere merchants, making immediate gain our first principle; to receive an immense revenue, without possessing an adequate protective power over the people who pay it; to be really interested in the grand and generous object, the good of the whole, and yet to pursue a narrow and partial end;—are paradoxes not to be reconciled, highly injurious to our national character, dangerous to the best defended establishment, and absolutely bordering on inhumanity."

After describing, in a fair and temperate manner, the obligation of the English to the people of Bengal, the dangers of dealing with the Nizámat, the advisability of appointing supervisors, and the abuses of the existing system, Mr. Verelst proceeded to define the reform he considered essential. It was, in a word, to make the Government a Government composed of men who should be administrators only, and not traders as well.

"I would propose," he concluded, "that, from the admission of a member into Council, he put an entire conclusion to his trade; and, in lieu of it, that he receive a certain allowance, chargeable upon the country; which allowance should be augmented in proportion to the improvements made and its internal prosperity."

For the moment the Court of Directors did not see their way to accede to this proposal.

In another State-paper of the same year, Mr. Verelst pointed out to the Home Government the dangers threatening from the scarcity of specie. The Court met the difficulty temporarily by borrowing in England. The Crown, however, jealous of their position as a ruling power in Bengal, exacted from the Company the payment of £400,000 as a condition of the renewal of their charter two years thereafter.

Mr. Verelst did not await the result of his recommendations. He retired at the close of the same year (1769), making over his office to the next senior member of Council, Mr. John Cartier.*

Mr. Cartier's administration of little more than two years was chiefly remarkable for the terrible famine which desolated Bengal during that period. Contemporary writers refer to that famine as the greatest scourge of the kind which had ever afflicted the country. The loss of life was estimated at one-third of the population. The revenue—already declining—suffered enormously from this terrible affliction. Murmurs and cries of distress reached even the ruling powers in London. Lord Clive was earnestly appealed to for his advice. He gave it with the frankness which always characterized him. Ultimately the Court of Directors resolved to appoint a Commisson, composed of three men of Indian experience, to proceed to Calcutta, with full powers to investigate, and to introduce into every department of the State such reforms as they might consider necessary, their action to have the force of law. The three Commissioners selected were Mr. Vansittart, already known to us, Mr. Scrafton, the trusted friend of Clive, known to the present generation by his "Letters," and Colonel Forde, the conqueror of the northern Sirkars and the repeller of the Dutch invasion, known to every schoolboy as the recipient of the pencil scrawl from Clive, written at the whist-table, authorizing him to attack the Dutch at once, and promising to send him the Order in Council the following day.

It was not destined that this Commission should ever sit.

* Mr. Verelst retired with a fortune, honestly earned, of £70,000. He purchased and settled down at Aston Hall, about nine miles from Rotherham, in Yorkshire, where he lived some happy years in the society of the poets Gray and Mason, and other congenial friends.

The vessel in which they embarked, the *Aurora*, foundered at sea. On the information of its loss reaching England, the Directors, under the impulse of the distracted condition of their affairs in India, turned instinctively to Mr. Hastings, as the ablest of their servants, and directed him to proceed to Calcutta, and assume the Presidency of the Council, with the title of Governor. I have, in the last chapter, shown how Mr. Hastings obeyed that order. But it seemed to me absolutely necessary, for the full understanding of the reasons of his action in Bengal, to give this short sketch of the mode in which, under the two successors of Clive, matters in that presidency had reached a point requiring all the resources of a resolute and patient will directing great force of character, to restore prosperity to the three provinces. How Hastings worked to accomplish this result I shall narrate in the next chapter, and in the chapters which follow it.

CHAPTER IX.

MR. HASTINGS' TWO YEARS OF CIVIL ADMINISTRATION IN BENGAL—THE INTRODUCTION OF THE NEW ORDER.

ALTHOUGH Mr. Hastings arrived in Calcutta on the 17th of February, 1772, he did not relieve Mr. Cartier until the 13th of the April following. The period between the two dates he spent in a thorough examination of the internal state of the three provinces, in studying returns, in formulating for himself the lines which his reforms should take, and in mastering the relations existing between the English and the native princes beyond their borders. He found the internal situation extremely distressful. The Government had a large debt, contracted in times of peace; its income was not equal to its normal expenditure; the ruling authority was shared independently between the Governor and Council, the military commander, and the Revenue Boards of Murshídábád and Patná. The native administration of Murshídábád was described as oppressive, unjust, and corrupt. The same charge was made against the Government of the adjoining province of Bihár, in which Rájá Shitáb Rái, a soldier renowned for his gallantry in the field and his devotion to the English, was ruling as Deputy Diwán. The atmosphere all around was black and murky. The evil had penetrated deeply below the surface. Radical reform rather than mere amelioration had become absolutely necessary. Amongst those about him there were few whom Mr. Hastings felt he could trust. He would have to rely primarily on himself alone until experience should teach him who they were amongst those serving under him who could and would render him efficient assistance. It was with a heart brooding over the

many difficulties in his path, but full of courage and resolution, that Mr. Hastings took his seat as Governor of the three provinces on the 13th of April.

Within a very short period after he had assumed the reins of office, Mr. Hastings received from the Court of Directors despatches, in which they intimated their intention of assuming for the Company the office of Diwán, conferred upon it by the Emperor Sháh Álam, but till that time exercised nominally by the Subahdar of those provinces. To understand the position, it will be necessary to refer to events which had happened in the time of Clive and his immediate successors.

Those who are familiar with the history of Lord Clive's first administration in Bengal will recollect that towards the close of it he addressed a letter to Mr. Pitt, afterwards Lord Chatham, in which (January 7th, 1759) he suggested the mode in which the Crown might assume the direct administration of the three provinces on the demise of the actual Subahdar, Mir Jáfar. For some reason which has not transpired, Mr. Pitt did not respond to the bold suggestion; but, at a later period, it found ready favour with the Sovereign who then sat on the throne of Great Britain, and whose autocratic mind did not understand the exercise by a Company in London of governing rights over a dependency conquered by British troops. The plan, it will be observed, suggested two operations—one, the abolition of the office of Subahdar; the other, the assumption of the duties of Diwán, under the nominal suzerainty of the representative at Dehli of the Mughal family, by the Crown of England. Nothing was attempted with respect to either operation until the war with Mír Kásim had closed and the restored Mír Jáfar had died. This last event took place two months before Lord Clive's return to India in May, 1764. Lord Clive then discovered that the Government which he had come to replace had hurriedly, and for a consideration, bestowed the vacant seat on the eldest son of the late Subahdar, a youth of tender years, known as Mír Najmu'd daulah. As soon as possible after he had made his presence felt at Calcutta, Clive proceeded to Murshídábád to regulate the conditions under which the successor of Mír Jáfar was to be allowed to administer

the three provinces. He began by changing the title of the boy-prince, abolishing for him and his successors the rank and title of "Subahdar," and substituting for it that of Nawwáb-Názim, meaning, literally, the ruling Nawwáb. He made the Nawwáb-Názim responsible for the maintenance of peace and public order in the three provinces, for the administration of justice, and for the enforcing of obedience to the law. He further directed that under, and responsible to, the Nawwáb-Názim there should be a Diwán, or chief Minister, empowered to collect the revenues of the province, and responsible for all disbursements and the payment of all surplus revenue into the public treasury. But Clive had not forgotten his letter to Mr. Pitt. It was his intention that the real office of Diwán should devolve on the Calcutta Government, and that the public treasury should be the treasury of the East India Company. But, for the moment, he deferred the execution of this portion of the plan.

Some months later, however, the first part of his plan was modified. Clive realized, after a few months' experience, that to make a lay-figure such as the Nawwáb-Názim had become, responsible for the maintenance of the public peace, was an absurdity. Similarly he realized that the duty of the administration of justice and the enforcement of obedience to the law would become, under the Murshídábád administration, a dead letter. He therefore relieved the Nawwáb-Názim of those functions, and imposed them on the English Government. Further, he fixed the annual income of the Nawwáb-Názim, for the maintenance of his Court and for private disbursements, at fifty-three lakhs of rupees.

The following year the Nawwáb-Názim died (May 19). His death led to a fresh arrangement with his half-brother and successor, Nawwáb Saifu'd daulah. Clive reduced the personal and Court allowance from fifty-three to forty-one lakhs annually. He still insisted, however, that the revenue should be collected in the name of the Nawwáb-Názim. He recommended the appointment of English supervisors to see that the native collectors did their duty. In view of the prince being still a minor, it was necessary that he should either continue or alter the arrangement which, two months before his arrival as Governor, the Calcutta Council had made

for the appointment of Muhammad Rizá Khán, a Muhammadan of great ability, but generally regarded as unscrupulous, to be Náib Subah, or deputy ruler under the Nawwáb-Názim. General Carnac, then Commander of the Forces, pressed his chief very urgently to remove Muhammad Rizá, and to appoint in his place the Nandkumár of whom I have written in an earlier chapter of this biography. The previous career of this man had shown him to be an able man indeed, but bold, unscrupulous, and intriguing. In the days of Siráju'd daulah he had commanded for that Subahdar at Huglí when Clive had attacked the French at Chandranagar. On that occasion the notorious Aminchand, acting for the English, had bribed him to remain neutral. Subsequently the energy displayed by Nandkumár had gained the favour of Clive, and, in 1758, the latter had nominated him collector, for two years, of the revenues of Bardwán, Nadyá, and Huglí. Against this nomination Hastings, just appointed Resident at Murshídábád, had remonstrated. The then Subahdar, Mír Jáfar, had likewise complained of the appointment, and had expressed his surprise that the English should employ such a man. Clive, however, clung to his protégé. But the subsequent career of Nandkumár opened his eyes to the real character of the man; and when Carnac wrote to ask for him the post of Náib-Subah, Clive had replied that

"although Nandkumár may not prove guilty of the crimes laid to his charge, yet, believe me, my dear General, he will do no honour either to the Nawwáb or to the Company in any great or eminent post, which he never was fitted or designed for; and I can give you unanswerable reasons against his being the principal person about the Nawwáb when I have the pleasure of seeing you."

Nor was Clive very favourably impressed with Muhammad Rizá. In his letter to Carnac regarding him, he expressed himself as quite opposed to that noble continuing to occupy the great post of Náib-Subah. The fact of his being

"a Musalmán, acute, and clever, are reasons of themselves, if there were no others, against trusting that man with too much power; and yet the young man [the Nawwáb-Názim] must have about him men capable of directing and governing him; for, besides his youth, he is really very simple, and always receives his impressions from those last about him. It is really shocking to see what a set of miserable and mean wretches Nandkumár has placed about him, men that the other day were horsekeepers."

Forced at last to solve the question, and considering Muhammad Rizá less unworthy of trust than Nandkumár, Clive confirmed the former in the office of Náib-Subah, but associated with him the Rájá Dulab Ráo, who had been one of Siráju'd daulah's bought generals at Plassey, and the head of the Sett banking firm, Jagat Sett. This arrangement was kept in force after the departure of Clive, and it was existing when Warren Hastings assumed charge of the three provinces in April, 1772.

But Mr. Hastings had but just taken his seat in Council when he received not only the intimation previously alluded to, that the Court had decided to assume for the Company the office of Diwán of the three provinces, but instructions to seize the person of the Náib-Subah, Muhammad Rizá, his family, his partisans, and his adherents, and to detain them in custody until the accounts of the Náib-Subah should be rigorously examined. Similar instructions were received with respect to Rájá Shitáb Ráí, who occupied a similar post in the adjoining province of Bihár, a province in the gaining of which for the English he had largely assisted. Hastings had nothing to do but to obey. The noblemen and their families and followers were accordingly arrested, and brought to Calcutta to be tried.

That Nandkumár was the evil genius who had suggested to the Court this action is sufficiently proved. In their secret despatch* of the 28th of August, 1771, the Court suggested to Hastings the desirability of using Nandkumár as the most proper person to be employed "in the investigation of Muhammad Rizá Khan's administration," so as to bring to light any embezzlement, fraud, or malversation "which he may have committed in the office of Náib-Diwán, or

* Mr. Beveridge (article "Warren Hastings," *Calcutta Review* for April, 1878) suggests that Huzuri Mall, a brother-in-law of Aminchand, and an old and influential inhabitant of Calcutta, had influenced the Court of Directors considerably. In their despatch of the 28th of August, 1771, the Court thus referred to the information supplied them by that person: "We hereby transmit you extract of a letter from Huzzeramal to Robert Gregory, Esq., wherein Muhammad Rizá Khán is charged with a crime of so atrocious a nature, and we the rather advise you of Huzzeramal's information, as we rely on your endeavours to obtain full evidence respecting the truth of this allegation, as well as of such others as are the objects of the scrutiny we have directed you to make into the Náib's conduct."

in the station he has held under the several successive Subahs."

Hastings obeyed. He practically committed the charge of the case against the two great officers of State to Nand-kumár. Meanwhile, it became incumbent on him to fill up the places vacated by their arrest. Here his task was one of extreme difficulty. He had but just arrived in Bengal, and in Bengal he had found every native of position more or less discredited. He could not lay his hand upon a single man whom he could absolutely trust. In his perplexity he bethought him of a practice, not unknown in Indian history, of bestowing the office of superintendent of a minor Nawwáb's household and the guardianship of his person upon the senior and most accredited Begam of the palace. In the case before him, the mother of the prince who had immediately preceded the actual incumbent, occupied such a position. Though she had risen from a subordinate position, she bore a good character in the haram. This lady was called Maní Begam, literally, "the jewel." He accordingly bestowed the post upon her; whilst, to assist her, he appointed the son of Nandkumár, Gurudás by name, to be her diwán. About both of these much canvassed appointments something has to be said.

The judgment of later writers, with all the results, and with accumulated information not available at the time, before them, is very often unfair to statesmen who had acted to the best of their judgment, formed only on the facts before them. It has been so with respect to Mr. Hastings and his nomination of the Begam Maní. That nomination was approved at the time by the Court of Directors, by the Calcutta Council, and by the general public. Not a single voice was raised against it. Practically, Mr. Hastings had to choose between the nomination of that lady and that of the brother of the late Mír Jáfar, a man weak in character, having a large family of grown-up sons, ambitious and unscrupulous. The election of the latter, under the moral tone then prevalent in the Muhammadan Courts of India, would have been regarded as a sentence of death to the ruling Nawwáb-Názim. Yet a writer of Anglo-Indian history,* closely connected with the

* Thornton's "British Empire in India," 2nd edit., p. 123.

India Office, has not hesitated to denounce the appointment as "most discreditable to Hastings' judgment;" as "a blow on his administration;" as "one of the main sources of the disquiet of his after-life." Mr. Thornton does not add, as he was bound in justice to add, that the Court of Directors of the day hastened to express their approval of the nomination; nor, when one seeks the name of the individual whom he would have preferred for the post, and the reason of his strong disapproval of Maní Begam, can we find anything more substantial than that he would have chosen the actual mother of the Nawwáb-Názim, a lady who had no consideration in the haram; and that his chief objection to Maní Begam lay in the fact that she had originally been a dancing girl.

The nomination of Gurudás to assist the Begam as Diwán has met likewise with objectors. But here again Hastings was in a very difficult position, and he had no large range of choice. The Court had directed him to avail himself of the assistance and information of Nandkumár, and, should he find that individual serviceable to him in investigating the conduct of the incriminated noblemen, "to yield him such encouragement and reward as his trouble and the extent of his services may deserve." Under the large powers thus recommended, Nandkumár had practically become the prosecutor, as he had been the denouncer, of Muhammad Rizá and Shitáb Ráí. There could be no question of him to fill the office of Chief Minister under Maní Begam. His son, however, Gurudás, had displayed talents which seemed to recommend him for such a post. He was without ambition, was placid, mild, and frank. The only objection to him was that he was his father's son. That was indeed a drawback which no one felt more keenly than Hastings. Throughout his correspondence, official and private, of this period, we trace a deep-rooted distrust of Nandkumár. He would most certainly have appointed a man other than the son of this distrusted man, could he have found one with the same qualities. But, at the moment, new to Bengal, finding all around him men tainted or incapable, and forced suddenly to act, he cannot, I think, be very severely blamed because he chose a man in all respects suitable to the duties assigned

to him, in himself absolutely unobjectionable, but to whom there attached the solitary objection that he was the son of Nandkumár. Hastings believed and wrote to Mr. Dupré, that he had made arrangements by which the father should exercise no authority in the palace.

During the course of the year, Hastings, under orders from England, caused the annual stipend of the Nawwáb-Názim to be reduced to sixteen lakhs of rupees, a sum more than ample for a Prince exercising merely nominal duties, and with a very limited Court.

Having thus settled the affairs of the Nawwáb-Názim, Hastings had leisure to devote himself to the carrying out of the reforms in the several departments of civil administration and justice which were so urgently needed. The matters to which he particularly turned his attention may be thus enumerated: (1) the resettlement of lands on leases of five years; (2) the removal of the high court of revenue from Murshídábád to Calcutta; the institution there of a new council of revenue and of arrangements thereon depending; (3) the establishment of new courts of justice, consisting of two superior courts, at Calcutta—the one for the causes of property appealed, the other for criminal cases—and similar dependent courts in every district; (4) the reform of the expenditure. Taking these as the major heads, I shall have to say something regarding each.

The resettlement of lands had, since the famine especially, become a necessity of the first order. Hastings attached to it the greatest importance, and he began upon it almost from the very hour of his arrival. No explanation is required on that head. The second point, that of the removal of the high court of revenue from Murshídábád to Calcutta, with the attendant changes, deserves, however, more detailed treatment.

With the high court of revenue at Murshídábád, under the nominal authority of the Nawwáb-Názim, Hastings found on his arrival that, although that court was composed of junior English officers, it possessed more actual powers in revenue matters than the Governor in Council. It was, in fact, an *imperium in imperio*. Writing to Mr. Dupré on the subject of the younger members of the service employed as supervisors

of the collection of revenue and in the administration of justice, he thus expressed his opinion:—

"The boys of the service are the sovereigns of the country under the unmeaning title of supervisors, or collectors of revenue, administrators of justice, and rulers—heavy rulers—of the people. They are said to be under the control of the councils of revenue at Murshídábád and Patná, who are lords of these capitals and of the districts annexed to them, and dispose of the first offices of State (as it is said also) to the Governor and Council, who, you may take my word for it, have neither power, trust, nor emolument, but are honoured only with responsibility."

To continue such an arrangement after he had reduced the Nawwáb-Názim to be the shadow of a name, would to Hastings have been impossible. His exact thought on the subject is shown in a letter he addressed at the time to Mr. Dupré. "Although," he wrote, "my predecessor was turned out for opposing it, I will be turned out too rather than suffer it to continue as it is."

Accordingly, despite of all opposition and all difficulties, he struck the upas-tree with his axe. After attempting in vain such remedies as were within his power, such as appointing English collectors of revenue, he, in 1774, swept them all away with a stroke of his pen, and nominated in their place native Diwáns (superintendents of lands and collections) and amils (sub-collectors), to collect and bring in the revenue. These officials, however, were to be controlled in all fiscal matters by a Board of Revenue, which was to sit daily in Calcutta to hear complaints from the cultivators and from others who might consider their assessments too large. The collectorates were to be six in number, each administered by a council of five, whose duties ranged from the hearing of appeals in civil suits to a careful inquiry into land tenures, and a general supervision of revenue accounts. It was a further part of the scheme that a certain number of civil officers, chosen for their abilities, should be sent periodically to visit districts considered to require special supervision. The greatest reform of all, the removal of the *khalisa*, or court for the reception of the revenue, from Murshídábád to Calcutta, was a necessary part of the general scheme. This transfer was the first visible sign that Murshídábád had ceased to be the capital of Bengal; that for all purposes of

administration, Calcutta had taken the place of the city which Murshíd Kulí Khán had made the centre-point of the ancient Subahdárí. In the minds of the natives that city is the capital into which the collections are paid; and now, for the first time, by the ruling of Warren Hastings, Calcutta fulfilled that condition. The Nawwáb, wrote Hastings to his friend Sykes, mentioning these reforms, is a mere name, and the seat of government most effectually and visibly transferred from Murshídábád to Calcutta, "which I do not despair of seeing the first city in Asia, if I live and am supported but a few years longer." For, simultaneously with the removal of the Exchequer, occurred the transfer of the seat of justice. This operation was effected by Hastings and his Council alone. He wrote very feelingly regarding the new regulations he had formed. There is a proud humility in his words on that subject which I am about to quote, mingled with a consciousness of innate power. He had just learned that judges were to be appointed from England. He and his Council had completed their work by the exercise of their own unfettered judgment.

"We have been very unfortunate," he wrote, "in the time which we have chosen for our judicial improvements, for we cannot undo what we have done; and if the Lord Chief Justice and his judges should come amongst us with their institutes, we shall be in a complete state of confusion here, and we shall be cruelly mauled at home, especially if the Parliament should lay hold of our Code, for we have not a lawyer among us. Necessity compelled us to form some establishment of justice; we chose the best we could; and if this shall not be found so perfect as more time and more knowledge must have made it, it is yet capable of receiving improvements, and is a good foundation for a more complete system of judicature. Is it not a contradiction to the common notions of equity and policy that the English gentlemen of Cumberland and Argyleshire should regulate the polity of a nation which they know only by the lakhs which it has sent to Great Britain and by the reduction it has occasioned in their land-tax?" *

But there can be no doubt of the fact that the work of judicial reform was well done. It was followed very closely by a measure which, for the natives whom it principally affected, made it as perfect as it could be under the actual circumstances. The two races, the Muhammadans and the

* In this last expression Hastings probably referred to the payment of £400,000 by the Company for the renewal of their charter.

Hindus, had their own legal systems. But whilst that of the former was contained in a digest made in the reign of the Emperor Aurangzeb, universally acknowledged by the courts, that of the latter was absolutely without order or arrangement. To remedy this evil Hastings invited to Calcutta ten of the most learned pandits of the country, and commissioned them to codify, in a similar manner, the Hindu laws. They accomplished their work in a much shorter time than had been expected. Their digest was then translated into Persian, and made the text-book of the courts of justice. To render the system still more perfect, Mr. Halhed, the following year, translated it into English. The effect of these efforts to simplify the administration of the law justified the wisdom which had directed them.

In introducing his reforms in the administration of justice, Hastings claimed that no essential change had been made in the ancient constitution of the province.

"It was only," he wrote in a letter to Lord Mansfield (March 21, 1774), "brought back to its original principles, and the line prescribed for the jurisdiction of each court, which the looseness of the Mughal Government for some years past had suffered to encroach upon each other."

In transmitting the two codes to the same lord, Hastings, dreading the effect which might be produced in India by the introduction of a system drawn up by English lawyers ignorant of the manners, the customs, the ancient legal regulations, and the religious practices of her people, accompanied them by the following pregnant remarks, applicable to other matters besides law.

"I have only to add that the design of this letter is to give to your Lordship a fair representation of a fact of which the world has been misinformed, to the great injury of this country, and to prevent the ill-effects which such an error may produce in a public attempt to deprive it of the most sacred and valuable of its rights. Even the most injudicious and fanciful customs which ignorance or superstition may have introduced among them, are perhaps preferable to any which could be substituted in their room. They are interwoven with their religion, and are therefore revered as of the highest authority. They are the conditions on which they hold their place in society, they think them equitable, and therefore it is no hardship to exact their obedience to them. I am persuaded they would consider the attempt to free them from the effects of such a power as a severe hardship."

Again, after apologizing for taking up so largely the time

of his correspondent, Mr. Hastings added his apprehension lest the letter and its enclosures should arrive in England too late to produce the effect which he had hoped to obtain from them. He thus concluded:

"I would flatter myself that the work [the Hindu and Muhammadan codes] which it introduces may be of use in your Lordship's hands towards the legal accomplishment of a new system which shall found the authority of the British Government in Bengal on its ancient laws, and serve to point out the way to rule this people with ease and moderation according to their own ideas, manners, and prejudices. But although I should be disappointed in this expectation, I still please myself with the persuasion that your Lordship will receive it with satisfaction as an object of literary curiosity, whatever claim it may have to your attention from its intrinsic merit, as it contains the genuine sentiments of a remote and ancient people at a period of time in which it was impossible for them to have had the smallest connection or communication with the inhabitants of Europe, on a subject in which all mankind have a common interest, and is, I believe, the first production of the kind hitherto made known among us."

I may add that the hopes of Hastings in this respect were not disappointed. His Hindu code became a manual for the administration of justice in Bengal.

In connection with the administration of justice, it seems proper here to mention the strong measures which Hastings took for the suppression of highway robbery, an evil which had made much progress during the war with Mír Kásim, and which subsequently had at intervals reached a high development. The country had been parcelled out by bands of disbanded soldiers, by religious mendicants, and by professional robbers who had not been soldiers; all of whom rendered travelling without an escort absolutely unsafe. Those who felt most the evil were the native middle-classes. At the time when Hastings assumed the care of the administration their sufferings had reached a point which made it incumbent upon the ruler to interfere.

Hastings did interfere, and in that prescient and practical manner which is one of his claims to admiration as an administrator. First he reformed the police. Then, with the sanction of his colleagues in Council, he directed that every convicted robber should be hanged in his own village; that the village itself should be heavily fined; and that the members of the family of the captured robber should become

slaves of the State, and be disposed of for the general benefit and convenience of the people, according to the discretion of the Government. Hastings further directed that chief police stations should be formed in every district, and that the head officer of these, called the *faujdar*, should take proper measures for capturing the ringleaders, for which purpose he was empowered to invoke the assistance of the landowners and revenue officers. Hastings himself was anxious to proceed still further. Convinced that many of the robber gangs were working for the benefit of the zamíndárs,* and were often even in their pay, he desired to trace the evil to its source by holding the zamíndárs responsible for the robberies. But his colleagues declined to support him in that measure. And though it was afterwards proved that Hastings' suspicion was justified, that logical proposal was never adopted. Still, under the energetic measures I have mentioned, the evil, as far as related to the first and third classes, steadily diminished during his tenure of office.

There remained the second, and for a time the more formidable, class—the bands of religious mendicants. The action of these men was directly contrary to their professions. From the Sanskrit word "Sannyás," meaning "the abandonment of all worldly things," they called themselves "Sannyási," and overran the province of Bengal, committing the greatest depredations. Hastings despatched five battalions of sipáhís in pursuit of them, but one detachment of these coming suddenly upon the Sannyási, was overwhelmed by superior numbers, and their English officer was killed. Hastings then despatched two more battalions to reinforce those sent before. Eventually he succeeded in expelling them from the English territories; then, to prevent their return, he formed military posts along the frontier, and this measure proved effective. The complaint of Hastings regarding the damage done by these marauders to the revenue shows how deeply he felt the consequences of the manner in which these mendicants interpreted their religious obligations.

Before reverting to what may properly be called the

* Under the Mughal Government a zamíndár was a person who held a tract of land immediately of Government, on condition of paying the rent for it. In Bengal he occupied the position akin to that of a revenue farmer.

foreign policy of the two years' administration of Mr. Hastings, it is right that I should record the result of the trials of the two high officers whom, on the order of the Court of Directors, he had removed from their offices immediately after assuming charge of his government: I mean Muhammad Rizá Khán and Rájá Shitáb Rái.

These noblemen had been kept in Calcutta since the date when they had been brought there under arrest. Under arrest they remained, though not in confinement. The city constituted the limits of their liberty. Their trial began as soon as Nandkumár had been able to produce his evidence, and it continued, with many intermissions, from day to day. It soon became clear that the prosecutor had no conclusive evidence to offer. The accounts he produced proved nothing, and the charges he continued to make were utterly unsupported by proof. He constantly demanded adjournment, hoping that before the Court should meet again fortune might favour him by the production of evidence which he might drive home. But, notwithstanding the power which he wielded as practical prosecutor in a prosecution which had been ordered by the Court of Directors, he signally failed. Hastings, who took the greatest interest in the whole proceedings, who presided at the trial, acting often as examiner and interpreter, expressed his opinion towards its conclusion,* that although he had taken much pains to investigate the conduct of Rájá Shitáb Rái he could find no flaw in it; that he had shown himself an able financier. With regard to Muhammad Rizá he wrote—

"He has many friends; it is difficult to collect materials in support of the charges against him. I verily believe him culpable, and some of the charges I think I can clearly establish, but I want both time and assistants for such a work."

Some idea of the vast amount of business which devolved upon Hastings at this period may be gathered from the fact that concurrently with this trial he had on his hands all the reforms referred to in the previous pages of this chapter, as well as the administration of foreign affairs soon to be specially mentioned.

* Letter to Sir George Colebrooke, 15th January, 1773.

"My whole time and thought" (he writes in the same letter to Colebrooke), "I may add all my passions, are devoted to the service of the Company, and I am sure I do not labour in vain. But you cannot form a conception of the infinite calls which I have perpetually on me, by the greatest change which has devolved to this Government, every part of which is now full, and the channels through which the business of it should flow scarcely opened for its conveyance."

Returning to the trial, we find Hastings writing on the 2nd of March to his friend Sykes, that it was clear to him that Rájá Shitáb Ráí would "escape with credit." "Indeed," he adds, "I scarce know why he was called to account." In point of fact, he was not only honourably acquitted, but became the recipient of whatever honours the Government could bestow. But his enforced residence in Calcutta, the climate of which was unsuited to him, had undermined his constitution, and shortly after his return to Bihár, he was taken ill and died. His death, erroneously attributed to a broken heart, has been one of the weapons with which Macaulay assailed the memory of the illustrious man who obeyed the order of his masters by directing that he should be tried.

Muhammad Rizá Khán was also acquitted. On this subject it is interesting to read the opinion of Mr. Hastings, given in a letter (March 24, 1774) to Mr. Laurence Sulivan.

"The inquiry," he wrote, "into the conduct of Muhammad Rizá Khán is closed, and referred to the Court of Directors for their judgment, which it is probable will acquit him of every charge against him. In the mean time we have released him on his giving an obligation that he will not leave the province without leave of the Board, and he has chosen Calcutta for his residence. I, in my conscience, acquit him of making a trade of grain in the famine; but of the charges of embezzlement, had he been an hundred-fold guilty, it would have been impossible at this distance of time to have proved it against him—I mean in the revenue. The accounts of the Nizámat were in the hands of Rájá Gurudás, Nandkumár's son, whom I must suppose capable of producing the most authentic proofs, if any exist, of the Náib's * misapplication of the money entrusted to him for the Nawwáb's use. These ten months past I have been urging the old man [Nandkumár], his son, and the Begam, for these accounts, in person, by letter, and by the means of the Resident, Mr. Middleton. They have been at length sent and contain nothing. A charge has since followed of 262,000 rupees, said to be embezzled in the article of exchange. This was produced by Gurudás. It was delivered to Muhammad

* Muhammad Rizá had, the reader will recollect, been the Náib, or deputy, of the Nawwáb-Názim.

Rizá Khán, and he immediately avowed the fact—*i.e.* that such a perquisite did formerly exist, and was the property of the treasurers, but was converted into a fund for the payment of sundry religious and gratuitous expenses of the Nawwáb's household, by the advice and with the concurrence of Mr. Sykes, and he has shown by an account in what manner it was disposed of.

"Here the affair rests, concluded so far as it respects Muhammad Rizá Khán; but I expect not to escape censure in my own person for having brought it to so quiet and unimportant an issue. Whatever disappointment this may prove to the expectations of many, I have the conscious reflection of having acted with the strictest integrity, equally rejecting every proposition, both of his foes and his friends, that I could not reconcile to justice. I have taken every measure, by proclamation, protection, and personal access, to encourage evidences against him; and have given many valuable hours, and whole days of my time to the multiplied but indefinite accounts and suggestions of Nandkumár. I presided in every examination, one only day excepted, and was myself the examiner and the interpreter in each. The proceedings will show with what wretched materials I was furnished."

Mr. Hastings further stated that Muhammad Rizá had produced the attestations of above two hundred persons, mostly of credit, in vindication of his conduct during the famine, whilst Nandkumár had produced against him a lesser number of attestations signed by men little known. The truth seems to be that Muhammad Rizá had not been a whit more corrupt or unscrupulous than any of his predecessors, or than any diwán at a native Court in the present day. He had acted, as his successors will continue to act, on the Asiatic principle, which is not the European principle, and should not be judged by it. For the prosecution, which caused a great deal of scandal and produced no result, the Court of Directors alone were to blame. The result was a lesson to them, and to all administrators of affairs in India, to refuse to act on the charges proffered by self-seeking accusers, natives of India, whose one aim almost always is to eject the incumbent of an influential post in order that they may sit thereon themselves.

In this instance the backbiter signally failed. Muhammad Rizá, the intended victim of Nandkumár, lived to obtain and to hold high office under the Government, and, as Captain Trotter * has put it, to see his old traducer "doomed to a felon's death."

Such, as I have related in the preceding pages of this

* Rulers of India Series: "Warren Hastings," by Captain L. J. Trotter.

chapter, had been the domestic legislation of Mr. Hastings during the two years of his administration of Bengal. He had "found the provinces," to use the just and appreciative language of his earliest biographer *—

"when he assumed the principal direction of their affairs, labouring under the accumulated evils of an exhausted treasury, and a Government destitute of influence. The revenues, collected nobody could tell how, proved year by year less productive. There were no tribunals to which men might appeal against the oppressions of the strong or the chicanery of the feeble. Bands of robbers wandered over the face of the country, setting the resistance of a wretched police at defiance, while poverty and sickness, the results of a terrible famine, appeared to paralyze the exertions of the scanty population that remained. With respect, again, to the commerce of the country, whether we look to its foreign or its domestic trade, that was totally destroyed; and partly through the misconduct of individuals, partly through the indifference of those at the head of departments, the native merchant was thrust absolutely aside, while the Company's investments fell to nothing as much through the poverty of the weavers and contractors from whom they were obtained, as through the negligence of the Board whose business it was to look over them. Within the limited space of two years Mr. Hastings entirely reversed this picture. From the outrages of dakaits [robbers], and Sannyásis, and other marauders, the provinces were gradually delivered. He hunted them down wherever they showed themselves, and in the end they ceased to be troublesome. The revenue system, if not perfect, was the best which circumstances would allow him to form, for the five years' settlement could only be regarded as an experiment. The establishment of district courts for the administration of justice, likewise, and of district officers to maintain the public peace, were great steps taken towards better things. So also his division of the Supreme Council into committees, and his substitution of individual superintendents for Boards which never acted, especially contributed to set the machine in motion and to render its movements certain and regular. And when we take into account that all this was done, often at the expense of private interests, oftener still in despite of old and deep-rooted prejudices, it seems impossible to deny to him who accomplished it the high praise of rare talent and industry such as no amount of labour could break down."

I may add to this summary of the work accomplished in those two years by Mr. Hastings that we have seen how for several weeks he found time, amidst his other laborious duties, to preside at the trial of Muhammad Rizá, acting as president of the court, and often as interpreter and as examiner; that he had the members of his own Council to win over and conciliate, sometimes at the sacrifice of his own

* "Memoirs of the Life of the Right Hon. Warren Hastings, First Governor-General of Bengal," by the Rev. G. R. Gleig, M.A. In three volumes.

better judgment; that with great difficulty he succeeded in persuading them to agree to his plans for farming the opium districts to contractors, and, later, for assuring to the Company a monopoly of the salt trade; that he had, moreover, to secure, by the frankness of his avowals, by the rendering of long and detailed reports, by private letters explaining and justifying the reasons of his policy, the support of his masters in London; and, finally, that he had to conduct complicated negotiations, even occasionally to make demonstrations, to assure the safety of his frontier. How, amid the crash of a falling empire, and amid the struggles of the several races which had formed its component parts, he accomplished this task I must tell in the next chapter.

CHAPTER X.

THE FRONTIER POLICY OF MR. HASTINGS, 1772–1774—THE NAWWÁB-WAZÍR OF OUDH—THE ROHÍLAS.

In the early part of the eighth chapter I have shown how Lord Clive, when he quitted Bengal on the 29th of January, 1767, had left a frontier for the English possessions which he regarded as the best adapted to the circumstances of his countrymen in India. His policy involved the holding of the three provinces under the shadowy name of Nawwáb-Názim; the garrisoning and holding for the Emperor the districts of Allahábád and Karra; the occupation of the fort of Chanár, and the placing, when necessary, of two battalions at Banáras. He set his face strongly against the plan which had found favour with the administrators he had succeeded in Bengal (May, 1765), of assisting Sháh Álam with troops for the recovery of Dehlí. The carrying out of such a plan he denounced as fraught with disaster, possibly with ruin, to the English. He had agreed, however (August 19, 1765), to pay to the Emperor the sum, annually, of twenty-six lakhs of rupees, and the Emperor had in return bestowed upon the English the Diwání of the three provinces. From Sháh Álam, who was, practically, an adventurer without means and without credit, the very shadow of a name, he expected neither good nor evil. There were three races, however, beyond, one of them all about, his border, with whom, he realized, his successors would have to deal. These were the Muhammadan rulers of the Subahdárí of Oudh; the Rohílas; and the Maráthás. With the second and third of these he had never come in contact; but he knew well the able man who filled the position of Nawwáb-Wazír in Oudh, Shujáu'd daulah, and he placed great hopes on his alliance for the

protection of the English frontier against a possible Maráthá invasion. He knew the ambition of the Nawwáb-Wazír, bu he had the best reasons for believing that he would neve attempt again to measure swords with the English. Hi first effort in that direction had left him at the mercy of hi conquerors, and he had obtained from their generosity th recovery of his territories. He had then signed with th English a treaty for the defence of their respective dominions A consideration of these circumstances would render him Clive had thought, more inclined to extend his borders i other directions than in the direction of Bihár and Bengal.

Such was the position when Clive, for the last time, quitte India. Such it practically remained during the rule of Mr Verelst, and until towards the immediate close of the rule o Mr. Cartier. Then there took place, under the circumstances about to be described, certain military movements which were still in progress when Mr. Hastings assumed charge of his government.

In these movements there were five principal factors: the Emperor, the Maráthás, the Rohílas, the Nawwáb-Wazír of Oudh, and the English. Of these, the first, as the weakest, and whose history merges into that of the second, demands primary attention.

The one idea of Sháh Álam was the recovery of his ancestral throne. He had never forgotten that Lord Clive's immediate predecessor, Mr. Spencer, had favoured his views in that respect, and had almost embarked with him on the venture. He still clung to the idea, and urged incessantly on the English and the Nawwáb-Wazír its adoption. He was still brooding and hoping when, in the spring of 1771, he learned that the Maráthás had entered the Duáb and were threatening Rohilkhand. In that movement he recognized the opportunity to recover his throne. He opened negotiations with the invaders; received from them replies full of promises; and, finally, in May of the same year, despite the strong remonstrances of the English and the warnings of the Nawwáb-Wazír, he quitted Allahábád with an army of sixteen thousand men, and marched on Farrukhábád. There he remained during the rainy season. The Nawwáb of the province represented by Farrukhábád opportunely dying in

that interval, the Emperor seized a considerable amount of money found in the treasury, and then, pushing forward, joined the Maráthás in the Duáb. He did not stay with them, but, accompanied by Madhují Sindhiá with fifteen thousand cavalry, marched on Dehlí, and entered the imperial city on the 25th of December, 1771. There for the present I must leave him. Even to bring him so far I have anticipated the more important parts of the narrative.

The Maráthá confederacy, the most formidable enemy of Aurangzeb at the height of his power, had, after threatening for a time to take the place in India of his successors, been almost annihilated at the third battle of Pánipat* (January 6, 1761), by the Afghán monarch, Ahmad Sháh Abdálí. The defeat the Maráthás sustained on that occasion had been so thorough, the disaster had seemed so irreparable, that despair reigned in all the strongholds of the few leading chieftains who had not perished in the fray. But Ahmad Sháh failed to follow up his victory. He cared more for the plunder he had acquired than for establishing his family in the sweltering country below his own mountain ranges, and, after recognizing Sháh Álam as Emperor, appointing Najíbu'd daulah, the chief of the Rohílas, to be his Prime Minister, nominating Shujáu'd daulah (of Oudh) to be Wazír, and assigning to the Rohíla chiefs certain districts in the Duáb, he quitted India, leaving the central authority practically annihilated, and bequeathing to the north-western Provinces a legacy of turmoil and war. The buffalo was to be to the man who held the bludgeon, the territories to those the best able to wield the sword.

No policy could have so completely favoured the aspirations of the Maráthá race than that, just detailed, of Ahmad Sháh Abdálí. It gave them time. In western and to a very great extent in southern India they were still supreme. Their ambition, never altogether stifled, returned with redoubled force. The idea that they were the true heirs of the Mughals revived with more than its former intensity. Who were to

* It may be worth noting that the three battles fought at Pánipat were decisive battles. The first, fought in 1525, and won by the founder of the Mughal dynasty, decided the fate of the Lodi family; the second, thirty-one years later, established the rule of Akbar; the third prevented the Maráthás from succeeding the Mughals.

be their rivals? Leaving for the moment the English out of consideration, they could not find a prince or a ruler likely to prevent the realization of their dreams. In southern India there was Haidar Ali of Maisur, but he was at the moment their tributary. In western India they counted themselves supreme. In Bengal there were the English, but, despite the English, they still occupied a portion of Orísa, one of the three provinces bestowed upon the foreigners by the Emperor. There had gradually risen amongst them one of the fugitives from the field of Pánipat, a man competent to devise, competent to lead, competent to follow up early successes, the famous Madhují Sindhiá, and Madhují, who had succeeded to the chiefship of that famous house, had already begun to exercise an influence which was greatly to increase.

Before I recount the next spring made by the Maráthás to prove to India that they had recovered from the disaster of Pánipat, it is necessary to say a word or two regarding the other factors in the events which were materially to influence the action of Mr. Hastings—the Rohílas.

The Rohílas were a tribe of Yusufzai Afgháns who had settled in the province of Katehar some thirty years after the death of Aurangzeb, and, changing its name to Rohilkhand, to signify to the world that thenceforth it was the "khand" —the region—of the Rohílas, supported their chief for the time being in the almost absolute authority he assumed. In 1740 the then Emperor acknowledged the supremacy of the chief of the Rohílas' adoption, Ali Muhammad. A quarrel with the then Subahdar of Oudh, whose territories his own adjoined, led a little later to his dismissal, but the invasion of India by Ahmad Sháh Abdálí in 1748 had enabled him to recover his power. He died the year following, leaving six sons. The years that followed until that which saw the third battle of Pánipat were, for the Rohílas, years of struggling with enemies on all sides. They were overwhelmed by the Maráthás, fined, and driven to evacuate the best parts of the territories they had made their own. But they always "came again," and struck for independence and conquest. At the battle of Pánipat their chiefs threw in their lot with the Afghán invader, and profited from the victory by gifts of territory in the Duáb bestowed upon them,

on his quitting India, by Ahmad Sháh. One of their chiefs, Najíbu'd daulah, the father of the noted Zábitá Khán, was appointed first Minister at Delhí, a position which enabled him, in the absence of the titular Emperor, to exercise supreme authority in that city and in the districts dependent upon it.

Such was the position of the Rohílas at the close of the year 1761. Their territories were bounded by the Ganges, by Oudh, and by Kamaon, were watered by the Rámgangá, the Kosilá, the Ganges, and the Ghághrá, and included the lands of the Nawwáb of Rampur and some important places in the Duáb. The great majority of the population were Hindus. These tilled the land, farmed the small holdings, maintained the shops, and carried on the whole industry of the country. These men, without whom the country would have been absolutely barren, were not Rohílas, they were the men whom the Rohílas had dispossessed, and whom they ruled with a rod of iron. The trade of the pure Rohílas was fighting, and nothing else but fighting, and in India fighting was ever accompanied by plundering. They toiled not, neither did they spin. Yet they were as reckless of blood as the old Romans, as indifferent to slaughter as their kinsmen of the Yusufzai mountains. They numbered but fifteen to twenty thousand men in a total population of over three millions. Yet they possessed the right of the conqueror, and for the seven years which followed Pánipat, from 1761 to 1768, they ruled the country in their own despotic manner, undisturbed by invasion from outside. Such was their position, when there occurred that movement amongst the Maráthá people which was to announce to all India the awakening from the disaster of Pánipat.

The occasion was singularly propitious. The Mughal dynasty had suffered not less than the Maráthás from the battle of Pánipat, and, unlike them, had subsequently continued its downward course. Its actual representative, after undergoing many humiliations at the hands of the English and the Nawwáb-Wazír of Oudh, had, as we have seen, thrown in his lot with the Maráthás. The Rohílas had for some time past ceased to threaten the Duáb. The Nawwáb-Wazír of Oudh had but just recovered from the defeats inflicted upon him by

the English. Who then was to stay the course of those marauding warriors? Seeing no one able to check them, they had accepted the proposal of the Emperor that he should join them, and in 1770–71 they poured their troops, led by Visají Krishná, under whom was the famous Madhují, into the Duáb, and threatened Rohilkhand.

About this time the man whom the Afghán chief, Ahmad Sháh Abdálí, had nominated first Minister of Dehlí, and who had subsequently administered that office in the name of the Emperor, the Rohíla Najíbu'd daulah, died. His son, Zábitá Khán, succeeded him, took the office before the arrival of the titular Emperor, and commenced the most vigorous efforts to baffle the invading Maráthás. Then was seen the extraordinary spectacle of the Mughal Emperor being allied with the Maráthás, whilst the first Minister of the dynasty led the opposition to them. That opposition was fruitless. The Maráthás and their allies forced the fords of the Ganges, despite a vigorous opposition, dispersed the Rohílas, plundered and devastated Rohilkhand, seized the family of Zábitá Khán, and compelled the fleeing warriors to intrench themselves in strong positions below the mountains on the borders of Kamaon. Then finding that the Emperor was rather a hindrance than an aid, they began to treat him with contempt and compelled him to make certain important concessions which will presently be recorded.

It was an open secret that the Maráthás intended, so soon as they should have mastered Rohilkhand, to take vengeance on the Nawwáb-Wazír of Oudh, whose splendid leading at Pánipat had greatly contributed to their overthrow. Shujáu'd daulah, fully expecting they would carry this threat into practice, communicated with the Calcutta Government early in 1772, and called upon the English to aid him, even though the assistance should be merely a semblance of aid.

It was the period immediately before the arrival in Bengal of Warren Hastings, and when Mr. Cartier still held the reins of office. Cartier was very unwilling to commit himself, but he permitted Sir Robert Barker, who commanded the troops on the English frontier, to have with the Nawwáb-Wazír, at Faizábád (in Oudh), the interview he had solicited. In that interview, which took place on the 20th of January, the ruler

of Oudh was very explicit. The titular Emperor, Sháh Álam, he regarded, he said in so many words, as a cypher completely under Maráthá influence; there could therefore be no question of him. To see the Rohílas absolutely reduced would be impolitic, for, to save themselves from being exterminated, they would cast in their lot with the Maráthás. He himself would then be attacked, and with a force difficult to resist. There was, he then proceeded to add, but one of two courses to adopt. The one was that he should lie quiet awaiting events, and relying on the support of his friends and allies; the other was to make an active demonstration. This latter, however, would require "a show of support, and the approbation of the English Government." In their joint interests the latter was the better course to pursue. If Sir Robert Barker would march with his whole force to the frontier of Oudh, contiguous to the possessions of the Rohílas, all would be well. There would be no necessity, he believed, to draw the sword. The very appearance on the frontier of the English force would induce all parties to come to terms. A compromise could be made by which the Rohílas should continue to possess Rohilkhand, resigning to the Emperor only those parts of the Duáb, outside their own territories, which the Abdálí had bestowed upon them, the Maráthás being satisfied with a money contribution. Subsequently the Nawwáb-Wazír told Sir Robert Barker that the presence of the English on the frontier was further necessary in order to dispel from the minds of the Rohílas that he, the Nawwáb-Wazír, who had at one time coveted their country, was planning to trick them out of it.

The Calcutta Government, convinced by the arguments of the Nawwáb-Wazír, authorized Sir Robert Barker (February 3) to accompany the latter on his forward expedition. The united force marched accordingly, and, reaching the frontier, opened negotiations with the Rohílas.

Then the difficulties of the situation began to unveil themselves. The Rohílas showed suspicion of the Nawwáb-Wazír, for the Nawwáb-Wazír seemed to display a desire to receive as a reward for his service compensation in the way of territories. Finally, however, it was arranged that whilst the Rohílas, under their most powerful chief, Háfiz Rahmat,

should march to the assistance of Zábitá Khán, the Nawwáb-Wazír and his allies should remain on the frontiers of Rohilkhand but within the borders of Oudh. But before this operation could take place reinforcements reached the Maráthás, and these co-operating with the troops of Sháh Álam, completely defeated the Rohílás. A terrible panic now seized the entire tribe. Their army practically disbanded, each man seeking his own safety and the safety of his family. So great was the general terror that Sir Robert Barker transmitted orders to Colonel Champion, commanding the brigade at Dánápur, to march into Oudh, in case he might require supports.

Meanwhile the Maráthás, not caring, it has been supposed, to commit themselves at once to open war with the English, had been engaged in endeavouring to come to terms with one or other of the principals opposed to them. What proposals they made to Háfiz Rahmat and the Rohílas is not known; but to the Nawwáb-Wazír they made offers so seductive as to tempt him to throw over his other engagements and accept them. They offered to transfer to him the greater part or even the whole of Rohilkhand, provided they might retain for themselves the territories on the right bank of the Ganges which they had already overrun, and that he would agree to pay them *chauth*—a species of tribute—for the territories he might add to his own. The Nawwáb-Wazír was indeed sorely tempted. For long he could not bring himself to the point of refusing. Towards the middle of March he was strongly leaning towards the Maráthá proposal, when his purpose was radically altered by the receipt of a piece of news which greatly affected his feelings as a Muhammadan. This news was to the effect that to display their contempt for their Muhammadan enemies, the Maráthás had dug up the body of Najíbu'd daulah, and had burned it under circumstances of studied insult. No greater outrage on the feelings of the Musalmán could be perpetrated. The ordinary term of insult applied by men of that faith to the Hindus is "son of a burnt father," and now the Maráthás had made the son of Najíbu'd daulah, the living Zábitá Khán, liable to have hurled at him a phrase of all others to a Muhammadan the most revolting. The insult rankled, and from that moment the Nawwáb-Wazír

bent all his energies to the arranging for the expulsion of the Maráthás from the territories they had invaded.

Mutual jealousies between the Nawwáb-Wazír and the Rohílas hindered the progress of the negotiations which then ensued, but on the 25th of May Háfiz Rahmat, as representing Rohilkhand, and Zábitá Khán and his chiefs, as representing the real power of the Mughal, met the Nawwáb-Wazír and Sir Robert Barker at Sháhábád, a town on the road from Lakhnao to Sháhjahánpur, fifteen miles from the latter. Here, after much discussion, an agreement was arrived at between the contracting parties, and a treaty was signed (June 17). By this treaty, which the reader should bear in mind, as the breach of it by the Rohílas led to the catastrophe which followed, it was covenanted (1) that the three parties should unite for the defence of the territories of the Nawwáb-Wazír, of the Empire, and of Rohilkhand; (2) that if any enemy should attack the dominions of the contracting parties the Nawwáb-Wazír and the chiefs of Rohilkhand should unite to oppose him; (3) that the Rohíla chiefs should "join and unite in any measure that may be determined by the Wazír of the empire [*i.e.* the Nawwáb-Wazír] for the benefit of the Nawwáb Muhammad Zábitá Khán." This treaty was sworn to "by the Almighty, his Prophet, and the sacred Kuran," and was duly attested by Sir Robert Barker, signed, and sealed, on the 17th of June (the eleventh day of the month Rabi'u-l-awwal, the third month of the Muhammadan year, 1186 Hijra).

But there was an additional clause to the treaty contracted between the Nawwáb-Wazír and the Rohílas, and it is this clause which, in the light of the events which followed, is of supreme importance. By this the Wazír of the empire (*i.e.* the Nawwáb-Wazír of Oudh) pledged himself to compel or to induce the Maráthás to retire from Rohilkhand. He undertook that if from natural causes they should retire only to return, and should return, he would expel them; that, to compensate him for taking upon himself these two weighty obligations, the Rohíla chiefs should pay him forty lakhs of rupees (worth at that time half a million of English money) in the following manner:—

"As the Maráthás are now in the country of the Rohíla Sirdars, the Wazír

of the empire shall march from Sháhábád as far as may be necessary to enable the families of the Rohílas to leave the jungle and return to their habitations Ten lakhs of rupees in specie, in part of the above sum, shall then be paid and the remaining thirty lakhs in three years, from the beginning of the year Fasli." *

This agreement was sealed in the presence of Sir Robert Barker.

Meanwhile Hastings had but just entered upon his administration of the three provinces. The treaties were naturally sent to him, and he at once recognized that but for the attestation by Sir Robert Barker, neither the Nawwáb-Wazír nor the Rohíla chiefs would have come to any agreement. The attestation of the English commander did it all. It caused both the contracting parties to regard Sir Robert Barker as a guarantor on behalf of the English Government that both parties would carry into effect the provisions of the treaty.

Whilst these negotiations had been progressing the Maráthás, far from thinking of continuing the campaign, had been making preparations for departure. The rainy season, which commences generally very early in June, was fast approaching. They hastened then to abandon their conquests, and, releasing the women they had made captive, they temporarily retired from the Duáb. The Nawwáb-Wazír and Sir Robert Barker then returned to Faizábád, in Oudh, whilst the Rohílas reoccupied their former territories.

The treaties of which I have just given a summary, and the events preceding and accompanying them, were not at all calculated to lessen the anxiety of Mr. Hastings on the subject of his frontier relations. He realized, I have shown, that the English were committed to the carrying out of certain clauses, agreed to by two native powers, each mistrusting the other, and bearing hardly on the less powerful

* *Fasli* is the word used to signify the solar year, and is thus distinct from Hijra, which marks the Muhammadan era. There is thus a variation of about three years in a century between the two eras. The reader curious in such matters will note that the first of the two treaties detailed in the text bears the date, the eleventh of the month Rabi'u-l-awwal, 1186 Hijra, whereas in the second it is covenanted that a certain payment should begin "from the beginning of the year 1180 Fasli." The difference is explicable by the fact that the Fasli era was founded by Akbar in 963, and that during the nearly two centuries which had passed it had, from the fact of its being a solar era, lost six years relatively to the Hijra era.

of the two. He himself had taken practically on his own shoulders the direction of foreign affairs, for, although he was but one in a Council of nine, the Council had, on his initiative, remitted to a committee of three the consideration of foreign policy, with the proviso that matters of special importance only should be laid before the whole Council. Of that committee of three Hastings was the presiding and the ruling spirit. That which he wished his colleagues agreed to. He had found matters connected with that department in a condition requiring reform almost to the same extent as in the other departments he had to administer. Almost the first arrangement that he kicked against was the payment to the titular King of Dehlí (generally called the Emperor) of twenty-six lakhs of rupees (£325,000). The reader will recollect that, in Lord Clive's last administration, this payment had been agreed to as an equivalent for the Diwání of the three provinces. Hastings disputed the power of Sháh Álam to make any such transfer. We hold the sovereignty of them (the three provinces), he wrote to Sir George Colebrooke,* just before he assumed office, "by the best of all titles—power. He [the Emperor] could not transfer what he never had to give." Proceeding to argue that no other State in India paid the Emperor a rupee for his grants; that they were an absolute sham; that for this idle pageant the English had drained the country of its current specie, "which is its blood;" that since the King had joined the Maráthás he had become theirs, "theirs, and his name, authority, wealth, and all he possesses, is theirs with his person;" he announced his determination to refuse to continue the payment unless the Court of Directors should order him to do so. Arguing then against the policy till then pursued of mistrusting the "useful ally" of the English, the Nawwáb-Wazír of Oudh, he proceeded to dwell on the great progress made by the Maráthás, and the danger they threatened to the Rohílas. He then narrated the incidents of the preceding campaign, so far as it affected the movements of the English

* The date of the letter is March 26, 1772. For a perusal of this and for many other documents in connection with this subject, I am indebted to the Forrest papers and to Sir John Strachey's invaluable work, "Hastings and the Rohilla War."

troops, and expressed a very strong opinion that the Nawwáb-Wazír was bound to defray the entire expense of the English troops so long as they might occupy his territories.

"At the same time," he added, "our alliance with him might be easily placed, as it ought to be, on a footing of more credit and satisfaction to him, and of more utility to ourselves. We should leave him the uncontrolled master of his own dominions. We should assist in making him such, and enabling him to be a useful ally instead of a burden to us. He should have the most convincing assurances given him that we had no other object in our mutual alliance than our mutual security."

Meanwhile, in other respects, the retreat of the Maráthás had failed to restore peace to the districts they had invaded. Rohilkhand, especially, after a very short interval, became the scene of constant turmoil. One of the worthiest Rohíla chiefs, Sirdar Khán Baskhski, having died, his sons commenced to fight for his estates. Worse even than that, the son of Háfiz Rahmat, Inayat Khán, broke out into rebellion against his father, and defeated the troops sent against him in several encounters. Ultimately, Háfiz Rahmat got possession of his son's person by artifice, and the young man died soon after. This evil had hardly been met when another, even greater, assailed them. Zábitá Khán suddenly deserted his countrymen and allied himself with their deadly enemies, the Maráthás, on condition that he should be reinstated in all his possessions and in his position of first Minister at the Court at Dehlí, an office previously held by his father and himself.

Under this last information the Nawwáb-Wazír reeled. He alone knew what it meant. He recognized in it the determination of the Rohílas not to keep with him the treaties which the English had guaranteed; it threatened, moreover, an attack by the confederated enemies upon his dominions as soon as the rainy season should have passed. He wrote in this sense to Mr. Hastings, and begged his assistance.

Hastings received the letter of the Nawwáb-Wazír on the 17th of July, 1772. It did not surprise him, for the course of events had warned him of the turn affairs in northern India were about to take. He had refused to continue to Sháh Álam the tribute of twenty-six lakhs per annum, and that prince was now the virtual prisoner of the Maráthás

whose alliance he had sought. The Maráthás made no secret of their determination to conquer north-western India. They had, as will be presently shown, designs on the capital; they had gained the most influential man in the Duáb, Zábitá Khán; and they hoped to gain likewise the other chiefs of the Rohílas, or to compel their submission. Then they would fall on Oudh, the bulwark of the English possessions. An alliance of the English with the Nawwáb-Wazír could alone prevent this catastrophe. Five days then after the reception of the letter I have mentioned from the Nawwáb-Wazír, Mr. Hastings wrote to that prince an assurance that he would join him, to the utmost of his power, in the defence of his territories; but that, without orders from England, he could not engage in any offensive operations. That done, he left it to the confederates to make the next move.

Although the Maráthás had quitted the Duáb in May, 1772, they had by no means renounced their designs against the Rohílas and the ruler of Oudh. Their first step was to wring all they could out of the titular Emperor. With that end they resolved to occupy Dehlí. This, despite the opposition of the Emperor's troops, commanded by Najíf Khán, they accomplished on the 22nd of December of the same year. Then, having Sháh Álam absolutely in their power, they forced him to transfer to them the provinces of Allahábád, Kora, and Karrá which, it will be recollected, Lord Clive had assigned to him. But to transfer was not to give possession; and it was clear even to the sanguine leaders of the assignees that the English and the Nawwáb-Wazír would alike have to be reckoned with before those districts would come actually into their hands. The news of the paper transfer did not the less, however, alarm and agitate the Nawwáb-Wazír. The effect on Mr. Hastings was the issue by him of an order directing that English troops should at once occupy the fortress of Allahábád, strongly placed at the junction of the Ganges and the Jamná.

An event became known about this time which, though it did not immediately affect the Maráthá movements, yet, in the ramifications of which it was the forerunner, produced important consequences. On the 18th of November of the year of which I am writing, the real head of the Maráthá

confederacy, the Peshwá, Mádhu Ráo, died. In his excellen history of the Maráthás, the late Captain Grant Duff recorde that "the plains of Pánipat were not more fatal to th Maráthá empire than the early end of this excellent Prince.' He was succeeded by the natural heir in order of succession the youngest son of Bálají Bájí Ráo, Narayan Ráo, a princ described by the same authority as "peculiarly ambitious o military fame." Narayan Ráo had, however, but a short tim allowed him to put his abilities to the test. On the 30th o August following he was murdered in his own palace b some conspirators, secretly instigated to seize his person b his uncle, Raghunáth Ráo, at the time a prisoner in th palace in which the Peshwá resided. A few weeks late Raghunáth Ráo was proclaimed Peshwá. He was the mos feather-brained, the most adventurous, and the least fitted o all the men who had borne that splendid office, to maintai with a steady hand the traditional policy of the Maráth people.

These events at head-quarters did not immediately affec the movements of that Maráthá army which, under Visáj Krishna, had invaded Rohilkhand. We have seen how, in December, 1772, that army had occupied Delhí. The firs acts of Visájí had been to force Sháh Álam to declare the Peshwá to be his Bakhshí, or Commander-in-Chief; Zábitá Khán, the Rohíla Chief whom the Maráthás had bought, to be his deputy; to confirm all the promises the Maráthás had made to the latter; to cede to them the district of Sarangpur, lately taken from the Jâts; and, as previously stated, to transfer to them the districts of Allahábád, Kora, and Karrá. They resolved then to march, at the head of a force estimated at fifty thousand men, mostly cavalry, to invade Rohilkhand. Early in the year 1773, the force above referred to did cross the Ganges, and did enter that province.

The invasion constituted the occasion provided for in the treaty arranged the previous year under the guarantee of Sir Robert Barker, between the Rohílas and the Nawwáb-Wazír. Mr. Hastings recognized at once the gravity of the situation. Every consideration prompted him to be true to the arrangement to which Sir Robert Barker had pledged the English name. The Maráthás had already purchased one of the

Rohíla chiefs. The others knew that, unassisted, they were powerless to resist the invasion. It might be easy to buy them also. And then? The frontier of Oudh, the districts of Allahábád, Kora, and Karrá, would be open to the common enemy, assisted, possibly, by the bought Rohílas. The only statesmanlike course to pursue was to prevent, as far as possible, such an evil, by combining with the Nawwáb-Wazír to force the invaders to let go the hold they were taking of Rohilkhand.

Mr. Hastings lost no time in acting on his convictions. On the 18th of February he sent instructions to Sir Robert Barker to enter into a treaty with the principal chief of the Rohílas, Háfiz Rahmat, "for the defence and protection of his dominions on such conditions as shall fully indemnify the Company for the additional charge and hazard which may be incurred by such an engagement." He gave him general instructions how to act under circumstances which might occur; to confine his operations to the country east of the Ganges; to expel all hostile invaders, but on no account to cross the river; and "studiously to avoid engaging the Company in an offensive war with the Maráthás." He was, however, at all hazards, and by whatever movements he might deem necessary, to protect the district of Kora, to take possession of it, and to have it civilly administered by the officer of the Emperor, in subordination to, and under the control of, himself. That district was to provide from its revenues the estimated expense of defending it, viz. one lakh of rupees monthly. The expenses for the defence of Oudh Hastings estimated at 115,000 rupees per month, and he demanded from the Nawwáb-Wazír an assignment on his revenues for that amount, directing Sir Robert Barker to demand and receive that assignment as a preliminary to operations. Should the prince require an additional English force, Sir Robert was to act on the same principle regarding its probable expenses. Should the Nawwáb-Wazír refuse the money, Sir Robert was forthwith to abandon him and withdraw his whole force from his territory. Sir Robert was further instructed to recover the arrears still due by the Prince for the expenses of the campaign of the previous year.

It is difficult to see how Hastings could have acted

otherwise than he did act at this conjuncture. To have allowed the Rohílas and the Nawwáb-Wazír to meet singly the sweeping onslaught of the Maráthás would have been almost an invitation to that marauding people to become the nearest neighbours of the English in the most vulnerable part of their frontier. The Rohílas, unsupported, could have offered no effective defence. And as for the Nawwáb-Wazír, when one reads the account of the battle of Baksar, when the English, under Munro, beat him badly with very inferior forces, it is not to be conceived for a moment that he, standing unsupported, could have successfully resisted the full onslaught of his powerful foe. Hastings had to choose between permitting his nearest neighbours on his most vulnerable frontier to be conquered in detail, or to combine with them in a stubborn resistance. Under such circumstances no real statesman could have hesitated for an instant, and Hastings, an eminent specimen of that class, lost not a single moment in giving orders to close up with his natural allies.

The Nawwáb-Wazír, who recognized the peril and the one means of averting it as clearly as did Hastings, agreed promptly to all the conditions imposed by the latter, and wrote to Háfiz Rahmat to inform him of the early march to Rohilkhand of himself and his allies. He acted up to his word. Joined by Sir Robert and the English contingent, consisting of two battalions of English infantry, six of sipáhís, and a company of artillery, he entered Rohilkhand early in March, and hurried on towards Rámghát, a town on the right bank of the Ganges, in the Bulandshahr district, near to which the Maráthás lay encamped. The only movement they had made had been to hold both banks of the river near that town.

It is easy to trace the cause of this stationary attitude, so contrary to the genius of the Maráthá nation. Instead of moving to crush the Rohílas with one terrible sweep of their legions, they had been engaged in endeavouring to buy them. We have seen how they had bought Zábitá Khán. They were now attempting the same arguments with Háfiz Rahmat, Zábitá assisting them with all a convert's zeal. Their arguments were weighty. Granted, they argued, that, with

the assistance of their allies, they, the Rohílas, might repulse their own forces, what would happen? The Rohílas would be at once called upon by the Nawwáb-Wazír to make good their engagements of the previous year, to pay down the forty lakhs of rupees for which they had bound themselves. Nay, more, who was the Nawwáb-Wazír that he should defend them without a secret purpose? He had shown in his previous negotiations that he had long coveted their territories. What stand could they make against him, if, supposing the Maráthás departed, he should renew his demands? Jealousies among the Rohíla chiefs greatly assisted these arguments, and Háfiz Rahmat was on the point of renouncing the alliance of the Nawwáb-Wazír and the English, when information reached him that the latter were within a few marches of Rámghát. Forced then to decide, Háfiz Rahmat signed a treaty with the Maráthás by which, in return for the protection of that people for the Rohíla territories, he bound himself to pay them five lakhs of rupees, and to allow them a passage through Rohilkhand into Oudh.

This proceeding seemed to change completely the face of affairs. One of three powers confederated against the Maráthás had deserted to the Maráthás. From a military point of view the situation had become extremely interesting. When the English and the Nawwáb-Wazír had actually realized Háfiz Rahmat's treachery; when it was not merely a rumour, but had become an ascertained fact; they were but thirty-five miles from Rámghát—eighty miles from Dehlí—whilst the Maráthá army was encamped on both banks of the river. The Rohílas were marching, it was supposed, to join the Maráthá camp. What was passing in the secret councils of the Maráthá camp may not accurately be known. But in those of the allies there were two prominent ideas differing very much the one from the other. In that of the English Sir Robert Barker was chafing at the orders which forbade him to cross the Ganges and attack the Maráthás; in that of the ruler of Oudh there had risen, in the mind of the Nawwáb-Wazír, a strong desire to punish the Rohílas for their treachery, by expelling them from Rohilkhand and annexing their territories to Oudh. Such a practical shape

did these desires take that Shujáu'd daulah offered that if the English would assist him to make it a reality he would pay them fifty lakhs of rupees; would help them to restore to the Emperor the districts in the Duáb which the Maráthás had occupied; would induce that Prince to resign his claim for tribute for the three provinces and to acknowledge them to be the property of the Company; and that he himself would confer on the English, in exchange for Kora, Karrá, and Allahábád, all his own territory lying south of the Ganges, Banáras alone excepted.

Sir Robert Barker at once transmitted this proposal to Mr. Hastings. It reached him about the 1st of April. In writing two days later to Sir George Colebrooke, Hastings mentioned the fact, but refrained from commenting upon it. At such a time, he knew, events were likely to march quickly, and that one decisive stroke of the sword might solve many questions. He waited, therefore, for further news from the seat of war.

Once more, on the spot, the situation seemed to alter. Gradually the rival forces approached. The Maráthás occupied both sides of the Ganges, near Rámghát. Close to them, holding a small fort, was the advanced guard of Háfiz Rahmat. The English and their ally were (March 20) approaching Rámghát. The vicinity of the latter had again caused Háfiz Rahmat to change his mind, and he had not effected the junction with the Maráthás stipulated in his agreement with that people. The Maráthás then applied a gentle stimulant; they compelled the garrison of the small fort to surrender. But the stimulant acted in a manner different to that which had been intended. Háfiz Rahmat kept the main body of his troops aloof, and sent an intimation to the Nawwáb-Wazír that he was prepared to carry out his engagements of the previous year. It was then agreed between the re-united allies that they should at once attack the Maráthás. The attack was fixed for the morrow, March 22. The English, it was arranged, should, despite their orders, cross the Ganges by the fords which there abounded, and assail the right flank of the enemy, whilst the Nawwáb-Wazír and the Rohílas should occupy them on the left bank. On the morning of the 22nd the English

started on their perilous enterprise, crossed the Ganges without opposition, and prepared to assault. But in the Maráthá camp they kept good watch. The movement of the English had been noted almost from its beginning; and the Maráthás, whose leaders were resolved not to be forced into a battle, and whose troops were mostly cavalry, fell back rapidly, and soon put twenty miles between their new halting-place and their former camping-ground. No pursuit was possible, and considering that the allies of the English failed entirely to carry out their part of the programme, it may have been fortunate that the Maráthás did not await Sir Robert Barker's attack, for they would have been able to concentrate their numerous horsemen, estimated at from thirty to sixty thousand, against his six or seven thousand footmen.

The Nawwáb-Wazír explained to Sir Robert on his return the next day into Rohilkhand, that his inaction had been caused by his distrust of Háfiz Rahmat, he fearing that the latter, as soon as he should see the Oudh troops engaged, would desert to the enemy. Such suspicion foreboded ill for hearty co-operation in the future. The Nawwáb-Wazír felt that until Háfiz Rahmat should have paid an instalment at least of the contribution of forty lakhs promised the previous year, not only would he keep his own counsel, but he would have recourse to any subterfuge, even to that of bringing back the Maráthás, rather than disburse any more money. However, the next day Háfiz Rahmat appeared, and made reassuring promises. The Nawwáb-Wazír was pacified, and he promised Sir Robert Barker that as soon as he should receive the forty lakhs he would pay one moiety of the sum to the English. He added that should the Rohílas prove faithless he would be ready to pay the English fifty lakhs for the aid they would, he hoped, afford them in putting him in possession of the territories of Háfiz Rahmat. He wrote the same day to the same effect to Mr. Hastings.

"I have promised the general," he stated in his letter, "that whenever we drive the Maráthás out of the Rohíla country, and Háfiz Rahmat Khán shall fulfil his agreement by the payment of forty lakhs of rupees, I will give half that sum to the English Sirdars. Should the Rohíla Sirdars be guilty of a breach of their agreement, and the English gentlemen will thoroughly

exterminate them, and settle me in their country, I will in that case pay them fifty lakhs of rupees in ready money, and besides exempt them from paying any tribute to the King out of the Bengal revenues."

We have left Mr. Hastings considering the letter he had received from Sir Robert Barker of the 1st of April, referred to in a previous page. That letter had unfolded for the first time the ambitious projects of the Nawwáb-Wazír, and the prospective advantages to the English which would ensue from their supporting him. Hastings had taken no action in the matter when, nearly a fortnight later, he received Sir Robert's report, dated 24th of March, and a letter of the same date from the Nawwáb-Wazír. Both were considered in Council. In reply to Sir R. Barker, the Government censured him for having disobeyed orders in crossing the Ganges; it reminded him that his mission was to defend the dominions of the Nawwáb-Wazír, and, as a means to that end, to assist in driving the Maráthás out of Rohilkhand. He was told that the Government approved the measures he had taken for the protection of that province, and of his acceptance for the Company of the promised present of one-half of the forty lakhs due by the Rohíla chiefs to the Nawwáb-Wazír; but the Government declined to commit itself to the approval of any plans based on the possible failure of Háfiz Rahmat to fulfil the engagements he had made with the Nawwáb-Wazír; and as it appeared to the Government that in all the proposals made by the ruler of Oudh there was, underlying them, a scheme for his own advantage, they expressly forbade Sir Robert Barker to undertake any hostile operations against the Rohílas without further instructions.

Just seven days later Mr. Hastings despatched to the Nawwáb-Wazír his reply to that Prince's letter of the 24th of March. After quoting *verbatim* the passage of the letter which demanded his reply, Mr. Hastings proceeded to express his opinion that the Nawwáb-Wazír's proposal required much consideration and the ratification of a formal agreement. He added that he fully recognized the advantage which would accrue to the dominions of the Nawwáb-Wazír by the addition thereto of the Rohíla country, as the nature of the country would permit him to use it as a defence against Maráthá invasion. He argued thus—he

stated in so many words,—on the supposition that the Rohílas might, by an act of treachery or of enmity, justify his endeavour to drive them from the country they occupied. But,—Hastings went on to argue,—one solitary invasion of Rohilkhand by the Maráthás would not justify the English in always according their support to the Nawwáb-Wazír. The English,—Hastings continued,—had assisted him for a special and temporary purpose—to defend with him the frontiers of Oudh and the districts of Kora, Karrá, and Allahábád. For those objects only was he authorized by his masters to employ British troops out of the three provinces.

"But it has always been with reluctance," he added, "that we have suffered the army to pass the frontiers of our own country, because the loss and inconvenience attending it was certain; and although joined with your forces, there is no cause to fear the most powerful efforts of our enemies, yet the events of war are at the disposal of the Almighty, and the only fruits which the most splendid successes can afford us, are the reputation of having maintained the faith of our alliance in opposition to every incentive of self-interest and self-defence; thus circumstanced, we are precluded from deriving any benefit from your support, and ours can only afford you a relief from present danger without any provision for future security."

Mr. Hastings concluded his letter by expressing his desire for a personal interview with the Nawwáb-Wazír at such time and place as might suit the convenience of both.

Before this letter had reached Shujáu'd daulah, events had happened which it is necessary to record in this place.

Although, on the 22nd of March, the main body of the Maráthás had evacuated their position at and about Rámghát, other divisions of their army continued to occupy points within the Rohíla frontier. There was one considerable body at Sambhal in the Murádábád district, four miles from the Sôt river; another had constructed a bridge of boats across the Ganges at a place in the Budaon district. Thence they attempted a sudden raid upon Bisaulí, a town in the same district, in which, they had been informed, were the families of several Rohíla chiefs. But Sir Robert Barker was on the watch. Hearing of the movement of the Maráthás, that officer set out to intercept them. So rapidly did he march that the Maráthás, who had passed through and plundered Murádábád, turned rapidly towards the river, and crossed it

so hastily that they left to the pursuers the greater part of their baggage. They had just time to destroy their bridge before Barker came up. That officer's well-timed advance had left Rohilkhand without a single Maráthá invader. The invaders did not, however, immediately abandon the Duáb. On the contrary, they continued for about a month longer to move as though they intended to break through some point of the Rohilkhand border. They even went so far as to cause the Emperor's general to write to Sir Robert Barker to summon him to surrender the districts of Kora, Karrá, and Allahábád. Sir Robert sent a very straight reply, the purport of which was that the question of those districts was one between the Emperor and the English, in which the latter would permit no interference on the part of the Maráthás. Shortly after, in the month of May, a letter of recall from the Peshwá, Narayan Ráo, was received by the Maráthá general, Visájí, and towards the end of that month he evacuated Hindustán, and commenced his march to Puná. Three months later his master, Narayan Ráo, was assassinated in the manner already described.

The departure of the Maráthás brought to a head the difference between the Nawwáb-Wazir and the Rohilas. The latter, by the mouth of Háfiz Rahmat, continued to evade the execution of the treaty to which they had sworn, and the execution of which the English General had guaranteed. The Nawwáb-Wázir and the English had performed their part of the contract with scrupulous exactness. By their joint efforts they had freed Rohilkhand from the Maráthás. But the Rohílas remained insensible to the duty which devolved upon them. And it was with a mind full of rancour at the non-fulfilment by them of their pledges that in May, 1773, the Nawwáb-Wazir, accompanied by his English allies, re-entered Oudh and marched on Lakhnao. Before he could take any decisive measures he had to arrange for the interview to which Mr. Hastings had invited him.

CHAPTER XI.

THE PROGRESS AND CLOSE OF THE ROHÍLA WAR.

It can well be imagined how distasteful it was to Mr. Hastings to be forced to realize that with the departure of the Maráthás the frontier question still remained unsettled; that it would devolve on him, in concert with the ally who had remained faithful to his oaths, to compel the performance of his obligations by the other ally who had displayed an inclination to come to terms with the common enemy whilst hostilities were in progress, and who, after the exertions of his two confederates had brought him security, now endeavoured to evade compliance with his solemn promises. The correspondence I have quoted will have shown the reader how steadily Mr. Hastings had discouraged the ambitious projects of the Nawwáb-Wazír, and how he had invited him to a conference for the purpose of discovering a middle path which might bring the disputants into accord. After some negotiation with the Nawwáb-Wazír, he had arranged that the conference should take place towards the end of August, at the city of Banáras, which, though a zamíndárí ruled by a zamíndár, who styled himself Rájá, formed a part of the dominions of the ruler of Oudh. Thither, accordingly, Mr. Hastings, accompanied by the two members of the Foreign Affairs Committee of his Council, Messrs. Vansittart * and Lambert, arrived on the 19th of August, and there he met Sir Robert Barker. The conference with the Nawwáb-Wazír commenced the same day.

There were three important questions to consider: (1)

* Mr. Vansittart was a son of the gentleman of the same name who had succeeded Clive in Bengal in 1760, and who had perished on his return voyage to India in the *Aurora*.

that of payment of the English troops, which, although fixed at an amount estimated at the time to be sufficient, had fallen far short of the actual expenditure; (2) that of the future of the districts of Kora, Karrá, and Allahábád; (3) that of the payment of the sums due by Háfiz Rahmat and the Rohílas. I shall deal with the disposal of these questions in the order in which I have here given them.

The insufficiency of the payments made for the maintenance of the English troops employed in fighting the battles of the Nawwáb-Wazír on the further frontier of Oudh, had caused a very heavy drain on the Calcutta treasury, itself still suffering from the disasters of preceding years. To such an extent had the balances been reduced that when Mr. Hastings quitted the capital for Banáras there was less than fifty thousand rupees available for all purposes, and the Government, which had already borrowed money, did not possess the credit to tempt investors to contribute more. Still—Hastings recognized—it was as important for the three provinces as it was for the Nawwáb-Wazír himself, that the tide of Maráthá invasion should be stemmed. Before Hastings, Clive had foreseen the necessity which would arise —the necessity of making a firm friend of the ruler of Oudh. Hastings had acted as Clive had counselled. To the Nawwáb-Wazír the assistance rendered by Sir Robert Barker's brigade had been invaluable. It was an open secret that the Nawwáb-Wazír looked forward to a period, very near indeed, when he would again require its assistance. There was no question but that he would very willingly pay the price such assistance would entail. That price was the cost price, and that only.

In the negotiations with the Nawwáb-Wazír, which Mr. Hastings' knowledge of the language enabled him to conduct in person, without the intervention of an interpreter, and unaccompanied by his colleagues, this question was mooted. Hitherto the Nawwáb-Wazír had contributed the sum of 115,000 rupees monthly for the support of the British brigade. The actual cost had been, according to returns furnished by Sir Robert Barker, and with which Hastings had taken care to provide himself, very nearly double that amount, or 210,000 rupees. The English brigade would be required to

remain for some time within the territories of the Nawwáb-Wazír, and it seemed only logical that he should pay the full amount required for its support. Shujáu'd daulah recognized the justice of this demand, and acquiesced at once in the proposal made by Mr. Hastings for the increase of his contribution to the amount above stated.*

Then came up the questions affecting the disposal of Kora, Karrá, and Allahábád. In the view of the certain discussion of this question, Mr. Hastings had despatched an invitation to the Emperor Sháh Álam to send a confidential agent vested with full powers to attend the conference. The Emperor had at first accepted, but had afterwards referred Mr. Hastings to the Nawwáb-Wazír, whom he instructed to demand payment of the overdue tribute, and to restore the three districts mentioned. To a second invitation from Mr. Hastings the Emperor vouchsafed no reply.

The reader will doubtless recollect that in a previous communication to Hastings the Nawwáb-Wazír had offered to give to the English, in exchange for the districts of Kora, Karrá, and Allahábád, all his own territory lying to the south of the Ganges, except Banáras. The country lying to the south of the Ganges could be no other than the districts of Chanar and Gházipur. The exchange, as an exchange, would doubtless have been beneficial to the English, inasmuch as it would have given them districts adjoining their own borders instead of a territory separated from those borders by the dominions of others. But Hastings, bearing in mind the strong monitions of Clive on the subject, did not want an increase of territory. He cared more to have the compact frontier which Clive had bequeathed to him. With the Nawwáb-Wazír as his ally, the districts of Kora, Karrá, and Allahábád were somewhat in the nature of a white elephant: they might become at any moment the cause for a quarrel. Still he would not have refused the exchange if the Nawwáb-Wazír had repeated his offer. But, far from repeating that offer, Shujáu'd daulah withdrew it. He too wished to round off his borders, to increase rather than renounce, to recover all the territories which his father had possessed. He probably saw that the English Governor, hampered for want

* Experience proved that even the increased sum fell short of the actuals.

of money, was not very eager to obtain fresh territories, entailing alike expense and responsibilities. He, therefore, anxious to possess the districts of Kora, Karrá, and Allahábád, knowing the impecunious state of the Calcutta treasury, proposed, instead of the exchange formerly offered, to purchase the English rights to the districts just mentioned. To this Mr. Hastings, after grave consideration, ultimately agreed, covenanting for the payment to the English treasury of fifty lakhs of rupees as compensation.

There are few candid minds who will refuse to admit that the action of Hastings in this respect was wise and statesmanlike. He renounced that which he did not want to retain, to procure the article of which his Government was in most urgent need. He gratified a very powerful ally; he made the districts he had ceded safe against Maráthá invasion by placing them in hands well able to defend them. He relieved himself of all obligations to the Emperor—of the agreement to pay an irksome tribute to one who, by his own act and against the urgent advice of the English, had become a tool of the Maráthá power. After-events completely justified his action. To renounce territory is always painful to a proud man of the English race. But sometimes it may be imperative; sometimes it may be the prelude to a further advance. In the instance before us, it was wisdom which prompted Hastings to an act which has stood the test of time, and has held its ground against the assaults of Edmund Burke and the invectives of Lord Macaulay.

The territorial question having been settled, it was believed that Mr. Hastings and the Nawwáb-Wazír would proceed to consider the matter which was regarded as even more crucial than the others—that of the Rohíla payment, overdue and virtually refused. That question was, however, relegated to subsequent consideration. In the treaty signed between the two contracting parties on the 7th of September, 1773, which defined the other two points of the agreement, no reference whatever was made to the Rohílas.

The question, however, was not forgotten. It remained always uppermost in the mind of Shujáu'd daulah, who in his heart rejoiced at the failure of Háfiz Rahmat to keep his solemn oath, because it gave him a legitimate claim to enforce

compensation for the debt. The moment seemed to him to be singularly opportune to enforce such compensation, for the Maráthás had quitted Hindustán, and the disturbances which followed the murder of the Peshwá, Narayan Ráo, seemed to indicate that a considerable time would elapse before they could possibly return. He therefore seized an early opportunity to press upon Hastings the desirability of aiding him with English troops against the defaulting mountaineers.

There were many important reasons which urged Hastings to turn, at this conjuncture, a favourable ear to the requests of the Nawwáb-Wazír. The Rohílas had proved themselves not only unable to stem a Maráthá invasion, but, by their double-dealing and their jealousy of Oudh, had lessened the power of the ruler of that province to repel one. In the late campaign the prompt advance of the allies alone had prevented an alliance between the Rohílas and the Maráthás. Oudh then occupied a position with respect to British India somewhat analogous to that assigned to Afghánistán in the present day. It was the buffer State to receive and repel the invasion of the people who considered that their destiny had marked them out as the successors of the Mughal. It was therefore essential that Oudh should be strong. That condition was impossible so long as there should remain on the weakest frontier of that province a horde of warriors, few indeed in number but fierce and unruly, themselves invaders or sons of invaders of the lands they occupied, very ambitious and very faithless. To have the strength, then, necessary to repel an attack in numbers on the part of the Maráthás, it was logically advisable that Oudh and Rohilkhand should be ruled by one potent hand. To obtain such an end, however, the Nawwáb-Wazír would not have presumed to urge on Hastings, nor would Hastings have listened to, a proposal for a predatory attack upon the Rohílas. But in the case they both had to consider there was a very serious cause of war. The Rohílas had not paid one rupee of the contribution of forty lakhs they had promised in the most solemn manner to pay to the Nawwáb-Wazír for his assistance in compelling the Maráthás to evacuate their country. By their refusal to pay they had actually invited invasion and the consequences of invasion. And it was because such invasion and its consequences would

give strength against the Maráthás to the buffer State which covered the British possessions, that Hastings, though well aware that he had been forbidden by his masters to extend his frontiers, though but recently advised from England that a new Commission to inquire into the state of affairs in Bengal and to supersede the actual authority there had been appointed, deliberately resolved to accede to the proposal of the Nawwáb-Wazír to furnish him with a brigade of British troops for the purpose of expelling the Rohílas from the country they had seized but a few years ago.

But before his assent had formally been given a difficulty arose. The Nawwáb-Wazír, on counting the cost of the engagements he had already made with Hastings, and on estimating the probable expenditure that would be entailed by an expedition against the Rohílas, came to the conclusion that it would be better, from a financial point of view, to postpone that expedition for a year. His own arguments on that point are so straightforward and so clear that I make no apology for transcribing them. The extract is made from the notes of Mr. Hastings, to be seen in the unpublished manuscripts of that statesman in the British Museum.* It runs as follows:—

"I dread" (the Wazír said) "whatever may interfere to disturb our union and disappoint my hopes. There is such a delicacy in the strictest friendship that affairs of accounts and money may destroy it, for if a man would sow dissension between two of his most intimate friends, his surest way to do it would be to persuade one to borrow money of the other. This is my case. I want not money, I desire not to enlarge my territory, I am content with what I possess, and should have sat down in quiet and in peace with all mankind if others would have let me. The designs of the Maráthás against me, and the necessity of obviating them, have forced me often to go to war. How could I avoid it? Whenever I have taken the field it has been for my own safety, not from enmity to others. This being the case, I wish to postpone the Rohíla plan, and to confine my present views to the possession of Kora and Allahábád, if it be agreeable to you, because I foresee that if I undertake both they may exceed my ability; and if I should fail in my engagements, God knows what would be the consequence. I can attend to the business of Kora and Allahábád, if I have no other business to divert my attention, in such a manner as effectually to ensure the possession of it, and I have no fears about the payments which I have to agree to; but if I am

* *Vide* Sir John Strachey's "Hastings and the Rohilla War," p. 110 and note.

engaged with the Rohílas with the monthly charge of the army, the forty lakhs to pay for the possession of that country, and forty-five for Kora and Allahábád, I fear the engagement is too weighty, and I may fail in it."

For these reasons the Nawwáb-Wazír desired to postpone the Rohíla business till the year following. Hastings, not at all unwilling, agreed, assuring the Nawwáb-Wazir, however, of his willingness to co-operate with him whenever the project could with prudence be resumed. He then returned to Calcutta, arriving there the first week of October, 1773. One of his first acts was to appoint, with the approval of his Council, a permanent Resident at the Court of the Nawwáb-Wazír. For this post he selected Mr. Nathaniel Middleton, a gentleman of ability, who had been engaged successfully in more than one confidential mission.

I have already told how, on the 30th of August this same year, the real head of the Maráthá confederacy, the Peshwá, Narayan Ráo, had been cruelly murdered, at the instigation, it was believed, of his uncle Raghunáth Ráo, who, after a short interregnum, succeeded him. The interval was sufficiently long to reassure the people of Hindustán against the chances of an immediate Maráthá invasion.

Hastings received this information, through the Nawwáb-Wazír, on the 23rd of October. He learned a few weeks later, from the same source, that the effect of the news on the turbulent Rohílas had been to induce them to cast longing eyes towards Itáwá and other districts in the Duáb. The Nawwáb-Wazír added that he had made up his mind not to permit this infraction of the public peace, and that, to prevent it, he would invade Rohilkhand, "for," he added, "in the first place they have not made good a single *dam* * of the forty lakhs of rupees, according to their agreement, and in the next, they are now going to take possession of another country." A few days later, November 22, Hastings laid, first before the Committee of Foreign Affairs, and then before the whole Council, his views as to the line of conduct which should be adopted with special reference to the Rohilkhand question, accompanying the statement with an impartial review of all the circumstances which had led to the actual situation. For three days the subject was debated in Council, no two

* *Dam*, a copper coin, the fortieth part of a rupee.

members being precisely of the same opinion. Finally it was resolved unanimously to request Hastings to draw up a resolution expressive of the general view, as it might present itself to his mind. This he did in a manner which met universal acceptance. The resolution, so accepted, ran as follows:—

"The Board, after due consideration of the matter in reference from the Select Committee, and of the President's representation, concur heartily in wishing to avoid the expedition proposed, without entering into the 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 he is under, from what passed on the subject between him and the Wazír at Banáras. They are equally solicitous to save the honour of the Company and watch over its interests, and for that reason they approve of the letter now before them, which seems calculated to save both. The conditions, if accepted, would undoubtedly secure the greatest possible advantage from such an enterprise; but they appear to them more calculated to drive the Wazír into a refusal, which is what they trust as its most probable and almost infallible consequence, and which they wish for as the proper result of this proposition and the present circumstances of affairs. Agreed, that the President be requested to forward the letter, as prepared by him, to the Wazír; and that order, the order of the 19th inst., to the chief at Patná and to the commanding officer at Dánápur, be forthwith issued."

The letter referred to in this resolution, addressed by Hastings to the Nawwáb-Wazír, may thus be summarized. Beginning by recapitulating the facts brought to his notice by the Nawwáb-Wazír in his most recent letter, and how he had answered him; how, namely, he had informed him of the death of the Peshwá, Narayan Ráo; of the accession of Rághunáth Ráo; of his resolution to take possession of the territory in the Duáb, formerly belonging to the Rohílas, but now to the Maráthás, and asking whether he, Hastings, was prepared to aid him with the English forces in case he should need them; how, in a subsequent letter, he, the Nawwáb-Wazír, had informed him, Hastings, of the intended raid by the Rohílas on Itáwá and the other parts of the Duáb referred to in the preceding letter; how he was resolved to carry out the plans arranged at Banáras for expelling the Rohílas from the territory to the north of his own, *i.e.* from the province called Rohilkhand, and asking whether Hastings

was still prepared to assist in the execution of that design; how Hastings had replied by stating that with respect to the Duáb, the Nawwáb-Wazír could act as he might deem most fitting; that whilst he could command the aid of the English forces for the defence of his own territories, he, Hastings, could not sit still and see him beaten without endeavouring to relieve him in a war beyond his borders, but begging him to avoid an enterprise at a distance from those borders, as his own instructions were peremptory not to engage the English troops except for the defence of Oudh; how, with respect to the Rohíla question, Hastings had stated that he was prepared to carry out the agreement he had entered into at Banáras; how, to prevent future misunderstandings, Hastings had then recapitulated in detail the monetary terms of that agreement; how he had asked whether the Nawwáb-Wazír was then prepared not only to begin the work, but to finish it, adding that if he was ready to carry it to completion, he could have the brigade stationed at Dánápur on sending a letter to the English Agent at Patná, stating his acquiescence in the conditions formulated by Mr. Hastings, and contained in a form which the latter enclosed, accompanied by a requisition for the troops; how Mr. Hastings had despatched letters to Mr. Lane at Patná and to the officer commanding at Dánápur, containing instructions in full accord with the letter just summarized to the Nawwáb-Wazír.

But the pear was not yet ripe. There was still some hesitation, alike on the part of some members of the Council and on that of the Nawwáb-Wazír. Sir Robert Barker, whilst approving of the letter just summarized, recorded a separate minute, in which he argued that the cession of Rohilkhand to Shujáu'd daulah, in addition to Kora and Allahábád, would render that Prince too powerful, unless he should transfer to the English the zamindárí of Chét Singh of Banáras. To the expedition against the Rohílas he had no objection on moral grounds. They had courted their fate, and must take the consequences. He simply dreaded that, whilst making the Nawwáb-Wazír strong enough to resist the Maráthás, it might render him too strong a neighbour for the English. Sir Robert Barker was a man of great ability, but, in the matter of the relative strength of the

ruler of Oudh, increased by the acquisitions he meditated, and of the British, his prescience fell short of that of Mr. Hastings.

Several members of the Council, again, whilst agreeing that, abstractedly, the policy of Mr. Hastings was the proper policy to pursue, dreaded lest the Court of Directors, far away from the spot, and actuated possibly by other influences, might regard it in a different light. Strong man as he was, Hastings could not but feel the force of those fears. He expressed the same at a subsequent date in a letter addressed to the Court of Directors.

Finally, to clench the uncertainty, there came the reply of Shujáu'd daulah to Mr. Hastings' letter. He was not, he said, ready for immediate action, and he had no present occasion for the troops. But he requested Hastings to direct the Commander-in-Chief to despatch them to him whenever he should send to that officer a requisition for them, "for the protection of my dominions."

Under these circumstances, Hastings was able to report to the Court (January 17, 1774) that the Nawwáb-Wazír had declined for the time the assistance of the English troops, but had desired that a brigade might be held in readiness to march "whenever he shall find it necessary to call on it for the defence of his own dominions;" that, until such time, the English would remain spectators of his action, keeping, however, a watchful eye over the course of events; ready, even anxious, to despatch the brigade whenever it might be called for, "as we shall then be eased of so considerable a part of the military expense, and have the discipline of our troops preserved in an actual service at so little distance from our frontiers."

Left thus, at his own desire, to himself, the Nawwáb-Wazír entered alone upon the enterprise of which he had given intimation to Mr. Hastings. He marched in November, 1773, on Itáwá. His plan was to take possession not only of that place, but of all the towns in the Duáb in which the Maráthás had left small garrisons, so as to be beforehand, in that respect, with the Rohílas. He encountered no opposition. Pursuing his course, he persuaded the Chief of Farrukhábád, Muzaffar Jang, a Rohíla by descent, to sever his connection with his

countrymen in Rohilkhand, and to acknowledge himself as his overlord. He pursued a similar policy with respect to Zábitá Khán, the titular first Minister of the Emperor. The reader will recollect that, at the time of the Maráthá invasion of Rohilkhand, this chief had deserted his countrymen, and made terms with the invaders. But the invaders had returned to their own lands, and Zábitá was hesitating whether, to secure himself in the times which he saw must come, he should not reconcile himself to Háfiz Rahmat. Just at the moment the Nawwáb-Wazír appeared on the scene, occupying the very positions which the Maráthás had vacated—a Prince, moreover, who would always be a near neighbour. Zábitá no longer hesitated; he promised his aid whenever the ruler of Oudh should decide to attack Rohilkhand.

Still unsatisfied, the Nawwáb-Wazír proceeded further. Agra, once the Mughal capital, and still a most important centre, had fallen into the possession of the Jâts, who largely composed the population of the provinces in its vicinity. Shujáu'd daulah assisted the Emperor's general, Najaf Khán, to recover that city. Then, to conciliate the Emperor, he made with him a secret agreement, carefully concealed from the English, under which he covenanted to bestow upon the Emperor one-half of such territories "as he might wrest from the possession of usurpers," whilst the latter agreed to bestow the other moiety on the Nawwáb-Wazír. There was an important proviso to this treaty, which will be referred to when I mention the attempt made by the Emperor to enforce the agreement.

Having thus cleared the Duáb of enemies and secured himself as firmly as, in those days, treaties could secure him, Shujáu'd daulah recognized that the time had arrived to make his spring upon Rohilkhand. He wrote therefore to Hastings to agree to all the conditions insisted upon by the latter, and to request that an English brigade might be at once ordered to join him, as it was his intention to attack the Rohílas with the least delay possible.

Mr. Hastings received this letter on the 3rd of February, 1774, less than one month after he had (January 10) announced his intention of deferring the expedition against the Rohílas to a more convenient season. There can be little

doubt, I think, but that the Nawwáb-Wazír was moved to this change of plan by the rapid success he had met with. Like a good general, he determined not to leave to the morrow the movement which he saw must be successful if carried out at the very hour.

After the interchange of ideas which had taken place between the English Government and the Nawwáb-Wazír, and the promises on both sides, it was impossible that Mr. Hastings could refuse the assistance now asked of him. Accordingly, he directed Colonel Champion, who had succeeded Sir Robert Barker, to assume command of the troops already marching, in virtue of the agreement with the Nawwáb-Wazír, in the direction of Oudh. He sent him likewise the fullest instructions alike as to the nature of the treaty and the purpose for which the troops were to be employed; * as to the money to be paid by Shujáu'd daulah and the action to be taken should that Prince fail in his engagements; as to his avoiding all occasion to give cause of offence to the Maráthás; and as to the necessity of cultivating a good understanding with the Nawwáb-Wazír, and of paying the strictest attention to the discipline of his troops.

On one point Hastings made a material difference between the powers entrusted to Colonel Champion and those formerly exercised by Sir Robert Barker. The latter had been Political Agent as well as General. But it will be recollected that after the interview at Banáras, Hastings had despatched Mr. Middleton to represent the English Government at the Court of Oudh. He directed that gentleman, therefore, to retain his functions during the campaign, and to accompany the Nawwáb-Wazír in the same capacity. This arrangement was very displeasing to Colonel Champion. Strangely enough, too, that officer was also nettled because Hastings would not confer upon him the rank of Brigadier-General—the fact being that Hastings had, as he read his instructions, no power to bestow such a rank. The force which Colonel Champion commanded consisted of the 2nd brigade of six battalions of sipáhís, the 2nd European regiment, the select picket, consisting of about a hundred cadets waiting for their

* "The reduction of the Rohíla country lying between the Ganges and the mountains."

commissions; and one company of artillery—a total of between six and seven thousand men.

It is not my purpose to follow the campaign in its details. We are concerned rather to watch the effect of the policy of Mr. Hastings. He had embarked on the enterprise of aiding the Nawwáb-Wazír of Oudh with British troops to conquer for himself the country between the Ganges and the mountains, commonly called Rohilkhand. He had prepared the means; we have to record the result.

It is therefore only necessary to state that the Nawwáb-Wazír and Colonel Champion joined forces in the middle of April at Sháhábád; that the former then made a formal demand to Háfiz Rahmat for the payment of the forty lakhs of rupees due to him under treaty; that after great delay Háfiz Rahmat returned an evasive answer, and then repairing to Aonlá, a town in the Baréli district, raised there his standard, and summoned the other chiefs to join him; that on their responding to the invitation, it soon transpired that their mutual jealousies would prevent all effective co-operation; that these jealousies were carefully fanned by the emissaries of the Nawwáb-Wazír; that, in consequence, no proper defensive measures were taken by the great body of the Rohílas. There prevailed in fact a jealousy and mistrust of Háfiz Rahmat, nor was there any other chief to whose guidance the others would unhesitatingly submit.

Under these circumstances there was but one course for the allies to pursue. Failing to receive a satisfactory reply from Háfiz Rahmat, they advanced into Rohilkhand and met the Rohílas ranged in order of battle, twenty-eight thousand strong with sixty guns, at Miránpur-Katrá, a town twenty miles west of Sháhjahánpur. The battle that followed is thus described by the native historian, Saadat Yár Khán,* a grandson of Háfiz Rahmat.

"On the 11th, Safár Shujáu'd daulah advanced with an army numbering 115,000 horse and foot. . . . Háfiz Rahmat went to the tent of Faizu-llah Khán, and said, 'My end is near at hand. So long as I remain alive do not turn away from the field; but when I fall, beware, do not press the battle,

* Sir H. Elliot's "History of India, as told by its own Historians," vol. viii. p. 312. The word "Safár," used as a prefix to the name of the ruler of Oudh, properly "Saffárá," means "a marshaller of troops."

but leave the field directly, and flee with my children and dependents to the hills. This is the best course for you to take; and, if you act upon my advice, it will be better for you.' After giving these directions he mounted his horse, and marched against the enemy with ten thousand horse and foot. He had proceeded only a short distance, when the advanced force of the enemy came in sight, and fire was opened from cannon and muskets. . . . Ahmad Khán, son of the Bakhshi, who had made a secret agreement with Shujáu'd daulah, now fell back, and set the example of flight, which many others followed. . . . Háfiz Rahmat had only about fifty supporters left when he drew near to the Tilangas* and English. He was recognized by his umbrella, of which spies had given a description, and a cannon was levelled against him. He advanced in front of all his companions, using his utmost efforts. The cannon-balls fell all around, and . . . at length one struck him on the breast. He was lifted off his horse, and after drinking a sip or two of water, he drank the cup of martyrdom."

If this can only be accepted as the grandson's version of a grandfather's prowess, there can be no doubt that it contains an element of truth. That there were both treachery and lukewarm support on the part of some Rohíla chiefs, may not, I think, be questioned; but to the bravery of Háfiz Rahmat and his followers, Colonel Champion bore evidence. The English contingent lost 132 men, the troops of the Nawwáb-Wazír 254, not including the casualties in the cavalry, of which no return was made.

The victory of Miránpur-Katrá practically concluded the war. Faizu'llah Khán, who succeeded to the chiefship of the Rohílas, fled to the mountain regions beyond the borders of Rohilkhand. In that province itself the invaders encountered no further resistance. The Rohílas, foreigners and successful raiders, had no root in the soil. Adventurers, they had succumbed to other adventurers stronger than they. One decisive battle had sufficed to take from them the province they had seized. The war had begun in April; in May Colonel Champion was able to report to Mr. Hastings that the whole of Rohilkhand was in possession of the Nawwáb-Wazír. For a time, indeed, the titular chief of the Rohílas continued from his border fastness to make proposals for the recession to him of the territories of which he had been possessed, on conditions which it would have been

* Tilanga, a name given to the sipáhís, from the fact that natives first wore the British red coat in southern India, anciently called Tilingáná.

impossible for him to perform. But to these both Mr. Hastings and the Nawwáb-Wazír turned a deaf ear. The latter, Colonel Champion reported, "rejected them with the greatest disdain." Mr. Hastings was not less positive in his refusal.

"We engaged to assist the Wazír," he wrote, "in reducing the Rohíla country under his dominion, that the boundary of his possessions might be completed by the Ganges forming a barrier to cover them from the attack and insults to which they were exposed, by his enemies either possessing, or having access to, the Rohíla country. . . . The Board undertook the Rohíla expedition on a firm conviction that the Wazír would be able to maintain his conquest of it, and that it would make his dominions more defensible. For the reasons before assigned, and with respect to myself, I declare that if I had not been morally certain of the justness of this reasoning, I would not have consented to enter upon the enterprise at all."

Regarding the immediate consequences of the rejection of Faizu'llah Khán's proposals, I may add that the allies pursued him to his fastness; but when they had arrived within striking distance of him, he submitted, on terms which, in consideration of the payment of fifteen lakhs of rupees, secured to him the territories formerly allotted to his father, together with the town and district of Rámpur, he becoming a feudatory of the Nawwáb-Wazír. Of the other Rohílas, some entered the service of the new master; some joined Zábitá Khán; others abandoned the sword for more peaceful pursuits; none were persecuted; and the country rapidly resumed an aspect infinitely more peaceful than it had displayed since the time when the tribe, the offshoot from the Yusufzais, had pounced upon and settled in it.

One episode remains to be recorded. The reader will recollect that before the Nawwáb-Wazír had decided to make then his raid on Rohilkhand, he had treated with the Emperor and arranged to transfer to him one-half of the conquests he might "wrest from the possession of usurpers." Scarcely then had he begun to reap the consequences of the battle of Miránpur-Katrá, than he received from Najaf Khán, the Emperor's general, a notification that such a treaty was in existence, and that its conditions would have to be carried out. Receiving no satisfactory reply to his reminder, Najaf Khán marched with his troops to the English camp, and put

his case before Colonel Champion. The Nawwáb-Wazír, in reply to the reference made to him by the English commander, admitted the validity of the treaty, but pointed out that it contained a clause which rendered it, under the actual circumstances, nugatory. By that clause the Emperor had engaged to assist personally in the campaign then about to be undertaken. He had failed to comply with that undertaking, and had therefore forfeited all right to participate in the spoil. Champion, not knowing exactly how to act, referred the matter to Calcutta. The reply of Mr. Hastings was clear, decisive, and just. The English, he said, had been no party to the treaty; they had remained in profound ignorance of its existence; they had no concern in its provisions; and they would not interfere. The demand of the Emperor, himself little more than a name, collapsed then under the firm attitude assumed by the Nawwáb-Wazír and the positive reply of Mr. Hastings.

Such was the conquest of Rohilkhand by the ruler of Oudh, assisted by the English. A few years later, an attempt was made to prove that the Rohíla war was based on injustice, conducted with cruelty, and concluded with rapine. These charges have been supported by famous names, with the object of ruining the reputation of the great proconsul who is the subject of this biography. Some of the motives of the traducers are known; some have only been guessed at, and will probably never be disclosed. This is a question which I hope to discuss more fully towards the close of this volume. But, whatever may have been the motives of the traducers, it is satisfactory to add that their charges have recoiled on their own reputations. Whilst the reputation of Warren Hastings has risen higher and higher with each decade; whilst writer after writer has come forward with conclusive evidence to attest the purity of his action and the greatness of his policy; nothing, it may safely be asserted, has so besmeared the fair fame of Mr. Burke than his treatment of the illustrious statesman whom he so unscrupulously assailed; nothing has so dimmed the reputation for truth and honesty of Lord Macaulay as his poisoned memoir of the same statesman; nothing has so convinced the world of the dishonesty of Mr. Mill as a historian, as the manner in which he endeavoured

to distort the truth on all matters connected with the first Governor-General of India. Amongst the charges brought against Mr. Hastings was one endeavouring to fix on him the responsibility for the cruelties alleged to have been committed by the troops of the Nawwáb-Wazír, in this Rohíla war. How completely the verdict of history, supported on ascertained facts, has reversed the conclusions which the enemies of Mr. Hastings endeavoured to establish, is proved by the examinations of the two latest writers on this subject. Sir John Strachey, one of the ablest men the Civil Service of India, fruitful in men of ability and resource, has ever produced; endowed with a great capacity for governing, of which he has given practical proof in India; an expert in the sifting of evidence; has, after a thorough investigation, arrived at the conclusion regarding the cruelties practised during and after the Rohíla War, which I now proceed to quote.*

"There never was an Indian war in which excesses were not committed. To restrain from all violence troops like those of Shujá-ud-daula would have been impossible, even if their commanders had desired it. Hastings was stating a notorious fact when he said that it was unfortunately true not only that these excesses were the general practice in Eastern warfare, but that the Vizier might find examples of conduct on the part of British troops similar to that of which he had been accused. We all know how, even in more modern times, wars in India have been carried on. The horrors of the Mutinies of 1857 are still fresh in our memories. Even in European countries, and in the present century, terrible atrocities have been committed; the strong will and stern discipline of Wellington could not always prevent in Spain cruelties towards a friendly people almost as abominable as any that have been perpetrated in India. If Hastings had not firmly resisted the lust of plunder, which, as I have shown, pervaded the English army in Rohilkhand, I fear it would not be the crimes of the Vizier alone that we should now be discussing. I do not doubt that this, like every other war, brought with it an amount of misery far worse than that of which any direct evidence is now before us, but at the same time it seems to me clear that Shujá-ud-daula would have been justified in saying that the campaign in Rohilkhand had been carried on with an absence of violence and bloodshed, and generally with a degree of humanity altogether unusual in Indian warfare. Nor can I doubt that this result was mainly due to the remonstrances of Hastings."

The testimony of Mr. George W. Forrest, based on selections he has lately collected from the records of the

* "Hastings and the Rohilla War," by Sir John Strachey, G.C.S.I. Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1892.

Calcutta Foreign Office,* is equally decisive. In his introduction he has penned these pregnant words—

"The Rohíla atrocities owe their birth to the malignity of Champion and Francis; their growth to the rhetoric of Burke; and their wide diffusion to the brilliancy and pellucid clearness of Macaulay's style."

In quoting this passage in his admirable work, Sir John Strachey pertinently adds—

"The only defect I can find in this perfectly just judgment is that in pronouncing it Mr. Forrest has forgotten the history of James Mill."

* "Selections from the Letters, Despatches, and other State Papers preserved in the Foreign Department of the Government of India, 1772–1785." Calcutta, 1890. Edited by Mr. George W. Forrest.

CHAPTER XII.

THE MALIGNITY OF CHAMPION—THE POLICY OF HASTINGS ON OTHER BORDERS.

THE Muhammadan historian, Muhammad Aslám, has given us, in his "Farhatu-Nazarin," * a sketch of the life of Burhánu-l Mulk, father of the Shujáu'd daulah, whose name has occurred so often in these pages. After relating his exploits and his death, Muhammad Aslám continues—

"He was succeeded by his son, the most upright, accomplished, and brave Jalalu-d din Haidar Shujáu'd daulah, who in the time of Sháh Álam obtained the office of Wazír, and excelled all competitors in wealth and rank. The son was even superior to the father."

This unstinted praise is by no means limited to the historian I have quoted. All the writers of the period who make mention of the name of Shujáu'd daulah speak of him as a man entitled to great respect, towering above the other chieftains who struggled to establish themselves on the ruins of the Mughal empire.

Yet it is this Prince, noted amongst his contemporaries for his personal courage and his valour on the field of battle, whom the commander of his English allies, Colonel Champion, singled out for detraction. In his account of the battle of Miránpur-Katrá, Champion accused Shujáu'd daulah of "shameful pusillanimity," † though he refrained from giving an instance of such behaviour. The charge is totally opposed to the well-known character of Shujáu'd daulah. There was

* "History of India, as told by its own Historians," vol. viii. pp. 173–4.

† Macaulay exaggerates the "shameful pusillanimity" of Champion into a statement that "the dastardly sovereign of Oude fled from the field." The statement is absolutely untrue; Lord Macaulay could not have indicated one single witness who would support the charge.

no occasion for any show of pusillanimity. The brunt of the battle had fallen, according to all concurrent testimony, on the English; but that the Oudh troops were engaged also is proved by the fact that two hundred and fifty-four of them were killed. Sir Henry Lawrence, who studied the question, has recorded (Sir John Strachey has reminded us) that "Shujáu'd daulah, whatever were his faults, was never before charged with cowardice." And the most prejudiced will admit that at the battle of Miránpur-Katrá there was no opportunity for the display of such a weakness. The battle went one way from its beginning to its close.

I have laid stress upon this charge made by Colonel Champion, and on the known character of the Nawwáb-Wazír, in order the better to account for the subsequent virulent conduct of the officer who preferred it. In a previous chapter I have shown that Colonel Champion had been greatly irritated against Mr. Hastings because the latter had not conferred upon him the same political powers which had been bestowed upon his predecessor, and had declined to give him the rank of Brigadier-General. Champion never forgave these refusals. Indeed, he carried his anger to the extent of endeavouring to thwart all those who were, in his opinion, bound to the policy of Mr. Hastings. Amongst these he included the Nawwáb-Wazír, who was guilty of the further outrage, as he considered it, of allowing himself to be guided by the counsels of the Resident, Mr. Middleton, rather than by those of the commander of the English brigade.

These feelings will account, to a great degree, for the report of Colonel Champion regarding the pusillanimity of Shujáu'd daulah. But events were soon to occur which would greatly strengthen, even embitter, the unworthy sentiments of Colonel Champion. No sooner had the allies gained the victory of Miránpur-Katrá than the troops of the Nawwáb-Wazír hurried in pursuit of the enemy, plundering, as an army under such circumstances always will plunder. But Champion, true to his instructions, had kept back the English troops. His report of the circumstance proves that he did not much relish this enforced inaction. In that report he wrote—

"Their [the enemy's] camp-equipage, which was all standing, and

proves we came on them by surprise, with whatever effects they could not carry off, fell a sacrifice to the ravages of the Nawwáb's people, whilst the Company's troops, in regular order in their ranks, most justly observed: 'we have the honour of the day and these banditti the profit!'"

Subsequent events proved that this feeling was produced by the disappointment that the English troops did not share in the plunder. Five days after the battle, Champion reported to Mr. Hastings that it was believed that an immense treasure existed in the Fort of Pilibhít, and he asked that statesman whether the Board, *i.e.* the Council, considered "their troops entitled to any share or consideration of treasure, etc., should anything considerable be found during the further progress of their conquests, either in the field or garrison." Champion was not content with asking this question. A few days later the Resident, Middleton, wrote to Mr. Hastings in a private letter that the affair, that is, the action of Champion, had been the source of much dissatisfaction to the Nawwáb. What that action was may be gathered from the report made by the Nawwáb himself six months later to Mr. Hastings. The report was to the effect that when he entered Pilibhít he found the English soldiers committing outrages in the town, and that whilst he was remonstrating against this, Champion came to him and informed him that the English officers said that there were four karors of rupees (four millions sterling) in the place, to a part of which the English troops would be entitled, and begged him to send three officers to inquire into the case, for that otherwise the English troops would mutiny; that he, the Nawwáb-Wazír, then informed Champion that there was not so much as four or five thousand rupees in the place, but that even had there been more it was no business of the English. Stating then that he had honourably kept all his engagements, paying regularly all that he had covenanted to pay, the Nawwáb-Wazír thus commented on the unseemly conduct of the English officers permitted by Colonel Champion—

"I have long been acquainted with the principal English gentlemen, such as Lord Clive and others, as well as yourself, but I never saw it customary that the principal chief and commander of the whole should sit still, and let every one else talk as each thought fit."

The occurrence thus commented on took place early in May. Some days later, Champion, far from being abashed at the reproof he had received from the Nawwáb-Wazír, wrote to Hastings to the effect that since the battle of Miránpur-Katrá the Nawwáb-Wazír had been plundering the whole country; that he had accumulated effects to the value, he was confident, of fifty lakhs of rupees; that that sum would be doubled if he could get hold of the treasure and effects of Faizu'llah Khán; that some portion of this was surely due to the English army; and that he was afraid that if some mark of favour and gratification for their services is not manifested, "it may be dangerous ever to try an experiment of this kind again, or to put the patience and temper of any part of your troops so much to the proof."

This letter alone would be sufficient to stamp Champion as a man utterly unfit to lead British troops. It was received in Calcutta with something akin to dismay. Letters from Middleton and the Nawwáb-Wazír himself showed how the action of Champion was tending to cause variance and disunion between the two allies. But there was no lack of firmness in the action of the Governor and his Council. Already Hastings had endeavoured, but vainly, by private letters, to bring Champion to a sense of his misconduct. Now he dealt with him officially. On the 3rd of June the Government sent Champion an official order to inform the troops that they were not to expect any share of the riches acquired by the Wazír; that the insubordinate spirit he reported as having been shown by the troops would have sufficed, had there been no other reason, to induce the Government to oppose such a demand; that they recommended him, in the warmest manner, to exert himself to bring the troops to a proper disposition on the subject; to discourage the reports, generally founded on idle rumour, of riches and treasure found by the Wazír. Before this letter reached Champion, the misunderstanding between himself and the ruler of Oudh had gone on increasing, mainly in consequence of the want of cordiality displayed by himself, and although he reported (July 3) that he had carried out the orders transmitted to him on the 3rd of June, it is certain that he took no measures to conceal his own personal discontent at

the decision of the Government, and that he continued to fan rather than quench the feeling to which his own discontent and avarice had given the first impulse. The ill-feeling of the English troops and their officers increased at last to such a point that Hastings, instructed by Middleton, became thoroughly alarmed. His feeling was shared by the Nawwáb-Wazír, who, appreciating to the full the loyalty of Hastings and his Council, could not conceal his dread lest his allies, secretly encouraged by their commander, might break out, as they had done in Bengal in the time of Clive.* He determined, therefore, if possible, to appease the avaricious feelings which had been roused by granting the English troops a gratuity for their services. He accordingly, of his own impulse, wrote to Champion, announcing his intention to bestow on the English brigade a donation of seven lakhs of rupees (equivalent then to about £80,000). Afterwards he proposed to present three lakhs of rupees to Champion, and fifty thousand rupees to the other officers; but of this Champion made no mention at the time, although, after the new Government had been installed in the manner presently to be related, he stated that he had thrown the three lakhs into the common fund, taking his chance of drawing a proportion.

The action of the Nawwáb-Wazír was not at all approved by Hastings, who considered that it was highly improper and subversive of discipline to bestow on an army in the field a donation extorted by clamour and insubordination. He wrote in this spirit to the Nawwáb-Wazír, but before his remonstrance arrived that Prince had already given Champion a bond to pay the money in six months. Hastings then closed the discussion by informing Champion that the Acts of Parliament by which they were bound, laid down that no servants of the Company, civil or military, could be allowed to receive any presents under any pretence whatever.

The action of the Nawwáb-Wazír, in granting the donation, failed then in the purpose for which it was designed. Far from restoring order and good conduct among

* Champion had been one of the instruments of Clive in repressing the mutiny of 1766. It is quite probable that the recollection of the mode in which that mutiny was quelled may have influenced both officers and men on this occasion.

the British troops, it had made matters worse. The decision of the Calcutta Government had stultified it. On this result being realized in camp there was a talk of appealing to the Home Government. The relations between the English brigade and the Nawwáb-Wazír became at length so strained that the latter pressed upon Middleton the desirability of withdrawing the English brigade. Middleton reported this state of affairs to Hastings on the 22nd of September, and Hastings, fully alive to the magnitude of the danger, selected an officer in whom he had confidence, Colonel Macleane, then Commissary-General, to proceed to the English camp, armed with a letter to Champion, explanatory of the purpose of his mission, to endeavour to reconcile the conflicting claims of the Nawwáb-Wazír and the English Commander-in-Chief. Hastings took this step on his own authority without consulting his Council, and without informing any one save Middleton.

Colonel Macleane reached the allied camp a few days after the Nawwáb-Wazír had signed the peace with Faizu'llah Khán, described in the last chapter. He found the English in a lamentable condition of indiscipline. One may search the military history of our own country without finding a situation parallel to it in that respect. One fortnight before Macleane arrived, and when the peace with Faizu'llah Khán had not yet been signed, Champion had assembled the field officers of his force to discuss the point as to how much they should demand from the Nawwáb-Wazír, as a consideration for assisting in the attack, then considered imminent, on the position of Faizu'llah. Some had proposed to demand twenty lakhs, some fifteen, some ten, whilst Champion himself had suggested the more moderate amount of five lakhs, at the same time expressing his hopes that the Wazír might offer a larger sum. Fortunately nothing came of this meeting, for, as we know, Faizu'llah Khán accepted terms from Shujáu'd daulah. The matter, however, still remained rankling in the minds of Champion and his officers, and Macleane reached their camp only just in time to prevent the marching of a deputation of the captains of the force to Colonel Champion to demand "whether any notice had been taken of the army in the treaty with Faizu'llah Khán, as

they were ready to storm the town before the treaty took place." In other respects Macleane found the discipline of the officers very unsatisfactory. Champion had "lost all credit and weight with the army;" "indecent clamour prevailed and was encouraged." In the matter of their purely military duties the officers showed a better spirit, and Macleane, after consulting Middleton, expressed himself hopeful that the measures he had decided to take would be crowned with success.

By this time the officers generally had discovered the unworthy character of their commander. He was a man "who can," wrote one of them, "be guilty of any meanness." On the advice of Macleane they forwarded to Mr. Hastings a respectful address, signed by the field officers only, though not by Colonel Champion, "submitting respectfully to his determination, and craving protection and good offices for the army." This document, which arrived in Calcutta after the Government had been remodelled, was forwarded to the Court of Directors for their orders, and the money paid by the Nawwáb-Wazír was placed in deposit.

With this the incident, so far as concerned the brigade, though not Colonel Champion, terminated for the time. I may mention here how it concluded. On the 15th of December, 1775, the Court of Directors wrote that the existing Act of Parliament rendered impossible the acceptance of the money by the army, but that they would consider the propriety of applying for a special Act to authorize the payment of it. Ultimately, eleven years after that date, the Court authorized the payment of the money "to the several claimants or their legal representatives." * It was not till thirteen years after the conclusion of the war that the claims were

* Sir John Strachey's "Hastings and the Rohilla War," p. 171. It would be unfair to Sir John Strachey, to whose book I am so much indebted for the narrative of the events recorded in this chapter, if I were to refrain from quoting his own words as to the source whence he obtained his information regarding the final disposal of the Nawwáb-Wazír's gift. He writes: "I believe that this account of the discontent in the army and of the anxiety of Hastings is the first that has been published, and the wish of Hastings, that the reasons for Colonel Macleane's mission might remain unknown, would have been fulfilled but for the existence in the British Museum of the secret correspondence on the subject. Mr. F. C. Danvers has been good enough to trace for me in the India Office Records the subsequent history of the Vizier's gift."

finally settled. Long before that period there had gone to their long resting-places, the Nawwáb-Wazír, many of the soldiers, but not, unfortunately for his own fame, Colonel Champion. This man became one of the most envenomed traducers of Mr. Hastings.

I turn now to consider for a moment the action of Mr. Hastings on the frontiers of the British territories in Bengal during the eventful two years of his earlier incumbency. In the extreme north of Bengal, bordering on the independent states of Sikkim and Bhután, lies the territory of Kuch-Bihár, then ruled by an independent Rájá. I may premise that the people of Sikkim are Tibetans, who recognize the overlordship of the Chinese Empire, and that their frontier towards India is guarded, by the orders of the rulers of that empire, against the entrance of Europeans. The inhabitants of Bhután, called Bhutiás, are Buddhists, governed by a Chief called the Deb Rájá, elected by the council of nobles. They have also a religious Chief, known as the Dharmá Rájá, a perpetual Avatar, who resides at Punakhá, to the north of Kuch-Bihár. Kuch-Bihár is linked to Bengal by the district of Goalpárá to the east, by Rangpur to the south and south-west, and to the west by Dinájpur. The sympathies of its people are with the inhabitants of those regions, with whom they are connected by ties of faith, rather than with their northern neighbours. It happened that in 1772, the Bhutiás, prompted by love of plunder, had invaded Kuch-Bihár, and had pressed the young Rájá so hardly, that he in despair had appealed to Mr. Hastings for assistance to drive them back. To tempt the English ruler to render him the aid promptly and efficiently, the Rájá offered to recognize the overlordship of the East India Company, and to assign half his revenues to the Government of Bengal. Such an offer was not to be refused. Mr. Hastings accepted it gladly, despatched a force of sipáhís, sufficient in number to expel the enemy, and after their expulsion concluded a treaty with the Deb Rájá, in virtue of which the Bhutiás were granted the right of trading with Rangpur. I may add that the treaty with Kuch-Bihár has well stood the test of time. The overlordship of British India over that State still continues, and its Rájá is one of the most loyal, enlightened, and progressive sovereigns in the empire.

Whilst the little war with the Bhutiás was still in progress, the Teshu Llama, one of the two highest religious authorities in Tibet—a province of China bordering on Nipál, and extending on both sides beyond the frontier of that kingdom—had sent a letter to Mr. Hastings, begging him to deal mercifully with his vassal, the Deb Rájá of Bhután. We have already seen how Hastings responded to that request. But he did not stop there. Recognizing the enormous advantages which must accrue to the British if he could but establish a regular trade through Tibet with the Chinese Empire, he despatched, shortly after the conclusion of peace with Bhután, a very intelligent young civilian (Mr. George Bogle) to visit the Teshu Llámá, and talk the matter over with him, with the view of arriving at an arrangement. Bogle set out in May, 1774, carrying with him specimens of every kind of Indian produce. His route lay through Bhután. There a new Deb Rájá, successor to the invader of Kuch-Bihár, gave him a most hospitable reception, and encouraged him to hope for success. Pushing on, he reached, without much difficulty, the town of Dasharigpé, the head-quarters, for the time, of the Teshu Llámá. Bogle presented his credentials to that high functionary, was received with great cordiality, accompanied the Llámá in his march across the upper Brahmaputrá, called there the Tsanpu, and was received as a guest by the Llámá in his palace at Teshu-Lumbo. He was hoping to proceed further, and to reach Lhása, the seat of the Grand Llama, when the Governor of the province, taking alarm at the presence of a foreigner, issued instructions which compelled him to return to India. His mission, however, had not been fruitless. The Teshu Llámá, completely won over, continued to work for permission from the Chinese authorities for the English to trade with Tibet. His death in 1780, and the death of Bogle the following year, seemed for the moment to dissipate all the hopes that had been entertained. But new men, equally adventurous, rose to succeed those who had departed. In 1783 a new mission under Captain Turner proceeded to the point which Bogle had reached. Again the enterprise seemed on the verge of success, when the hostile action of the Gurkhás compelled the Chinese Government to direct the closing of all the passes leading from India

into their dependencies. The great merit of having attempted to open out a beneficial trade with the countries bordering India does not the less belong to Warren Hastings.

The two years' record for the administration of foreign affairs can take rank, therefore, with the splendid record of the civil and judicial administration during the same period. To that I have referred in previous chapters. It is a great merit of Mr. Hastings' administration that he carried out simultaneously civil reforms and important military operations. Whilst his faculties seemed to be absorbed by arranging for the better administration of justice; by the transferring the courts of revenue from Murshídábád to Calcutta; by the hunting out of dakaits; by personally conducting the trial of Muhammad Rizá; by maintaining a perpetual watch on the doings and intrigues of Nandkumár; by establishing and putting into execution a new scheme for the better collection of the revenue; by educating his colleagues and training his executive officers; he dealt in a statesmanlike manner with the Maráthás who threatened the frontier; with the friendly Prince who defended it; with the Rohílas who, at first nominally acting as his allies, were always plotting to betray him. The condition of the north-west frontier after the war is alone a sufficient justification for the policy of Hastings. Based upon right, it substituted a solid frontier for a frontier always threatened, alike by Maráthá invasion, and by the faithlessness and ambition of the Afghán tribe, which, in the sorest moment of the decadence of the Mughal Empire, had seized and occupied the territory which, in a military sense, was the glacis of the province of Oudh. His policy stood the test of time, for it lasted until one of his successors, his equal in genius and foresight, the great Marquess Wellesley, claimed for England the province which English troops had helped to conquer, on grounds sufficient in themselves, but upon which it would be foreign to the purpose of this book to enter. But for this policy, alike masterly and successful, Hastings was assailed, at a later period, in the Parliament of his country, with a savage unscrupulousness unparalleled, except in the arraignment of Lord Strafford, in the history of England. He has been assailed since with equal malignity by unscrupulous writers.

But whilst the highest tribunal in the country recorded his triumphal acquittal, it is only of later years that the descendants of his contemporaries have vindicated his memory—and his policy. There is now no question but that in all the matters connected with the Rohíla war Hastings acted with the foresight of a statesman, with the fullest conviction of the justice of his cause, and with the strongest sense of the necessity for the action which he carried out for the safety of the British provinces in India.

The reputation of his adversaries—of those adversaries who in India; in the House of Commons, before the Tribunal in Westminster Hall; and in essays illustrated by a great name, spared no efforts and shrank from no perversion of facts to destroy him—has, in the presence of the truth, unveiled during the past ten years, faded and withered, whilst his own stands on a pedestal which no time can destroy.

Hastings was so gifted by nature that there were few men, alike able and honest, whom a short experience of his action failed to convince of his sincerity. Let us glance, for a moment, at his dealing with his colleagues in Council. Coming round from Madras to take precedence of them all, he devoted himself with so much intensity to the public interests that he gradually won their support. He never attempted to override them. He gave them the example of steady, unremitting, patient work. By forming the Council into committees of three or four he brought into play the individuality of each member. Attending these committees himself, he combated objections with argument, placing before his colleagues his reasons so clearly that, although they did not always altogether agree with them, they invariably recognized the honesty of his purpose. In the last chapter I have recorded a striking instance of his method of proceeding. I refer to the occasion when a doubt existed as to the reply which should be given to the Nawwáb-Wazír when he demanded the aid of British troops. The question was submitted to the full Council. They debated it for three days, each member presenting a view differing from the views of his colleagues. Finally, recognizing the straightforward mind of Hastings, they unanimously requested

him to draw up a reply which should embody the general ideas of each member; and this seemingly impossible task Hastings performed to the satisfaction of all. In fact, he succeeded, to use the term of a modern statesman, in "educating" his Council. In 1773 he had written to his late colleague at Madras, Mr. Dupré, that after various contests, disputes, and an almost open rupture, there reigned amongst the members of the Council perfect harmony and confidence.

"I am assured," he had added, "of a most cordial support from my associates, and can venture to delegate a share of my labours, which I have hitherto undertaken alone, without the same hazard of sacrificing my own authority."

We now enter upon another period of his Indian career: a period of almost constant friction with impossible colleagues; of thwartings and intrigues; of backbiting and slander; of blind hatred and determined opposition on the one side, to be met on the other by a resolute perseverance in well-doing, and, eventually, by a final and well-deserved triumph. In narrating the history of this period, I shall have to record how Hastings, despite of this backbiting, of these intrigues, of this concentrated hatred, succeeded, more than once, in saving the British Empire in India.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE NEW CONSTITUTION FOR INDIA—THE ARRIVAL OF THE NEW JUDGES, AND OF THE NEW MEMBERS OF COUNCIL—CHARACTERS OF THE LATTER — THEIR LANDING AND THEIR RECEPTION.

In a previous chapter I have described the terrible effect upon the Company's possessions in India of the famine of 1770–71; how, even after the arrival of Hastings in Calcutta, the treasury was empty, and the credit of the Company at vanishing point; and how, notwithstanding the reforms he effected, the treasury did not immediately fill, nor did credit immediately return. Amongst the expenses Hastings had to meet not one embarrassed him so much as that which necessitated the remission to England of money required there for the payment of the quarterly dividends. Sometimes, indeed, he could remit nothing, nor could he hold out an early prospect of payment. He was rebuilding the great State mansion, and for a long time he was required to make bricks without straw. Only with the greatest difficulty could he meet the current expenditure. He could not forestall the prosperity which, he recognized, would accrue from the working of the reforms he had introduced.

The penury of the three provinces made itself felt at the India Office. Matters there were bad in 1771; they were much worse in the summer of 1772. When Parliament met in November of that year, the Prime Minister, Lord North, disclosed to it the applications which had been made to the Treasury by the India Office during the few months immediately preceding. He stated that the balances at the India Office had become so low, that, unable to borrow from the Bank of England, the Court had applied to the Government

for a loan of at least a million sterling; that he had replied that he could do nothing without the consent of Parliament; and that he therefore moved for the appointment of a Secret Committee of thirteen members to be chosen by ballot to take into consideration the whole state of the Company's affairs. This motion was carried, and the Committee was appointed.

Then ensued a duel between the Court and the Committee as to by whom the inquiry should be undertaken. Little relishing the idea that their affairs should be exposed to the scrutiny of a Parliamentary Committee, the Court hastened to pass a resolution to send out to India at their own expense a batch of supervisors—an impotent remedy at the best. But the Secret Committee declined to fall into the trap. Within ten days they reported to the House that the measure of the Court might prove a serious obstacle to the inquiry ordered, and begged that the Court's action should be arrested. The House responded by passing a temporary bill to prevent the Court from acting in the manner they had announced.

Matters rested in this condition till the spring of 1773. Lord North then brought in his own measure for the relief of the Company. This Act, known as the Regulating Act, granted to the Company a loan of a million and a half for four years, and relieved them of the annual payment to the State of £400,000; it restrained the Company from making a greater dividend than six per cent. till the loan should be repaid, and a greater dividend than eight per cent. until the public should participate in the profits; it enacted further that instead of annual elections of the whole number of Directors at the India House, six should retire each year, and that none should sit longer than four years; the qualification for a vote was also raised.

Lord North's Act further provided for important changes to be made in India. The first of these laid down that the Mayor's Court in Calcutta should be restricted to petty cases of trade, and that in its place should be constituted a Supreme Court, to consist of a Chief Justice and three Puisne Judges, appointed by the Crown. Another clause laid down that thenceforth the Governor of Bengal was to have authority over the other Presidencies, and to be styled Governor-General of India. He was not, however, to control his own

Council, but was to submit to the will of the majority. Only in the event of an equality of numbers was he permitted a casting vote. The nominations to Council were to be made, in the first instance and for the following five years, by Parliament; they were then to revert to the Directors, subject to the approval of the Crown. The first nominations were as follows: Mr. Hastings was appointed Governor-General; Mr. Richard Barwell, an actual colleague in Calcutta, General Clavering, Colonel Monson, and Mr. Philip Francis were nominated members of his Council. Of these five the first two were, as we know, actually in harness, Barwell, who had begun by opposing Hastings, having been won over by the great qualities the Governor had displayed during the two years of his administration. Of the three others it is necessary to say something.

General Clavering was a mere soldier, hot-headed, possessing little intellect, endowed with a disposition which could recognize merit only in a policy which might commend itself to his narrow view. Like the majority of men so constituted, he was liable, despite his hot-headedness, to be easily led by those who would take the trouble to pay him court; whilst to views assimilated under others' influence, to which he had once adhered, he would cling with all the tenacity of a slender brain. He had seen some service in the West Indies, having led the successful attack on Guadeloupe in May, 1759. The parliamentary votes, of which he could dispose, had given him considerable influence with Lord North, and that fatal Prime Minister displayed his gratitude by nominating Clavering to be a colleague of Warren Hastings.

Colonel Monson was very similar in character and disposition to General Clavering. He had done some soldiering in southern India, but he was as small-brained, as obstinate, as easily won by judicious flattery, as tenacious in wrong, as devoid of fair judgment as was General Clavering. The two men were, in fact, admirably fitted to become the abject slaves of a stronger will, of a masterful mind, of a man who, endowed with vast talents, employed them to inflict pain and, if possible, ruin on those whom he disliked.

Such a man was the third of the group, Mr. Philip Francis. The son of the accomplished chaplain of Henry Fox, Lord

Holland, Philip Francis was born in Dublin on the 22nd of October, 1740. When only sixteen years old, Henry Fox, then Secretary of State, employed him as clerk in his office; and when he made way for William Pitt in December of the same year, he had sufficient interest to transfer his young clerk with the office. Two years later Pitt persuaded General Bligh, then about to command an expedition against the coasts of France, to take Francis with him as private secretary. In 1760 Francis accompanied Lord Kinnoul in the same capacity when the latter proceeded as ambassador to Portugal. After his return to England he was appointed, in 1763, a clerk in the Ministry of War, then directed by Welbore Ellis, afterwards Lord Mendip. He threw up his post in 1772 in consequence of an altercation with Lord Barrington, who had succeeded Welbore Ellis. He took advantage of his leisure to travel in Flanders, in Germany, in France, and in Italy. Shortly after his return in 1773, he was nominated, by the influence of the same Lord Barrington, whose dislike had been changed, no one knew why, into a warm friendship, to be a member of the Council of India.

The outline thus given of the official career of Francis gives no indication of his character or of the other employments to which he devoted his leisure hours. But during the time of his sojourn at the War Office, there had appeared in the public journals and pamphlets of the day a series of bitter letters attacking the public men of the period, successively, with a virulence of abuse never before or since equalled, and impossible to surpass. These letters, signed by JUNIUS, have never been acknowledged; but it has been proved, to the satisfaction of a large majority of public men, that they owed their conception and their execution to Philip Francis. They appeared whilst he was at the War Office; they ceased when he quitted it. In all of them there is visible that intense bitterness, that unscrupulous malignity, that disregard of justice, that absolute indifference to the feelings of his victims, which characterized the proceedings of Mr. Francis when he was member of Council in Calcutta. Of the other indications, such as the general similarity in the form of certain letters with the known peculiarities of the handwriting of Francis, it is only necessary to state that such

similarity has been deemed strong evidence in favour of the contention. But I do not dwell upon that. It is rather the blackness of the heart, displayed alike in the letters of Junius and the Indian career of Mr. Francis; the malignity of the intellect; the vindictive nature which delighted in wounding; the indifference to, or, I might rather say, the revelling in, the mental tortures of those whom he so virulently assailed, which stamp the writer and the councillor as the same man. None but Francis could have been the parallel of Junius.

This opinion is not the opinion of a mere partisan. It was shared to a great extent, if not wholly, by those who used the demoniacal abilities of Francis to ruin Hastings. In an eloquent passage of his excellent sketch of the life of Warren Hastings,* Captain Trotter has dwelt upon this fact with great force and skill.

"Macaulay," he writes, "in his well-known description of that vitriolic satirist [Junius],† has, according to Herman Merivale, the biographer of Francis, given us a perfect likeness of Francis himself. 'Junius was clearly a man not destitute of real patriotism and magnanimity, a man whose vices were not of the sordid kind. But he must also have been a man in the highest degree arrogant and insolent; a man prone to malevolence, and prone to the error of mistaking his malevolence for public virtue. "Doest thou well to be angry?" was the question asked in old time of the Hebrew prophet. And he answered, "I do well." This was evidently the temper of Junius; and to this cause we attribute the savage cruelty which disgraces several of his letters. No man is so merciless as he who, under a strong delusion, confounds his antipathies with his duties.' Merivale himself speaks of his 'proud, unaccommodating spirit,' while Sir James Stephen adds 'falsehood, treachery, and calumny' to the list of his darker traits. Francis's malignant nature, his keen, versatile intellect, his arrogant self-esteem, his strong prepossessions, his combative instincts, his crafty daring, his wrong-headed zeal for any cause that took his fancy, all these qualities marked him out as a leader in the long and furious struggle into which his party were about to drag the Governor-General of Bengal."

Such was the man who, as yet unsuspected of having been the writer of the Junius letters, landed in Calcutta in October, 1774, to become the colleague of Mr. Hastings. On his voyage out in the *Ashburnham* he had been able, with

* "Rulers of India: Warren Hastings," by Captain L. J. Trotter, pp. 96, 97.

† It is hardly necessary to add that Macaulay identifies Francis as having been the author of the letters of Junius.

the most perfect ease, to obtain a complete mastery over the minds of General Clavering and Colonel Monson. He brought then with him three votes to oppose to Mr. Hastings and Mr. Barwell. He landed practically arbiter of the situation. Another vessel, the *Anson*, sailing in company with the *Ashburnham*, conveyed to Calcutta the four new judges of the Supreme Court. These were Sir Elijah Impey, a Westminster school-friend of Hastings, as Chief Justice; Mr. Chambers, Mr. Hyde, and Mr. Lemaistre, as Puisne Judges. Hastings had been for some time expecting their arrival. Let us see how he received them, and how they answered his courtesies.

For some time past Hastings had known that a considerable change in the constitution of the government of British India was impending. Rumour had even exaggerated the nature and extent of the intended reforms. But he had been posted in the details of the actual scheme whilst the ships bearing the newly appointed councillors and judges were still on the ocean, and, true to himself, he prepared to receive his new colleagues with the courtesy and respect due to their position. Believing that the two ships would touch at Madras on their way up the bay, he wrote letters abounding in assurance and welcome, and even more, to the three councillors, to be delivered immediately their ship should anchor in the Madras roads. To Francis, indeed, his letter was particularly graceful. After congratulating him on his appointment "to a share of the administration of this Government," he added:

"I received with particular pleasure a letter from General Clavering, wherein he unites with his own intentions an assurance of your disposition to co-operate in measures of public utility. My hopes and wishes are equally sanguine, to concur heartily in such measures as will most fully answer the intention of your appointment and reflect honour on our councils. I shall impatiently expect your arrival here, both from the personal satisfaction I propose to myself from it, and the desire of entering upon the several public measures which may be necessary for the discharge of the great trust confided to our joint direction."

To Clavering and Monson Hastings wrote at least as warmly. To the latter, after the usual complimentary congratulations, he thus expressed himself:—

"Though I have not the advantage of being personally known to you, I flatter myself we shall not meet on the footing of strangers; and I beg leave to assure you that I shall seek to cultivate both your friendship and confidence, as well from personal prepossession, as from the conviction of the necessity of such a mutual understanding for the conduct of the great and difficult affairs in which we have been joined."

Hastings concluded the letter by begging Colonel Monson to present his compliments to Lady Anne Monson, who was accompanying him, "in the hopes that I may have the honour still to bear a place in her remembrance"—a phrase which shows that they were not absolute strangers to each other. To General Clavering his letter of welcome was couched in similar or nearly similar terms.

The ship conveying the three councillors anchored off Khejirí, the first station on the Huglí river, on the 14th of October. Thither Mr. Hastings despatched the senior member of his administration present in Calcutta, to bid his new colleagues a welcome. The difficulties of navigating the Huglí below Calcutta were greater in those days than they are at present, and it was not till the 19th that the vessel cast anchor at Chandpál Ghát. Hastings had directed that a salute of seventeen guns should be fired as the new councillors landed, and had despatched an officer of his staff to conduct them to his house at Alipur, a pleasant suburb of Calcutta. But these honours irritated rather than satisfied the new arrivals. Why, they asked angrily, was the salute limited to seventeen guns, instead of the regal twenty-one? Why was there no guard of sipáhís to do them honour? Whatever had been the civilities of the Governor-General, the three councillors were in the disposition to pick holes in them. They made no endeavour to conceal their feelings; and when they reached Alipur, and found Hastings, surrounded by the members of his Council, standing to receive them, they replied to his greetings with a coldness bordering on incivility, and made an early pretext to retire.*

* That there was no tangible charge for incivility on the part of Hastings is evident from his letter on the subject to the Court of Directors, dated the 3rd of December, 1774—a letter, the statements in which the reply of the three councillors, dated the 18th of July following, fails altogether to impugn. In his journal, quoted by Dr. Busteed ("Echoes from old Calcutta," p. 87), Francis recorded that the reception was "mean and dishonourable." After replying in the letter above quoted to this charge in detail, Hastings thus

In connection with the landing of the new members of Council I have to add that the *Anson*, which conveyed the four judges, and which was a better sailor than her consort, arrived so as to permit her passengers to land two days before the new councillors. The judges were received with the usual ceremonies, and these, though inferior to those accorded to the arrivals by the *Ashburnham*, gave no offence to any one of their number. Hastings had procured for his old friend Impey, the Chief Justice, a house just vacated by Colonel Macleane, "until you can be provided for more to your liking." Suitable arrangements had been made likewise for his three colleagues.

So much for the reception of the new arrivals. To the next chapter I must defer the history of the working of the new Constitution.

summarizes the facts: "Upon the whole I must remark that I paid them higher honours than had ever been paid to persons of their rank in this country; as high even as had been paid to Mr. Vansittart and Lord Clive, when they came in the first station as Governors—men whose names will ever stand foremost in the memories of the people of this country, and who merited as much from their employers as any who have filled, or are likely to fill, that station. I wrote letters severally to the three gentlemen at Madras, bespeaking their confidence, as a measure necessary to the safety of the Company. The Board sent their senior member down the river to meet them; and, as a mark of personal respect from me, one of the gentlemen of my staff attended them; the whole Council attended at my house to receive them on their landing. What more could I do without derogating from my own rank? But they seem to have considered themselves as the Government, and to have required the honours due to it entire, to be paid to their own persons, forgetting that they were only a part, and that it was from the head they expected such concessions."

CHAPTER XIV.

JUNIUS ON HORSEBACK.

WARREN HASTINGS was now Governor-General of India; but many hours were not to elapse ere he was to discover that in the power to rule he was less than the least of the councillors who had cheerfully submitted to his influence when he was merely Governor of Bengal. That power had passed to the majority, and that majority, composed of Messrs. Francis, Clavering, and Monson, was resolved to show him no consideration. They had made up their minds that he was corrupt, and they had resolved to prove the correctness of a conclusion arrived at without a scrap of evidence to support it. For the moment Hastings was alone, for the fifth councillor, Mr. Barwell, was absent from Calcutta.

On the morning following their arrival the three new councillors insisted that a Council should be held to read the commission setting forth the new Constitution. Hastings would have preferred to await the return of Mr. Barwell, then shortly expected, but his new colleagues were too eager to begin their machinations to wait even a day, and they insisted on immediate action. The first Council was accordingly held at Government House on Thursday, the 20th of October, and the commission establishing the new Constitution was then and there read. It began by recommending the Governor-General and his colleagues to act with harmony and concord for the advancement of the Company's interests and the general advantage of the governed; to endeavour to preserve peace in India, and in the Company's possessions in particular. It required the Council to meet at least twice every week. It bestowed upon the Governor-General the sole authority to carry on

correspondence with the powers outside the British territories, but to this authority was added the condition that he should lay before Council all the letters he might propose to despatch, for the approval of his colleagues; and that all letters received by him should be submitted to the Council at the meeting next following their arrival. It laid stress upon the necessity to attentively review the actual position of the Company's affairs, and exhorted the Council to be careful ere they committed themselves, by alliances or otherwise, either to native or European powers. It directed the Council to establish a Board of Trade to conduct the commercial affairs of the Company, but it prohibited the employment on the said Board of any one who had the general management of the revenues of British India. It enjoined a strict examination into the causes of the large military expenditure. It laid particular emphasis on the reduction of the bonded debt. It recommended the Council to continue the land revenue system introduced by Mr. Hastings, and of which the Court expressed its approval. Finally, it urged an inquiry into past abuses and oppressions, and the enactment of regulations to prevent their recurrence; then, exhorting the Council to render every possible aid to establish the Supreme Court so as to facilitate the administration of justice, it concluded, as it had begun, by earnestly recommending cordiality and unanimity amongst the members of the Council. The recommendation was made in good faith, but by not conferring upon the Governor-General, in case of necessity, the power to override the vote of the majority, the Court of Directors had let loose all the demons of prejudice and passion.

One clause in the instructions was immediately seized hold of by Mr. Francis and his two colleagues. It was the clause which urged an inquiry into past abuses and oppressions. In that clause lay the chance of bringing home to Mr. Hastings charges of misconduct such as would suffice, the majority believed, to overwhelm him. They used it without delay, and they insisted that inquiry into past transactions should precede the consideration of all other questions. Mr. Hastings urged upon the majority that it would not be becoming to enter upon such an examination until the arrival of their colleague, Mr. Barwell; that that gentleman would

return on the 24th; that he was cognisant of all the transactions which could possibly come under the head of the inquiry; and that justice and courtesy alike required his presence. In the mean time, he said, he would draw up a memorandum containing a general account of the policy of their immediate predecessors. It was with difficulty that Hastings could induce them to stay their hand till the 25th, the date on which it was certain that Mr. Barwell would be present. But there was no immediate pressure; the inquiry related solely to the past, and Francis and his friends could find no adequate excuse for refusing to accede to so moderate a demand.

On the 24th Mr. Barwell arrived, and on the 25th the Council met. Hastings laid before them the memorandum he had prepared, setting forth the whole of his policy since the hour when he relieved Mr. Cartier: the measures he had undertaken for the transfer of the Revenue Department from Murshidábád to Calcutta; the reforms he had instituted for the administration of justice; those he had introduced into the revenue system. These details were listened to by his new colleagues in silence. But when the Governor-General proceeded to read the story of the treaty of Banáras with the Nawwáb-Wazír, and of the military operations and territorial arrangements to which it had given rise, they loudly expressed their condemnation. Declining to indicate the policy which they would have under the circumstances adopted, on the ground that the Governor-General's minute did not afford them sufficient information on which to form an opinion, they condemned as impolitic, unjust, and immoral, the course he had actually adopted. To provide evidence to support their views, one of their number, Colonel Monson, called upon Hastings to produce the correspondence which had passed between himself and Mr. Middleton, his Agent at the Court of the Nawwáb-Wazír. To this Mr. Hastings demurred. His letters to Middleton had been strictly private and confidential. Many of them had been written in the carelessness of private friendship. He could not produce those letters in their entirety without violating the trust which had been reposed in him by others, and which Middleton had received on the condition of absolute

confidence. Still pressed to produce them, he finally replied by a flat refusal to give the full text in its entirety; but he promised, instead, to lay before the Council every sentence in them which could throw the smallest light on the subject under discussion, and he begged his colleagues to be satisfied with such a concession. Barwell supported the President in the principle he had laid down, and declared that nothing would induce him to agree to the enforcement of a demand which an *ex post facto* law had suggested to the new councillors.

But the triumvirate scornfully rejected the proposed compromise. They would have the letters and nothing but the letters. When Hastings still refused, the choleric natures of the Colonel and the General, carefully fanned by the cooler and more calculating Francis, boiled over. To revenge themselves on their President, they brought forward and carried a proposal to recall the Resident, Middleton, from his post at Lakhnao, declaring that they would submit him to a personal examination. Having disposed of Middleton, not without protests from both Hastings and Barwell, they proceeded to nominate his successor. It happened that that very day a report had been received from Colonel Champion, giving an account of the successful termination of the war, and announcing his intention, as soon as he should have placed the troops in quarters at Rámghát, to resign his command and return to the Presidency. Champion was known to be smarting under the just rebukes he had received from Hastings; he was known to be personally obnoxious to the Nawwáb-Wazír. Possibly in the minds of the new councillors these facts constituted recommendations for employing him at the Court of that Prince. This at least is certain, that the majority passed a resolution directing a letter to be written to him to assume the post to be vacated by Middleton.

But the folly of the majority did not stop there. Having disposed of Middleton, they proceeded to denounce the war with the Rohílas as unjust and impolitic. The Rohílas were declared to be a brave and inoffensive people, who had been cruelly wronged. Some of their statements indicated an ignorance of Indian geography so profound that Hastings

asked them to point out on the map the position of the country occupied by the Rohílas. Not one of them could do it. It appeared that they had based their arguments on a very ancient atlas, compiled before the country had been invaded by the tribe of the Yusufzais; and they spoke of the people conquered and expelled by the Nawwáb-Wazír of Oudh as though they had been the original pastoral owners of the soil. It was in vain that Hastings and Barwell pointed out their mistakes alike in history and geography, adding that whatever merit their arguments might have had if the facts upon which they were based had been correct, founded on error they were valueless. The two experienced members of Council might as well have talked to the wind. The majority insisted that the Court of Directors had forbidden all wars except wars of pure defence; that in making war beyond the frontiers of the three provinces, Hastings had deliberately disobeyed the orders of his masters. Indifferent to the fact that their geographical and historical arguments had been proved worthless, they took their stand on that solid contention, and, secure of their majority, they declared, as the cardinal principle of their policy, their intention to undo, as far as might yet be possible, the work which had been accomplished by their President.

Fortunately for the position of England in India, they could not undo it all. But, in successive Council-meetings, they employed all the means within their power to effect such a result. I have already mentioned that, after having recalled Middleton from his post of Resident at the Court of the Nawwáb-Wazír, they had transmitted to Colonel Champion instructions to act temporarily as the organ of their communications with that Prince, and as an earnest of the new policy, they had desired him to withdraw the English brigade within the limits of the ancient dominions of the Nawwáb-Wazír; to demand the payment of the sums covenanted to be paid by that Prince for their maintenance; and then to march back within the British borders. The letter directing this series of movements was despatched despite the opposition, even the urgent protests, of Hastings. A few days later, the majority went back upon their resolution regarding Champion, and appointed Mr. Bristow, a man who had been bowing in

their anti-chambers ever since their arrival, to be Resident at Lakhnao in place of Middleton, with instructions to carry out the policy, the details of which they had already communicated to Colonel Champion.

To understand the effect which this sudden change of policy was calculated to produce at Lakhnao, I must ask the reader to bear in mind the cordiality of the relations which had existed between the Governor of Bengal and Shujáu'd daulah. The main principle of the foreign policy laid down by Lord Clive, accepted by the Court of Directors, and carried out by Hastings, had been the policy of union with the ruler of Oudh against the attacks of the Maráthás. There was not a man of mark in India who had failed to recognize in that ambitious and predatory people the desire to profit by the decadence of the Mughal Empire to plant themselves firmly in Hindustán. They had recently made several serious attempts to conquer Rohilkhand, and had been baffled mainly by the union between the Nawwáb-Wazír and Hastings. The coalition between these two eminent men might not have succeeded to the extent it did succeed but for the intrigues at Puná, which induced the Peshwá to recall his generals to western India. It certainly would have failed had the co-operation of the two allies been less loyal. It was the loyalty with which their union was conducted which produced splendid results. Rohilkhand, till then the point of attack of the Maráthás, and occupied by a race of adventurers, foreign to the soil, alike venal and treacherous, who neither toiled nor spun, but who lived on the sweat of the toilers it had supplanted, would in the future be defended by the troops of a Prince whose territories, resting on the Himaláyas, extended from the vicinity of Hardwár to Banáras, touching in the vicinity of that sacred city the dominions of his English ally. The future was dark to every one; but reasoning from the impression arrived at by the best thinkers amongst the natives of India, and from the past history of the states which recognized the supremacy of the Peshwá, Hastings had the right to conclude that, sooner or later, the Maráthás would resume the policy which had been shattered at Pánipat, and strike a blow with all their force for the succession to the inheritance of the Mughals. Surely, then,

the policy was wise which, with such a probability looming in the future, Hastings had, after mature consideration, adopted. There is always a tendency in the human mind to judge the past from the position of the present. But let the statesman of the present day put himself in the position of the Hastings of 1772–74. Ruling a province but just recovering from the effects of a terrible famine; with an empty treasury and credit greatly impaired; with a powerful buffer State on his north-western frontier, and the Maráthás threatening that State and himself, what other policy could he pursue? Was he to sit still and see the buffer State devoured? Surely it was wiser to join with the ruler of that State in including in the defensive position a territory, snatched from its own people only a few years before by alien mountaineers whom, it had been proved, no treaties could bind. Thus and thus only could his ally present to the Maráthás an unbroken front; thus and thus only could he hope to bar the way to the invaders whose undisguised object it was to appropriate all the territories of the Mughal.

The position of Hastings may be defined in a sentence. He had so far deviated from the hard and fast line of the policy imposed on him by the Court in that, to secure his borders, to make them stronger and less assailable than they had ever been before, he had waged a war of offensive defence. He had not increased the English borders, but he had strengthened the ally whose dominions would always prove a buffer against Maráthá invasion. He had, rightly, no fear of increasing the strength of the ruler of Oudh. That prince had felt the English power; he had recognized their superiority; and it was his earnest desire to continue to retain the friendship of the English rulers against the one enemy then dreaded by Indian princes and peoples.

To assure that intimate alliance Hastings had entered into certain arrangements, and had made treaties with the Nawwáb-Wazír, which imposed duties on both the contracting parties. But it was these contracts which the tyrant majority of the Council had now resolved to abolish; these duties which they loudly expressed their intention to disregard. It was in vain that Hastings, supported by Barwell, argued that treaties were sacred; that these, in particular, had been

loyally acted upon; that to break them would affect the English credit, not only at Lakhnao, but in every Court in India. Fruitlessly did he urge that the measures contemplated by the Council would reflect dishonour upon him, upset all the plans he had carefully laid, and affect the fair name of England. Arguments like these only stimulated the persecuting zeal of the three councillors. They were glad to humiliate Hastings. Deaf to all his reasonings, they refused even the delay for which he pleaded. To quote the expression* employed at that period by Francis, the majority felt themselves to be absolute kings, and they used their power with a despotic brutality of which even kings have given few examples.

There is another point of view from which the conduct of the three councillors may be fairly criticized—the more fairly and the more profitably as the same causes and the same consequences are daily witnessed by the present generation. I refer to the mania which seems to seize on persons who consider that a few weeks' experience of a country which is almost a continent entitles them to challenge the conclusions arrived at by years of labour and probing beneath the surface. The three new councillors were men new to the country. The short experience of Colonel Monson in southern India, amongst people of a race and a language foreign to Bengal, had given him no insight into the wants and character of the people of the three provinces. General Clavering had no personal knowledge of Bengal before he landed at the Chándpál Ghât in company with his colleagues. Whatever experience of the country Francis possessed had been gained in the War Office. He was absolutely ignorant of all matters relating to the country and its people. Yet these three men, before they had been a week in Calcutta, set themselves not to criticize, but to condemn the policy pursued, under most trying circumstances, by a colleague who possessed a knowledge of British India and its people, gained by a personal experience of more than sixteen years; who was thoroughly acquainted with the modes of thought, with the customs, and with the secret inclinations of the children of the soil; who had had large experience of the general fear inspired in

* "We three are King."

Hindustán by the struggles caused by the collapse of the Mughal. Of the Maráthás he had heard a great deal. He had landed in 1750, at a period when the three provinces were ruled by Ali Vardí Khán, under the nominal overlordship of the Emperor, and when the English admitted the suzerainty of the Subahdar. He had witnessed, from the factory at Kasimbazár, the terror which had been constantly excited by the rumours of a fresh inroad of the Maráthás. During the ten years immediately preceding his arrival, Orísá and Bengal had been overrun by their armies. He had seen how the great Ali Vardí himself, one of the strongest rulers of the time, had been compelled, the very year after he himself had landed in India, to purchase from the invaders an ignominious treaty, ceding to them the chief town of Orísá, and agreeing to pay *chauth*, or tribute, amounting to twelve lakhs of rupees annually, for Bengal. He had studied during those times the Maráthá people, and had divined their aims. And although he had seen their ambitious designs crushed at Pánipat in 1761, he had witnessed the steps they had taken, when the ground had been again cleared, cautiously and gradually to restore their power and their influence. Amongst the Indian princes who had made common cause with the Afghán invader against them, and whose gallant action at Pánipat had contributed greatly to their defeat, had been Shujáu'd daulah, the Nawwáb-Wazír of the country which had been recognized by Clive and afterwards by Hastings himself, as the buffer State covering the English territories on their north-west frontier. Between this Prince and the Maráthás there existed an enmity which would cease only with the life of the former. When, then, the Maráthás appeared in the delta of the Ganges and invaded Rohilkhand, Hastings, drawing on his experience, on his knowledge of the princes and peoples of the country, of their fears and their ambitions, had adopted a line of policy, unintelligible possibly to men ignorant of the country and full of prejudice against him, but which, by strengthening his loyal neighbour, had relieved his treasury and made fast his borders. This policy, he wrote to Lord North, would, he believed, meet the approval of the Home Government. Yet that Government had entrusted the power of condemning it, to three men who had no

experience of India and her people; who, on their voyage out, had concocted a programme from a basis absolutely incorrect, and who now loudly declared in Council that experience was to count for nothing; that knowledge of the people was to count for nothing; but that ignorance and prejudice were to rule uncontrolled.

We of this generation ought not to be astonished at this display of the conceit of combined ignorance and prejudice, for scarcely a year passes but we see the story repeated. A globe-trotter possessing no knowledge whatever of India and her people, who, on landing, is forced to depend for his information on the prejudices of natives who can speak English, considers his impressions of three months, acquired on those lines, sufficient to outweigh the experience of men who have spent their lives in the country, in daily communication with natives of all classes, speaking their language, and thoroughly conversant with their ways and requirements. What is worse still, the blind globe-trotter succeeds too often in leading the equally blind and equally prejudiced members of Parliament into the ditch which gapes to receive them all.

To return. Having dismissed Middleton and appointed Bristow to succeed him, the dominant majority in Council proceed to institute an inquiry into the manner in which the Rohíla war had been conducted. In this inquiry they had, they believed, an ally in Champion. They counted also on receiving confirmation of their prejudices from the higher officers of the army. But in both instances they were deceived. Disliking Hastings as he did, even Champion found it impossible to say a word against his personal character. The next officer in seniority, Colonel Leslie, when questioned by Clavering as to the feeling of the army regarding the honourable character of the war in which it had been engaged, replied curtly that he could not answer for the opinions of others. Finding that their English witnesses failed them, the triumvirate took another line. Searching diligently the correspondence at their disposal, they thought they had discovered a weak spot in the armour of Hastings. They proceeded then to accuse him of having encouraged the army to expect a pecuniary gratification from the Nawwáb-Wazír, notwithstanding that he had been well aware that an

Act of Parliament prohibited the acceptance of presents as illegal, and that then, by insisting that a reference on the subject should be made to the Supreme Council, he had placed the members of that Council in an invidious position towards the troops. The reader who has followed me so far will recollect the transaction, the result of the intrigues of Champion, of which a detailed account is given in a previous chapter.* It was naturally easy enough for Hastings to refute the charge, but the triumvirate did not the less insist upon it.

There can, I think, be no doubt but that the failure of the triumvirate to discover a single fact which could soil the character of Mr. Hastings, added zest to the malignity which continued to dominate their inquiries. They did not hesitate to assert, in their despatches to the Court of Directors, that a strong and deliberate censure of the administration of Mr. Hastings was necessary in order to justify their own conduct towards him. They had made many desperate attempts to gain Mr. Barwell to their views, but that honourable gentleman declined with indignation to abandon the Chief whose counsels he had shared, and of whose action he had approved. Finding, at length, that but little advantage was to be gained from a further scrutiny of the events of the Rohíla war, the triumvirate turned their attention to the internal administration of their proposed victim. This portion of their conduct will be treated in the next chapter. Meanwhile, I shall proceed to record how the action of the triumvirate regarding the Rohílá war affected the loyal ally of the British-Indian Government, the first of the rulers of Oudh who was at once Nawwáb of Oudh and titular Wazír of the Mughal Empire—a title which some years later was merged into that of King.

The relations which had existed between Hastings and Middleton on the one side, and the two Englishmen and the Nawwáb-Wazír on the other, had been relations of mutual confidence and esteem. Shujáu'd daulah had acquired for the person and character of Middleton a feeling which it would not be exaggeration to term affection. He had the greatest confidence in his justice and foresight. He had recognized in him a man whose word could be implicitly relied upon.

* Chap. xii. pp. 159–161 and note.

His grief then, when Middleton communicated to him the purport of a letter he had received from the Council announcing his recall, may be imagined. Regarding it as the first step of a policy which preluded hostilities against himself, he burst into tears, declaring that he had no dependence save on the friendship of Mr. Hastings, and that he would be guided in all things by that gentleman's advice. The situation of the Nawwáb-Wazír under the pressure of an action which he regarded as fraught with evil to himself and his dominions was one demanding great commiseration. For some time past his health had been declining, and at the time he was suffering tortures from a swelling on the groin. The anxieties caused by the recall of Middleton, and the evident eclipse of the power of Mr. Hastings, most certainly diminished the power of nature to struggle successfully against the physical evil, and on the 18th of January * of the year following, 1775, he died. He was at once succeeded by his eldest son, Mirzá Maní, who assumed the title of Nawwáb-Wazír Asafu-d daulah.

The death of the ruler of Oudh presented an opportunity to the dominant majority in the Council to display their powers of casuistry and malevolence. The first position they assumed was to declare that the demise of the Nawwáb cancelled the treaties made with him by the English. Such a principle had never been admitted in Europe; it was absolutely new to India; it was supported neither by the researches of Grotius nor the erudition of Vattel; the emotionless mind of Pufendorf had contemned it. Nothing shows more the straits to which the triumvirate were reduced; the methods which they did not hesitate to employ to damage their illustrious colleague; than the fact that they deliberately insisted upon a principle unknown to international

* There is a difference of ten days between the dates, given by historians, of the death, the "Imádu-s Saadat" of Mir Ghulám Ali giving it as occurring on the 14th Zilkada, equal to the 18th of January; the "Yadgar-i Bahádurí" of Bahádur Singh placing it ten days later. The earlier date is probably the correct one. The author of the first work quoted, adds, regarding the disorder, that it was caused by a swelling which suppurated. "Ointment was applied to it, but, so far from healing, the wound grew worse from day to day. He lived for a month and thirteen days at Faizábád, during which time that form which had been noted for its stalwart proportions grew thin and slender as a thread; and his arms looked like reed pens in his sleeves."—*Vide* Elliot, vol. viii. pp. 395 and 423.

law, and on the face of it absurd. The logical intellect of Hastings at once rejected the contention. He pointed out to his colleagues the mischief which would arise if such a principle were universally admitted. He brought forward instances, amongst others that of the Methuen treaty with Portugal, contracted in 1703, and asked Francis whether he considered that Portugal possessed the right to set aside that treaty on the ground that the English sovereign who had sanctioned it was no longer living. He further pointed out that the principle, if once admitted, would strike at the rights of the English in Bengal, based as they were on farmans, or royal patents, of sovereigns long since deceased. But on the triumvirate all arguments were thrown away. They had the bit in their teeth. They were, as Francis had said, "the King." These profound jurists affirmed then, against Hastings and Barwell, the principle that the demise of a ruler abrogates the treaties made with him; that, therefore, the death of Shujáu'd daulah had severed all connection, had abrogated all treaties and all agreements, with his successor; that if the successor wished that they should continue, he must make a fresh arrangement with them. In the next chapter I shall narrate the story of their clumsy and immoral action, and the first of its many consequences.

CHAPTER XV.

THE FOREIGN POLICY OF THE TRIUMVIRATE—THEIR ACTION WITH RESPECT TO OUDH.

One of the last acts of the dying Shujáu'd daulah had been to dictate a letter to Hastings in which he implored him to extend to his son and successor the same friendly feeling which he had invariably displayed towards himself. He made, in his letters, no reference to the disposition of his private property, and from this fact, and from the circumstance that no written deed was ever produced, the conclusion has been drawn that he had left no will behind him.

Unfortunately, "an Amurath had not succeeded Amurath." The Hindu historian of the period,* Bahádur Singh, writes that the Nawwáb Ásafu'd daulah was as much addicted as a child to sports and trivial pursuits; had no acquaintance with the business of the State; and that the management of affairs devolved upon a nobleman named Mukhtáru-d daulah, who had risen to high office under his father.

But neither the young Nawwáb nor his Minister were the only parties exercising influence and authority in Oudh when Shujáu'd daulah expired. As is so often the case in Muhammadan governments, the influence of the haram was very great indeed, and in that of the late Nawwáb-Wazír there was only one lady whose ambition and power preponderated. This lady was called Bahu Begam. She was already rich, possessing a jagir, or estate, which brought her in the equivalent in rupees of fifty thousand pounds per annum. But her avaricious nature was not content with this stately income. Having much, she coveted more; and, being utterly unscrupulous, she took measures, on the death of

* Elliot. Vol. viii. p. 423.

the Nawwáb-Wazír, in alliance with her mother, to add largely to her resources. The methods to which she had recourse to accomplish this end will be related in due course.

It remains now to add one factor to the group of intriguers who hovered round the corpse of the deceased Prince. This last was the English Resident, Mr. Bristow. The reader will recollect the intrigue to which this servant of the Company owed his appointment; he will recall the circumstance of the refusal of Mr. Hastings to permit his colleagues—whom I have called the triumvirate—to peruse his confidential correspondence with the then Resident, Mr. Nathaniel Middleton; of their consequent recall of that gentleman; and of their nomination in his place of a member of the Civil Service, who had bowed[1] in their anti-chambers, and had displayed in his manners towards them a servility which seemed to promise to go all lengths. The performance of this person, whose name was Bristow, did not belie its early promise. He gave himself, body and soul, to the dominant faction in Calcutta. If Middleton had been the private friend and faithful correspondent of Hastings, animated in all his dealings by the honourable desire to advance the policy which the latter considered to be necessary for the interests of his country, his successor, Bristow, became, at Lakhnao, the subservient tool of the triumvirate, looking, not to the interests of Great Britain, but to the success of the policy directed by that body, and which, the reader will recognize, was dishonourable to England, ruinous to the young Nawwáb, and profitable only to knaves and intriguers.

At the close of the last chapter I have recorded how the triumvirate, on learning of the death of the Nawwáb-Wazír, had declared, and, despite the protests of Hastings and Barwell, had carried through Council the extraordinary proposition, that treaties made with the ruler of Oudh* ceased with the demise of the ruler with whom they had

* The morality of the policy prevailing in the India House at this period is evidenced by the fact that on the question coming before the Court for its decision, the Directors gave an abstract approval to the principles laid down by Mr. Hastings; but, the result of the opposite policy having proved meanwhile financially favourable to the Company, they endorsed the policy of the triumvirate. Their principle may thus be translated: "It is wicked to rob an orchard, but if the robber brings home all the apples without being detected, he is worthy of praise."

been made. Acting on this doctrine, they directed Bristow to demand, on terms presently to be mentioned, the assent of the Nawwáb to a new treaty in place of that which they declared to be no longer binding on either party.

But before Bristow could act on the instructions thus transmitted, he had found his hands full of very serious business at Lakhnao. There were others besides the triumvirate who had resolved to seize the occasion of a new accession to rob the estate of the deceased Prince. Prominent amongst these was the Bahu Begam, of whom I have already spoken. This lady was well aware that there lay, stored up in the royal palace at Faizábád, properties in gold and precious stones, estimated at two millions sterling in value; and although she knew that by right, as well as by custom, these properties belonged to the successor to the *masnad*, she boldly claimed them as her own, in virtue of a will which, she declared, the late Nawwáb-Wazír had caused to be drawn up, and had entrusted to her care.

Then ensued a scene which tested the capacity and the honesty of the new English Resident appointed by the triumvirate. On receiving from Bahu Begam notice of her claim, and of the grounds on which she based it, it was the bounden duty of the Resident to demand to see the will. After having seen the will, it would again have been his duty to inform the Begam that a private will cannot set aside the rights of the State. But Mr. Bristow did not even follow the first course. He did not ask to see the will. Accepting with effusion the statement of the Begam that such a will had been made, he not only recognized its existence and its validity, but he threw himself heart and soul into the cause of the Begam, and persuaded the immaculate triumvirate in Calcutta to support him. Doubtless Bristow had some private reason for his compliance, for, as a rule, men do not become base for the mere love of baseness; and of the two temptations which may induce a man to depart from virtue—the love of the sex and the love of money—the former, in this case, was wanting.

It remains to add that it was not without a struggle that the Council confirmed the proceedings of Mr. Bristow. Both Hastings and Barwell protested with all their eloquence

against the iniquitous transaction. Even the majority shrank from the complete spoliation of the young Prince. Bristow, to secure much for his patroness, the Begam, proposed to the Council that he should act as mediator between the young Nawwáb and his mother, the Bhao Begam, in view to effect a compromise. The object of Bristow was too clear to Hastings and Barlow to permit them to accede to it, but, as usual, they were outvoted by the majority. By that majority Bristow was directed to proceed with his scheme. He did so; and after much correspondence and many interviews with the parties concerned, he was able to report, in October of the same year, that, in consideration of the payment to him of the comparatively small sum of fifty-six lakhs of rupees, in specie, goods, jewels, elephants, and camels, the young Nawwáb would accede to all the demands of the Begam.* To the last Hastings and Barwell opposed the course pursued by the majority, denouncing the whole transaction as impolitic and iniquitous.

Iniquitous indeed it was. Nor was it the less impolitic. How it affected the successor of Shujáu'd daulah will be seen when we come to consider the action of the triumvirate with respect to the abrogation of the existing treaties. To that subject I shall now proceed, prefacing it with a statement of the financial position of the young Prince suddenly called to succeed the most famous ruler who ever guided the fortunes of Oudh and its dependencies.

The treaty of Banáras, made with the late Nawwáb-Wazír on the 7th of September, 1773, had provided for the transfer by the English to that Prince of the districts of Kora, Karrá, and Allahábád, "for ever." The article which regulated this

* The reader is referred, for the text of the agreement, to Aitchison's "Treaties," vol. ii. p. 93 (1st edition).

The "kaulnámá" (*agreement*) bears the date of the 15th of October, 1775. It contains an acknowledgment on the part of the Nawwáb that he had received from his mother "thirty lakhs on account of the present, and twenty-six on account of former debts, in specie, goods, jewels, elephants, camels, etc., from the patrimony of my father, and have no further claim on her." The Nawwáb further engaged, in the same agreement, never to molest his mother "in the enjoyment of the jagirs" (*estates*), "gange" (*villages*), "kil'adárí" (*emoluments from lands protected by forts*), "from gardens, and mints of Oudh, Faizábád, etc., conferred upon her by the late blessed Nawwáb, but will leave her in full possession of them during her lifetime." At the end of the agreement follows a list of the estates, villages, gardens, and the kil'adárí, referred to in the sentence quoted.

cession concluded with these words: "This agreement shall be observed by all the English Chiefs, gentlemen of the Council, and by the Company, nor shall it ever be broken or deviated from."

In consideration for that transfer the Nawwáb-Wazír had agreed to pay to the Company the sum of 50,00,000 Sikka rupees, according to the currency of Oudh, by the following instalments, viz. 20,00,000 in ready money, and, two years after the date of the treaty, the first year 15,00,000 rupees, the second year a similar sum.

The second article of the treaty provided that, for the expenses of the Company's troops which should march to his assistance, the monthly expense of a brigade should be calculated at 2,10,000 Sikka rupees of the Oudh currency; that a brigade of troops should signify two battalions of Europeans, six battalions of sipáhís, one company of artillery; and that the expense of the said troops should be defrayed by the Nawwáb-Wazír from the time that they should have passed the borders of his dominions until the date on which they should return within the borders of Bihár; that nothing more should be demanded from him, but that should the English Company require the service of the troops of the Nawwáb-Wazír, they should pay their expenses in like manner.*

Six weeks before he died, Shujáu'd daulah had been suffering so much from the illness which proved fatal that he had had neither the time nor the strength to attend to the affairs of State. The consequence was that when he ceased to live there was a considerable amount due to the Company under the provisions above quoted. The payments for the subsistence of the English brigade and for the Rohíla treaty were alike in arrears. For these payments his successor, Asafu'd daulah, was naturally responsible. But for the moment he had no money; and, to add to his troubles, his own troops, estimated at a hundred thousand strong, urgently demanded the twelvemonth's pay which was due to them. The difficulty would have vanished had Ásafu'd daulah possessed a nature strong enough to avail himself of his undoubted

* Extracted from the treaty, as given in Aitchison's "Treaties," vol. ii. pp. 84–86.

rights; for, as we have seen, there lay, stored up at Faizábád, property of the ruler of Oudh, estimated at two millions sterling. But, as we know also, his mother then and there declared that this property belonged to her only, on the strength of a will which she declined to produce. The British Resident supported the Begam, and the triumvirate in Calcutta supported the British Resident. When the Nawwáb's troops did mutiny for their arrears of pay, the Begam replied to the earnest prayer of the Nawwáb by refusing to lend him a single rupee.

Such was the difficult position of Ásafu'd daulah when he received, through Mr. Bristow, intimation that the Calcutta Council had arrived at the decision that the existing treaty of Banáras, quoted in the preceding page, had been a personal treaty with his father, and that it lapsed on his demise. The question had been discussed in the Council-chamber of Calcutta. There Hastings and Barwell had vainly argued in favour of the binding right of treaties; had pointed out the tyranny and illegality of the course advocated by the majority. Their labours were wasted. The majority had declared itself to be "King," and they declined to divest themselves of the privileges attending on absolute monarchy. Neither eloquence nor arguments affected them. They were not even moved when they received an earnest and pleading letter from the young prince, pointing out that the abrogation of the treaty would lay upon him burdens which, with an empty treasury and a mutinous army, it would be impossible for him to bear. The needs of the Nawwáb only whetted the eagerness of the triumvirate. In his weakness lay their strength—their sole hope of adding to the territorial acquisitions of the Company, and of increasing the deposits in its treasury. They forwarded to Bristow a schedule of the demands, from which they would not abate, and directed him to embody them in a new treaty. Vainly did the young Nawwáb again protest that the allies of his father were depriving him of the means of carrying on his government. The triumvirate were pitiless. On the 21st of May following, Bristow, under directions from the Council, forced upon the young Chief a new treaty, of which the following is a concise summary.

The first article provided, in the usual formula, that "universal peace, firm friendship, and perfect union shall for ever be established" between the two contracting parties. By the second, the Nawwáb engaged never to entertain or receive in his dominions Kásim Ali Khán, the former Subahdar of Bengal, nor Samru, "the murderer of the English;" to entertain in his service no Europeans whatsoever without the consent of the Company; notified that he then and there dismissed all Europeans actually in his service, and engaged never to entertain them again; promised further to deliver up to the Company those who had deserted or who might in the future desert. The third article provided that, should the King of Dehlí write to the English Sirdars anything regarding the affairs of the Nawwáb, the former would attend to it to the satisfaction of the Nawwáb, and would not consent to what the King might write; further, that the Nawwáb should act on the same principle, should the King address him. The fourth article confirmed to the Nawwáb the possession of the districts of Kora and Allahábád, the English engaging to defend the Subahdar of Oudh at all times, as well as Kora and Allahábád, "until the pleasure of the Court of Directors shall be known."

The fifth article deserves to be stated at full length. It runs thus:

"The said Nawwáb, for the defence of his country, as above specified, declares that he had given up of his own free will and accord, unto the English Company, all the districts dependent on the Rájá Chét Singh, together with the land and water duties, and the sovereignty of the said districts in perpetuity; that the English Company shall, after one month and a half from the date of this Treaty, take upon them the sovereignty and possession of the districts under Rájá Chét Singh, as hereunder specified, viz. Sarkár Banáras; Sarkár * Chumah" (meaning Chanár); "Saktisgarh" (in the Mirzápur district); "the districts of Juanpur, Bijepur Bahdui" (in the district of Mirzápur); "Mulwass Khwass; the Sarkár of Ghazípur; the parganas of Sikandarpur, Jaride, Shadiábád" (written in the draft treaty Shaay, Abad), "Tapa, Sarchar, etc., as formerly; the Mint and Kotwálí of Banáras."

It was a mockery to affirm in the above-quoted article that the Nawwáb resigned those valuable territories, the possession of which had been one of the main objects of his father's policy, "of his own free will and accord." Before

* The word "Sarkár" signifies "a division comprehending several parganas or districts."

he could be induced to resign them, Ásafu'd daulah, young, frivolous, and fond of pleasure as he was, had shed "tears of blood." He knew well the meaning of this forced cession. He knew that the majority of the English Council were at once gratifying their hatred to Mr. Hastings, by undoing the work which he had accomplished but two years before, and were striving by the accession of valuable districts to gain the favour of their masters in England—and all at his expense. He was absolutely powerless. On the one side, his mother, backed by the English Resident, had robbed him of his patrimony, refusing him a single coin to meet the emergency of a mutiny; on the other, the English, clamorous for the payment of the allowances promised to their troops whilst they should occupy any part of Oudh, were pressing upon him a treaty which at one blow lopped off the most valuable parts of his territories. Had he had but one enemy he might have passed through the crisis with but little damage; but the triumvirate, by the exercise of a policy as cruel as it was unscrupulous, deprived him of all his resources. Whilst their agent, Bristow, by siding with Bahu Begam, prevented him from taking possession of the treasures his father had left behind him, the triumvirate, by the same agent, took advantage of the position they had themselves created to despoil him of the lands they coveted. Here was a case far more worthy of sympathy than that of the mountaineers who, in the last throes of the Mughal Empire, had seized and occupied Rohilkand. Yet the very same men who charged Hastings with cruelty for his alliance with the Nawwáb-Wazír to expel these robbers, perpetrated towards the helpless successor of the ally of England, a deed infinitely more shameful—a deed which no sophistry can defend. In defiance of legality they abrogated a treaty, one clause of which provided that it should never be broken or deviated from; they then used the freedom which their breach of contract had given them, to compel the young chief to resign to them the most valued of his possessions.

This was their main spoliation. The sixth article of the new treaty provided that the Nawwáb should pay monthly, from the date of the treaty, for the charges of the English brigade, two lakhs and sixty thousand Sikka rupees of the

Oudh currency; whilst the seventh, amongst other matters of lesser moment, asserted the principle that the treaty held force only during the lifetime of the Nawwáb Ásafu'd daulah.

This treaty completed the ruin of the Nawwáb. I have referred to the mutiny of his troops, caused mainly by his inability to pay them. This mutiny was only crushed after a bloody conflict, costing the lives of three hundred of his adherents, and of double that number of the mutineers. Nor did this suppressing of the mutiny restore order. The nobles of Oudh, seeing the weakness of their master, plotted against him on every side. Nor was it till six years later, when the cabal at Calcutta had ceased to possess power, that Hastings was able to render to the son of his old ally the assistance of which he stood so much in need.

Meanwhile, the Governor-General and his supporter Barwell had witnessed the immoral administration of their colleagues with respect to Oudh without being able to prevent it. They had strongly protested against the cancelling of the treaty of Banáras; against the support given to the Begam; and against the policy generally of weakening instead of strengthening the province which Clive and Hastings had alike regarded as the first defensive line against Maráthá invasion. The triumvirate had paid no attention to those protests. Sublime in their ignorance of the country and its people, they had forced on their ally a treaty which, though rich in promise to the English of "solid and permanent advantages,"* was destined to bear bitter fruit; to prove, in the hands of unscrupulous men, the basis of one of the charges made against the high-minded proconsul who had used all his efforts to prevent its accomplishment.

But whilst the triumvirate were conducting their foreign policy on the new method, founded on a principle wanting alike in morality and justice, they were pursuing a course even more wanting in those qualities with respect to internal affairs. How they did this will be shown in the next chapter.

* The words used by the Court of Directors when, at the close of the following year, they gave their sanction to the bargain.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE TRIUMVIRATE ATTACK THE INTERNAL POLICY OF HASTINGS—THE STORY OF NANDKUMÁR, AND HOW HE AIDED THEM.

In a previous chapter I have told the story of the introduction by Hastings of much-needed reforms in the Judicial and Revenue Departments of his Government. I have related in some detail the arrangements he had made for carrying on the native administration at Murshídábád; how he had nominated the senior lady in the haram, Maní Begam, to be guardian, and Gurudás, the son of Nandkumár, to be Diwán, to the young Nawwáb-Nazin; how, ordered by the Court of Directors to bring to trial the Diwán immediately preceding Gurudás, Muhammad Rizá Khán, he had, in compliance with suggestions received from the Court of Directors, employed largely Nandkumár to get up evidence against the accused; how he had, amidst all his many onerous duties, presided at the trial; and how he witnessed the collapse of evidence which terminated in the acquittal of the accused. During his earlier residence at Murshídábád he had formed a very poor opinion of Nandkumár. He considered that his weak sense of morality rendered him utterly unfit for high office. Lord Clive, who had at the outset been greatly impressed by his abilities, recorded, before he left India for the last time, a similar opinion of him. Nor was the manner in which Nandkumár had conducted the prosecution of Muhammad Rizá calculated to change Mr. Hastings's opinion of the man.

There can be but little doubt that Nandkumár had penned his charges against Muhammad Rizá in the expectation that he himself would be nominated to succeed him as Diwán. But the action of Hastings in removing the Revenue Department to Calcutta; in standing forth in his position of

Diwán of the three provinces; had transformed the situation. Murshídábád by that act lost all its political importance. It still remained, however, a hotbed of intrigue; and it is by intrigue that the Brahman of high caste, who finds his abilities too little appreciated by the ruling power, always works. There is no greater adept in the world in the capacity to undermine, to insinuate that which he dare not openly charge; in the disseminating of slanderous whispers; in convincing those with whom he may converse that the false thing is the true thing.* In 1772-74 Nandkumár had special opportunities, for his son Gurudás was the chief Minister of the palace; and partly through him, partly by means of his own powers of persuasion, he had made the head of the administration, Maní Begam, his ally, ready to work his will, whatever it might be.

Before I enter into the story of the alliance of this man with the triumvirate—an alliance not written on parchment, but based on the virulent hatred borne by both to Hastings—it is necessary that I should say something regarding the four judges who had landed in Calcutta two days before the three councillors, to constitute the new Supreme Court. They were, the reader has been already told, Sir Elijah Impey as Chief Justice; Messrs. Chambers, Lemaistre, and Hyde, as Puisne Judges.

Impey had been a schoolfellow of Hastings at Westminster, and had displayed there no small ability, though of a somewhat commonplace order. After leaving Westminster he read for the bar,† was called in due course, and by his talents and energy obtained a fair practice. When the East India Company protested in Parliament against the Bill to prevent it from sending out supervisors to India, the Court of Directors engaged Impey as one of their counsel. On the passing of the Regulation Act, he was nominated by the Lord Chancellor, Lord Bathurst, on the recommendation of the Attorney-General, afterwards the famous Lord Thurlow, to be Chief Justice of the Supreme Court established in Calcutta by

* In stating this I write from my own experience of the class.

† For my notes regarding the Judges I am greatly indebted to Sir James Fitzjames Stephen's admirable and exhaustive work entitled, "The Story of Nuncomar and the Impeachment of Sir Elijah Impey."

the Bill. He possessed considerable public spirit; was "a zealous, warm-hearted man, much attached to his friends, but not the least likely to be a tool of, or subservient to any one, and certainly not to Hastings, with whom at one time he had a violent quarrel." * Hastings had maintained his schoolboy friendship with Impey, and when in October, 1774, he calculated that the ship which bore him and his colleagues would arrive in the Madras roads, he despatched a letter to greet him, expressive of the satisfaction with which he had heard of his appointment.

"I need not say," he added, "how much I rejoice at the prospect of seeing so old a friend, independently of the advantages which that friendship, cemented (if it required it) by the same connexions, cannot fail to produce in the conduct of such affairs as are likely to fall to our respective or common lot."

In his private life Impey was an amiable man, and his tastes displayed a refined and cultivated nature.†

Of the three Puisne Judges who accompanied Impey, the same authority informs us that Chambers, "a member of the Club, a friend of Dr. Johnson, and Vinerian Professor of Law at Oxford, was the most distinguished of them." He would appear to have been one of those men, so numerous in the world, who have such a detestation of strife, or, it might, as a rule, be more truly put, so intense a love of their own ease and comfort, that they prefer to play the part of "Facing-both-ways." Certain it is that previous to the trial of Nandkumár, Francis and his two associates regarded Chambers as belonging to their party. In public he seemed to be their friend and sympathizer; but when the decisive hour arrived his conscience would not permit his private likings to pervert his sense of justice. His weakness was so well

* Fitzjames Stephen. Vol. i. ch. iii.

† Sir James Fitzjames Stephen writes: "If Macaulay's account of Impey is to be believed, he must have been the most odious and contemptible of human beings, committing the most abominable crimes from the basest of motives, or even without motive at all." In the following paragraph (vol. i. p. 33) Stephen gives reasons why he cannot believe Macaulay's account. Referring, in his introductory chapter, to the actual charges brought by Macaulay against Impey, he writes thus: "These dreadful accusations I, upon the fullest consideration of the whole subject, and, in particular, of such evidence which Macaulay seems to me never to have seen, believe to be wholly unjust" (vol. i. p. 33).

known in Calcutta, that in the leading journal of the day he was always referred to as "Sir Viner Pliant." *

The two colleagues of Chambers, Lemaistre and Hyde, seem to have been men of inferior judgment and capacity. They were united in opposition, on almost every question, to the Chief Justice. "For the conduct of Lemaistre," wrote Impey, in a letter to Thurlow, "I cannot account. As for Hyde, I much fear the return of his old disorder, but it is too delicate a matter to touch upon." This expression and others, in his correspondence regarding the abusive action of Hyde on the Bench, have seemed to imply that Hyde had been out of his mind.† This at least is certain, that far from being as clay in the hands of Impey, he sided invariably with Lemaistre, and Lemaistre took part almost always against the Chief Justice. The one support upon which the latter could rely was the conscience of Mr. Justice Chambers.

Such were the judges of the new Supreme Court. It is fit, before we proceed further, that we should inquire into the powers bestowed upon them by Act of Parliament. It is a pertinent inquiry, for the administration of justice up to the time of their arrival had been worked on a rough-and-ready principle, without any defined method.

All this was now changed. The new Court of Justice was to be independent of local authority; it was designed, in fact, to exercise control over the Company's servants in British India. There being no precedents on which the judges could frame their regulations, they had a blank sheet of paper on which to draw up the constitution they might deem the most conducive to the establishing of their rights. Their powers were so large that they could even interpret, as Judges, the prerogative of the Governor-General and Council, and the extent of their authority. It was a tremendous power to entrust to untried men; and it redounds to the credit of the Chief Justice and Mr. Chambers that the Supreme Court steered—with one exception, to be referred to at a later period—a clear course between the two extremes of despotism and weakness. At the outset it was by no means certain that the measures of the Judges might not trench too much

* Stephen. Vol. i. p. 36, and note. † Stephen. Vol. i. pp. 33–34.

on the Executive; and the fact that it was possible it might do so had no little influence on the minds of the natives.

The natives of Calcutta, indeed, had not been slow to appreciate the changes which the Regulating Act of 1773 had introduced into the administration of British India. Up to the period of its introduction they had enjoyed the mild despotism of Clive; had suffered from the disorders consequent on the government by the divided Council, presided over by M. Vansittart; and had prospered, during 1772–74, under the mildly despotic rule of Hastings. An administration on such a basis was the natural successor of the administration to which they and their fathers had been subjected, and they had recognized that whilst the one-man administration almost always secured to them order and protection of life and property, the administration of the many had led invariably to disaster and oppression. The arrival of a strong man such as Hastings, at a moment of terrible depression, and his assumption of supreme power, had been most welcome to them. They did not inquire, they did not care, how he had persuaded his colleagues to submit to his authority; but that they had submitted was patent. In the eyes of all in India, Warren Hastings had been for two years the absolute ruler of the three provinces. Then, to their astonishment, when the internal policy of this autocrat was blooming into rich fruit, there came a series of changes, which established controlling powers over the Governor-General in his own Council, and raised up another supreme authority with undefined powers. After the first moment of astonishment, the more astute amongst them, especially the Bengálí Brahmans, recognized that whilst the new rules had abolished, for the time, the autocratic powers of Mr. Hastings, it had widened the road to intrigue, and would afford them opportunities, such as they had never dreamt of, for the practice of that chicanery in which they excel all other races. The first field on which the ablest and most unprincipled amongst them determined to practise his hereditary vocation was the field of the Council.

The animosity displayed by the triumvirate against Hastings had, within a few weeks of their arrival, become public property. What an opportunity to corrupt men whom

Hastings had displaced, whose intrigue he had baffled, whose ambition he had declined to gratify! Foremost to recognize the brilliant opening thus offered to his genius was Nandkumár. That wily Asiatic was thoroughly acquainted with the estimate Hastings had formed of his character. He knew well that the Governor-General had always mistrusted him; that when he had appointed his son, Gurudás, to be Diwán at Murshídábád, he had taken measures which he had deemed effective to exclude the father from interfering with him; that, so long as Mr. Hastings lived and ruled in British India, there was no opening in the higher ranks of the public service for such a man as he. But he realized now that, practically, Hastings was deposed; that a hostile triumvirate, which believed—to use the language of one of their recorded minutes, "that there was no pilfering from which the honourable Governor-General has thought it reasonable to abstain" —had reduced the once all-powerful Hastings to the position of being simply a witness of their own proceedings. That was his opportunity. How he seized and used it forms the theme of the narrative upon which I propose now to enter.

The ground had been thoroughly prepared for his action. Within a few days of the arrival of the new councillors Nandkumár had made their acquaintance. Seeing their impressions regarding Hastings, that they regarded him as a man thoroughly corrupt, and that they looked upon it as a sacred duty to gather proofs of his corrupt acts, Nandkumár set to work with all possible despatch to supply them with those proofs. He recognized that, by ministering to their prejudices, he could gratify his own spleen. In a few days there was not a native in Calcutta who did not regard Hastings as a doomed man. There were few indeed who were not ready to help in collecting stones to cast at him. There is a passage in Lord Macaulay's famous essay which paints the situation in living colours. After stating that the natives had soon recognized the helpless condition into which the triumvirate had reduced the Governor-General, he continues:—

"They considered him as a fallen man, and they acted after their kind. Some of our readers may have seen in India a cloud of crows picking a sick

vulture to death, no bad type of what happens in that country as often as fortune deserts one who had been great and dreaded. In an instant all the sycophants who had lately been ready to lie for him, to forge for him, to pander for him, to poison for him, hasten to purchase the favour of his victorious enemies by accusing him. An Indian Government has only to let it be understood that it wishes a particular man to be ruined, and in twenty-four hours it will be furnished with grave charges, supported by depositions so full and so circumstantial, that any person unaccustomed to Asiatic mendacity would regard it as decisive."

That the members of the triumvirate did in their hearts regard the revelations of Nandkumár as decisive of the guilt of Hastings there is every reason to believe. To doubt it would be to condemn them as being accomplices in a crime. But such a charge has never been brought against them. The one charge which has been substantiated against the three councillors is that they believed too readily the statements inculpating Hastings made to them. They allowed their prejudices, their hatred, their anxiety to condemn, to overcloud their judgment. Believing in their inmost hearts that Hastings was a corrupt man, they accepted without too minute an inquiry the documents which Nandkumár laid before them. That unscrupulous man had taken care that these documents should be drawn in a manner to impose even on the unprejudiced. What chance, then, had these men, ignorant of the ways of the natives; unversed in the methods peculiar to Asiatics; unacquainted with the language, with the characters of the handwriting, and with the cunning and duplicity of the race, to unravel the fraud which Nandkumár had concocted? Between the informer and the informed there was the common ground of hatred to Warren Hastings. They accepted, then, with eagerness, the documents which Nandkumár declared to be proofs of the corrupt dealings of the Governor-General, and they sanctioned the plan of campaign which he proposed to put into execution.

On the 6th of March there had been received and considered in Council a letter from the Ráni of Bardwán accusing Hastings of having received a gratification. Within the next few days other letters from diverse persons arrived, making similar charges against the Governor-General. But it was on the 11th that Nandkumár dealt his first blow. That morning he called on Francis, bearing in his hand a letter

addressed to the Governor-General, in which he stated the grounds upon which he suspected Hastings of corruption, peculation, and connivance at embezzlement, and gave particulars of the large sums he had received under the name of presents. The givers of these presents were, the letter stated, Maní Begam, the lady whom Hastings had appointed regent at Murshídábád, and Muhammad Rizá Khán. Nandkumár requested Francis to deliver the letter sealed to Mr. Hastings, and to insist on its being read in Council. Francis promised to comply.

That same day, the 11th of March, Council held its meeting, and the letter was produced by Francis, laid on the Council table, and, on his motion, was read. It began with a history of the writer's connection with the Company. It stated that he, Nandkumár, had persuaded Mír Jáfar to make war on Mír Kásim after the massacre at Patná; that he had received and distributed the revenue of Bengal after the defeat of the Nawwáb-Wazír at Baksar; that he had been deprived of his place as Diwán by certain corrupt Europeans for their own private ends; and that the place had been bestowed then upon Muhammad Rizá Khán, who had held it for seven years, committing every kind of oppression and corruption, whereas he himself had been untainted and unaccused; that he had assisted Hastings when he was appointed Governor in prosecuting Muhammad Rizá Khán and Shitáb Ráí—that he had, in fact, got up the case against them; that each of the accused had offered large bribes to Hastings and himself to procure their acquittal; that he had mentioned these offers to Hastings, who refused them, but immediately stayed proceedings. Why did Hastings do this? Surely the Council had the right to inquire.

The writer then proceeded to more particular charges against Hastings. He stated that with the view of obtaining the appointment of his son, Gurudás, to the treasurership of the titular Nawwáb's household, and the nomination of Maní Begam to be Guardian of his person, he had, on four different occasions, delivered to two of Hastings' servants, whom he named, eight bags of gold coins to the value of 104,105 rupees; further, that Maní Begam had given Hastings, at Murshídábád, a lakh of rupees on the same

account, and had written to Nandkumár's son, Gurudás, to say that she wished him to give Hastings another lakh and a half of rupees, and that Gurudás must ascertain from his father the form in which Hastings would prefer to receive the money. Nandkumár added that he had reported the contents of this letter to Hastings, and that the latter had replied that he had connections at Kásimbazár; and that he desired that the money should be paid to one Nurr Singh on his account. This was accordingly done. The total amount thus paid to Hastings amounted, the letter added, to 354,105 rupees.

The letter proceeded to state the personal grievances of the writer against Hastings. The first of these was that on the arrival of the new councillors, Hastings had declined to introduce Nandkumár to them, though he afterwards authorized Mr. Alexander Elliot to do so; that he had reproached Nandkumár, at a later period, with having contracted a friendship with his enemy, and had concluded with these words, "I shall pursue what is for my own advantage; but in that your hurt is included. Look to it." He added that at first he was unwilling to believe that Hastings would really become his enemy, but that he soon became convinced of it; that he had received two of his enemies, Jagat Chand and Mohan Parshád, men who had no other title to intimate connection with the Governor-General than their enmity and malevolence to himself.

When, at the Council table, Francis had produced the letter of which a summary has been given in the preceding paragraph, he had declared that he was unacquainted with its contents. This remark immediately preceded the reading of the letter. Having been duly read, that letter was entered on the Consultations, and then Hastings appended below it the following remarks:—

"The Governor-General observes—as Mr. Francis has been pleased to inform the Board that he was unacquainted with the contents of the letter sent into the Board by Nandkumár—that he thinks himself justified in carrying his curiosity further than he should have permitted himself without such a previous intimation, and therefore begs leave to ask Mr. Francis whether he was before this acquainted with Nandkumár's intention of bringing such charges before the Board?"

Francis replied that he did not deem himself obliged to answer any questions of mere curiosity. He added:—

"I am willing, however, to inform the Governor-General that though I was totally unacquainted with the contents of the paper I have delivered into the Board till I heard it read, I did apprehend in general that it contained some charge against him."

Two days later, the 13th, the Council met again. The scene that followed was one of the most violent recorded in the history of that Council. The proceedings began by the reading of another letter from Nandkumár, in which, after affirming the truth of the charges contained in his previous letter, he declared that he had

"the strongest written vouchers to produce in support of what I have advanced; and I wish and entreat, for my honour's sake, that you will suffer me to appear before you to establish the fact by an additional and incontestable evidence."

Upon the reading of this letter Colonel Monson moved that Nandkumár should be called before the Board.

Then began a scene happily but seldom witnessed in a grave Council composed of English gentlemen. Hastings, at white heat, proceeded to pen a minute, to be placed on the Consultations as recording his reasons why Colonel Monson's motion should not be carried. Never did a high officer of State, accused of disgraceful conduct, write under so great a disadvantage. Hastings knew well, when he took the pen in his hand, that the majority against him was assured; that they desired his disgrace and his ruin. He believed that they would stop short of no means by which that disgrace and ruin might be accomplished. His action afterwards proved that far from shunning an inquiry, he courted one. But it must be an inquiry before competent judges. The issue of an investigation before his colleagues, every one of them actuated by the bitterest feelings against him, all of them ignorant of the language of the country, incapable of testing the genuineness of the documents which would be produced, could only be in itself a mockery, but a mockery which might lead to his own degradation. He would not, he could not, be a party to such a parody of justice. He was well aware that the excitement under which he was labouring, that the obligation imposed upon him to answer then and there charges long

meditated, drawn with considerable cunning, and supported by documentary evidence, which, though much of it might be forged, would yet be accepted by his colleagues, would prevent him from presenting his case as clearly as he could desire. He was so conscious of this disadvantage, that at the close of the minute he recorded his regret that he had found it necessary to deliver his sentiments on a subject of so important a character "in an unpremeditated minute drawn from me at the Board," when he could have wished "to have leisure and retirement to have enabled me to express myself with that degree of caution and exactness which the subject requires." He reserved to himself, therefore, the right he had to add subsequently to his remarks.

No man under the circumstances could be expected to write a minute which should be conclusive; and it is not to be denied that the reply penned by Hastings on this memorable occasion bore all the marks of haste and excitement. The wording was slipshod, the arguments were inconclusive. It contained sentences which prejudiced minds might construe into an admission that the charges might be true.* But it was at least manly and outspoken. It cast aside the veil which had covered the real accusers. Those accusers he denounced to be "General Clavering, Colonel Monson, and Mr. Francis," and he declared that he would neither sit at the Board in the character of a criminal, nor would he acknowledge the members of the Board to be his judges. He concluded by declaring—

"I will not meet Nandkumár at the Board, nor suffer Nandkumár to be examined at the Board, nor have you a right to it, nor can it answer any other purpose than that of vilifying and insulting me to insist upon it."

A heated altercation followed the reading of this paper, Monson insisting on his motion, and denying the statement

* This conclusion was arrived at by the accusers of Hastings in England. Sir Gilbert Elliot and Burke described it as bearing every mark of conscious guilt. Mr. James Mill, the historian, sitting in judgment on the event many years later, blinded by prejudice against the then Governor-General, has contended that the eagerness of Hastings to obstruct and stifle inquiry, on all occasions when his conduct came under complaint, constituted in itself an article of proof. Even Sir James Stephen considers that "it leaves something to explain." Very naturally it does, considering the circumstances under which it was written.

made by Hastings that Nandkumár had called upon him and had explained to him during several hours the nature of the charges he was about to bring against the Governor-General; Barwell, supported Hastings, urging that the Board could not "with any propriety place the Governor on the footing of a criminal arraigned at their tribunal, and Nandkumár as that of his accuser;" and arguing further that the proper tribunal to take cognizance of the charge was the Supreme Court. But his arguments produced no effect on the majority. Monson and Clavering declared that it was their consideration for the character of the Governor-General which induced them to insist on confronting the accuser and the accused. At the division which followed Colonel Monson carried his motion, the triumvirate voting solidly against their two colleagues. Then Hastings, exercising the powers which the Act of Parliament had conferred upon the Governor-General, declared the Council dissolved; and, foreseeing that, notwithstanding this declaration, the majority would continue to sit, he protested against any acts of it as a Council during his absence as illegal and unwarranted. He then signed the minute of the proceedings up to that point, and quitted the Council-chamber. Barwell stayed to record his opinion that the Council was dissolved, and then followed his chief.

It is most likely that the majority had regarded such a result as probable. They were resolved at all events it should not interfere with the execution of their plans. Disregarding the dissolution pronounced by Hastings, they immediately voted General Clavering to the chair, and acting on the motion they had carried, summoned Nandkumár within the Council-chamber, asked him what he had to say in support of his charge against the Governor-General. Beginning by declaring that in the course he had taken he had been actuated solely by regard for his wounded honour, Nandkumár declared that the charges against Mr. Hastings were contained in the letter the Council had received, and he was prepared with proofs which, with the permission of the Board, he would lay before them. Receiving the permission asked for, he produced a document purporting to be a letter from Maní Begam, written in the Persian character, and an alleged translation of the same. This letter, dated the 2nd of September, 1772,

addressed to Hastings, expressed the desire of the Begam to present to Hastings something as a recognition of the services he had rendered to her, and, after some details, concluded by asking him to accept one lakh of rupees at Murshídábád; adding that she would draw on Nandkumár for a second lakh to be paid to him at Calcutta, and that she would repay the amount to Nandkumár. The translation finished with the strongest exhortations to secrecy.

Such was the purport of the grand charge against the Governor-General. Five minutes' consideration would have shown his colleagues the inadequacy of the foundation upon which it rested. Hastings had known Nandkumár for sixteen years. From the first period of his acquaintance with him, when he was Resident at Murshídábád, he had distrusted him. He had represented his opinion of the man to Lord Clive; stating that he had found him false, intriguing, and corrupt. Appointed to be Governor of Bengal, he had employed him in the prosecution of Muhammad Rizá and of Shitáb Ráí, solely because he had definite instructions from the Court of Directors to that effect. During the trial of these men, at which he presided, he had seen the evidence produced by Nandkumár break down in every particular. He had had peculiar opportunities for sifting it, and he had found it throughout untrustworthy. Amongst the natives of Bengal the character of Nandkumár stood at a very low point. He had been engaged in many shady transactions. And yet, when this man brings forward a charge against the ruler who had declined to give him the political employment he coveted—a charge based on a translation of a Persian document which the self-constituted judges could not read—the triumvirate clutch at the chance offered them, and regard him as condemned by the very fact that the charge has been made.

Let us examine further the proceedings of that memorable afternoon, and see whether they afford the slightest confirmation of the charges brought against Hastings by Nandkumár. He has produced, it will be recollected, a Persian document which has not been read, and an alleged translation of it which has been read. The triumvirate then asked the accuser to hand them the original for examination. Not one of the

three is able to read, or recognize the character of, the document; they hand it therefore to the assistant secretary to the Council, who is supposed to know Persian—the Court language of India—and ask him to look on the characters impressed on the seal it bore and tell them what they are. The assistant secretary replies that the characters are Persian, and that they express the name of Maní Begam. This statement is confirmed by the chief Persian interpreter, Sir John D'Oyley, who had been sent for, and who arrives opportunely.

Then arises a difficulty. The Munshí, that is, the Persian secretary to Sir John D'Oyley, produces from the Persian office a letter received from Maní Begam a few days before, and points out that the handwriting differs in every respect from that of the letter produced by Nandkumár. But the triumvirate hasten to set aside this difficulty on the plea that the latter document was written two and a half years earlier than that produced from the office.

The majority then ask Nandkumár if he has any further proofs to produce. He has none. Then: whether the Governor-General or any one on his behalf has applied to him to obtain the Persian letter which he had produced. The answer runs as follows—

"The Begam applied to me for it through Kántu Bábu, the Governor's baniyán.* I gave it into Kántu Bábu's hand, who read it, and on being refused the original he desired he might take a copy of it to read to the Begam. I told him he might copy it in my presence, but it then being late in the evening he said he would defer copying it till another day."

In reply to a further question, Nandkumár told the triumvirate that the Bábu did not subsequently renew his application to copy it.

So much for the document. It will be observed that no attempt was made to compare the alleged translation with the original. It seems to have been taken for granted that the one was the counterpart of the other.

The triumvirate continued their examination of Nandkumár by asking him if he were present when the gold was, as stated in his letter, handed over to the two servants of Hastings. He replied that he was present, accompanied by

* Baniyán means money-changer, or financial agent.

three natives, whom he named. Asked whether he was sure that the servants of Hastings received the money on account of their master, he replied, "They undoubtedly took it for the Governor. I asked the Governor if it had reached him, and he said it had."

The triumvirate then summoned Kántu Bábu to attend the Board. But the Bábu, instructed by Hastings, replied that when the Board was fully constituted he would attend. Thereupon the triumvirate passed a resolution declaring him to be guilty of "a high indignity to this Board;" gave permission to Nandkumár to retire; and sent a message to Hastings to inform him that Nandkumár had withdrawn, and to request him to return and take his seat. Hastings very properly replied that he could not recognize the majority as a properly constituted Council; that he could not summon another for that evening as Barwell had left for his country seat, and would not return till the following morning. The triumvirate then, upon the evidence I have cited, and upon that only, proceeded to pass a resolution condemning the Governor-General on the charges brought against him by Nandkumár. Their resolution ran as follows—

"It appearing to the Board that the several sums of money specified in Mahárájá Nandkumár's letter of the 8th of March, viz." (here appear the several items, amounting to a total of 354,105 rupees) "have been received by the Governor-General, and that the said sums of money do rightly belong to the Honourable East India Company: Resolved, that the Governor-General be required to pay into the Company's treasury the amount of those sums for the Company's use."

The triumvirate further directed that the proceedings of the Board, and the papers read thereat, should be delivered to the Company's attorney that he might lay them before counsel for his opinion as to how to proceed for the recovery of the sums named.

In an earlier page I have recorded how the fact that the majority of the Council had, from the very day of their arrival in Calcutta, displayed against the Governor-General an animosity which, according to all appearances, would terminate only in his ruin and disgrace; had incited the baser sort of men, all, in a word, who had a grudge against Mr. Hastings, to come forward to add their stone to the heap

which Nandkumár had collected to hurl at him; and I have stated how the Rání of Bardwán had accused him of accepting a gratification. This charge had been considered in the presence of the Governor-General, and although no proof was offered, the majority had proposed to confer upon the lady accuser the honorary distinction which the Government of India was in the habit of reserving for those of high position who had rendered good service to the State. Hastings had protested against a resolution which would be a personal indignity to himself. But again did the triumvirate triumph by weight of numbers, and the distinction was conferred. The action of the Rání gave an incentive to others anxious to kick the lion whilst, as they believed, he was falling. Amongst them there came forward with charges manufactured for the occasion, Rudácharn Rái, the Wakíl or agent in Calcutta of the Nawwáb-Názim of Bengal; Kamálu'd dín, a farmer of the revenues; and three Englishmen, viz. Mr. Grant, accountant to the provincial Council of Murshídábád, and two adventurers* named Fowke, the elder of whom, whilst supporting in the main the charges of Nandkumár, gave a version of the story differing in many essential parts from that which the chief accuser had laid before the Council. These were the men whose venomous attacks Hastings was suddenly called upon to meet.

In his admirable work,† already quoted, Sir James Stephen has commented on the manner in which, after Hastings had quitted the Council-chamber, the majority had conducted their business. He has pointed out, with the acumen of a lawyer accustomed to cross-examine, that the evidence on which the majority acted was simply the evidence of Nandkumár; that that evidence was hearsay evidence, uncorroborated save by a letter which was authenticated only by Nandkumár, himself an accomplice in the alleged corrupt act, and who avowed himself to be actuated by motives of revenge. As to the questions put to the accuser by the majority, they were not only trivial, but such as the accuser himself would have suggested. He adds that if the majority had given

* By the term "adventurers," I mean Europeans not then in the covenanted Civil Service.

† "The Story of Nuncomar, and the Impeachment of Sir Elijah Impey."

themselves time for examination of the documents before them, they would have realized that there were several points which demanded inquiry; that the story told in the letter of Maní Begam did not agree with the statements made by Nandkumár; that if Nandkumár had been examined regarding the story told by the Begam in her letter, he must either have been brought into direct conflict with her statements, or he must have admitted difficulties which would have rendered it difficult to believe his own assertions. Sir James Stephen adds—

"Apart from this, the majority of the Council did not observe the most obvious and common precautions. They took no steps to ascertain the authenticity of the letter attributed to Maní Begam beyond comparing the inscriptions on two seals. They did not even impound the alleged original, but returned it to Nandkumár. They did not even send for the persons alleged by Nandkumár to have delivered and received the bags of gold, nor did they ask Nandkumár a single question as to the time when, and the place where, the gold was delivered; the persons from whom he got so large a sum; the books in which he had made entries about it; the place and time of his alleged conversation with Hastings on the subject; or any of the other obvious matters by which his truthfulness might be tested."

To these comments I may add the assertion of Hastings, contained in a letter to his friends, Messrs. Graham and Macleane, dated the 25th of March, that Nandkumár was not sworn, nor was he ever asked to swear. Regarding the letter alleged to have been written by the Begam, Hastings denounced it in the same letter "as a gross forgery." With respect to his action in dissolving the Council when he quitted the Council-chamber—a course which he pursued also for the same reasons on the 14th and 17th—he wrote that he could not recall an instance of the Council being called or continued without the President's authority, "not even in the contests of Mr. Vansittart's government." He adds—

"Right or wrong, I had no alternative but to do that or throw up the service. Indeed I consider this to be a case which supersedes all forms. Their violence [that of the majority] had already carried them to lengths which no rules of the service would allow or justify, nor could I yield without inverting the order of it, and submitting to a degradation to which no power on earth could have impelled me. . . . I shall continue the practice I have begun of dissolving the meetings of the Council, that is, of leaving them to themselves as often as they propose new indignities to me. Indeed, I expect

to be able to do very little with them, and how the public business is to be conducted I cannot devise."

It is very interesting to read the unburdening of his heart in the letters the Governor-General wrote at this period to his intimate friends—friends with whom he had been long associated, and who had been eye-witnesses to the rectitude of his conduct from the very beginning. Thus, in the letter from which I have already quoted, dated the 25th of March, just eight days after he had for the third time quitted the Council-chamber because the majority insisted upon examining the charges made against him by men without conscience or honour, he writes:—

"The trumpet has been sounded, and the whole host of informers will soon crowd to Calcutta with their complaints and ready dispositions. Nandkumár holds his darbar in complete state, sends for zamindars and their wakíls, coaxing and threatening them for complaints, which no doubt he will get in abundance, besides what he forges himself. The system which they have laid down for conducting their affairs is, I am told, after this manner: The General" (Clavering) "rummages the consultations for disputable matter, with the aid of old Fowke; Colonel Monson receives, and, I have been assured, descends even to solicit, accusations; Francis writes; Goring* is employed as their agent with Muhammad Rizá Khán, and Fowke with Nandkumár. I believe you both knew, before you left Calcutta, that it was reported and currently believed that I had been many days in close counsel with Nandkumár before the arrival of the transports, and carried down with him a long list of malversations to present to the new members. I suppose it is the same which Nandkumár has since presented.

"Was it for this," he then asks indignantly, for such miserable prying work as this—"that the Legislature of Great Britain formed the new system of government for Bengal, and armed it with powers extending to every part of the British Empire in India?"

Regarding the tempers of his colleagues thus intriguing to ruin him, Hastings writes in the same letter:—

"Colonel Monson, with a more guarded temper, and a more regular conduct, now appears to be the most determined of the three. The rudeness of General Clavering and the petulancy of Francis are the more provoking, but it is from the former only" (meaning, probably, the first, viz. Monson) "that I apprehend an effectual injury."

In his letter to Lord North, dated two days later (March 27), Hastings entered very fully into the controversies which

* Goring was a member of the Civil Service, protected by the triumvirate.

had arisen between himself and his colleagues, and which, increasing every day in bitterness, had continued up to that day, with no prospect of cessation. Beginning by intimating that the Prime Minister must have perceived from the correspondence and reports previously submitted to him that the endeavours of the three new councillors he had selected had been directed, since their arrival in India, to destroy his credit in internal matters, and to annihilate his power in foreign affairs; then indicating at some length the base and unworthy methods to which they had not hesitated to have recourse; Hastings went on to argue that it had been surely foreign to Lord North's intention, when he established the new system of government, and obtained for it great and extended powers, that those powers should be wholly exerted in acts of personal hostility against a mere individual. He had imagined, he said, that the object of the new plan had been only to introduce, by an easy gradation, a more perfect constitution; that, if such, as he did not doubt, had been his Lordship's view, nothing surely could so effectually aid in carrying out his design, than a cordial understanding and co-operation between the old members of the administration and the new. He had been informed indeed that he, Lord North, had enjoined upon the latter the desirability of cultivating a good understanding with himself (Hastings); and to shun every occasion of personal animosity; that he himself had, from the moment of their arrival, made advances to them even beyond the line of his station; but that their indisposition to act with him had manifested itself on the moment of their landing, and had progressively displayed itself up to the very time of writing, in such reiterated acts of deliberate and wanton persecution, as no period of time in the records of the Bengal administration could equal. Hastings concluded his letter with the following appeal:—

"I early foresaw a part of the evils which were preparing for me; but the assurances given me by your Lordship, and the flattering distinction with which you had been pleased to honour me, outweighed every consideration of my own ease and convenience, and fixed me in the determination to stand the event, and to wait for the remedy which your Lordship's justice might prescribe, whatever troubles might be destined to fill up the long interval of my time before I could receive the benefit of it.

"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, to my Sovereign."

The paragraph which follows, and with which the letter concluded, paints in vivid colours the torture which the persecutions of the triumvirate were inflicting on the soul of their colleague :—

"The meanest drudge," so runs the paragraph, "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 an idle spectator of the ruin I cannot avert."

The proceedings of the triumvirate with regard to Oudh, recorded in the last chapter, have already made clear to the reader the weighty reasons which impelled Hastings to pen those concluding words.

It is necessary to record here the letter which Hastings penned to his old friend, Mr. Graham, on the very same date as that on which he despatched the letter above quoted to Lord North. It explains very clearly his intentions regarding the alternative of retention of office or resignation. It runs thus :—

"I think it necessary to give both you and Colonel Macleane this separate notice, lest you should be at a distance from each other when the packet arrives, of a resolution which I have formed, to leave this place" (Fort William) "and return to England on the first ship of next season, if the first advices from England contain a disapprobation of the treaty of Banáras, or of the Rohíla War, and mark an evident disinclination towards me. In that case I can have nothing to hope, and shall consider myself at liberty to quit this hateful scene before my enemies gain their complete triumph over me.

"If, on the contrary, my conduct is commended, and I read in the general letters clear symptoms of a proper disposition for me, I will wait the issue of my appeals.

"I have imparted this resolution to no other person on your side of the water, and I leave it to your discretion and Macleane's to make such use of it as you think proper. I shall certainly contrive to stop at the Cape for the sake of intelligence."

The last sentence shows that he considered that the

chances were in favour of an adverse decision of the Home authorities, and, consequently, of his retiring.

But Hastings was not the man to yield without a blow. Whilst the authorities in England were considering his conduct during the period when the Calcutta Council had followed his lead and had supported him in all his measures, he was resolving the best mode of meeting the conspiracy which had been hatched against him. In the Council-chamber he was powerless. But there were open to him many modes of attack. The campaigns of Marlborough and Eugéne at the beginning of the century had proved that the most efficacious mode of baffling an attack was to carry the war into the enemy's country. A system proved to be good in war was equally applicable to civil contests. In attacking him with the savage vindictiveness he had displayed, Nandkumár had burned his ships. He, at least, was vulnerable. He had conspired with many others to disgrace and ruin the Governor-General. His charges and theirs had been based on documents which, according to the contention of Hastings, were forged, that is, manufactured for the special purpose of disgracing and ruining him. He would have aided the plans of his accusers if he had attempted to disprove those charges in Council; for there the majority of the Council would have overruled all his pleas, and would have recorded, in his own presence, a verdict of "guilty" against him. He could not—he, the accused—act as judge in a case affecting his own character and actions. It would have been the act of a madman had he acknowledged the jurisdiction of and submitted to a tribunal packed against him. There was, he recognized, but one tribunal in India from which he could expect an impartial hearing. That tribunal was the Supreme Court of Justice. Already, on the very first day of the attack, Barwell had pointed out to his colleagues that the charge against the Governor-General should be laid before that Court; but his suggestion had been scouted. We have seen how Hastings, suddenly charged with conduct unbecoming any man, especially a man occupying his high position, had met the motion that the charges should be then and there examined, by a refusal, penned on the moment, couched in language which, critically examined,

would permit a prejudiced person to draw conclusions unfavourable to himself, and had then dissolved the meeting and quitted the Council-chamber. We have seen how the majority nevertheless pursued their pre-arranged examination, and pronounced a verdict against him. We have seen further how this first success, as the conspirators deemed it, had opened the mouths, and whetted the malice of other accusers, and how it had become every day more clear to himself that his enemies were resolved to disgrace and to crush him.

He had quitted the Council-chamber on the 11th of March after having declared the meeting dissolved. He pursued the same course on the 14th and again on the 17th of the same month, when the majority again insisted on hearing other charges against him of a character similar to those brought by Nandkumár. Then ensued a very curious action. The reader will recollect how, when, after the meeting of the 13th, the majority summoned the baniyán of Mr. Hastings, Kántu Bábu, to attend the Board, that native official had declined to attend until the Board should be properly constituted, adding that he wrote that letter with the cognizance of Mr. Hastings. Summoned again on the 20th to attend the Council, when he knew Hastings would be present, he attended. But, strange to say, the majority did not ask him a single question on the matters urged by Nandkumár. They simply examined him as to the reason why he had not attended when first summoned. When he replied that by the orders of his master he had declined to recognize the validity of a Board sitting without its chief, Clavering simply moved that he should be put in the stocks for his disobedience. Very sharp words passed between Hastings and Clavering with respect to this motion, all of which were entered on the Consultations, and eventually Clavering withdrew his motion, and Kántu Bábu retired. On the motion of Francis the Council then adjourned.

During the six weeks that followed the hostile forces were engaged in preparing for action—the accusers framing their evidence, the accused adhering to the position he had taken up, waiting for the revelations which, he felt sure, must not only baffle his adversaries, but enable him to assume the offensive. This help from outside came sooner

than he had anticipated. It may be recollected that amongst those who had come forward to accuse the Governor-General was one Kamálu'd dín, a Muhammadan, a farmer of revenue on a large scale. Kamálu'd dín was a man of the ordinary Bengáli stamp, not possessed of much integrity; but he had embarked all his fortune in revenue-farming, and his interests were involved in the stability of the Government. On the 19th of April this man waited on Hastings at his official residence, and made a clean breast of the moral tortures he was suffering. He told him that the conspiracy had been concocted by the elder Fowke and Nandkumár; that he had just come from them, and that they had forced him to sign a petition charging Hastings and Barwell with bribery; and acknowledging the correctness of an account of sums taken collusively by himself on account of the district Híjlí, of which he farmed the revenues.

There were some apparent contradictions in this statement, and Hastings was not prepared to accept it as wholly true. Before resolving, then, as to the line of conduct he should pursue, he cross-examined Kamálu'd dín rigorously on all the points of his accusation; represented to him the consequences to himself should his statements prove to be false; then, when he found that Kamálu'd dín adhered to his story, and was eager to proceed further, he resolved to have it thoroughly sifted. The very same day, then, he referred the case to the Chief Justice, in his capacity of Justice of the Peace.* Impey fixed the day of hearing for the morrow, called in the aid of his brethren, and sent summonses to Nandkumár, the two Fowkes, Hastings, Barwell, and Vansittart, to appear.

What happened during the examination, which lasted from ten o'clock in the morning till eleven o'clock at night on the following day, will be told in the next chapter. I break off here because the examination, and the consequences to which it led, form the commencement of a new era in the biography of Warren Hastings. Hitherto we have seen him attacked, persecuted, vilified, his good name at the

* On the subject of the Chief Justice and his colleagues sitting also as Justices of the Peace, see Stephen, vol. i. p. 81. It was the custom of the time.

mercy of every informer, of every rascal who considered that his services had been ill-rewarded, of every petty miscreant who endeavoured to propitiate the colleagues who were striving to ruin him. He had no chance of vindicating his good name in the Council-chamber. He could not submit the most precious possession of an honest man to the pleasure of a majority banded against him. But now a chance had offered. One of the subordinates of the gang of perjurers had turned King's evidence. This was his opportunity. Without losing an hour he seized it. Before the supreme tribunal in the land he would have his accusers examined. The way to such a course had been opened to him by the revelations of Kamálu'd dín. He clutched at it with avidity. In referring the charge to the Chief Justice, he took the first step of the first march in the campaign which was to carry the war into the enemy's country.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE TRIAL OF NANDKUMÁR AND ITS CONSEQUENCES.

THE official record of the examination of Nandkumár and the two Fowkes, before the judges sitting as Justices of the Peace, on the 20th of April, 1775, is very hard reading, even for a lawyer. Fortunately an eminent English judge * has translated the clumsy sentences of which it is made up into clearer English, and has evolved the real story from the tangled mass. It is evident that the main accusation brought by Kamálu'd dín against Nandkumár and the elder Fowke was to the effect that the two men charged had compelled the accuser to write a petition, bringing the following accusation against Hastings, viz. that he, Hastings, had forced him, Kamálu'd dín, to write a petition charging Fowke with having tried to extort from him a statement that he had given bribes to English gentlemen and to natives in power.

The examination began, as I have said, at ten o'clock in the morning. Many witnesses were called, and from their evidence and the admissions of the accused, it became clear that such a petition as that mentioned had been signed by Kamálu'd dín. The only question that remained was whether he had, as the accused asserted, signed it voluntarily, or whether it had been extorted from him by threats; further, whether a list of the bribes offered, and to whom and by whom, referred to in the petition, had ever existed.

It would require far more space than I command to enter into the contradictory evidence of the witnesses, nor does it seem necessary for the purpose of this biography. The

* Sir James Stephen. *Vide* the first volume of "Nandkumár and Impey," pp. 78–89.

whole of it has been carefully sifted by Sir James Stephen in the book to which I have often referred. It must suffice here to state that Kamálu'd dín, though evidently possessing little weight of character, impressed the judges by his sincerity. At the close of the day, eleven o'clock p.m., they came unanimously to the conclusion that whilst the younger Fowke might be discharged, there was grave suspicion against Nandkumár, the elder Fowke, and their associates. They then demanded of Messrs. Hastings, Barwell, and Vansittart whether they were prepared to prosecute those against whom there was so strong a case of suspicion. At that late hour they would not demand a reply, but requested that they might receive one within two days, the actual day being Friday.

With Hastings how to reply was a matter of grave consideration. His knowledge of the character of the Bengális had taught him the danger of depending upon the stability of their word. Should the chief witness, Kamálu'd dín, be "got at;" should he, that is to say, be bribed into recanting his evidence; should he veer round and accuse him (Hastings) of being the promoter of the prosecution, paid by him to become so, the triumph of his enemies would be complete. And he had to depend mainly on that one man's evidence. Yet Hastings was a brave man, eager to search for and to follow the path of duty; and duty seemed to his conscience to point to but one path to follow—the path upon which he had entered when he had referred the case of Kamálu'd dín to the Justices of the Peace.

It is interesting to mark his conduct as related by himself in a private letter to his most intimate friends, Messrs. Graham and Macleane, on this critical occasion. The letter is dated the 29th of April, about a week after the occurrences to which it refers. After relating the incidents of the examination of the 20th, he continues:—

"After the examination I sent for him [Kamálu'd dín] to Belvedere (having had the precaution to ask the judges if I could do it with propriety) on the 23rd. I told him that if his charges were false, it would be impossible to conceal it from the penetration of the judges, the jurymen, and the assistants, by whom he would be closely questioned on every minute fact and circumstance; that the consequence of his being proved guilty of a perjury

would be infamy and irretrievable ruin. I conjured him, therefore, by God and his conscience, Khuda-ke-waste and Dharm-ke-waste,* not to involve himself in destruction, nor draw me into the prosecution of an innocent man—innocent, I mean, of the *fard* [list of the bribes and bribers], for I was clear as to the *arzi* [petition]. I entreated him to tell me fairly and candidly the whole truth. I promised him both pardon and my future support if he would reveal the real facts, even though it should appear from them that he had endeavoured to injure me, as the greatest injury he could do me was to deceive me on this occasion. In answer, he affirmed, with the most solemn asseverations, that he had related nothing but the strictest truth. He repeated the story, and again repeated it with variations in little circumstances, and in the mode of relating it, but with a strong and undeviating consistency in every material point. He said it was impossible for him to call witnesses to what passed in Fowke's chamber, where he stood alone in the midst of his enemies; but he would persist to the death in what he had affirmed, and relied even on the depositions of Mr. Fowke's own servants for the confirmation of enough of it to serve as presumptive evidence of the rest. He returned the next day of his own accord to confirm the same declarations. I accordingly resolved on the prosecution, and in my heart and conscience I believe both Fowke and Nandkumár to be guilty."

After dwelling at some length on the details of the charge, and the strong apparent evidence, despite some contradictions in minor details of its truth, Hastings concluded that portion of his letter which referred to it with these memorable words:—

"Whatever be the issue of the trial, I shall fix my judgment on the evidence given without premeditation, and shall carry to the grave the firm and immovable belief that these men [Nandkumár and his associates] are the retained instruments of a faction to excite and to forge accusations against me for the purpose of working their triumph on my ruin."

He had full justification for his belief. Even as he was writing the letter from which I have made these extracts, his eyes fell upon the copy of a despatch written by the triumvirate to the Court of Directors, and which that body had forwarded to him to answer. In it the triumvirate affirmed that the whole country joined in condemnation of his (Hastings') conduct,† and that he was, in so many words,

* The first of these expressions means "for the sake of God," the second, "for the sake of conscience."

† Even Macaulay contradicts this. He writes in his essay on "Warren Hastings," referring to this period: "The general feeling among the English in Bengal was strongly in favour of the Governor-General. In talents for business, in knowledge of the country, in general courtesy of demeanour, he was decidedly superior to his persecutors."

a monster of iniquity, guilty of every species of enormity. Stating that he had not had time to answer it, Hastings thus appeals to the experience of the friends associated with him during the first two years of his administration:—

"There are many gentlemen in England who have been eye-witnesses of my conduct. For God's sake call upon them to draw my true portrait, for the devil is not so black as these men have painted me. There are thousands in England who have correspondents in Bengal. I wish it were possible to collect testimonies from these. If I am not deceived, there is not a man in Calcutta, scarce in Bengal, unconnected with Clavering and his associates, who does not execrate their conduct and unite in wishes for my success against them."

Acting upon the resolution he had communicated to his friends in the letter above quoted, Hastings, on the 23rd—and with him Barwell and Vansittart—announced to the judges their intention to prosecute the elder Fowke, Nandkumár, and Rádácharn, the son-in-law and associate of Nandkumár, for conspiracy. The Court thereupon bound over those three gentlemen to prosecute, and—there being yet some six weeks before the assizes would sit—accepted bail from the defendants.

In the long interval which must thus ensue before the charges could be investigated, there was plenty of time—the community being what it was—to cause much gossip and much scandal. It is distressing to have to record that the three gentlemen who constituted the omnipotent majority of Council commenced very early to set the example. I have recorded in the pages immediately preceding, how it was that Hastings, asked on the night of the 20th whether he and his friends intended to prosecute the defendants, replied in the affirmative only on the 23rd—the 22nd being Sunday. It was on the 23rd, then, that the defendants had been held to bail. In the interval they had naturally been permitted to remain at large. This circumstance, in itself of no moment whatever, the triumvirate chose to regard as sufficient proof that the charges of Kamálu'd dín, which they professed to regard as instigated by Hastings, had fallen through. They, therefore, on the evening of the 21st proceeded, accompanied by their friends, and attended with all the ceremony possible, to pay a visit of congratulation to

Nandkumár. This visit was avowedly made because the triumvirate regarded Nandkumár as "an innocent man and the victim of State policy," * at a time when any sane man must have known that the only chance present to Hastings at the time for the vindication of his honour was to prosecute Nandkumár.

"It cannot be denied," writes Sir James Stephen in the work from which I have so often quoted, "that the act showed hot partisanship and considerable disrespect to the administration of justice. It is incredible that Clavering could believe that the inquiry was at an end, when he knew (as he admitted he did) that the inquiries had not ended favourably to the accused, and the visit could have no other object, especially in such a place as Calcutta, than to intimate strong disapproval of the prosecution and a belief in Nandkumár's innocence." †

The visit was not fruitless. The spectacle of the Government of India—for the triumvirate constituted the Government—paying a semi-viceregal visit to the denouncer of their colleague, now practically bereft of all ruling power, incited hosts of informers, quick to divine the winning side, to prefer fresh charges against the fettered lion. These men were prepared with oaths, with forged documents concocted so as to look like truth; they had the glibest of tongues, and the most elastic of consciences. They would have been dangerous indeed if their powers of divination had equalled their facility of invention.

As it was they might have spared themselves their immoral attempts to strike at the man they thought in their toils. It will suffice here to state that the answers of Hastings to those attempts cannot fail to carry conviction to all impartial minds. He was engaged in penning these replies, and in explaining the several matters connected with the charges in luminous letters to Lord North, when the attention of all Calcutta was suddenly diverted to a matter which riveted the attention of its inhabitants from the highest to the lowest. On the 6th of May, just a fortnight after he had been admitted to bail, Nandkumár was suddenly arrested for forgery.

The circumstances of the case may be here briefly stated.

* General Clavering's evidence at the trial.
† See Stephen, vol. i. pp. 89–90, and note.

In December, 1772, one Gangávishn, the executor of one Bálákí Dás, had claimed, in the Civil Court of Calcutta, the sum of 129,690 rupees from Nandkumár, on the ground that that sum was due by Nandkumár to the estate of the deceased for Company's bonds. There acted as attorney for Gangávishn a pleader named Mohan Parshád. Nandkumár had replied by filing an account professing to have been adjusted with the representatives of Bálákí Dás, showing a small balance in his favour. To this Mohan Parshád replied that the account had been indeed signed by himself and the plaintiff, but it was not an account with Nandkumár. The Court, anxious to probe the matter to the bottom, proceeded to investigate the antecedent transactions relating to the deposition of the Company's bonds in the hands of Nandkumár, and called upon Gangávishn for "a more minute explanation of his demand." The plaintiff proceeded to comply with the requirement of the Court, and in February, 1774, sent in an amended bill of complaint, in which the circumstance "of three fictitious bonds was alleged." Copies of these were produced, but not the originals. The Court, after hearing the evidence on both sides,—

"which, however, went rather upon the acquiescence of the plaintiff in the payment of the bonds, and the allowed retention of a certain number of the Company's bonds by Nandkumár, than either to establish or repel any specific charge of forgery against Nandkumár," declared that the case, "considered as a criminal charge, did not fall within the province of the Civil Court."

The Court then proceeded to recommend arbitration: first, because the plaintiff desired it; secondly, because the cause was intricate, depending materially on accounts in the Nágarí * character, which no member of the Court could read; thirdly, because, if a decisive opinion in favour of the plaintiff had been adopted, it would have implied a charge of forgery against Nandkumár; fourthly, because one of the members of the Court was known to have been recommended to his office by Nandkumár. After some hesitation Nandkumár agreed to arbitration, but he delayed naming an arbitrator, and the cause was still in suspense when the

* The "Nágarí" character is that in which the Sanscrit language is written. The pure Hindi, which is an offshoot of that language, also uses the Nágarí character.

members of the new Supreme Court landed in Calcutta (October, 1774).

From the above facts, which are incontestable, Sir James Stephen, to whose summary I have been so much indebted, draws the following conclusions:—

"In a word, litigation which has lasted for upwards of two years was brought to a standstill by the reluctance of the Court to proceed in a course which might cast upon Nandkumár the imputation of forgery, and by Nandkumár's refusal to agree upon arbitrators after a reluctant consent to refer the matter had been obtained from him. It is not at all surprising that in these circumstances the attorney for the plaintiff should recommend his client to adopt the shorter and sharper course of prosecuting Nandkumár criminally. His conviction for the criminal offence would not indeed operate as a verdict in his adversary's favour in the civil action, but if his goods were forfeited it would give him practically an irresistible claim on the Government, and if the law of forfeiture was not applied, the claim after Nandkumár's execution would be practically established against his representative." *

It is, I think, impossible to dispute the logical accuracy of the conclusion arrived at by Sir James Stephen. It is clear that Nandkumár, and Nandkumár only, was responsible for the long delay which had occurred. Up to the point in the story at which we have arrived, there is not the smallest sign of hostile influence put in action against him. The Civil Court, wishing, for reasons already stated, to compromise a matter, which, if dealt with by the Criminal Court, might ruin Nandkumár, had recommended both parties to compromise. Nandkumár, unwilling to part with money he had acquired by means which he did not wish to be investigated too closely, had kept the matter open, hoping that it would die a natural death. Whilst it still remained open, the judges of the newly constituted Supreme Court, armed with extraordinary powers, landed in Bengal. Nandkumár's ill-reasoned procrastination left him then exposed to a very serious attack on a field of which he had had no experience. Apparently, the knowledge that he was so exposed did not abate either his pride or his self-confidence. For, from his

* Stephen, vol. i. pp. 90–92. As far as this point Sir James Stephen has based his narrative upon the evidence of Mr. Boughton Rouse before the Impeachment Committee. From this point he had depended mainly upon Mr. Thomas Farrer, a gentleman who arrived in India two or three days before the judges, and was the first person admitted as an advocate of the Supreme Court.

own admissions, he selected that moment to prepare the campaign which, some months later, he opened against Hastings.

And yet, all the time he was making those preparations, the result of which we have read in the preceding chapter, the ground beneath him was being mined. I have already * told how, two or three days before the arrival in Bengal of the judges, there had landed in Calcutta a barrister named Thomas Farrer, who was at once admitted as an advocate of the Supreme Court. Mr. Farrer had not been a month in his new home when a Mr. Driver, recently admitted as an attorney in the Supreme Court, spoke to him on the subject of Nandkumár's case. He told him, in so many words, that from the information he had received from his client, the native practitioner Mohan Parshád, Nandkumár, though proceeded against in the Civil Court, of which he (Mohan) had been an attorney, had really been guilty of forgery, and that he had advised Mohan Parshád to proceed criminally against him for forgery; that Mohan Parshád had acquiesced in that advice; that all the papers of the late Bálákí Dás were in deposit in the Mayor's court; that, in order to enable him to prefer a bill of indictment as for forgery, it was necessary for him, first of all, to possess himself of the original instrument charged to be forged; that he had, *accordingly*,† in March, 1774, moved to have all these original papers, amongst which was the

"instrument in question, delivered to him or to his client" (Mohan Parshád), "but that his motion had been refused, and that the Mayor's court had only offered him attested copies to make such use of as he should think proper; that an attested copy would by no means answer his purpose of preferring a bill of indictment, and that therefore he had been prevented from proceeding further at the time."

After giving his reasons why the court before which the case had been tried had been biased in favour of "men of a certain description, such as Nandkumár," Mr. Driver proceeded to state to Farrer that he should advise Mohan Parshád

* See note in page immediately preceding.

† A great, and, fortunately, fruitless effort was made by the enemies of Mr. Hastings and Sir Elijah Impey to get rid of the word "accordingly." Sir James Stephen has effectively disposed of the contention of those who made the attempt. *Vide* Stephen, vol. i. pp. 93, 94, and note.

to authorize himself (Driver) to instruct Farrer to make the same motion before the Supreme Court, viz. to move for the production of the original papers, to be delivered to him or to his client.

Farrer agreed to act for Mohan Parshád; and on the 25th and 30th of January, 1775, he did move the Supreme Court for the papers referred to, to be delivered to Gangávishn, who, the reader will recollect, was the executor of Báláki Dás, and of whom Mohan Parshád had been the native attorney. The Court made the order, but there was some strange delay in obeying it. Accordingly, Farrer brought the case again before the Supreme Court, and, on the 24th of March, that Court peremptorily ordered that the Registrar should examine the papers, with the assistance of persons named,—or, should those persons not attend, by himself,—and deliver to Gangávishn, within one month, those that belonged to the estate of Báláki Dás. That month expired on the 24th of April, and it seems probable that the papers were not delivered till the full expiry of the period, for it was on the 6th of May only that, at the instance of Gangávishn, Nandkumár was brought before the judges, Lemaistre and Hyde, on a charge of forgery.

It would seem, from a letter written at a later date (August 2) to the Court of Directors, that when the charge of forgery against Nandkumár was exhibited in the magistrate's court, Lemaistre was sitting alone. Seeing that the case dealt with a very serious accusation, he requested the assistance of his colleague, Hyde. Hyde came at once, and before these two judges of the Supreme Court, acting as magistrates, the charge was heard. The recorded opinion of the two judges on the proceedings of that day is very remarkable. The examination, they wrote, "lasted from nine in the morning till near ten at night; when, *no doubt of his guilt remaining in the mind of either of us* upon the evidence on the part of the Crown, a commitment in the usual form was made out." That night, in fact, Nandkumár was committed to prison.*

On this transaction the enemies of Mr. Hastings have endeavoured to make a capital charge against him. Macaulay

* See Stephen, vol. i. pp. 94–96.

has endorsed with more than his usual malignity many of the charges brought at a later period against Hastings by the Managers of the Impeachment and by other hirelings. The opinion which he permitted to descend to posterity as not only his own, but as that "of everybody, idiots and biographers excepted," was that although the ostensible prosecutor was a native, Hastings was the real mover in the business. To support this grave charge Macaulay has not produced a single scrap of testimony, whereas further scrutiny has produced evidence, amounting to certainty, that not only had Hastings, up to the day of the hearing of the charge, taken no hostile action against Nandkumár in the matter, but that his previous conduct in respect to it had been characterized by the greatest reserve. After the careful summary of the story of the case given by the eminent judge from whom I have so often quoted, himself a personal friend and great admirer of Lord Macaulay, and whose account I have followed in all its main points, it is clear that the suit, from its inception to its close, was simply a suit for the recovery of money due to an estate which Nandkumár had endeavoured to defraud. The action for the recovery of that money was instituted, in December, 1772, in a Civil Court. The judge detecting in the case a great probability of forgery, and wishing to befriend the defendant, dismissed the civil action and recommended the two parties to arbitrate. If Nandkumár had agreed with the prosecution as to the names of the arbitrators, it is more than probable that the case would have been then and there settled. He was, however, imprudent enough to delay the settlement. Whilst he was still delaying the newly-appointed judges arrived, and the Supreme Court was constituted. The managers of the property came then to the conclusion that as they had failed alike in their civil suit, and in their attempts at arbitration, it was their duty to endeavour to compel the defendant, by means of a criminal suit, to disgorge. They wanted their money; and they believed that, charged with forgery, Nandkumár would hasten to come to terms.

Up to that point there is not the smallest trace of the hand of the Governor-General. That Hastings had the gravest cause of dislike to Nandkumár is certain. He would have been more than human had he not detested the accuser,

who, by means of forged documents, and by the suborning of false witnesses, had tried "to push him from his seat." But Hastings was a manly foe, an open enemy; throughout his career he never once descended to trickery or undermining. He had, we have seen, seized the very first opportunity that offered to bring charges of a very grave character against Nandkumár, and Nandkumár had been committed to stand his trial on those charges. He had had no reason to believe that after the judges, sitting as magistrates, had committed Nandkumár and his associates to stand their trial for conspiracy, there would rise against him other enemies to prosecute him on a charge still more serious. He had on the 23rd of March taken the offensive against Nandkumár. It was, as I have pointed out, the first step in the defensive-aggressive campaign he had resolved to carry out. He had no idea that his forward march might possibly influence other men, awaiting their opportunity, to direct a flank march against the common enemy.

That his example in attacking Nandkumár in the manner I have described should have given courage to those other denizens of Calcutta who had been nursing their grievances against that intriguer is so consonant to the Bengáli character that there are few save "idiots and pamphleteers"—if I may paraphrase Lord Macaulay's expression—who would hesitate to believe it. Let us, for a moment, examine the dates. Hastings had sanctioned the bringing of the charge of conspiracy against Nandkumár on the 20th of March; he had allowed himself to be bound over to prosecute on the 23rd. Now, we have the evidence of Mr. Farrer that the charge of forgery against Nandkumár had been submitted to him by Mr. Driver, an attorney, a month after his arrival in Calcutta. That would be about the end of November, 1774. Further that, on the same day, Mr. Driver had informed him that, in the previous month of March (March, 1774), he had moved in the Mayor's court for the original papers in the suit which Mohan Parshád had conducted in that court against Nandkumár; that he had been refused; but, now that an independent court had been established, he should advise his client to authorize him (Driver) to instruct Farrer to make the same motion before the Supreme Court. Farrer acted

accordingly, and ultimately obtained an order for the delivery of the papers within one month after the 24th of March. It seems important to note that that order was made after Hastings had been bound over to prosecute Nandkumár for conspiracy. He could not know that it was coming. Nor was it at all probable that he should take any interest in what, after all, was a family squabble. His papers may be searched in vain for the slightest intimation that the quarrel between Gangávishn and Nandkumár at all interested him.

Pursuing the inquiry, we find that the attorney of Gangávishn obtained the papers he asked for on or about the 24th of April. The suit had been a long one, extending over some years. Meanwhile the knowledge that early in June the prosecution instituted by Hastings against Nandkumár for conspiracy would be brought to an issue before the judges, had become universal. In the month which elapsed before the papers were to be delivered to Gangávishn, that prosecutor and his attorney, Mohan Parshád, had ample opportunity to discuss the question as it affected them in all its bearings. They might have hesitated to attack Nandkumár whilst he was apparently omnipotent, supported by the triumphant majority of the Council, his charges against Hastings accepted by that majority, and Hastings apparently reduced to silence. But since the 23rd of March, Hastings had become the avowed prosecutor of Nandkumár. Surely it would strengthen the position of Gangávishn and of Mohan Parshád if they were to bring a still graver charge against Nandkumár before the same magistrates who had already committed him for trial at the next assizes.

But to resume. The day after the commitment of Nandkumár on the charge of forgery, Farrer, whom he had, on the spot, engaged as his advocate, applied to the court for bail, or, failing that, for the removal of the prisoner from the common gaol to the new fort. Farrer based his request on the ground that Nandkumár, a Brahman, could not, without breaking his caste, take proper food or perform the ceremonies of his religion in the gaol. The request was refused on the ground that there was but one law for all, and that Brahmans were not exempt from the requirements of that law. Vainly did the majority of the Council interfere, basing their request

to the judges on the ground of humanity. Their interference gave Impey an opportunity of vindicating the independence of the Supreme Court, and of proving by the evidence of *pandits*, that the judges had exercised no severity prejudicial to the health or to the caste of Nandkumár.

We may pause here to describe the effect which this sudden commitment to prison of so conspicuous a character, on a charge so fraught with danger and disgrace, produced on the Calcutta community. "The rage of the majority," writes Lord Macaulay, "rose to the highest point." They displayed their anger, not only by their communications to the Supreme Court, but by penning a minute to the Court of Directors, in which they described the two separate actions against Nandkumár as though they had been part and parcel of the same drama, conducted by the same person. Beginning by referring to the prosecution of the Brahman by Warren Hastings for conspiracy, they treated that prosecution, notwithstanding that the accused had been committed for trial at the assizes, as having failed,* and went on to affirm that, because it had failed, Nandkumár was being prosecuted on the graver charge of forgery, and had been thrown into the common gaol. After further remarks, full of insinuations against the judges, the triumvirate concluded that they did not doubt that, "notwithstanding the power and influence of his persecutors," an English jury would give Nandkumár a fair trial. This letter gave the tone to the remarks of that portion of the society of Calcutta which supported the dominant power, that is, the triumvirate of Clavering, Monson, and Francis.

In the foregoing extract the triumvirate used the phrase, "notwithstanding the power and influence of his persecutors." It is desirable, in the interests of truth and justice, to inquire, calmly and seriously, who these persecutors were. There can be no doubt that the triumvirate referred to Hastings and the judges. But they brought forward no proof, no plausible suspicion even—I might even say, no shadow of a

* Their words were: "This attempt to discredit the evidence of the Rájá [Nandkumár] not answering the purpose it was intended for, he was, a few days after, again taken up, on a charge of forgery, and committed to the common gaol."

groundwork of suspicion—that Hastings was in any way connected with the charge of forgery against Nandkumár. In that transaction he had neither hand nor voice. As for the judges, who were they who committed the accused? They were neither Impey, the school-friend of Hastings, nor his most trusted colleague, Chambers. They were Lemaistre and Hyde, men of whom Impey had written, "they have set themselves in direct opposition to me in everything." Yet to these two men the guilt of Nandkumár had seemed so transparent that after an examination of him for nearly thirteen consecutive hours they had declared that "no doubt of his guilt remaining in the mind of either of us upon the evidence on behalf of the Crown, a commitment in the usual form was made out."

There remain, then, of those whom the triumvirate denounced as Nandkumár's persecutors, Impey and Chambers. We may at once dismiss the latter from the charge, for he was socially more allied with the triumvirate than with Hastings, and at the time when the letter was written, the majority counted upon his support. As to Impey, what had he done to justify the triumvirate in denouncing him as a persecutor? He had simply upheld the rules of the Supreme Court in dealing with a crime for which death was the penalty. He had refused to transfer Nandkumár from the common gaol to the fort. He had refused to treat him, because he was a Brahman, differently from other prisoners charged with, and committed for, a similar offence. He had laid down the golden rule that there must be but one law for all. But he was a just man, and a few hours later, out of consideration for the prisoner, he had permitted the erection of a tent within the precincts of the gaol, in which he might perform the ablutions declared to be necessary for a man of the Brahman caste. In the hysterical shrieks of the triumvirate and their friends it is difficult, it is impossible, to point to a single act of the Chief Justice on which to base a charge of "persecution." If there were any persecutors they were the native gentlemen, Gangávishn and Mohan Parshád, who, unable to obtain the money due by the accused in a Civil Court, thought to wrench it from him by prosecuting him for a forgery which that Civil Court had suggested as the real offence of Nandkumár.

Yet for the time, and, unfortunately, for many years after, the hysterical shrieks of the dominant party prevailed. They carried with them the support of the corrupt few in Calcutta; of a venal parliamentary party in England; of the men of all sorts and conditions who never think for themselves, but whose sluggish brains are content to take an impression from the majority; and finally of partisan historians and essayists. I cannot too often repeat that these men had not, and never had, one single fact upon which to base their charges against Hastings. Their reasoning has ever been the reasoning natural to ill-instructed schoolboys. Because Hastings had been bound over to prosecute Nandkumár for conspiracy, and because, five weeks later, a native gentleman had just procured documents which gave him substantial grounds upon which to bring a charge of forgery against the same man, therefore Hastings must have instigated the action of that native gentleman. Who can doubt that the famous mathematician of Alexandria, conning over a proposition of that character, would have marked it with the well-known formula *quod est absurdum?*

Once more to proceed. On the 8th of June Nandkumár's case came on for trial. The trial lasted eight days, concluding at four o'clock in the afternoon of the 16th. The Court sat without intermission, not rising even for Sunday. The jury was composed entirely of Englishmen. Space will not allow me, nor is it necessary here, to give the evidence in detail, nor the legal arguments involved in it. The curious reader will find these recorded and commented upon in the valuable work from which I have so often quoted.* Although the result of the trial affected Hastings, it affected him only indirectly. The action of Mohan Parshád may be described as the flank march of another enemy of Nandkumár, which rendered unnecessary the direct march on which Hastings had embarked. In that sense this trial affected him. It affected him likewise in that it gave to his enemies opportunities to concoct the falsest charges against himself. It proved the mainstay of the venomous minds which continued for years, and, alas! in some few instances, continue still, to dart their poison against his reputation. Regarding the

* Sir James Stephen, "The Story of Nuncomar."

matter from this point of view, we have to look only at the result.

The indictment against Nandkumár consisted of twenty counts, all containing charges of forging or of publishing bonds or legal documents. But of the twenty charges, the last two, viz. the 19th and 20th, were those which brought the charges to a direct issue. In these the accused was charged with forging and publishing a bond with intent to defraud Gangávishn, the surviving executor of Bálákí Dás. After a very patient trial, in which the prisoner was ably defended by the Mr. Farrer of whom I have already spoken, and by a Mr. Brix, Nandkumár was convicted, and sentenced to be hanged. Of the manner in which the trial was conducted, Sir James Stephen, after carefully examining the evidence, and sifting the action of the four judges, has recorded his opinion that "no man ever had, or could have, a fairer trial than Nandkumár, and that Impey, in particular, behaved with absolute fairness and as much indulgence as was compatible with his duty." * It is difficult to believe that any fair-minded man, capable of sifting evidence, who shall wade through the minutes of the trial, could arrive at any other conclusion.

Sentence had been pronounced on Nandkumár. The excitement in Calcutta was great. On the morrow of the publication of the result the triumvirate and their satellites employed all the means in their power to increase that excitement. Francis and his few English adherents, writes Lord Macaulay, "described the Governor-General and the Chief Justice as the worst of murderers." Clavering, it was said, records the same authority, "swore that even at the foot of the gallows Nandkumár should be rescued." Amongst the natives various feelings prevailed. The Muhammadans regarded the sentence as a just retribution on the condemned

* For the manner in which Sir James Stephen has disposed of the "elaborate and laborious" articles contributed by Mr. Beveridge in the *Calcutta Review*, in which that gentleman endeavours to prove that "Hastings murdered Nandkumár by the hands of Impey," the reader is referred to the book of Sir James Stephen, so often quoted by me, especially to pp. 189–192, and note to p. 185 of the first volume. The criticisms of Mr. Beveridge are therein proved to be "rash, and often unjust." It is clear, writes Stephen, that "when he wrote them he did not possess the knowledge of judicial affairs requisite to make him a competent critic of the matter on which he wrote."

for having attempted to ruin their leading representative, Muhammad Rizá Khán. The Hindus were curious or indifferent. Macaulay has endeavoured to draw capital from the fact that, according to the national laws of the Hindus, a Brahman cannot be put to death for any crime whatever. Such a law had never obtained State-sanction from Akbar or his successors, and the sentimental theory—for it was no more—had been departed from in a thousand instances. In point of fact, a Brahman was as amenable to the common law of the country as any other citizen. From all that I have been able to gather, I have come to the conclusion that the general feeling amongst the Hindus was that Nandkumár had played for a great stake, and must pay the penalty of having lost it. Those of my readers who have lived much amongst that people will readily understand that their habit of thought naturally prompts them to travel back from effect to cause, and it was in this way that, on this occasion, they came, most unjustly, to trace the sentence on Nandkumár to his attack on the Governor-General.

That sentence was to be carried out on the 5th of August. In the interval, the zeal which the triumvirate had displayed on behalf of their accomplice had begun sensibly to cool. Sir James Stephen has pointed out that there had been a way, by following which the majority of the Council might have saved the life of their subservient ally.

"On the 1st of August, 1775," he writes, "they had it in their power to save Nandkumár's life by simply voting in their capacity of a majority of the Council, to send to the judges, in the name of the Governor-General and Council, the letter which Farrer had drawn" (a petition of Nandkumár to the Council, asking for a reprieve, based mainly on the fact that the law on which sentence was given against him was an *ex post facto* law, accompanied by a draft* which, Farrer suggested, the majority of the Council should sign), "with or without an addition as to Nandkumár's accusation of Hastings. If at that time they really believed that he was an innocent man on the point of being judicially murdered, they made themselves, by their conduct, accomplices in the murder which they believed to be in the course of being committed."

* The suggested draft ran thus: "The reasons contained in such petition seem to us to have weight, and they, together with others of a political nature, which must be presumed from the known rank and station of the petitioner, both in public and private life, necessarily occur to your Lordships, induce us to comply with the prayer of the petition."

What was that conduct—the conduct of the triumphant majority who had encouraged Nandkumár to denounce Hastings, and who familiarly spoke of the sentence on that Brahman as an official murder, connived at, if not directly brought about, by Hastings? Let us read on this head the evidence of Farrer, the counsel for Nandkumár, at the trial. On the 1st of August, the day previously mentioned, Farrer was at a party at Lady Anne Monson's, and there met the triumvirate. He was full of the business of Nandkumar's petition.

"They being all assembled," he writes, "I called Francis aside, and explained the business to him first. He had no objection to it, but approved the measure. General Clavering and Mr. Monson were then called to us, and it was proposed by Mr. Francis and myself to them. The General, without hesitation, peremptorily refused, assigning as a reason that it was a private transaction of Nandkumár's own, that it had no relation whatever to the public concerns of the country, which alone he, the General, was sent out to transact, and that he would not make any application in favour of a man who had been found guilty of forgery; nor indeed did he think it would do any good. Mr. Monson concurred with him, and therefore the matter dropped, and was no further stirred." *

Nor was this all. On the 31st of July Nandkumár had addressed a striking appeal to Francis himself. Asserting in this letter that his endeavours to promote the interests of the country, and to serve with that object under Francis, "had tended to entrap his life in that cause," he begged Francis to intercede for him, and procure a respite till the pleasure of the King should be known. Confident that Francis would respond favourably to his prayer, he concluded by assuring him that in such confidence he would not accuse him in the day of judgment of neglecting to assist him in his extremity. Of this letter Francis took no notice. Nor was Clavering more careful of the life of the man who had served himself and his associates in his conflict with Hastings. On the 4th of August a petition from Nandkumár was handed to him. He took care, however, to avoid mastering its

* Stephen, vol. i. pp. 232, 233. The writer adds these pregnant words: "This contemptuous rejection by the majority of the Council of Nandkumár's petition to them appears to me to go very far to prove that the accusations afterwards brought at the instigation of Francis against Impey were not

contents until after the petitioner had been hanged. When, after that event, the petition came before the Council, it was Francis who proposed that the paper should be burnt by the common hangman, on the ground that it contained a libel on the judges.

At last the 5th of August dawned, and on the plain between Calcutta and the river Hugli, known immemorially as the Maidán, Nandkumár paid the penalty of his crime. The brilliant pen of Lord Macaulay has described the scene of the execution in language which owes its origin to the highly coloured account of the sheriff, Mr. Macrabie, the private secretary of Mr. Francis, and to the eloquent peroration of Sir Gilbert Elliot, delivered in the House of Commons fifteen years later. The statement that a large crowd assembled to witness the terrible scene may be accepted. There is not a capital in Europe in which a public execution did not then, unhappily, attract the scum of the population. Just eighteen years before the event we are describing, the breaking on the wheel of Damiens had drawn together, not the scum only, but the entire fashionable world of Paris. Many of those who witnessed the carrying out of the more humane sentence on Nandkumár were inspired by the doubt whether, after all, a man who had lived so deeply in the confidence of the triumvirate which governed British India, would be suffered to die. The declaration of General Clavering that he would rescue Nandkumár at the foot of the gallows had been talked of far and wide. It may be accepted, then, as certain, that curiosity had the largest share in bringing together a mass of men, whose numbers, by the highest calculation, did not exceed six thousand. The majority came, not from sympathy with the criminal, but, as they have always done on similar occasions in our own days, to gratify the prurient feeling which an execution always excites in the minds of certain classes. That a few Brahmans came in the hope that, despite the condemnation, the executioner would not be permitted to fix the rope round the neck of the leader of their sacerdotal order, is extremely probable. Their horror in being compelled to witness that the British law recognizes neither caste nor creed in the perpetrator of a crime, may account for the story, so eloquently improved upon by the enemies of

Hastings, regarding the universal yell of horror that escaped from the crowd. There is every reason to believe that Macrabie's original account of the execution had "been retouched by Francis' own skilful and experienced hand." *

So much for the crowd. As for the chief actor himself, the veteran intriguer who had dared every course to become omnipotent under the foreign rule of the English, and who had so nearly succeeded, it is due to his memory to record that his behaviour on this supreme occasion was the behaviour of a brave and self-contained gentleman. The sight of the gallows had for him no apparent terrors. He recognized that the death he was about to meet was the will of God. He asked the Sheriff to convey to the General, to Colonel Monson and to Mr. Francis his respectful farewell, and to ask their protection for his son, Gurudás, and for the inmates of his zenana. Not a sigh escaped him. He remained composed and collected till the fatal drop sent his soul into another world.

In his monograph on the career of Warren Hastings, Sir Alfred Lyall has thus accounted for a composure which seemed to astonish the English residents of India of those earlier times.

"The moment of dying," † he writes, "brings out the strong points of a high-caste Hindu's faith and character; whatever his life may have been, he always faces death steadily, and Nandkumár suffered with composure and fortitude. He had played the game of politics in his own way, after the manner of his time, and he probably thought that he had been fairly beaten with his own weapons."

Nothing can be more true; for, whilst among the English only intriguers and paid satellites believed in the complicity of Hastings in the action for forgery taken against Nandkumár, the Bengális, intriguers from their cradle, would naturally regard such a course as the necessary outcome of Nandkumár's charges against Hastings before the Council.

All the efforts made by the indefatigable enemies of Hastings during the course of nearly a century and a quarter have failed to bring home to Hastings the charge that he prompted or encouraged the action of the prosecutors of his

* Stephen, vol. i. pp. 237–247. The quotation is from Mr. Impey.
† "English Men of Action: Warren Hastings," p. 87.

enemy. His private correspondence proves—if private correspondence can be admitted as evidence in his favour, as undoubtedly it would be admitted if it were to tell against him—that he had no dealings, no correspondence, no secret communications with the promoters of that trial. When, after the death of Nandkumár, the majority in Council expressed the sneer that no man who respected his safety would now stand forward as the accuser of the Governor-General, Hastings replied that he had declared upon oath before the Supreme Court that he neither advised nor encouraged the prosecution of Nandkumár. Nor have all the power and influence of public faction and private hatred been able to produce one single scrap of evidence, to point to one single act on the part of Hastings, pointing, either directly or indirectly, to an opposite conclusion. The character of a public man would not be safe if the world, because his bitterest enemy had died on the scaffold, should persist in declaring, against all evidence and for the sole reason that the death had benefited him, that he had instigated the charge on which the dead man had been condemned. It is not uncharitable to surmise that those who without evidence support an opposite conclusion, do so because their inner conscience assures them that, under similar temptation, they would act on the principle which, they contend, may have influenced Mr. Hastings.

CHAPTER XVIII.

NINE MONTHS OF CONSTANT JARRING—OUDH—BOMBAY—MADRAS—DISPUTES BETWEEN THE SUPREME COURT AND THE COUNCIL, AND BETWEEN HASTINGS AND HIS COLLEAGUES—COLONEL MONSON DIES.

THE death of Nandkumár produced a momentary lull in the excitement which had prevailed in the administrative and social circles in Bengal. The main accuser of Hastings had gone to his long home. The triumvirate, who had encouraged him, only, in the hour of his greatest need, to abandon him, felt, and felt keenly, the discouragement which always supervenes on defeat, and, whilst still maintaining their alliance against Hastings, still planning to thwart him, seemed inclined for the moment to hold their hands. Hastings enjoyed this temporary respite from the daily strife which had been trying him, and he took advantage of the lull to devote himself to his private correspondence. To Doctor Johnson, two days after the execution of Nandkumár, he wrote a letter of thanks for a book which the doctor had sent him by the hands of Mr. Justice Chambers. But he did more than send his thanks. He entered, at some detail, into the question of the compilation of the code of laws which some learned Hindu pandits had been making under his auspices, of its completion, and of its translation into English. That translation he commended to the great lexicographer's notice with the expression of a hope that the Court of Directors would sanction its publication. He then proceeded to dwell on the journey into Tibet, made at his direction by Mr. Bogle; and forwarded for the doctor's acceptance the sheets of that traveller's journal. "I flatter myself," he added, "that you

will find it not unworthy of your perusal. I confess I received great pleasure from it." He concluded by asking Dr. Johnson's opinion as to the propriety of resetting Bogle's notes into a more connected form, and of adding to them fresh materials.

But the lull was only too short. The reader will recollect how, very soon after his arrival in Bengal to fill the post of Governor, Hastings had discontinued the double government, whereby the administration of the criminal law had been left in the hands of officers appointed by the Nawwáb-Názim, and had instituted regular courts, to become eventually subordinate to the Supreme Court, in their room. To give security to the farmers, he had further made with them a five years' settlement of their rental, based upon a rough survey of their properties. The second of these two reforms was that which first attracted the attention of the keen instinct for fault-finding of the triumvirate.

It had transpired, before the term of five years had actually expired, that, mainly through the eager confidence of the renters, the terms they had accepted from the Government had been too high. The farmers had been unable to pay the rents, which had seemed to them, when taking the leases, well within their power to disburse. Over-confidence had made them careless and improvident. It followed, then, that when the time for payment arrived, they in many cases made default. Gradually their arrears rose to a considerable sum. The triumvirate, when the case came before them in Council, were unanimous on one point, and that was to place the entire responsibility on the shoulders of Hastings. He alone was in fault. He had been wrong in placing on the land a burden which the land could not bear. He had shown himself deficient in statesmanship in that, when he had made the land responsible for a fixed annual income, he did not take measures to secure its realization. The two criticisms contradicted each other, but, in the minds of the majority, the question was not thereby affected.

With respect to the other question, the extension of criminal courts throughout the British territories, the triumvirate went to work still more wildly. In this case, let it be always remembered, the critics were an ex-clerk of the

War Office and two soldiers, both very choleric gentlemen, totally ignorant of administration. Of the first, it may be said that he was actuated by but one motive—a determination to ruin Hastings. Not, indeed, that Francis personally disliked Hastings. Probably, had his feelings been analyzed, it would have been found that his senior colleague had inspired him with no sentiment whatever. Hastings was to Francis that which the men whose characters he had bespattered had been to Junius. With the instinct of the loafer who would spend an entire afternoon at a fair engaged in throwing sticks at a lay-figure, without the smallest pretence of regard for that lay-figure, so had Junius, with epigrams and damaging charges, pelted his victims; so, now, did Francis, to indulge his venomous nature, bespatter Hastings. He cared neither for the cause nor for the victim. To him, perhaps, Hastings was somewhat more than a lay-figure, for he was alive; Francis could watch daily the effects of his venom on a living victim. To pelt him therefore was more exciting even than had been to Junius the publication of his bitter letters. The results were more visible—therefore more enjoyable. He could gloat over the victim as he assailed him.

It was in such a spirit that Francis dealt with the question of the criminal courts within British territories. One need not surely argue that in a country new to the English, it was impossible that the ruler should introduce a measure of legislative reform which should be absolutely perfect in all its details. The success of new criminal courts would depend not less on the principle on which those courts should be constituted than on the characters and abilities of the men chosen to preside over them. Now, in Bengal, when the courts were constituted, almost all the men available to preside over them were untried. Excellent and capable as a body, they were not all angels. Some complaints as to their working had naturally arisen. In one district a judge had been charged with neglecting his duty; in another, insufficient legal knowledge had been attributed to the incumbent. But, with new courts and new men such charges were to be expected. They were defects which required rebuke to the individual sinning, not

the demolition of the edifice. Matters, if dealt with in a sensible manner, would have speedily righted themselves. But in the minds of Francis and his two colleagues, there was no desire to maintain an edifice which Hastings had erected. To Francis it offered an unsurpassed opportunity to bait the bull. So it was resolved in their secret conclave to destroy the building. It should no longer cumber the ground.

The usual stock arguments of ignorance were again brought out. The new courts were an offence to the Nawwáb-Názim; he had been grievously insulted when the jurisdiction had been removed from Murshídábád; the new tribunals were not respected; they had come into frequent collision with the Supreme Court. So much for the destructive portion of their attack. But everybody can destroy; the wisdom or unwisdom of destruction can be realized only when the plan of reconstruction shall have been examined. On this point the triumvirate were fairly puzzled. By slow degrees they realized that the one course for them to pursue was the course so dear to the crab. They must go backwards; they must restore the old tribunals, the iniquities of which had cried loudly to the heavens; and they must appoint over all the district courts—to become the courts of the Nawwáb-Názim—a judge, who must be a native of India, superior to all the district judges.

The next question they had to decide was as to who this superior judge should be. Nandkumár was dead, or he would have suited their purpose admirably. Suddenly they remembered that there had been a Diwán, a general administrative officer, at Murshídábád—Muhammad Rízá Khán. And, although he had been removed on the charge of corruption on a large scale; although his misdemeanours had reached the ears of the Court of Directors to such an extent that they had directed that he should be tried, and had suggested to Hastings to employ Nandkumár to get up evidence against him; yet he had been acquitted. He had survived his old enemy, Nandkumár, and he was known also to be in the market. It was surmised, further, that he could be no friend of the Governor-General, for had not Hastings presided at his trial? Here was the *deus ex machinâ* ready to

their hand. He himself was eager to obtain the office. They seized, then, his stretched-out palm, and, despite the strong remonstrances of Hastings and Barwell; despite the orders, quoted by them, of the Court of Directors, to the effect that he was never again to be employed in the Company's service, the triumvirate nominated Muhammad Rízá Khán to the post. For him they revived the obsolete office of Náib Subah (Deputy-Governor); to him they entrusted the supreme jurisdiction over criminal offences in the British provinces outside of Calcutta; thus re-establishing that double administration for the abolition of which, in 1775, Mr. Hastings had received the unqualified approval of the Court of Directors.

In other quarters the policy of these amateur statesmen was bearing bitter fruit. We have seen how, on the death of the Nawwáb-Wazír of Oudh, they had disassociated the English provinces from the treaties made with that Prince; supported the Begam in her attempts to despoil the new Nawwáb; connived with her in reducing him to beggary; and how, finally, they had left him with an empty treasury and a mutinous army, naked to his enemies. In his bitter and urgent need Ásafu'd daulah had applied to the Calcutta Government for English officers to train and bring back to discipline his mutinous soldiers. The officers were sent, but the soldiers, in many instances, refused to obey them, and their lives were in constant jeopardy. The soldiers loudly declared that what they wanted was not English officers, but the payment of their arrears. Thanks to the policy of the triumvirate, the Nawwáb was unable to supply them with the one remedy for the existing evil. There ensued, then, in Oudh, a state of affairs bearing a strong resemblance to that of civil war; the mutinous soldiers, led by mutinous nobles on the one side, and the troops which had remained loyal on the other. Nor was it, according to the native historian, until April, 1776, that the latter succeeded in asserting the supremacy of the young Nawwáb. Meanwhile, English interests suffered. The Nawwáb, who was unable to pay his troops, was naturally not in a position to pay the arrears due to his protectors. By their action, after the death of the Nawwáb-Wazír, Shujáu'd daulah, the triumvirate had killed the bird which had supplied them with the golden eggs, and

their united brains could suggest no remedy to supply the deficiency which had naturally followed.

Affairs in the sister presidencies had been for some time past loudly demanding the guiding supervision of a statesman. Those presidencies had been placed, by the recent Act of Parliament, under the superintending control of the Governor-General, with effect from the date of the arrival in Calcutta of the new councillors. In the case of the Bombay Presidency such control was much needed, for with the best intentions possible, the Governor of that presidency had complicated his relations with the ruling Maráthá Power to an extent which was regarded as very dangerous. The story may be told in a few words. For some time the Bombay Government had been very anxious to round off its borders and secure immunity against attack by obtaining possession of the island of Salsette, with the inconsiderable islet of Kineri, Hog island, Elephanta, and Karanja, and the port of Bassein; and it had deputed one of their number, Mr. Mostyn, to proceed to Puná as British Agent, to treat for the attainment of that object. The situation of the Maráthá Power, as then represented by the Peshwá, was then so involved, that Mr. Mostyn found it very difficult to treat at all; impossible at the moment to treat with the rightful holder of the supreme authority. It ultimately happened that the Bombay Government, in their ignorance of native ideas, treated with the wrong man, and thus created a complication which required the genius of Hastings to remedy.

It happened in this wise. I have, in an earlier chapter, told how the then Peshwá, Narayan Ráo, had been murdered, in August, 1773, presumably by his uncle, Raghunáth Ráo; how, after an interval, Raghunáth had been, for want of an heir of his own body to the murdered prince, accepted as Peshwá. But Raghunáth made himself from the first very unpopular, and there were great rejoicings at Puná, and amongst the leading circles of the Maráthás, when, on the 18th of April, 1774, Gangá Bái, the widow of the late Peshwá, Naráyan Ráo, gave birth, at the fortress of Purandhar, to a male child. Raghunáth was absent from Puná—which he never saw again—at the time, but he was in Maráthá territory at the head of an army which he had employed very

inefficiently against Haidar Ali and the Nizám. But from that date he was no longer Peshwá. The young child born at Purandhar had been acknowledged by the principal chiefs of the confederacy, and all the principal towns had shut their gates on Raghunáth.

Yet it was this dispossessed Peshwá whom the English at Bombay had treated as though he were actually Peshwá. In return for supplies of men they obtained from him the cession of the islands they coveted—of Bassein, and of other places for which they had not asked. The story of the campaign in which English troops assisted belongs to another history. It must suffice here if I state the results serious enough to demand the consideration of Hastings.

Practically the English, as allies of Raghunáth, were at war with the Maráthás, represented by the infant Peshwá and the great chiefs of western India. They had entered upon that war without authorization of their legal superior, the Governor-General. That high officer had assumed supervising control over the Bombay Presidency on the 20th of October, 1774, and had at once called upon the Governor of Bombay, Mr. Hornby, to furnish a report as to the general condition of his presidency. The feeling of that gentleman and of the other members of his Council is shown by the fact that although they received that letter on the 9th of December, they deferred answering it until their arrangements for the conquest of the island of Salsette, then progressing, should be completed. Mr. Hornby despatched an answer on the 31st of December, but before that letter reached its destination Hastings had heard, by way of Madras, of the siege by the English troops of the fort of Thána, in the island of Salsette, and of its being stormed with considerable loss to the English, including the death of a most promising officer, Commodore John Watson. The prescient glance of Hastings recognized at once the true nature of the mistake committed by the Bombay authorities. He saw that whilst they believed they had gone to war to support the Peshwá, they were actually waging hostilities against the Maráthá confederation. He immediately (February 3, 1775) wrote to censure them for having gone to war with the Maráthás, and required them to supply him with special information as to the causes and

motives of their conduct. A few days after the despatch of that letter, Hastings received the Bombay letter of the 31st of December. He replied at once, offering no opinion regarding the capture of Salsette, but condemning the Bombay Government for its expressed intention of making common cause with Raghunáth Ráo, because such action was inconsistent with its negotiations with the ruling powers at Puná, and with the authority of the Supreme Government. When, finally, Hastings realized that the premature action of the Bombay Government had involved him in war with the Maráthás; and had made him the ally and chief support of one who could only be considered as a rebel against the actual Peshwá, his anger was expressed in language far stronger. In a minute forwarded to the Bombay Government he declared the treaty made by that Government with Raghunáth Ráo to be invalid; the war with the Maráthás to be "impolitic, dangerous, unauthorized, and unjust." He declared the Bombay Government to be solely responsible for all the consequences which might ensue, and peremptorily required them "to withdraw their forces to their garrisons, in whatsoever state their affairs might be, unless their safety should be endangered by an instant retreat." The Governor-General in Council further announced his intention of despatching an agent to open negotiations with the ruling parties in the Maráthá country, and desired the Bombay Government, whilst retaining possession of Salsette and the adjoining islets and of Bassein, to form no treaty without the previous sanction of the Governor-General.

In pursuance of this resolution, and despite a defence of their action by the Council of Bombay, urged before the Supreme Council by one of their own members, Mr. William Tayler, whom they had deputed to Bengal, Hastings despatched to Puná, as envoy-plenipotentiary, Colonel John Upton, with instructions to conclude there a treaty with the real chiefs of the Maráthá people. In consequence of this action, Colonel Keating, who commanded the English troops which had assisted Raghunáth Ráo, was directed to remain at Karód, a village twenty-five miles eastward of Surat, during the period Colonel Upton's negotiations should be pending at Purandhar, which place had been selected as the fittest locality for carrying them on.

Upton arrived at Purandhar on the 28th of December, 1775. The instructions he had received from Calcutta were to require the cession of Salsette and the islets in the Bombay harbour —which the British had already seized—and of Bassein, which the Supreme Government had been erroneously informed had been likewise occupied by English troops; further, to obtain the Maráthá share of the revenues of the city of Bharoch, recently taken by the English; and to secure such other advantages as he might regard as within reach.

These conditions were far from being acceptable to the astute Brahmans empowered by the administration of Puná to treat with the English colonel. "How," pertinently asked the Brahman statesman, "could the English Government reconcile to itself the propriety of taking advantage of the result of a war which they themselves had condemned?" On their side they demanded the surrender of the delinquent, Raghunáth Ráo, and the entire restoration of the territories seized by the English. In return for compliance with this demand, they were prepared to pay the English twelve lakhs of rupees in compensation for the expenses the Bombay Government had incurred. From this point they would not budge; they pushed their obstinacy to so great a length, that the renewal of hostilities seemed the only means of cutting the knot. Hastings, receiving from Upton information to this effect, made instant preparations for massing against the Maráthás all the resources of the three Presidencies.

But before the action of Hastings had become known at Purandhar, the Maráthá negotiators had recognized that they had gone too far in their obstinacy. Upton had made no secret of his intentions, and the force of Colonel Keating lay very handy at Karód. The Maráthá envoys then invited Upton to a further conference; made a considerable abatement of their demands; showed themselves prepared to yield somewhat to the pretensions of the English; and, finally, on the 1st of March, signed with him a treaty in which it was agreed that there should be peace and amity between the contracting powers; that Salsette and the islets in the Bombay harbour should be retained by the English, unless it should be the pleasure of the latter to exchange them

against a territory in the neighbourhood of Bharoch, "without retaining claim of chauth, or any other demand whatever;" and that they added thereto, "by way of friendship," an adjoining territory producing three lakhs of rupees. They further declared that the Peshwá and his Ministers agreed to pay to the English twelve lakhs of rupees for the expenses of the war; that the cessions made to the English by the Gaikwar should be restored to him provided it should be proved by documentary evidence that the Gaikwar had no power to make such cessions; that all treaties and agreements between Raghunáth Ráo and the English should be annulled, and the documents should be destroyed in the presence of the Peshwá's Ministers when they should come to hand; that the English troops should return at once to their own garrisons and districts; that Raghunáth Ráo should disband his army within one month; that the Maráthá Government should furnish a proper establishment for Raghunáth Ráo, conditionally on his residing at Kapurgáon (fifty-nine miles from Ahmadnagar) on the Godávarí; that the English should not render either to him or to any servant of the Peshwá who should excite rebellion any assistance whatever; that the treaties of 1739 and 1756, and all other agreements not suspended or dissolved by the present articles should be confirmed. It was further mutually agreed to assist the crews and restore the wrecks and cargoes of vessels of the respective nations thrown on each others' coasts.*

In this manner, by the intervention of Mr. Hastings and his Council, terminated the war, which is known in history as the first Maráthá War. Notwithstanding the outcry made by the Bombay Government alike against the terms of the peace and the action of Hastings in not continuing hostilities; and despite the fact, insisted upon at a later period by Burke, that Hastings did not at the outset insist on the immediate withdrawal of British troops, posterity has thoroughly ratified his action in the entire business. Bombay had taken hostile action before that presidency had come under the control of Hastings. For

* See Aitchison's "Treaties" (1st edition), vol. iii. pp. 1–39. See also Grant Duff's "History of the Maráthás," vol. ii., to which I have been greatly indebted in writing the foregoing narrative.

him, possessing no certain knowledge of the military position, to have insisted on the withdrawal of the troops would have been to interfere unwarrantably with the action of the commander in the field; whilst to have refused to make peace when the enemy was offering concessions which practically surrendered the chief object of hostilities would have been, in the then existing affairs of the English in India, a tempting of Providence worthy of a madman.

For in Madras itself there had ensued in the Council of the presidency dissensions in which the actual Governor was on one side and his colleagues on the other. It happened in this wise. In 1773, Governor Wynch had most unwisely permitted the Nawwáb of Arkát, Muhammad Ali, to encroach upon the territorial rights of the Rájá of Tanjur. For this act the Court of Directors dismissed Mr. Wynch, and sent in his place Lord Pigot, an old servant who had gained a great reputation in the wars between the French and English on the coast. Immediately after his arrival Pigot took steps to carry out his mission. He restored the Rájá of Tanjur to his throne, confirmed him in all his rights, and warned the Nawwáb that he had committed an act which the English Government resented. This brings the story up to April, 1776, just after the signature of the treaty of Purandhar. Here the matter might have ended, had not the Nawwáb entered on the scene. An adventurer named Paul Benfield held large assignments on the Tanjur revenues, given him by the Nawwáb, for moneys he had advanced at ruinous interest to that personage. The case came before the Madras Council, and that Council, after a short hearing, pronounced Benfield's claims to be fraudulent, and unhesitatingly rejected them. But Benfield possessed a power which in all countries and in all times has rendered the administration of justice extremely difficult—he had the power of the purse. He brought his case again before Council, and the Council, in the exercise of its pleasure, affirmed his contention by seven votes against five. Lord Pigot, who had voted with the minority, and who resented as immoral the means which had been employed to rescind the previous vote, assumed a high hand, and placed the Commander-in-Chief and two of his councillors under arrest. The majority retorted by

securing the person of Lord Pigot, and by casting him into prison. Lord Pigot referred the matter to Calcutta and to London. In the divided Council of Calcutta he met with no support, for Hastings ruled, and his colleagues agreed with him, that Lord Pigot himself had been the first to act with illegality, and that in such a quarrel he could not interfere. Probably Hastings felt that his interference could have resulted in nothing, for he would have been outvoted by his colleagues; whilst, by his vote, he would have sanctioned a principle, which, in the existing state of his own Council, might have been used as a weapon against himself. In London the action of the majority met with a far different expression of feeling. The Court of Directors, regarding that action as outrageous, sent out orders for the immediate release of Lord Pigot, dismissed from their service seven of the councillors, and directed that the officers who had arrested Lord Pigot should be brought before a court-martial. But before these orders could reach Madras Lord Pigot had died. His long confinement and the disgrace he had suffered had combined with the climate to undermine his constitution (May 11, 1777).

Before this sad event the quarrels in the Calcutta Council had been resumed with all their old bitterness, and this time the Supreme Court had entered the lists as a party in the struggle.

In an earlier chapter I have recorded how the judges who constituted the new Supreme Court had arrived in India with powers of a character very undefined. It could scarcely have been otherwise, for the framers of the Regulating Act possessed no personal knowledge of India, nor of the rules then existing there, either as to the regulation of justice, or as to the parts of the country which should properly come under the supervision of the new court. Hastings had been directed to stand forth as Diwán of the three provinces. He had so far obeyed the order in that he had transferred the head-quarters of the administration of justice and the collection of revenue from Murshídábád to Calcutta. But for the opposition of the triumvirate he would have proceeded further, and have caused to cease that nominal suzerainty of the Nawwáb-Názim which took place ten years later. The

actual situation in Bengal was not then quite clear to the minds of the legislators in England when they drafted those sections of the Act which referred to the powers to be granted to the Supreme Court. Their intention, however, may be divined from the fact that the fourth section of the Charter gave to the Supreme Court such—

"jurisdiction and authority as our justices of our Court of King's Bench may lawfully exercise within that part of Great Britain called England by the common law thereof within and throughout the said provinces, districts, and countries of Bengal, Bihár, and Orísá, and every part thereof."

This power would seem to a non-legal mind to be, in the expressions concerning it, sufficiently explicit; yet, for the requirements of the interpreters of the Act in India, the drafters had not been sufficiently careful in their phraseology. In one place, for instance, referring to the persons to be subject to the court's jurisdiction, they had styled them "all British subjects who shall reside in the kingdoms of Bengal, Bihár, and Orísá, or any of them under the protection of the said United Company." In other portions, different expressions had been used to signify apparently the same class; and it was these differences of expressions which, unless specially translated, would give, and did give, opportunities to every casuist and every special pleader to interpret the law according to the effect which the interpretation might produce in his own case.

The real object of the drafters of the Act, and the reason why they purposely left certain clauses of it vague and ill-defined, has been concisely argued by the late Sir James Stephen.

"The authors," he wrote,* "did not wish to face the problem with which they had to deal and to grapple with its real difficulties. They wished that the King of England should act as the sovereign of Bengal, but they did not wish to proclaim him to be so. They wished not to interfere in express terms either with the Mughal Emperor or with the Company which claimed under him. Hence the obscurity of language about British subjects."

The same writer continues, bringing us to the very *crux*

* Stephen, "The Story of Nuncomar," vol. ii. pp. 128, 129.

of the quarrel between the Governor-General's Council and the Supreme Court:—

"This fundamental obscurity showed itself in another way. The relation between the Council and the Court was left undefined. The Council was invested with 'the whole civil and military government of the said presidency, and also the ordering, management, and government of all the territorial acquisitions and revenues in the kingdoms of Bengal, Bihár, and Orísá.' The Governor-General and the Council were exempt from the criminal jurisdiction of the Courts except in cases of treason and felony, and they were not liable to be arrested or imprisoned; but there is nothing else in the Act to exempt them from the responsibility to which all European British subjects, and all servants of the Company, were, on the narrowest possible construction of the Act, made subject. There was nothing to say what part of the institution over which they presided was to be regarded as having a legal character of its own beyond the following vague expression: 'In like manner to all intents and purposes whatsoever, as the same now are or at any time heretofore might have been exercised by the President and Council or Select Committee in the said kingdom.'"

The following are the points which the interpretation of the Act by the author from whom I have quoted seems to establish: 1. That it rendered the Governor-General, every member of Council, and every servant of the Company, liable to action for every one of his acts, official or otherwise, by which any person's private interests were injured. 2. That the powers of the Supreme Court superseded, at least in Calcutta itself, the powers of such Company's courts as there were there, except only those which related specifically to the collection of the revenue.

This explanation of the undefined nature of the relations which existed between the two supreme powers in Calcutta, each emanating from the Crown, seems to me to be a necessary preliminary to the story of the quarrel which broke out between the two highly placed authorities in 1776. There had been many previous indications that a struggle was pending; but they were as the skirmishes which precede a pitched battle. The first indication that the majority in Council were prepared to push matters to a direct issue appears in a minute to the Court of Directors, signed by the three, but not by Hastings, dated April 11, 1775, censuring in the strongest terms the action of the Supreme Court. The triumvirate had always shown a disposition to acknowledge the Nawwáb-Názim of Bengal, at this time reduced

to the position of a shadow, as the real sovereign of the three provinces. This disposition was not only contrary to existing facts, but the display of it by the majority of the ruling Council tended to the dislocation of the public service. On the occasion of which I am writing it was the predominant cause of their hostile action. Declaring that an officer in the service of the Nawwáb-Názim had been arrested by the minions of the Supreme Court whilst lawfully engaged in the collection of revenue, and that similar arrests were being, or had been, made in the district of Dákhá, they minuted that if collectors of revenue were liable to be arrested for acts done in the discharge of their official duty; and if debtors, arrested by them to compel the payment of arrears, were to be set free by writs of *habeas corpus*, it would be impossible to collect the revenue. They added that it was stated that the Civil Court in Calcutta had been totally suspended, that the Criminal Court had been abolished, that the Supreme Council had refused for some months to hear appeals, lest its decrees should be set aside. Declaring further that the proceedings of the judges seemed to them to violate the Charter, they pressed upon the Court of Directors the necessity to reduce the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court.

It is interesting to note that although on this occasion Hastings did not side with the triumvirate, yet on more than one question he did vote with the majority and against Impey. A strict analysis of his voting on the questions connected with the quarrel considered in Council, proves to the unbiased mind that he bent his judgment to the matter under consideration; never to the personality of its advocates and opposers. Thus, on the question of the issue of a writ of *habeas corpus* in favour of a farmer of the revenue who had been committed by the Council of Revenue for an arrear of revenue, the return having been defective in form; and the consequent issue by the Supreme Court of an order to admit the defaulter to bail, and of instructions that he was not to be taken into custody until his under-renter should have been called upon to pay the arrear, or should have proved insolvent; the majority, furious, passed a resolution that no attention should be paid to the order of the Supreme Court.

Happily, before this minute had been recorded, one of the members of the triumvirate—it is not stated which member—appeared to entertain some doubts as to the legality of the proposed action, for he declared that he would not assent to the measure—a measure which would have brought the highest authorities in Calcutta into direct collision in the streets—unless the Governor-General should give his concurrence. Hastings naturally refused, and the minute dropped. The Council, in effect, gave way.

On another question, which came up a little later, Hastings sided with the majority of his colleagues against the Court. In an action pending before the Court, the production of certain documents in the possession of the Council had been required by the judges. For reasons of State, Hastings considered that the documents in question should be retained by the Council, and he voted therefore with Monson and Francis against their production. Clavering gave no vote, and Barwell stood alone in the minority. The Judges then summoned before them the secretary to the Council, and compelled him to reveal the vote given by each member. Impey then stated his opinion that each of the members who had voted against the production of the papers had rendered himself liable to an action.

Reasoning from these and other cognate facts, the majority of the Council minuted the Court of Directors, as already stated, on the subject; but their minute was drafted by unskilled hands. It contained variations from the facts as they occurred; and illogical reasonings based upon the latter. In his admirable exposé of the occurrence of this period, Sir James Stephen * has given us the minute itself and the notes of the Chief Justice thereupon. In those notes it is impossible to fail to recognize the dexterous turn of the wrist which gives the skilled fencer an advantage over opponents trained to use only the cudgel.

Meanwhile, almost every day added to the bitterness of the quarrel; every day likewise tended to trace back the difference of opinion in detail to difference of opinion in principle. Whilst the Council contended that their officers were exempt from the jurisdiction of the Court in respect of

* "Nuncomar and Impey," vol. ii. pp. 138-140.

acts committed by them in connection with the collection of revenue, the Court maintained that it was their duty to entertain actions brought against such officers for any irregular or oppressive acts with which they might be charged in the execution of their duty, and that it was one of the principal objects of the Regulating Act that such actions should be freely brought against such officers for such irregularities. Sir James Stephen points out that, in point of fact, although the quarrel caused much jealousy, much apprehension, and much bad feeling, during the first four years' of the Court's existence, yet that, practically, within that period, the Court established but one principle to which the Council took exception. That principle was this: the Court would not allow the Revenue courts to imprison a man without bail on mesne process. Other points of greater difference were to arise, and to these I shall have to recur as they present themselves in the course of the narrative.

In the discussion between the rival powers—the Council and the Court—Hastings had maintained his intimacy with Impey, and, recognizing the difficulty of the situation, had repeatedly, with the Chief Justice, frank and free interchanges of ideas. In a letter to Lord North, dated the 20th of January, 1776, referring to a plan he had submitted to the Court of Directors for the more perfect distribution of justice throughout the three provinces, and which may be told in a few words,* he had thus expressed himself:

"The Chief Justice, to whom we have submitted the plan, has expressed his entire approbation of it. Upon this occasion my duty obliges me to declare that in every instance in which I have consulted him, as has frequently happened in points in which the powers of the Board (Council) and of the Court were likely to be brought into competition, or in which the acts of the Court might be attended with embarrassment to the Council, I have experienced in the Chief Justice the greatest candour and readiness to assist me with his advice."

* The plan was as follows: the extension of the Supreme Court of Judicature to all parts of the provinces without any limitation; the confirming of the courts which had been established on the principle of the ancient constitution of the country by the names Nizámat, that is, criminal jurisdiction; and Diwáni, or court of revenue; the union of the judges of the Supreme Court with the members of Council in the control of the latter; and the bestowal on the provincial councils of a legal authority in the internal government of the country, and in the collection of the public revenue.

Three months later, writing to Mr. Laurence Sulivan, he expressed himself somewhat less hopefully regarding the general situation. Again, however, did he render justice to Impey, even with respect to the principle which had become the main difference between the Council and the Supreme Court.

"It is scarce possible," he stated, "to have acted with more moderation or caution than Sir Elijah has observed in all cases in which the ordinary process of the Supreme Court was likely to affect the collection and management of the public revenue."

For the evil consequences which had resulted from the quarrel between the two high powers he blames his colleagues. "It seems to have been a maxim of the Board to force the Court into extremities for the purpose of finding fault with them." He blames the action of his colleagues in fighting for a principle which would exclude certain parties from the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court.

"The truth is," he added, "that a thing done by halves is worse done than if it were not done at all. The powers of the Court must be universal, or it would be better to repeal them altogether. The attempt to make a distinction has introduced the most glaring absurdities and contradictions into the Act which virtually declares the British sovereignty over the provinces even in the qualifications which are made use of to limit it."

He concluded the letter to Sulivan, a very intimate friend, with these candid words, the conviction of the truth of which had supported him in all his troubles and anxieties:

"whatever may be the lot perhaps already assigned to me, I am certain that if ever I am compelled to submit my conduct to the public, my character will stand as fair in their eyes, and my integrity as unblemished, as those of any man who ever served the Company, though in abilities I may have been exceeded by many."

There can be no doubt in the minds of those who have studied the correspondence of Mr. Hastings, that he favoured the plan for the government of India which, in its outline, had been proposed to the elder Pitt by Clive in January, 1759. He would have had the King of England assume the sovereignty of the three provinces to be exercised through the Company. He would have bestowed upon the Supreme Court full control over all the provincial courts of justice.

In these magnificent projects we recognize the outline of the scheme which it required many years to accomplish.

"No one can deny," writes Sir Alfred Lyall,* "that Hastings possessed, to a degree rare at that period, the talent of political organization; for his projects, though premature, were all sketched out on the lines that have been subsequently followed in building up our Indian Empire. He saw that the old political fabric was too completely ruined to serve any longer even the purpose of a convenient fiction; he proposed to pull it down and to reconstruct it upon the foundation of facts."

The following passage, quoted also by Sir A. Lyall, resumes, briefly and comprehensively, the situation as it presented itself to the mind of Hastings at this period.

"On my arrival in Bengal," Hastings wrote, "I found this Government in the possession of a great and rich dominion, and a wide political system which has been since greatly extended, without one rule of government but what descended to it from its ancient commercial institutions, or any principle of policy but such as accident or the desultory judgment of those in actual power recommended. It was necessary to restore the authority of government to the source from which its powers originated; to assume the direct control instead of allowing it to act by a concealed and weakened influence; to constitute an uniform and effectual mode for the management and collection of the public revenue; to establish regular courts for the administration of civil and criminal justice; to give strength and utility to its political connections; and to transfer a share of its wealth to Great Britain without exhausting the circulation."

During the period of strife between Hastings and the triumvirate the former had possessed one considerable advantage: he had enjoyed excellent health, whilst his adversaries and his colleague, Barwell, had suffered and were suffering greatly from the climate and from other causes. Mr. Beveridge† has given us full details on this subject. He quotes a letter written at a later period by Hastings to his wife, giving a description of his mode of life:—

"I eat no supper, go to bed at ten, abstain wholly from wine, and from every other liquid but tea and water. I ride every morning, and gently, and use the cold bath as often as I ride, and will oftener if I am prevented from riding. If this will not do I will diet myself on pish-pash, or bread and

* "English Men of Action: Warren Hastings," p. 84.

† *Calcutta Review* for April, 1878: article, "Warren Hastings in Lower Bengal."

water, or live like Cornaro on the daily subsistence of an egg, but I will have health in some way though I may forego all the blessings of it. Blessings. What blessings will it yield to me? Let me have but existence and freedom from pain, with the full exercise of my mental faculties, and I desire no more till I see the last sight of Ságar island."

"It was these things," Mr. Beveridge adds most truly, "which gave him his superiority over the card-playing and licentious Francis, and which enabled him to last out all his opponents. And that he felt this is shown by a letter written to a friend in 1786, when the long warfare with Nandkumár and the Councillors was at an end, and which breathes the spirit of Miriam on the shores of the Red Sea. 'My antagonists,' he writes, 'sickened, died, and fled. I maintained my ground unchanged, neither the health of my body nor the vigour of my mind for a moment deserted me.'"

In truth, at this very period (1776) his antagonists were all ailing. From a letter written by Francis in March of that year it would seem that he had become very despondent as to the future. Recording that Monson and Clavering were in woeful plight from sickness, and Barwell only alive because death did not think him worth taking, he adds that Hastings was "much more tough than any of us, and will never die a natural death." Francis himself was in scarcely better plight than his two allies. From the journal of his private secretary, Macrabie, it is evident that he generally spent his evenings in gambling. One night, in March of the same year, he won about twenty thousand pounds at whist. The loser on this occasion was Barwell, "who is fond of play and will play for anything." Francis had no pity for him. To a friend who remonstrated with him for winning such large sums at play, he wrote—

"With regard to gaming and all its dreadful consequences, your advice is good, and not the worse for being tolerably obvious. It is true I have won a fortune and intend to keep it. Your tenderness for the loser is admirable. If money be his blood, I feel no kind of remorse in opening his veins; the blood-sucker should bleed, and can very well afford it."

Amongst others in high position who habitually played were Mr. Justice Lemaistre and Colonel Leslie.*

Amidst the shuffling of the cards by night and the jarring in the Council-chamber by day the climate of Calcutta

* For full details see Dr. Busteed's admirable little volume entitled "Echoes from Old Calcutta."

worked slowly but surely. Colonel Monson was the first to succumb to its influence. On the 26th of September, 1776, after two months of very severe sickness, that Councillor died. The consequences of this event, of which Hastings, writing the same day to Lord North, wrote that it had restored him to "the constitutional authority of his station," will be related in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XIX.

COLONEL MACLEANE'S ACTION IN ENGLAND ON BEHALF OF HASTINGS, AND ITS RESULT—ACTION OF HASTINGS BEFORE THE RESULT BECOMES KNOWN—CLAVERING CLAIMS THE POST WHICH HE DECLARES TO HAVE BEEN VACATED BY HASTINGS—THE RIVAL COUNCILS—THE TRIUMPH OF HASTINGS, AND ITS CONSEQUENCES—HASTINGS MARRIES THE BARONESS IMHOFF—DEATH OF GENERAL CLAVERING—THE ARRIVAL OF MR. WHELER.

In a previous chapter I have given the text of the letter which, at the crisis of his controversy with the triumvirate, Hastings had despatched, in duplicate, to his friends Messrs. Graham and Macleane. In this letter, dated March 27, 1775, he had informed his friends that should the Court of Directors condemn his action with respect to the Rohíla War, and should mark an evident disinclination towards himself, he should consider himself at liberty to quit Calcutta and return to England before his enemies should gain a complete triumph over him.* He concluded the letter by leaving it to the discretion of his two friends, singly or jointly, to make such use of the letter as they might think proper.

Colonel Macleane had not been a blind observer of the intrigues carried on alike in Parliament and at the India Office to the detriment of Hastings. He had recognized that there had been gradually forming against him a combination which the much-abused proconsul would find it all but impossible to overthrow. At the head of that combination stood Lord North, the Prime Minister of England, with whom Hastings had from the time of the passing of the Regulating Act corresponded in the most confidential terms,

* Chap. xvi. p. 216.

opening to him his heart on the subject of all his difficulties and the keen opposition he encountered, and appealing to him for support. The manner in which Lord North had replied to the despatches and letters of Hastings had been such as still to leave on the mind of the Governor-General that the Prime Minister was his friend. Nothing, in fact, could be less true. Throughout the entire period the Prime Minister had been persistently urging on the Court of Directors to recall Mr. Hastings, and to nominate in his place General Clavering. There was in Parliament a powerful party against Hastings, composed in a great measure of the followers of Lord North, incited by the friends of Clavering and Francis, each of whom wished to succeed him as Governor-General. In the India House the parties were almost equally divided; but amongst the proprietors of East India Stock a more generous feeling towards Hastings prevailed. Although, at that period, the public had to depend for their information on scraps from the gossip of old Indians, and the revelations made at the meetings of the Court of Proprietors, yet sufficient information had leaked out to leave the general impression that Hastings had been thwarted and persecuted, and that he was the victim of a cabal of interested colleagues. His friends, prominent amongst whom was Colonel Macleane, used meanwhile every effort to enlighten the mind of the inquiring public, and to prevent the degradation of Hastings in the manner contemplated by his enemies.

The despatch of the Court of Directors to India on the subject of the Rohíla War and the treaty of Banáras, though it had reflected in guarded terms on the action of Hastings with respect to those incidents, had reached Calcutta in the height of the Nandkumár controversy. That controversy affected the honour, the reputation, the very life of Hastings. Had he retired then, he would have left himself open to the attacks of enemies who had no scruple, and who would have shown no mercy. The guarded comments in the despatch were, moreover, so pointless and so vague, that they would not have justified an act of resignation. The manly nature of Hastings declined therefore to act as his enemies desired he should act. He resolved to hold on, and, like the gallant

crew of the *Revenge*, to fight on so long as there should be a solid plank beneath his feet. The thoughts which had dictated the letter of March 27, 1775, were not the thoughts which inspired him in October, 1776. In the interval two of his bitterest enemies had disappeared. Whilst the death by the gallows of Nandkumár had strengthened his position amongst a population which recognized in the fate of the man who had foully slandered him a direct interposition of Providence, the debt paid to nature by Monson had made him preponderant in the Council. It had made him Governor-General in fact as well as in name. Had he been a coward instead of, as he was, a man possessing the coolest and the calmest courage, he would have been mad, he would have been in the highest degree culpable, if, conscious as he was of his own fitness for the post and of the utter unfitness of his colleagues, he had, after the 26th of September, 1776, for a moment thought of resigning.

Thus as to his own action. But it was in London that the battle affecting his remaining in office took place. There, the gathering of the hostile clans was threatening. It seemed indeed overwhelming, for they counted amongst them the First Lord of the Treasury and about one-half of the Directors of the East India Company. To make head against this formidable combination were a few men who had had actual knowledge of India; some honest men who had followed with difficulty the course of his administration; and personal friends, prominent amongst whom, as I have already stated, was Colonel Macleane. This gentleman had been invested, as he believed, with a power to act for Hastings under circumstances which differed materially, though at the moment he knew it not, from those under which the power had been given. I must beg the reader to bear these circumstances in his mind when the time shall arrive to narrate the immediate consequences of the action of Macleane under that power.

Meanwhile I must carry him back to the morrow of the death of Monson. That event restored to Hastings "the constitutional authority of his station." Reduced to four, one of whom, Barwell, was a supporter of Hastings, the Council gave no longer a majority to Francis and Clavering. The

casting vote lay with Hastings, and, conscious as he was of the enormous mischief which had resulted from the former alliance, Hastings was resolved, whilst acting temperately, to remedy at once those evils which cried the most loudly for redress. Prominent amongst these was the condition of Oudh.

The state of anarchy to which Oudh had been reduced immediately after the death of the gallant prince who had been the ally of Hastings during the Rohíla War, had been the direct consequence of the administration of the triumvirate. How they had renounced the treaties made with the late ruler; how they had displaced the cautious and well-instructed Middleton, and appointed in his stead the lax-minded Bristow; how, acting with him, they had connived at the plunder of the young Nawwáb by the principal Begam; how their action had reduced that prince to a state of impotence so great as to encourage mutiny and rebellion—at that very moment raging in the province—I have told at sufficient length in preceding pages. It is only necessary to add here that the conduct of Bristow, as British Resident, had continued to cause scandal. He had lost the influence, to preserve which in the councils of Lakhnao should have been the first duty of a British Agent, and his recall had become absolutely necessary. Hastings resolved to hasten that necessary measure if he could only be sure of the support of Barwell, who, recently, had been showing some signs of temporizing. "This temporizing conduct," wrote Hastings to a friend, "he calls moderation, and makes a merit of it."

Barwell promised his support, yet for a few days Hastings did not make the move. The reason he explained in a letter to his old friend Elliot, then in England, dated the 23rd of November. "Francis," he wrote, "dreads it worse than death." However, he was not to be put off by the arguments of his bitterest enemy, and on the 22nd of December of the same year Middleton, by his orders, quitted Calcutta to relieve Bristow at Lakhnao.

A very cautious policy was at this period forced on Hastings, for he was not at all certain of his own position. Should the Court of Directors appoint a friend of the late triumvirate to succeed Monson his difficulties would only be

increased, for it would be a plain signification that the Crown and the India Office alike endorsed the destructive policy which, for two years, had been unintermittingly pursued. Forgetting the full powers he had given to Macleane, or, if remembering them, never dreaming that they would be applied to the actual situation, he simply realized that any month might bring an intimation which might, by giving Monson a successor, place him once again in the minority. In the Council-chamber his casting vote alone gave him a majority. From the date of the meetings of the Council after the death of Monson, General Clavering had laid it down, as a principle of action, to protest against everything that Hastings did, even in the ordinary course of business. This conduct, supported by Francis, removed, to a considerable extent, the objections which Hastings had felt at the outset, to act solely on his own judgment, supported by Barwell. Yet even then he would proceed cautiously; would act only in cases, which, like that of Bristow, required, for the credit of the British name, immediate action. In other matters, that is, in matters which could be deferred, he would only make preparations which would not bind the Government to any definite action.

Some things of a pressing nature he carried out despite the opposition of Clavering and the protests of Francis. He removed from the agency of Banáras the younger Fowke, a man whom he had many reasons to distrust, and nominated in his place Thomas Graham, an officer of good judgment and integrity. He appointed a commission under the general superintendence of Messrs. Anderson and Bogle, to examine and report upon the condition of the rent-payers with the view to the early expiry of the actual settlement, and to the necessity to settle the terms upon which a new one should be arranged. From the provincial councils, which exercised no little authority in revenue matters, he removed two or three men, appointed by Clavering, whose action had clogged the wheels of progress. It may here be stated that the commission produced splendid results. It was not the less, however, denounced as a job. Even the Court of Directors, some six months later, condemned Hastings for his action in nominating it. The reason they gave affords

another proof of the truth of the aphorism of the great Swedish Chancellor when he commented on the little wisdom with which the world is governed. The Directors based their condemnation mainly on the fact that, in 1772, Hastings had reported "that inquiry had been pushed to the utmost;" as though in the five years that had subvened since the earlier date, when the country was but just awakening from the effect of the most terrible famine that had ever visited it, the improvement in the circumstances of its people had not entirely changed the basis upon which taxation should be fixed. In the interval the prosperity of Bengal had advanced by leaps and bounds. The knowledge of the nature, of the extent, and of the direction of those leaps and bounds, was a knowledge indispensable to a Government on the eve of imposing a new settlement which should correspond to the paying powers of the classes who lived by the soil.

In the matter of foreign affairs the outlook at this period was not very promising. In Oudh, rebellion still held sway. To devise the best method of restoring order, and placing the Nawwáb in the position held by his father, was one of the matters upon which Middleton would have to devise. From Puná the news was not encouraging. It was clear that under the nominal administration of the minor Peshwá there were fomenting intrigues which, at any moment, might cause a breach of the treaty but recently signed. At the fortress of Chanár a British force was waiting under Major Hannay to stem the advance of an officer under the nominal control of Sháh Alam, Najaf Khán, who, after having plundered the Játs, and taken Díg by storm, had occupied in succession Agra, Mathurá, Bindraban, Alígarh, Jalesár, and Kámá.* It had become known, moreover, that the infamous Samru, the slaughterer of the English prisoners taken at Patná in 1764, had entered the Oudh territories, and his removal had been one of the duties entrusted to the British major. Nor did matters look pleasanter in the Southern Presidency. There were already rumours of a new expedition from France to surpass in number and efficiency the expeditions which had preceded it; whilst, from his eyrie in Maisur, Haidar Ali was preparing to pounce down, with the swoop of a bird

* Elliot, vol. viii. p. 228.

of prey, upon a Madras which almost seemed to invite him. Danger was in the air on every side. Hastings scented it, and prepared to meet it with the cool courage which was a main characteristic of him. He was forewarned, and he resolved he would be forearmed.

His plan, as stated by himself in a letter to Mr. Alexander Elliott, dated the 12th of January, 1777, was—

"to extend the influence of the British nation to every part of India, not too remote from their possessions, without enlarging the circle of their defence or involving them in hazardous and indefinite engagements, and to accept of the allegiance of such of our neighbours as shall sue to be enlisted among the friends and allies of the King of Great Britain."

Illustrating his meaning, and clinging to the hope to which Lord Clive also had clung, that within a few years the Company would become simply the agent to carry out the orders of the Crown, Hastings proceeded to cite the name of his old associate in the Rohíla War, the Nawwáb-Wazír of Oudh:—

"The late Nawwáb, Shujáu'd daulah," he wrote, "who wanted neither pride nor understanding, would have thought it an honour to be called Wazír of the King of England, and offered at one time to coin sikkas [rupees] in his Majesty's name. The credit of such a connection with the sovereign of a power which has for a long time past made so considerable a figure in Hindustan would of itself be a great advantage."

On such a footing he would replace the relations of the British with Oudh; on such, with the Maráthás of Barár; on such, with the Powers who should be inclined to recognize the advantages accruing from the connection to themselves. He wanted only the sanction of the Crown and of the Court of Directors, and of obtaining that he was not at all sanguine. "It is impossible," he wrote to the same friend, "for me to foresee what may be the dispositions in England when this letter shall arrive."

In justice to the clear foresight and comprehensive views of this great proconsul, thus prescient to propound, when the English were a small and struggling power, the principles which have long since taken root in India, I cannot pass over the detail of his completed plan as he explained it to the same correspondent in a letter dated the 10th of February:—

"Let the case be put, that the French, joined with a numerous Indian

army, and strengthened by other alliances, were to enter Bengal. Such a case is not unlikely, for it is scarce to be conceived that they will make the attempt without such a support. Will three brigades be sufficient to encounter such an armament, to repel other invaders, and to maintain the dominions of our ally, the Nawwáb of Oudh? I believe that with good conduct, and that fortune which has hitherto supported us in all our greatest emergencies, we may. Yet it will be impolitic to trust our whole stake to an equal hazard, if a more ample security can be obtained. To effect this purpose on the principles already laid down, the following plan is suggested:—

"(1.) Let one complete brigade (including the garrison of Chanár) be appropriated to the defence of the province of Oudh. Let the British officers be recalled from the Nawwáb's service wherever it can be done with safety.

"(2.) While Najaf Khán lives, let his pension be confirmed to him, on the condition of his furnishing this Government with a body of five thousand horse whenever demanded.

"(3.) Let a treaty of defensive alliance be formed with the Rájá of Barár. Let such a number of our battalions of sipáhís, but without any European infantry or artillery, as shall be necessary for his protection, be stationed with him, and annually relieved. Let him pay a fixed monthly subsidy for these of [blank] rupees for each battalion.

"(4.) Let the alliance with the Nawwáb of Arkát be confirmed by treaty, and on the conditions recommended in my letter to Lord North of the 1st of September, and let the Nawwáb be put in full possession of the zamindárí of Tanjur. Let him pay a monthly subsidy for the British troops and sipáhís on that establishment.

"(5.) The political connexions of the Presidency of Bombay cannot be prescribed under the present uncertain state of their affairs. The treaty lately ratified with the Puná Government is not formed for long duration, and the breach of it, whenever it happens, will either produce a state of lasting hostility, or lead the Government of Bombay to new and surer engagements.

"(6.) Let every treaty be executed in the name of the King of Great Britain, expressing the reciprocal conditions of protection and fidelity, and with his express sanction.

"(7.) Let it be lawful for the Governor-General and Council of Bengal, and for the Presidents and Councils of Fort St. George and Bombay, with the consent of the Governor-General and Council of Bengal, to enter into temporary agreements with any other princes or states for a term of two or three years only, and renewable after the expiration of that term.

"(8.) If among these any should desire to be bound by perpetual ties with the King of Great Britain, and their situation and consequence shall be such as will admit of it, such may be received into his alliance and protection, on terms similar to those of the treaties already prescribed, varying only as their wants and means may proportionably require it.

"(9.) Let three complete brigades on the present establishment be kept up for the defence of the province of Bengal, and the dependencies of the

province of Oudh, as above described, two of which shall always remain in the former, and relieve that stationed in the latter every two years.

"(10.) Let an additional number of battalions be added to the brigades for the purposes of furnishing the aids required in other stations beyond our own provinces."

That there was one incorrect forecast, that referring to Muhammad Alí and Tanjur, may be admitted. But, speaking broadly, the paper gives the clear opinion of the Governor-General of the period (1777) as to the relations existing between the British garrison and the other princes of India; his confidence in the strength of the British position; of the sufficiency of the British resources. The States he would have to deal with comprehended the Maráthá confederation, fast rising to that preponderance which it attained a few years later; Haidar Ali of Maisur, then at the very zenith of his power; the Nizám, not yet controlled by the genius of Marquess Wellesley; whilst the British were but a handful. But with the prospect of an alliance amongst some of these against him, with the certain knowledge that the French were preparing an expedition which, they fondly hoped, would revive the dreams of Dupleix, and which was to be led by the most illustrious of the associates of that far-sighted statesman, the Marquis of Bussy, Hastings remained calm and resolute. Never had his brain been more clear, his courage more resolute. He looked in the face all the possibilities, then asked himself if the resources at his disposal were sufficient to meet them, and, after a searching examination, decided that, in his hands, they were so. It is impossible to detect the slightest flaw in the reasoning of that stately mind. True to the policy of Clive, he would retain the alliance of the buffer-province of Oudh, and he would make terms with the Maráthás of Central India, whose territories lay immediately to the north of those of the Nizám. There is not a weak point in his defensive armour. Whatever the enemy may do, he will be ready to meet them, and this without incurring any fresh military expense, without calling for a single recruit from England.

And yet, at the very moment he was making these masterly preparations, there was speeding from England written orders accepting the resignation of his office, and

appointing his successor. To the causes which led to this remarkable concatenation of circumstances I must now refer.

In the early portion of this chapter I have told how Hastings had, in the very height of his warfare with the triumvirate, given power to his friends, Macleane and Graham, jointly or singly, to tender, under certain circumstances previously stated, but which did not exist in 1777, his resignation of the office of Governor-General. Shortly after Colonel Macleane's arrival in England, in the winter of 1775, he discovered that whilst Lord North's private secretary, Mr. Robinson, was writing encouraging letters to Hastings, urging him to hold his ground, Lord North was prompting his friends in the India Office, and especially those who were members of the Court of Directors, to oppose the Governor-General, with the ultimate view of replacing him. He ascertained further that Lord North had, on the 15th of December, made a great effort to obtain from the Directors an address to the Crown, praying for the removal of Messrs. Hastings and Barwell from their respective posts, with the object of placing General Clavering in the forefront of the Calcutta Council; that the question had been debated at the India Office, and had been rejected by a small majority, despite the most immoral efforts * made by the enemies of Hastings to secure the vote. But though at the moment discouraged, the enemies of Hastings were not beaten, and in May, 1776, they made a more determined effort. They convened a meeting of the Court very suddenly, and after a debate they carried a motion adverse to Hastings by a majority of one. Macleane then hastily called together his friends, and after some conversation, they resolved to appeal to the General Court of Proprietors. That Court met on the 18th of May, and by a sufficient majority of one hundred and six, reversed the decision of the Court of Directors.

But Macleane, though he hoped for everything, did not

* Macleane writes, dated 25th of June: "James was gained over by the promise of being deputy. He was also promoted to everything he could wish in the Trinity House. Six contracts were given to as many directors. Two, as I have already mentioned, were promised seats in the Supreme Council. Many principal proprietors were tampered with, and the most injurious calumnies industriously propagated against Hastings."

feel secure. "I live," he wrote, "in constant dread of the operation of loaves and fishes." He had witnessed the desertion of so many friends; he had seen how the Chairman of the Court of Directors, whilst "speaking for an hour in the ablest manner on behalf of Hastings, had voted against him." At a second discussion at the India Office the enemies of Hastings separated his case from that of Barwell, and the latter was balloted for first. The numbers were equal, but a casting vote decided in Barwell's favour. The vote regarding Hastings was deferred, but when it came on he had a majority of two.

Very soon after this narrow escape from defeat Macleane became aware that the energies of the adversaries of Hastings were still being secretly exerted to procure his overthrow. Acting with Mr. Elliott on behalf of his friend, he entered then into negotiations with the principal agent of the Prime Minister—Mr. Eden, the under-secretary for the northern department—and with Mr. Woodhouse, one of the directors opposed to Hastings. The real object aimed at by these gentlemen seemed to Macleane to be that Mr. Hastings should voluntarily retire, and that the Crown should take occasion to bestow upon him a mark of its confidence in the shape of a title. At subsequent conferences, however, the friends of the Prime Minister demurred to the consideration for Mr. Hastings, but consented that all his friends should be provided for. An agreement to this effect was ultimately drawn up, to the effect that whilst nothing was to be stipulated for Mr. Hastings, every reasonable provision was to be made for his friends. This agreement was discussed at Haldon House, Devonshire, the seat of the Palk family, whither Macleane had proceeded just a fortnight before the date fixed for the quarterly meeting of the General Court of Proprietors, viz. the 25th of September.

But, before that Court had met, Mr. Eden had the opportunity to see Lord North, and had acquainted him with the terms of the convention of Haldon House. He reported to the other negotiators that he had found the oracle dumb—that Lord North, who was in the throes of the war with the American colonists, was expecting news from America, and he wished to defer his decision until that decision should

have arrived. This avoidance of action on the part of Lord North was unfavourably interpreted by Macleane and his friends; and at the meeting of the Court of Directors one week before the date fixed for the convocation of the General Court, their worst fears were confirmed. However, after much talking, the Haldon House agreement was accepted by Mr. Robinson, Lord North's private secretary, and, in consequence, the quarterly meeting of the proprietors was adjourned. Macleane then negotiated direct with the Chairman and other influential directors, and ultimately promised to write to the Court, on behalf of Mr. Hastings, a letter, in which he should state that Mr. Hastings, recognizing the necessity for unanimity in the Council of Calcutta, had directed him to signify to the Court his desire to resign his office of Governor-General of Bengal, "and to request your nomination of a successor to the vacancy which would be thereby occasioned in the Supreme Council." Surely, in thus acting, he not only strained, but greatly exceeded, the powers with which Mr. Hastings had entrusted him.

On the 8th of October Lord North received favourable news from America, and the day following Macleane's letter, to the effect just mentioned, was sent in. Three days later, the 11th, Macleane attended a Court specially summoned to consider it. He was at once interrogated as to the instructions and the nature of the powers he held from Hastings. He offered to show these to three members whom the Court might then and there appoint to examine them. To these he showed the letter of the 27th of March, 1775, another letter to a similar purport, written a few days later, and explained why he had allowed so long a period to elapse before using them. The three directors evidently did not consider the letters shown them—written, the reader will remember, under very different circumstances—a sufficient authorization, for they at once asked Macleane whether he did not possess an instrument beginning with the formula, "I, Warren Hastings, authorize you," etc. Macleane was compelled to say he had not such an instrument, but that he had been instructed by Mr. Hastings to signify his desire to be relieved. The Court adjourned, but on the 16th of October they reassembled, and signed, to the number of

twenty-two, a letter to the Secretary of State, signifying that Mr. Hastings had resigned his office, and requesting the Crown to appoint Mr. Wheler to fill the vacancy. The meeting then terminated; but the conversation which Macleane held immediately afterwards with some of the members of the Court convinced him, too late, that he had been overreached, and when taxed by some of these with having exceeded his powers, he replied, "Then Mr. Hastings will disavow me; his resignation is in his own hands."

In the last clause of a letter despatched a few days later to Hastings, in which he gave a detailed account of a conduct which, certainly well-meant, was nevertheless quite unauthorized, and as such detrimental to the interest of the client he represented, Macleane thus apologized for his action:—

"I can now see the ground on which you stand in this country clearer than during the contest. The public have the highest sense of your services and respect for your character. This was evident from the first; but it was not so evident that you stood on very near the same ground in the closet and cabinet also. The lengths to which Clavering has gone were neither expected nor approved; but he had obtained such promises of support, and from such quarters, before he left England, that they held themselves bound to carry him through, though his measures were displeasing to them. His whole conduct in the Maráthá affair has given great discontent. The particular friends of General Clavering, who are all leaders in the House of Commons, are prejudiced against you, and stand in a different predicament. The General's misrepresentations both of your character and actions to these men have been so gross and acrimonious that there is no length to which they were not ready to go; and even now they disapprove loudly of my compromise, and say the General will come home. Mr. Robinson foresaw this while we were negotiating, for when I mentioned to him the difficulty I should have to content such friends as were not in the communication of what was doing, he replied, 'Don't imagine that it is smooth water with us either, for we have two parties to manage our side—the particular friends of General Clavering, who will not be satisfied with any compromise, and the country gentlemen, who insist upon this as the properest time to decide the question of territorial right.'"

The well-meaning but maladroit negotiator was indeed destined to be very quickly undeceived as to the spirit in which the terms of his compromise were read by the enemies of Hastings. The next *Gazette*, whilst containing the nomination of Mr. Wheler to the Council, recorded also the conferring

upon General Clavering of the honour of the Bath. Colonel Macleane resented this public announcement of the triumph of Clavering over Hastings by denouncing it as a breach of the honourable understanding he had entered into with the opposite party, and by advising Hastings to delay his resignation until he should receive from England authentic accounts of some equivalent honour having been bestowed upon himself.

The scene now shifts to Calcutta. On the 18th of June Hastings received the letter from Macleane, from which I have so freely quoted, and with it despatches from the Court of Directors announcing the results of the extraordinary intrigue of which it was intended he should be the victim. Let the reader imagine the position. This man, long overborne in Council by unscrupulous adversaries, had, but eight months before, been placed, by the death of Monson, in the ruling position for which he was so thoroughly qualified; he had begun to rectify some of the extraordinary blunders perpetrated by his colleagues, to prepare for the stormy times which he saw looming in a very near future, when suddenly a bolt from the blue of the India Office informed him, in so many words, that his power had departed from him; that his own hand, guided by a weak but well-intentioned friend, had laid him low. It was indeed a situation to try him to the core, to test the justice of the application to him of the Horatian motto—

> "Æquam memento rebus in arduis
> Servare mentem."

I have now to relate how Hastings met this unforeseen blow; how he stood upon his sense of right; how, recognizing that his departure would mean loss of character dearer to him than life; would convey to incompetent hands the charge of empire; would ruin, in the minds of the people of India, the reputation of the fatherland; he resolved, persuaded of his legal rights, to stand firm, to disavow Macleane's negotiation, to retain the reins of office, to defy the malignity of the two surviving members of the once all-powerful triumvirate. Of all the qualities which had once characterized Clavering, malignity was almost the only one which had

survived. The climate had made great inroads upon his health. He was covered with boils, and it was clear that a prompt return to his native land could alone save his life. But he held on; and Hastings knew that, under the circumstances communicated by the Court, of his own displacement, he would hold on to the last. But unless the law, to which he would appeal, should decide that he was wrong, Hastings would meet his obstinacy with an unyielding determination.

The despatches containing the report of the events at the India Office—the information given by Macleane to the Court of Directors that he had been authorized, empowered, and directed by Hastings to intimate his desire to resign; the unanimous acceptance by the Court of that resignation, and the appointment of Mr. Wheler to fill the vacant place in Council—were received in Calcutta on the 18th of June, and read at a meeting of the Council on the 19th. It would seem that no debate followed this reading. "The Council," writes Hastings, "broke up after reading the despatches." But the rival parties had not the less decided on their line of action. Whilst Hastings determined to pay no attention to the act of the Court, because founded on an error of fact—he not having resigned, nor, in the actual circumstances, authorized any person to submit a resignation on his behalf—Clavering and Francis seemed to regard the resignation of Hastings as a fact actually accomplished from the moment the despatches of the Court had been read in Council. The result of this difference of opinion was very quickly manifested. The day following—the 20th of June—happened to be the day regularly appropriated to the Board of Revenue. Hastings was summoned to it as usual. But about ten o'clock the same morning Clavering issued a summons, in his own name as Governor-General, to the members of Council to attend an extraordinary General Council, to be held that day to receive from Hastings the charge of the Government, the keys of the Fort and of the Treasury, etc. He wrote at the same time to Hastings to inform him of his intentions, and requiring absolutely that his resignation should take place that very day.

For Hastings the opportunity had arrived, the occasion to

prove before all Calcutta the stuff that was in him. He had not only the remains of the old triumvirate against him, but those remains acting under the authority of their common masters, and about to be reinforced by a fresh recruit from England. It was a moment when to hesitate was to be lost. But into that imperial mind the idea of hesitation never once entered. Ignoring the summons of Clavering he proceeded to the offices of the Board of Revenue. He found there Barwell. The two men had but just taken their seats when they were informed that Clavering and Francis had met at the General Council table; that Clavering had then proceeded to take the oaths as Governor-General, and had taken his seat as President of the Board. Hastings immediately summoned the judges of the Supreme Court to attend the Revenue Board to consider the constitutional question which had arisen. The judges came. The question which Hastings desired to submit for their decision was whether, after considering the despatches from England, they should declare that Hastings had committed any act whence his resignation could be deduced. Should they reply in the affirmative, he was ready, then and there, to vacate the chair. He could not, however, put that question because Clavering had taken possession of the despatches, and he refused, when requested by letter, and subsequently, when personally solicited by Barwell, to deliver them. He told Barwell that he might take his seat at his Council and hear them read, but that, speaking as Governor-General, he would not permit him to handle them.

Matters had arrived at a crisis, for whilst Hastings still held all the authority derivable from actual possession, the two recalcitrant councillors, possessing only the shadow of power, refused to supply the papers which would enable the question to be sifted. But they soon had to recognize that their position was not tenable. Hastings had secured Fort William and the troops, and had written to the Commandant to obey no order emanating from any other source. In the pride of their new authority Francis and Clavering had begun to transact the business before the Council, to pass resolutions, and to issue orders. But, informed that Hastings had taken the precautions I have mentioned, they recognized

that these transactions, resolutions, and orders were but an empty farce, and that, so long as Hastings should assert his position, they would be in the position of rebels against authority. Then it was that they too resolved to invoke the decision of the one other independent authority which had been established by the Regulating Act of 1773, viz. that of the Supreme Court. They invoked that decision in their own way. Still refusing to send the European despatches to the Revenue Board that the judges there assembled for the purpose might read them, they wrote a joint letter to the Supreme Court, in which, stating that the position they had taken up was indubitately established on the authority of the general letter from London, copies of which they enclosed, they asked thereon the opinion of the judges, without, however, agreeing to accept that opinion as a decision, but declaring simply that they would suspend the execution of their orders as a Council until they should have received the opinion they demanded. They further requested that the judges would deliberate by themselves, and not in conjunction with Mr. Hastings and their other colleague.

This action, so far as it went, seemed to prepare the return of the two recalcitrants to the path of legality. For, although they had not engaged to accept the decision of the judges, they could hardly act against it should it prove unanimously hostile to their pretensions. The judges met the same evening, read and considered the copies of the despatches, and came unanimously and decisively to the opinion that the assumption of the chair, that is, of the office of Governor-General, by General Clavering, was illegal. They expressed this opinion in the strongest terms, in separate letters to Clavering and Francis. Then the crisis subsided almost as quickly as it had arisen. The two men realized that it would be vain for them to struggle against Hastings for the administrative authority, when Hastings was supported by the highest legal authority in the land—an authority to which they had appealed. They therefore wrote to acquiesce in the judgment of the Supreme Court.

There was, after this, an interval required apparently to wipe out from the wounded spirit of one of the defeated conspirators the sting of defeat. The meeting of the Council,

summoned for the 20th, had been adjourned to the 23rd. Francis, though twice invited, failed to attend it. The members present proceeded, notwithstanding his absence, to the business before them. The principal matter to be considered upon the minutes, was the conduct of General Clavering in taking the oaths as Governor-General, and proceeding to other acts and declarations as such. These proceedings, the Council decided, had caused the vacating by General Clavering of his seat as senior councillor, and of his position as Commander-in-Chief. Upon this Clavering and Francis again appealed to the Supreme Court, and that Court decided unanimously that the Council did not possess the power to declare General Clavering's seat vacant, and advised a compromise. The Council responded by withdrawing their resolution of the previous day, and finally resolved to leave matters in the position in which they had been before the arrival of the despatches which had caused the disturbance.

It only remains to add that Hastings, left to himself, would never have resigned his office on the conditions negotiated by Macleane. The crisis which was passing when he wrote the letter on which Macleane had acted had become ancient history. All the letters which he had subsequently written to his friends and to the Court of Directors had breathed the determination to hold on to the last. He could not understand how Macleane and his friends could have acted as he did act. Why, when they had committed him to a public contest, and had secured a majority for him in the Proprietary Court, they should suddenly make him quit the field, was to him incomprehensible. To us, in the present day, such a resignation could not be regarded other than a gratuitous act of abandonment of a field of battle in which all the strong positions were occupied by Hastings. The best that can be said regarding Macleane's action is that it was well-meant—a judgment which has sufficed, and will certainly suffice in the future, to cover acts of the most egregious folly.

To Lord North, Hastings wrote a letter full of manly dignity. After giving an epitome of the occurrences which had taken place on the receipt of the despatches, he thus referred to the conduct of Macleane, and to the motives by which his own action had been guided :—

"My Lord, I was not pleased with the engagement made for me by Mr. Macleane; I will candidly own it. But I held myself bound by it, and was resolved to ratify it. This was my resolution; but General Clavering himself has defeated it, by the attempt to wrest from me by violence what he could only claim as a voluntary surrender; by persisting in asserting his pretensions to all the rights and functions of my office from a time already passed, and independent of my option; and by his incapacity to possess the government, after having by his own acts and declarations vacated the place from which alone he could legally ascend to it. Thus circumstanced, I think myself not only absolved from this obligation which has been imposed upon me, but bound by every tie of duty to retain my ground until I can honourably quit it; still hoping that the next advices, which are expected by the *Princess Royal*, may furnish me with that opportunity."

With respect to his departing from the engagement made on his behalf by Macleane, Hastings thus expressed himself in a letter dated the 26th of June to Laurence Sulivan:—

"Though I shudder at the consequences of departing from the letter of Colonel Macleane's engagements, and dread equally with death the thoughts of entering into a new scene of indefinite contention, yet I scarce see an option left me to avoid it. One condition of that engagement was that the time of my resignation was to be left to my own choice; but that condition has been broken by the attempt made by General Clavering to wrest the government from me by force, and by persisting to assert his claim to the government in despite of it. My resignation, therefore, can neither be accepted by him as such, nor can I ratify it but under every appearance of a timid submission to violence. . . . I cannot resign the government in favour of the General, because he has disqualified himself from accepting it; and by yielding to him, whether by a direct surrender or merely by leaving it vacant, I should either deprive Mr. Barwell of the right of succession, and be the abettor of an usurpation, or sow the seeds of a civil war, if Mr. Barwell should be inclined to assert his own position in opposition to it. On these grounds I consider myself not only absolved from the obligation to resign my place, but as bound by every tie o duty and honour to retain it."

From that moment Hastings was supreme in Council. The death of General Clavering about two months later (August 30, 1777) prevented the difficulty to which the arrival of Mr. Wheler would have given rise. From the indications I have given of the health of the general during the year that had passed, the reader will have been prepared for an event which, humanly speaking, solved a very grave crisis. For the public weal, for the interests of the English in India, the death of Clavering was an unmixed advantage. It enabled Hastings to grasp with a firm and resolute hand

the reins of administration; to deal in a statesmanlike manner with the dangers which on all sides, in the Maráthá country, and in the southern presidency especially, were threatening the British territories in India.

It may be convenient if I record in this place the result in England of the daring action of Mr. Hastings. When the information reached London that Mr. Hastings had not obeyed the order which had been the fruit of so many intrigues; that he had even gone so far as to attempt to deprive Clavering of his seat in Council, the outcry amongst the conspirators was loud and furious. In the first exhalation of this outcry there was no punishment too condign for the daring proconsul and his associates. The King wrote to his Prime Minister that the dignity of Parliament required the removal not only of Hastings and Barwell, but of the judges who had abetted them. But Lord North had at the moment too much on his hands to court a quarrel which could not fail greatly to augment the difficulties of his position. The reader may remember how, in the earlier phases of the intrigue, Lord North had hesitated at a decisive crisis to declare his sentiments, pending the arrival of despatches from America. Since that time matters had gone badly for the English in the war with the colonists. Burgoyne—the Burgoyne unfavourably known as the accuser of Clive—had surrendered at Saratoga; France had espoused the cause of the colonists; and it was known that the French Government had determined to despatch a fleet and army to make a powerful diversion in India. Even had Lord North desired to act vigorously against Hastings the Court of Proprietors would not have permitted him. They had confidence in the man of their choice. There was not another man in England whom the public voice could name as worthy to replace him. It is a remarkable historical fact that, at that particular period, England was deficient, to an extent never realized before or after, in capable men of action. All their generals had failed in the American contest, and it was only at the very close of the war, waged at that moment against France and the colonists combined, that the splendid action of Rodney gave evidence that the race had not deteriorated. Who then could replace the Governor-General of India

—of an India on the verge of a war; of an India in which the English still constituted only the nucleus of a protective power; of an India threatened by the Maráthás, by Haidar Ali, and the French? There was no one; and Lord North, unable to support successfully the instruments he had employed, silently gave way, preferring to pay, by his inaction, the tribute of admiration which is always rendered to the man of genius, who, in difficult circumstances, hews out the path to success; who, at a decisive crisis, can exhibit that marvellous virtue in a ruler, which a great French democrat expressed by the phrase "*L'audace, l'audace, et toujours l'audace.*"

During the same month in which Clavering died, just three weeks before that event, Hastings consummated his happiness by marrying Mademoiselle Chapuset, formerly Madame Imhoff. In a previous chapter I have described how they met, how they loved, and how Imhoff had been moved to take steps to dissolve the marriage. During the interval Madame Imhoff had lived quietly in Calcutta, in a house which is still to be recognized,* unassailed by scandal, waiting the moment when the dissolution of her marriage with Imhoff should be authoritatively pronounced. A contemporary, Dr. Busteed tells us, thus wrote of her—

"She is about twenty-six years old, has a good person, and has been very pretty, is sensible, lively, and wants only to be a greater mistress of the English language to prove she has a great share of wit."

Francis describes her as "an agreeable woman, and has been very pretty. I have always been on good terms with the lady, and do not despair of being asked to the wedding." Whether he was asked or not it is impossible to state, as on the question his journal is a blank. But the marriage took place a few days after he had penned the passage which I have extracted, the news that the Franconian Courts had pronounced the dissolution of the first marriage, and the vessel bearing the documents to that effect having arrived in the interval. Of the marriage it is only necessary to state that it was absolutely without a cloud. Mrs. Hastings, who was married under her maiden name, retained to the last the

* See Dr. Busteed's "Echoes from Old Calcutta," pp. 123 and onwards.

affection of her husband, the respect and admiration of all those with whom she came in contact. About her there is but one testimony. To Hastings she was always the wise in counsel, the consoler in trouble, the one woman whose society, whose sympathy, and whose bright and brilliant cheerfulness helped him to bear with equanimity all the storms of fortune.

In December of this memorable year, 1777, arrived the new councillor, Mr. Wheler. This gentleman professed to have an open mind on all the matters on which Hastings and Francis had disagreed, and he declared to Hastings his desire to effect an accommodation between the two colleagues. Hastings permitted him to make the attempt, but Francis would have none of it. From that moment Wheler dropped into line as the supporter of Francis. The casting vote still, however, gave to Hastings the control of the Council.

CHAPTER XX.

THE SECOND MARÁTHÁ WAR—THE WAR IN SOUTHERN INDIA.

HASTINGS had always expressed his conviction that the peace made by Colonel Upton with the Peshwá's Government on the 1st of March, 1776, and called, after the place where it was negotiated, the treaty of Purandhar, possessed no element of vitality, and that at any moment hostilities might be renewed.

This opinion was based mainly upon the state of parties within the Maráthá territories. The actual Peshwá was an infant: his mother, Gangá Bai, was regent. Under her nominal control were two strong parties at Puná, the one headed by Náná Farnavís, a statesman of great ability, who, forty days after the birth of the young Peshwá, had received the clothes of his investiture and installed him as Peshwá, and who now, in alliance for the moment with Sukarám Bápu, constituted the conservative element in the government. The rival party was led by a cousin of Náná Farnavís, Murhabá, who held nominally, on the installation of the Peshwá, the post of Prime Minister, but who, finding his influence waning before that of his cousin, had resolved, in conjunction with other leading men, to return to Raghunáth Ráo, with the view of restoring him to the chief power in the State, notwithstanding that he knew that when that Prince had exercised supreme authority, he had displayed neither capacity nor patriotism. It may be added that whilst the party of Náná Farnavís was supported by Sindhiá, Holkar inclined to Murhabá and his faction.

Before I proceed further, it seems advisable to say one word more regarding the remarkable man who for so many years guided the counsels of the Court of Puná, and who, though endowed with a nature essentially timorous, contrived

to carry out, often successfully, a very daring policy. Náná Farnavís, so called in history, but whose real name was Bálájí Janardin, a member of one of the ruling families of Puná, had been invested with high office at that Court at the close of the year 1763. His age had then reached the thirties. Mahdu Ráo was Peshwá, and that estimable ruler soon recognized the talents which lay under the quiet exterior of the Náná. The latter continued in high office during the remaining years of the life of Mahdu Ráo, and during the short reign of his successor, Narayan Ráo. On the murder of the latter on the 30th of August, 1773, he assisted Sukarám Ráo and others in maintaining order. Ultimately he and they recognized Raghunáth Ráo as Peshwá, pending the result of the pregnancy of the widow of Narayan Ráo, Gangá Baí. A short experience of the character of Raghunáth convinced the Náná of his utter incapacity for rule, and although he accompanied him in the earlier part of his last campaign, he took the first favourable opportunity to quit his camp. We have already seen how, when the pregnancy of Gangá Baí terminated in the birth of a son, Náná Farnavís and the more veteran statesman Sukarám Bápu were selected to invest him with the paraphernalia due to his birth.

The Náná was very conservative in his notions, detested the English, whose rising power he regarded with dread, and was little inclined, as Minister, to carry out the conditions of the treaty of Purandhar. In this stage of his career, younger than the majority of the statesmen at the Court, he never thrust himself into the front rank, but preferred to influence others. His earlier colleague, Sukarám Bápu, an older man than himself, possessed the outspoken courage in which he was deficient. But Sukarám always deferred to the opinion of the Náná. The fact is that Farnavís possessed an influence of which the other was not ignorant. The widowed mother of the Peshwá, Gangá Bái, herself nominally regent, had fallen deeply in love with the handsome Brahman, with whom she daily conversed, and, during the short space of life that remained to her, she gave him counsels which he forced upon his colleague. But Gangá Bái died * in the autumn of 1777, leaving the

* Grant Duff (*vide* note to p. 245, vol. ii., Indian edition) writes thus:

administration still in the hands of Sukarám Bápu and Náná Farnavís.

It was just at this period (October 10, 1777) that the President of the Council at Bombay, Mr. Hornby, reported to Mr. Hastings that Maráthá affairs were fast verging to a period when the English would be compelled to take some active and decisive part in them, or relinquish all hopes of bettering their condition in the west of India. He drew attention to the efforts being made by Sindhiá and Holkar to supplant the authority of the infant Peshwá; to the defection of many of the Maráthá chiefs; and to the blow authority had received by the death of the regent, Gangá Bái. He added, further, that the actual Government was undoubtedly intriguing with the French, and that they had not fulfilled the articles of the treaty of Purandhar. The Bombay Government, it may be added, were encouraged in their demand for permission to act by the Court of Directors, who, never having approved of the treaty of Purandhar, kept patting the western presidency on the back, and eventually authorized its government to make a fresh alliance with Raghunáth Ráo, in case the Court of Puná should not have fulfilled all the conditions of that detested treaty.

In Puná itself matters were rapidly approaching a condition very favourable to a renewal of the war. The death of the regent Gangá Bái had produced a crisis in the relations between the two men who had hitherto directed the administration, Sukarám Bápu and Náná Farnavís. The former had been content to follow the lead of the Náná, so long as he knew that the latter was inspired by the regent. But on her death he resolved to dispense with an alliance at which he had long secretly murmured. The Náná's cousin, Murhabá, had joined the faction of Raghunáth Ráo, a faction plotting for his restoration, and to this party Sukarám Bápu now made advances. An alliance was formed, and the conspirators, as they may be fairly called, made proposals to the Bombay Government to aid them in their plans, and, as an earnest of their co-operation, begged that

"Gangá Bái was the cause of her own death, by having taken medicine for the purpose of concealing the consequence of her illicit intercourse with Náná Farnavís."

English troops might escort Raghunáth, who was then at Bombay, to Puná. This proposal, forwarded to the Supreme Government at Calcutta, was there approved; and Hastings, to give more effect to the British intervention, directed the formation at a point on the Jamná, opposite the town of Kalpí, of a force to be commanded by Colonel Leslie, composed of six battalions of sipáhís, and a proportionate number of artillerymen. To this force some cavalry was afterwards added.

Meanwhile Puná had become once more agitated by divided counsels. As the moment for action approached, Murhabá showed himself more and more unwilling to aid in the return to power of the unstable and intriguing Raghunáth Ráo. He now refused, and now accepted, the assistance offered him by Colonel Leslie. Meanwhile Madhají Sindhiá, the greatest of all the Maráthá chiefs, then a strong adherent of Náná Farnavís, had reached Purandhar, and had effected there a junction with Harí Pant, acting in the same interest. Thus strengthened, Náná Farnavís boldly resumed the authority which, on the death of Gangá Bái, had fallen from his hands. He caused Murhabá to be seized and thrown into the fortress of Ahmadnagar. He placed his former colleague, Sukarám Bápu, under a surveillance which left him only nominally a free agent. He confined every other leading man who had shown the smallest disposition to question his authority, and he stood face to face with the statesmanship of Mr. Hastings.

The position of Mr. Hastings at this epoch was a position of great difficulty. Threatened in Bengal, he had to meet the impending hostile action of Haidar Ali, the great ruler of Maisur, in southern, that of the Maráthás in western India. But that was the smallest part of his difficulty. There was on the seas, sailing for India, a French fleet, conveying a considerable number of French troops, which might be used either to assist the Maráthás or to act with Haidar Ali. He knew that there was a French adventurer at the Court of Puná, M. St. Lubin, regarded favourably by the Náná, who had been profuse in his promises of the co-operation of his countrymen. In those days the Supreme Government did not possess the means whereby it might

be possible to judge accurately at the moment the movements of many adversaries. Hastings was therefore compelled to prepare for a treble danger—for a war with Haidar Ali in southern India, possibly assisted by the French; for a struggle with the most formidable chiefs of the Maráthá people, aided possibly by the same people; and for disturbances on his north-western frontier. Putting the last possibility on one side, he had the certainty of having to fight for the maintenance of British authority in the two minor Presidencies of which he was the supreme director. He might lose one or the other, or both. And here I may say, in anticipation of the results, that whilst a little audacity on the part of the French commander—I might say even the display of the slightest common sense—must have entailed the temporary loss of Madras: the western Presidency was saved solely by the display on the part of the Governor-General of a prescience, which is the rarest yet the most valuable quality in a ruler, and which Mr. Hastings possessed to a degree but seldom equalled, never surpassed.

We can almost see him in the Council-chamber of Calcutta reading the reports brought to him by native messengers, travelling for the most part on foot, from the different parts of India. He read in these how the Lion of Maisur was massing his forces, preparing for the descent into the plains of the Karnátik, which he actually made; how the English at Madras could not realize the possibility of offering a resistance which could be effective; how, if a French fleet should appear off their coast, there would in their opinion be no hope for Madras. Turning then to the despatches from Bombay, he would read how a recent revolution in Puná had filled the fortresses and dungeons with the partisans of the British alliance; how the chief enemy of the British, the avowed partisan of a firm alliance with the French, was in possession of the supreme central authority, and was backed by the most powerful members of the confederacy; how the Maráthá rulers were awaiting the arrival of the French fleet, then on the seas, to display their feelings. From other quarters would come also reports: from Oudh, the situation in which had to be remedied; from Nágpur, in whose ruler Hastings, following the traditions of Clive, hoped

to find an ally whose assistance might counterbalance the hostility of the other chiefs of the Maráthás; from Dehlí, where intrigue was always rampant; and from those other many divisions of India, in which gratitude for past favours and past protection had raised up hopes of assistance from the British during the storm which, it was evident to all, was about to sweep over the peninsula.

But this picture is not complete without the addition to it of the two hostile figures who sat at the same table, their minds filled with other thoughts and their voices expressing other ideas. We note the malevolent Francis, deprecating the measures Hastings was proposing, talking wildly about resources already exhausted, of a French invasion which would revolutionize India, of the uselessness of resistance, of the inutility of the despatch of troops to Bombay, of the folly of sending an envoy to Nágpur to ask the assistance of the Bhonslé. We can see his colleague, Wheler, echoing his expressions and adopting his thoughts; both most bitter against Hastings; both attributing to personal motives plans which had for their sole object the salvation of the scattered provinces, removed by large distances from one another; but the preservation of the link between each of which was essential to the plan which had germinated in the brain of Clive, which had become the fixed idea of Hastings, and which was to be brought to maturity by the energy and daring of the great Marquess Wellesley—the union of India under British suzerainty. Neither Francis nor Wheler was capable of grasping this comprehensive policy; the Home Government could not, or, frightened by the loss of the colonial empire they had thrown away, would not, understand it. It is clear that, even in the present day, the large ideas which formed the basis of the policy of Hastings, have been misunderstood. Measures which were necessary, and yet which have seemed risky, have been condemned as the result of intemperate rashness. And yet the link between every action is so perfect; consequence, throughout, so surely follows cause; that an acute observer will not fail to recognize a marvellous unity of design in a policy which, waged in most difficult circumstances, often very hazardous, did ultimately realize the result, to obtain which Hastings had planned,

had dared, had negotiated, had risked even all the resources at his disposal.

The news of the triumph of Náná Farnavís at Puná was naturally regarded by Hastings as a blow to the policy he had supported at Bombay. That policy had been based on the affirming of British interests in the western Presidency, mainly by restoring Raghunáth Ráo to power at Puná. To this end, I have shown, a small force of native troops under Colonel Leslie had been collected on the Jamná, near Kalpí. Now, it was admitted that such a force had become, under the altered circumstances, more than ever necessary to Bombay; but the question had arisen, whether, in the face of the opposition of the Maráthá chiefs, it was advisable to run the risk of sending its component parts thither by land; or whether they should not be recalled to Calcutta to take thence the safer sea-route to Bombay. The timid minds of the two hostile members of the Council favoured the latter course. But Hastings had looked below the surface. The march of a British force through the districts which it would traverse from Kalpí to Bombay, would encourage the well-affected natives, and would indicate a confidence in British prestige which would be a tower of strength to the British Government. Hastings never shrank from danger. To his mind, boldness in difficult circumstances was prudence. He did not hesitate then to direct Colonel Leslie to march from Kalpí to Bombay. At the same time the Bombay Government at his direction applied to the Maráthá chiefs for a passport for the march of their troops, on the ground that the threatened invasion of the French rendered their presence necessary at Bombay. Mr. Hastings supplemented this action by despatching Mr. Elliot to Nágpur to negotiate an alliance with the Bhonslé.

It was owing to circumstances entirely beyond his contro that both these measures did not respond to the anticipation of the great proconsul. The march of Leslie's column wa to have been accompanied by a movement from Bombay unde the direction of Governor Hornby, to whom, for that purpose Hastings had remitted ten lakhs of rupees, with an intimatio that he had urged on the Madras Government the necessity if it were at all practicable, of aiding him with some of thei

own troops. But I shall have to show now how it was that the three weapons which Hastings was compelled to use for the carrying out of his scheme crumbled in his hand. Leslie proved utterly incompetent as a military leader; the Madras Government failed to detach any of their troops to the aid of Hornby; and Hornby, discouraged at the non-receipt of these troops, and alarmed at the opposition of two members of his own Council, hung back at the critical moment. Well might Hastings ask, as he did ask, whether this was ingratitude, envy, stupidity, or pusillanimity, or all together? Another disappointment met him in the death of Elliot on his way to Nágpur. From his mission Hastings had anticipated great results. He had hoped to bring the Maráthá ruler of Barár into a subsidiary alliance with the British, so as to form a counterpoise against the hostile influences of Puná, of Gwáliár, and of Holkar. Such an alliance, he believed, was, should it succeed, "likely to prove the era of a new system in the British Empire of India." But the death of Elliot disappointed even this hope. It was in the midst of the cares engendered by this succession of failures, all, I repeat, beyond his own power of control, that Hastings received information that war with France had actually begun.

An illustrious Latin poet has told us in so many words that no terrors can shake from his settled purpose the man who is just and resolute.*

Hastings at this critical conjuncture justified the aphorism of Horace. I propose to deal in this chapter with his action regarding Leslie's column and the remaining phases of the Maráthá War. In its successor I shall record the hostile action of Haidar Ali and the French in the southern presidency. But I must ask the reader always to remember that throughout this period Hastings had not only to deal with a hostile combination in his own Council, but to meet also difficulties nearer Bengal sufficient to overwhelm a man of only ordinary capacity. So far from this period having been the dark period of the administration of Mr. Hastings, it

* "Justum et tenacem propositi virum,
Non civium ardor prava jubentium,
Non vultus instantis tyranni
Mente quatit solidâ."—HORACE.

brings into prominence his splendid courage, his wonderful prescience, his calmness under difficulties, his resolution to succeed when the hour was the darkest, the danger most overwhelming. To deal now with Leslie's column.

Leslie crossed the Jamná in the month of May, 1778, took possession of the fort of Kalpí, but, instead of pushing on, as he had been directed, steadily towards Bombay, he engaged his force in local feuds, wasting valuable time. At length he reached the locality which is now known as the military station of Máu; but, once more, instead of pushing forward, he again missed his opportunity, and losing the whole of the rainy season, remained halted in a position which offered him no advantage. He thus gave every opportunity to the Maráthás to concentrate their forces. In five months he had not advanced from his base on the Jamná more than a hundred and twenty miles.

Hastings had noticed the slow advance of Leslie with the greatest disappointment. But, a just man, never looking for a scapegoat, inclined rather to give every chance to a commander, he had resisted the urgings of Francis and Wheler to recall the entire force. The former prophesied at the Council table that unless such an order were issued the fate of Burgoyne at Saratoga would overtake Leslie and his troops. But Hastings held firm, and endeavoured, by letters, to instil some of his own spirit into the unhappy Leslie. When he found this to be impossible; that an advance of a hundred and twenty miles represented the efforts of five months, and that expenditure was proceeding with a rapidity greatly beyond the necessities of the case, he turned round to look for a man who would at least obey his orders. His choice fell upon Lieutenant-Colonel Goddard, a man of energy, vigour, and comprehension, a worthy successor of the Captains and Majors who, under the administration of Mr. Vansittart, had destroyed the trained levies of Mír Kasím. Goddard set out at once; reached the force at Rájgarh in November; found that Leslie had died of fever on the 3rd of the month immediately preceding; assumed command, and at once commenced his march toward the Narbadá. He forded that beautiful river at Hoshangábád on the 2nd of December, having, on the way, repulsed an attack made by the Maráthás on his

rearguard, and having received the greatest sympathy and hospitality from the Muhammadan ruler of Bhopál. On crossing the Narbadá, Goddard, in obedience to his instructions, opened negotiations with the Bhonslé ruler of Barár, and halted pending the receipt of a reply. This action had been directed by Mr. Hastings in consequence of the death of Mr. Elliot, the special envoy to the Bhonslé, which had occurred on the 12th of September.

It seems proper to mention in this place that, to insure the success of the expedition, Mr. Hastings, disappointed at the languid action of the Governor of Bombay, had placed Goddard under the immediate orders of the Supreme Government; and had, at the same time, directed the formation on the western frontier of the province of Bengal, of two additional battalions of sipáhís under the command of Major Jacob Camac, to serve, if necessary, as reinforcements to him.

Mr. Hastings had endeavoured to rouse the ambition of Mudhají Bhonslé, the ruler of Barár, by offering to acknowledge him as supreme chief of the Maráthá confederacy; as the representative of the throne of Sívájí. The proposal was received and considered by the Bhonslé, but it is doubtful whether under any circumstances he would have accepted it. In the then existing circumstances of Puná—a young Peshwá guided by able councillors; Holkar and Sindhiá rising into prominence, and the representatives of both families men of force of character and ambition; Raghunáth Ráo, on the spot, claiming the chief authority;—it is more than doubtful whether the Bhonslé would have had the smallest chance of success. And he knew it; he knew that he might indeed effect a diversion; but for so slight a result he was not inclined to risk his position. He therefore declined the proposal.

Meanwhile the Bombay army had taken the field to support the pretensions of Raghunáth Ráo to the office of Peshwá; and just about the period when the unfavourable reply above referred to was received from the Bhonslé, Goddard received from the Bombay Government an urgent request to press forward to march to the aid of that army, then in great danger. Goddard was not bound to obey any order from the Bombay

Government, but, being the man he was, he hurried by rapid marches from Hoshangábád, through a country occupied by the Maráthá troops. Quitting Hoshangábád on the 26th of January, 1779, he reached the important town of Burhánpur on the 30th, halted there for a week, and, resuming his march on the 6th of February, reached Surat on the 26th, having marched three hundred miles in twenty days, no slight improvement on the lax method of his predecessor. Leaving his troops at Surat he proceeded to Bombay to consult with the Government of that Presidency, which expressed to him the greatest gratitude, and placed all the resources at their command at his disposal.

But long before Goddard could reach Surat, before even he had quitted Hoshangábád, there had occurred to the Bombay troops a catastrophe long remembered, and which seemed for the moment fraught with consequences which an enterprising enemy might make fatal. The reader will remember that the darling object of that Government had been to re-seat the expelled Raghunáth Ráo as Peshwá at Puná. The force to which this duty had been intrusted was commanded by Colonel Charles Egerton, an officer new to India, a stranger to the ways and customs of its people, and whose activity was likely to be marred by a health so infirm as to render him quite unfit for active service. The troops at his disposal consisted of 591 Europeans, 2278 sipáhís, and 500 gun lascars, amounting, including officers, to 3,900 men. Egerton, accompanied by Mr. Carnac as president of a committee to settle matters with Raghunáth Ráo, embarked with his force at Bombay on the 23rd of November (1778), and occupied Panwel, a town in the Tháná district, two days later. An advanced guard under Captain Stewart had, three days previously, occupied the village of Khándálá, thirty-seven miles east-south-east from Bombay.

The days which immediately followed were wasted in ceremonial puerilities, with disputes regarding precedence, giving evidence of the absence of a leading mind among the civil and military chiefs of the expedition, and it was not until the third week of December that the force, joined by Raghunáth Ráo, ascended the ghâts. Arrived there, Egerton divided his force into two brigades, the one commanded by

Lieut.-Colonel Cay, the other by Lieut.-Colonel Cockburn, Stewart still leading the advance. Their progress, which, to gain the desired success, should have been rapid, was so dilatory, that they covered scarcely two miles a day. Thus eight days elapsed before the troops reached Karlí, only seven miles from the summit of the Bori ghât, forty from Bombay, and thirty-two from Puná. Before the force reached this place two of its best officers had been killed—Colonel Cay by a rocket near Khándálá, and Captain Stewart * by a cannon-ball at Karlí.

But the slowness of Egerton's march had given to the ruling coterie at Puná the very chance which, otherwise, would have been wanting. Had the British force marched with the rapidity displayed by Goddard, it is more than probable that it might have entered Puná before the members of that coterie had had time to consider the situation, still less to act. But Egerton had played their game to perfection. They had had time to compose the differences which the presence of so many influential chiefs had caused; to place Holkar, suspected of coquetting with Raghunáth, in a position where he would be powerless for offence; and, finally, to concentrate their army at Táligáon, twenty miles from Puná, and twelve from the position occupied by the English.

Meanwhile Egerton had resigned the command of the Bombay forces, and had been succeeded by Cockburn (January 6). Three days later the latter directed an advance on Táligáon. The Maráthás declined a battle, and retired as Cockburn approached. Then ensued the most extraordinary panic in a victorious force ever known in history. The way to Puná was open: the villages between that city and the point occupied had been burned. The distance was a short twenty miles; the force had provisions for eighteen days; the enemy had displayed self-distrust. Every argument pointed to the desirability of pushing forward. Raghunáth was informed that success would cause important chiefs to

* The merits of this officer were so great that, many years after his death, his name was remembered. Whenever a native desired to mention a deed of peculiar merit, he invoked the memory of "Stewart Fakhira," the second of the two words signifying the highest order of excellence. (See Grant Duff, vol. ii. pp. 261, 262.)

declare in his favour, and success could be obtained only by advancing. Yet this very crisis produced among the English and native leaders a despair which can be accounted for solely on the grounds of want of confidence in themselves. Carnac was the first to sound the note of alarm. He suggested to Cockburn that the victorious army should retreat before the enemy who had retreated before it. Instead of rejecting the proposal with scorn, Cockburn and the officers whom he consulted pleaded for negotiation. But the committee, of which Carnac was the leading spirit, still insisted on retreat. Vainly did Raghunáth urge a short delay. The committee refused him a single hour, and, on the night of the 11th of January, the British leaders, having burned their stores, and cast their heavy guns into a large tank, commenced their retreat from an enemy who had declined to meet them in the field.

This disgraceful retreat was but the beginning of the end. That same night, that is, in the early morning of the day following, the Maráthás had cognizance of it, and commenced a pursuit, passionate, vehement, and untiring. They cut off stragglers, dashed through the baggage on the disorganized masses, and drew them helter-skelter into the village of Wargáon (January 12). They were repulsed, indeed, when, the following morning, they attempted to storm that village; but its surrender, should hostilities continue, was a question of a few hours. Already the retreat had cost the retreating force 352 fighting men. Those who remained were thoroughly disorganized. In the opinion of the committee further movement was impossible. It remained only to treat for terms. One officer only, Captain Hartley, who had been the soul of the retreat, protested against negotiation, and submitted a plan, perfectly feasible, by following which the army might be saved. But he was not listened to. Panic reigned supreme.

The immediate consequence of the negotiations which then ensued was the conclusion of an arrangement known as the "Convention of Wargáon." The terms of this convention recapitulated how, up to the period expiring with the death of the Peshwá Madhu Ráo, matters with the English had progressed peaceably; how, subsequently, the English had

taken many places, which they named, from the Maráthás; had given their aid to Raghunáth Ráo; had commenced a war which had been terminated by a treaty negotiated on the part of the English, by Colonel John Upton; how the English had not adhered to that treaty, having again given assistance to Raghunáth, having mounted the ghâts, invaded the districts of the Maráthá Sarkár (Government) and acted as an enemy; how the Maráthás had then prepared for war. The Convention went on to state that the Maráthás, having succeeded, were now prepared to restore friendship to the English on the following conditions: that they should renounce the cause of Raghunáth, giving neither to him, nor to any others of their enemies, any protection whatever; that they should restore all the places they had taken from the Maráthás, and return to the position in which they were at the time of the Peshwá Madhu Ráo; that in consideration of agreeing to these terms, the English force at Wargáon should be permitted to return safely to Bombay, with all its effects and appurtenances; that the English army at Hoshangábád (that of Goddard) should not proceed forward, but be sent back to Calcutta, giving no molestation to any one; that no aid should be given to the French.

Considering the masterful position occupied by the Maráthá army, we may wonder that the conditions were not still more stringent. In point of fact they released for future service against themselves a body of nearly three thousand troops actually in their power, receiving in return a paper concession which proved utterly valueless. The English troops returned to Bombay, but the English Government declined to restore the places their agents had covenanted to surrender. The prescience of Hastings in sending Goddard by the land route to Bombay now became manifest. That officer was enabled not only to save the situation, but once again to threaten Puná. The reader will remember that Francis and Wheler would have recalled Goddard's force to avoid a calamity akin to that of Saratoga. It was Hastings who refused; Hastings who, boldly daring, insisted, and triumphed.

What the man was, how, in difficult circumstances, he kept a firm and equable mind, may be judged from his action

on hearing of the events which culminated at Wargáon. Determined to keep in his own hands the threads of the negotiation with the Puná Maráthás, he had invested Goddard with powers which made him directly subordinate to the Supreme Government and their plenipotentiary at the Court of Puná. The main provisions upon which he had insisted when he sent Goddard to supersede Leslie were identical with the instructions given to the Hebrew leader when he was ordered to march the Israelites towards the promised land. Goddard was "to go forward." The march of that general from Hoshangábád to Surat was then a march which filled the soul of the proconsul with joy. It was a march thoroughly in accordance with the spirit of the instructions he had given, and Hastings, recognizing the keen insight and true military spirit of the man who had accomplished it, recorded his approval in a minute which he published to the army. When, almost immediately afterwards, he heard of the convention of Wargáon, he felt that Goddard's action would neutralize a misfortune which, under other circumstances, a resolute enemy might make fatal. But even then, inspired as he was by that conviction, he left nothing untried which might contribute to a favourable result. His conduct at this critical conjuncture serves as a lesson for all time. He believed that Goddard's force, and still more Goddard's presence, would suffice to save the situation. But that there might be no doubt as to the future in the western Presidency, he, pressed though he was, as we shall see from every quarter, despatched on the instant to the banks of the Jamná two battalions of native troops, whilst to make sure of his northern frontier he directed Sir Eyre Coote, who had succeeded Clavering in the command of the army, to inspect and prepare against invasion that frontier. Upon Goddard he bestowed the office of Brigadier-General, and directed him to reopen negotiations with Puná with the view of re-establishing a peace on the conditions of the treaty of Purandhar, but with the additional clause that the French should be excluded from any establishment within the Maráthá dominions.

To relate in detail the subsequent action of Goddard against the Maráthás would be foreign to the plans of this biography. It will suffice if I place upon record here

that that able general, fully comprehending and acting upon the views and intentions of Mr. Hastings, did succeed in obtaining the very results he had been commissioned to work to secure. Finding it fruitless to continue the negotiations he had begun with Náná Farnavís, now uncontrolled master of the Government at Puná, and who had laid down that the surrender of the person of Raghunáth Ráo and the restoration of Salsette must be preliminaries to any further discussions, Goddard crossed the Taptí (January 1, 1780), occupied the fort of Dabhai, fifteen miles from Barodá, and then marched against Ahmadábád, the capital of Gujrát. He stormed this fortress on the 15th of February, just in time to prepare to meet the united forces of Madhují Sindhiá and Tukají Holkar, which were rapidly marching to the relief of the place. Goddard crossed the river Mahí to meet them, and at Fazilpur offered battle to Madhují. The latter declined the contest, and, professing friendship for the English, endeavoured to negotiate. For a time Goddard humoured him, but convinced at last that his enemy's object was to dupe him, he determined to attack him. This he did at two o'clock in the morning of the 3rd of April, and obtained a slight success. He then marched to the Narbadá to secure favourable quarters for his troops during the rainy season.

As soon as the rains were over, Goddard, reinforced from time to time by troops from Bengal, despatched for that purpose by the watchful care of the Governor-General, proceeded to the Kánkán * to complete the conquest of the harbour towns in that strip of coast-land. He arrived before Bassein on the 28th of November, and immediately erected batteries before it. Then, returning to look after troops coming from Bengal, he left Major Hartley to press the siege. But Náná Farnavís was determined to prevent the fall of a place which the Maráthás regarded with peculiar appreciation. He despatched thither a force commanded by

* The term "Kánkán" is used to indicate the strip of land that lies between the western ghâts and the Arabian Sea. It now forms two collectorates, Tháná, or the northern Kánkán, comprising Tháná, Bassein, Kalyán, and Matherán hill; and Ratnagírí, or the southern Kánkán, of which the harbour towns of Ratnagírí and Vengurlá are the principal. The entire length of the Kánkán (both collectorates) is about three hundred and thirty miles, and it is nowhere more than fifty miles broad. Its area is nine thousand square miles.

a very enterprising leader, Rámchandar Ganésh, to secure it at all costs. Rámchandar, finding that the precautions of Hartley had rendered it impossible for him to throw reinforcements into the place, resolved to destroy the covering army. He attacked it therefore with great spirit and resolution on the 10th of December with a force considerably outnumbering that of the British. Failing in a decisive result on that day, he renewed his attack on the 11th, but though the British loss was heavy, Hartley maintained his positions. But Rámchandar was still persistent. The action of the 11th had made clear to him the points which must in the first instance be carried if he were to succeed. On the 12th, then, he had resolved to conquer or die. Leading his troops under cover of a thick fog he attacked the British position with great gallantry. Success seemed almost within his reach when a bullet terminated his career. The second in command being also severely wounded, the assailants gave way, and were pursued with heavy loss. On the previous evening Colonel Hartley's troops had occupied Bassein.

This success was very opportune. The pressure of affairs in the southern presidency had rendered Mr. Hastings peculiarly anxious to close the account in the western, and he instructed Goddard to use all his efforts to come to terms with the Puná authorities. This seemed the more necessary, inasmuch as the Bhonslé, menaced on one side by the Nizam, and frightened on the other by the disasters suffered by the British at the hands of Haidar Ali, hesitated to accept the part of mediator pressed upon him by Hastings. The necessities of the Supreme Government were great; and to Hastings, upon whom devolved the entire burden of providing for them, the most essential measure at the moment was peace with an enemy from whom no further advantage was to be hoped. Goddard, responding to the call made upon his energies, was at first inclined to employ that method, so often successful when energetically executed, of carrying the war into the very heart of the enemy's country. He would march on Puná, and dictate terms under its walls. It seems more than probable that if he had acted as he had designed he would have succeeded. But, under pressure, caused by the necessities of Madras, he made the mistake of

holding his hand. Whilst threatening the Puná authorities with his vengeance, and advancing towards the passes of the ghâts, he sent on his advanced guard to Khandálá, and made as though he intended to push on to Puná. He even transmitted terms to the Náná, the acceptance of which he insisted upon. But Náná Farnavís was not deceived for a moment. He knew the condition of the English; that the Bhonslé had refused to offer the very terms on which Goddard now insisted; that the English had received very rough handling at the hands of Haidar; and that they were longing earnestly for peace. Whilst then amusing Goddard, he endeavoured to combine against him the several divisions of the Maráthá army, with the view of repeating with still greater effect the blow already dealt at Wargáon. Sending the young Peshwá, now in his seventh year, for safety to Purandhar, he advanced with one army towards the ghâts, whilst he despatched another force of twelve thousand men to harass Goddard's communications with Bombay. Goddard had, in fact, delayed too long; but divining in time the Náná's intentions, he repulsed an attack on his convoys, and then prepared to retreat on Panwel. But the enemy were already closing about him. He was attacked, and lost large quantities of baggage on the 10th at the foot of the ghâts; again, with very severe loss, on the 21st. He halted the following day, the Maráthás remaining close to his rear. On the 23rd he marched early and obtained a good start of the pursuers, but these, led in a very resolute manner, followed him up, and attacked his rearguard about midday with great determination. The Bengal sipáhís there posted behaved with marked courage, and eventually repulsed the assailants. The next day Goddard reached Panwel, having lost four hundred and sixty-six men, including eighteen officers, in killed and wounded, in the four days' retreat. The Maráthás did not press him further, so that after halting at Panwel for a few weeks, Goddard was able to lead the army to Kalián for the rainy season.

Fortunately for the policy of the Governor-General successes nearer home more than counterbalanced the defeat, for so it deserves to be styled, of Goddard's attempt on Puná. I have already stated how Hastings, to secure his operations

in western India, had, on learning of the disaster of Wargáon, posted two battalions on the Jamná, to be commanded by Major Jacob Camac. The brigade had been formed, but before it had undertaken any operations the Ját Ráná of Gohad, a fortress in Central India, had applied to Hastings for protection against Madhují Sindhiá, who, with some reason, had called upon the Ráná to render him the military service due from a vassal to a liege-lord. To effect a diversion in a part of India in which he deemed the great Maráthá chieftain would be more vulnerable than in the vicinity of Puná, Hastings had entered into engagements with the Ját Ráná, and he had directed an able and enterprising officer, Captain Popham, to proceed with the drafts which had been raised for the purpose of reinforcing the sipáhí regiments serving under Goddard, amounting to two thousand four hundred men, to the assistance of the feudatory above-mentioned. Popham divided his force into three battalions, added to it a small body of cavalry, a detail of European artillery, with a howitzer and a few field-pieces; crossed the Jamná in February; attacked and dispersed a body of Maráthás in the neighbourhood of Gohad; stormed a strong fort called Lahár, equidistant (fifty miles) from Kalpí and Gwáliár; and then marched against the renowned fortress of that name. Gwáliár is one of the most famous hill-fortresses in India. It stands on an isolated rock about three hundred and fifty feet high, and in the upper part nearly perpendicular, and is approached only by steps cut in the rock itself. The natives regarded it as impregnable, and the notion that a small force such as that commanded by Popham could storm it would have been laughed to scorn. But Popham was one of those men, produced by this island in greater number, I believe, than by the other countries of Europe, to whom difficulties are only obstacles to be overcome. After taking Lahár, he had marched to within eight miles of Gwáliár, had encamped there, and had thence secretly examined the fortress, its defences, and the ways of its garrison; and at the end of two months, during which he was largely aided by spies provided by the Ját Ráná, he had resolved to storm it. On the 3rd of August he formed his storming-party. Selecting two companies of sipáhís, with which were four lieutenants, Wilson, Scott, Allen, and Paterson, he set over them a very

gallant officer, a captain named Bruce, and placed them in the front. In immediate support was a small body of twenty Europeans. Then followed two battalions of sipáhís. As soon as the night was well set, the advanced party, proceeding with great caution, placed their ladders at the foot of the scarped rock, sixteen feet high, and mounted without difficulty. They had yet, however, to climb a steep ascent of about a hundred and twenty feet to reach the base of the second wall, which was thirty feet above it. Fortune favoured them, inasmuch as their presence remained undiscovered by the garrison. The native spies silently ascended, carrying ladders of rope of the requisite length, and made these fast. Then the stormers climbed them one by one, each man sitting down until his comrade should arrive. When, in this manner, Captain Bruce, who had led the way, had collected some twenty men, he entered the fortress, promising himself an easy victory. Unfortunately in the excitement of the moment three of his men so far forgot themselves as to discharge their muskets, and so gave notice to the garrison. But the contest which then ensued was never in doubt. The surprised garrison yielded before the impetuous rush of the stormers, and before the sun of the 4th of August rose, the strongest fortress in India had been won by the gallantry of a handful of British-led sipáhís.

The capture of this famous fortress added enormously to the prestige of the British in India. And in India prestige is everything. The ruler of Gwáliár, the astute Madhují Sindhiá, could not believe his ears when he was told of it. "These English," he is reported to have said, "can then conquer the impossible!" The loss hit him very hard indeed, and followed by an event which for a few days promised an opposite result, but ultimately wounded him even more severely, produced a considerable influence in disposing him towards peace.

Lieut.-Colonel Camac—for he had been promoted to the higher rank in the interval—had likewise been directed by Mr. Hastings to assist the Ráná of Gohad. He had not moved, however, when the result of the attempt on Gwáliár came to rouse him from his lethargy. Camac was in many respects the reverse of Popham. The latter was in the habit

of using his eyes, his ears, his brain; he could carry with him the impressions produced by the appearance of a country he might traverse in his morning ride. He was active, enterprising, and prompt, daring when daring promised results, but always careful to secure the safety of his troops, so far as that result was attainable. The nature of Camac differed from this. A slow thinker, not easily roused to action, he was yet very susceptible to the influence of stronger men. Left to himself he was too much inclined to keep, so to speak, his eyes in his pocket, and to pay too little regard to the reports of his scouts. He had remained quiet until Popham had achieved the brilliant success I have recorded. Then, suddenly joined by the Bruce who had so distinguished himself at the capture of Gwáliár, he submitted at once to his influence, and breaking up his camp, entered Malwá.

He was successful so long as there was no enemy before him. For instance, he marched on and captured Síprí, situated sixty-five miles to the south of Gwáliár. Then he advanced to Siránj, a town at the foot of a pass connecting Malwá with the tableland to the north, and took it. Careless then of the fact that Madhují Sindhiá was marching to cut him off, he remained there halted until the Maráthá chief had all but accomplished that purpose. Suddenly roused to a sense of his danger, Camac then despatched messengers into Oudh, where he believed the nearest force to be, to describe his position and to ask for aid. But Madhují was not the man to give him the respite he required. On the 1st of March he attacked his discouraged enemy, not indeed by a regular assault, but by an incessant cannonade. This he continued for seven days. Then Camac, unable to bear the situation, massed his troops at midnight and commenced his retreat. His plans were taken with so much caution that it was not till daybreak of the 8th that Madhují discovered the evasion. Then he followed with his cavalry, caught his enemy the same afternoon, and continued to harass him till the morning of the 10th. Then Camac turned and faced him; entered during the night the considerable town of Mahautpur, and forced the inhabitants to furnish him with the provisions he so much needed. There he decided to remain until he should

receive from Oudh the reinforcements for which he had sent, or until Fortune should give him a chance of retrieving her favours.

In the almost daily contests which had ensued, Camac had found in Bruce a most competent adviser. Bruce was a man of real genius, a fit compeer of the noble Englishmen of inferior rank but of extraordinary merit, who in the early days had contributed so much to the conquest of India. I have told how, in the crisis which had followed the halt at Siránj, his great merit had forced itself on the attention of Camac. He had suggested the stand made at Mahautpur; and now he urged upon his chief a plan, which, by throwing Sindhiá off his guard, might induce him to give a chance to the pursued. The plan involved the continuation by Camac of the defensive system which he had theretofore pursued, in order the better to blind Madhují as to his real intentions. For five or six days, then, Camac adopted only measures necessary to repel a hostile assault. Madhují, who every night had encamped within five miles of the English, ready to repulse any movement on their part, began at the end of that period to relax his vigilance, and, whilst active during the day, came at last to permit his men to sleep off their fatigues at night-time. This practice continued till the 24th of March. Believing by that time that Sindhiá was thoroughly off his guard, Camac issued from his camp in the darkness of the night, entered the hostile camp, unguarded by sentries, surprised the Maráthás as they slept, killed numbers of them, took thirteen guns, three elephants, the principal standard, twenty-one camels, and many horses. It was a great victory, and had great consequences. It disposed Sindhiá absolutely to peace. Attacked in the very heart of his own territories by an enemy who had seized his chief fortress, and, when apparently eager only to escape, had inflicted upon him a crushing defeat, he felt but little desire to continue a war which would bring him personally but little advantage. He felt still less when he found, on the 4th of April, that Camac had been joined by a detachment under Colonel Muir, who assumed the command. Towards the beginning of August, then, he grasped at the terms offered him. Negotiations, conceived by a real desire to push those terms to a conclusion,

were opened; and on the 13th of October an engagement was concluded between Madhují and Muir, in virtue of which the former agreed to retire to Ujjén, the latter to recross the Jamná, Madhují promising to remain neutral in the war which continued to wage with the other Maráthá powers. It was arranged that his territories west of the Jamná should be restored to him, but that the possession of the fortress of Gwáliár should devolve on the Ráná of Gohad "during good behaviour." It is almost needless to add that it did not long remain in the hands of that petty chieftain.

This arrangement with Sindhiá was a preliminary to a general accommodation with the other Maráthá chieftains. To effect such a general pacification had been the main object for some time of Mr. Hastings' policy, and beset as he was with other difficulties at Banáras and with respect to Oudh, he carried out the negotiations with his usual skill and diplomatic power. After much negotiation, during which Madhují Sindhiá honourably carried out the position of mediator, a treaty was concluded on the 17th of May, 1782, at Salbai, a village in the Gwáliár state, thirty-two miles south-east of the fortress of that name, in virtue of which the British (1) restored the territories and cities, including Bassein taken from the Peshwá since the signature of the treaty of the Purandhar; (2) were confirmed in the possession of Salsette and the other islands mentioned in that treaty; (3) whilst being allowed to retain the town of Bharoch, they relinquished their claim to a territory, near it, bringing in three lakhs of revenue; (4) restored to the Gaekwar the territories in dispute between that chief, the Peshwá, and themselves; (5) secured for their ally, the ex-Peshwá Raghunáth Ráo, a pension of twenty-five thousand rupees per month, on condition that he "should repair to Maháráját Madhu Ráo Sindhiá, and quietly reside with him." Such were the principal articles as far as concerned the Peshwá and his immediate surroundings. The remaining articles proceeded to provide for a general peace to include Haidar Ali of Maisur; the Nawwáb of the Karnátik; the Nizám; the Nawwáb of Oudh; the Bhonslé; and Sindhiá. To facilitate the conclusion of such a peace,

the two principal negotiators agreed to nominate Madhují Sindhiá—

"to be the mutual guarantee for the perpetual and invariable adherence of both parties to the conditions of this treaty. . . . If either of the parties shall deviate from the conditions of this treaty, the said Mahárájá shall join the other party, and will, to the utmost of his power, endeavour to bring the aggressor to a proper understanding."

This treaty terminated the Maráthá war. From a territorial standpoint, it left matters just as they had been before its outbreak. It was not, however, devoid of incidents which told in favour of the English. Although, in the western Maráthá country, events were fairly balanced, the surrender at Wargáon and the retreat of Goddard from Puná counting for the Maráthás, whilst the capture of Ahmadábád and the battle and capture of Bassein told with almost equal force in favour of the English; yet, in central India, within the territories of the most powerful, and certainly of the ablest, of the independent Maráthá chieftains, the prestige of the English gained enormously. The storming of the fortress of Gwáliár and the victory of Camac, at a moment when Madhují was counting the hours when that general must inevitably surrender, left an impression on the mind of that prince which no time could efface. And when it is considered that the war was waged practically with the whole Maráthá confederacy—for before its conclusion the Bhonslé had been seduced into an adherence to his co-religionists—at a time when the English were fighting for existence on the Koromandel coast, it has to be admitted that to have come off without material loss and with a great increase of prestige reflects enormous credit on the masterful mind which had laid down the general plan of operations. The next chapter will show how, in that double war—the war with the Maráthás and the war with Haidar Alí—Hastings advanced English interests to a point which rendered a further and decisive progress easy to a successor who should dare to attempt to complete the work he had begun. The avowed end of Hastings was gradually, almost imperceptibly, to induce the native princes and chiefs of India to accept the over-lordship of the foreigners from the west. Of the edifice which would

certainly be erected on that basis he laid the foundation-stone. Whilst Clive had been the engineer who had levelled the ground, had obtained the territory upon which it was necessary to work, had rounded off the borders of that territory, it was Hastings who had recognized all the possibilities which the solid occupation of Bengal and Bihár had opened out. The Rohilkhand war had taught him how, if peace were to be preserved in India, one power must be predominant. There was no question in his mind as to the power upon which the mantle of Akbar must descend. That power must be Great Britain. Hence his readiness, whilst threatened on the coast, to come to blows with the Maráthás; hence his contentment with the result of the Maráthá war. The English, weak, engaged in many directions, had more than held their own, whilst, in prestige, they had made an advance not to be calculated by words. He was content. The final result could not, he knew, come in his time. But he had made it possible for a successor to complete the edifice of which he had laid the solid foundations. With time that successor did come—the third and not the least illustrious of the greatly gifted trio who made British India—the renowned Marquess Wellesley.

A few months after the treaty had been signed, Raghunáth Ráo, the restoration of whom to the office of Peshwá had been the ostensible cause of the war, died. His son, Bájí Ráo, ultimately became Peshwá; and the adopted son of Bají Ráo, known to the world as Náná Sáhib, lived to become a prominent actor in the tragedy of the Indian Mutiny.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE COAST WAR.

HAIDAR ALÍ, the great ruler of a Maisur more than double in extent of the kingdom of the present day, had many serious causes of discontent with the English Government at Madras. The treaty which he had forced upon the English at the very gates of Madras, in 1769, had secured for him the promise of the support of that people in his operations against his enemies. But that support had never been given. He had been very anxious to secure his position by a firm alliance with the only people in southern India whose power he had recognized as sufficient to turn the scales against him, but his efforts in that direction had been thwarted, partly by the weakness of the Madras Government, partly by the intrigues of the Nawwáb of Arkát—the Muhammad Alí whom the English had adopted as their candidate for that office in their tremendous struggle with the French under Dupleix and Lally. It may be as well here to state that Muhammad Alí was one of the very worst men the English, in their dealings with the people of India, ever adopted as a protégé. Treason, ingratitude, perfidy, falseness, were ingrained in a nature which did not possess one redeeming quality. His life was a constant intrigue against the people who had befriended him. To him no means were too base to gain the ends he for the moment proposed to attain, but all of which contributed, directly or indirectly, to the ultimate ruin of his family. At the time of which I am writing his one great object was to prevent a good understanding between Haidar Alí and his English patrons. So great was the power for successful intrigue he possessed; so impressionable to his touch were the Madras authorities, who could never clear

their minds of the fact that he had been the factor on whose behalf they had struck down Dupleix, that he always gained his end. The English repulsed, often rudely, the overtures of Haidar Alí; and that prince, at first unwillingly, but later in a spirit of the hatred almost always engendered in man and woman by the rejection of advances, was gradually led to feel that there no longer existed in southern India room for himself and the western foreigner; that, if his dynasty were to take root, that foreigner must be expelled.*

Muhammad Alí was the main factor in bringing about this result. Yet throughout this period, and to the latest hour of his life, he was working secretly against the foreigners who had placed him on his semi-throne, and whose confidence he so strangely maintained. Owing all he possessed to the English at Madras, he despatched, in 1767, an agent to England with instructions to bring about a direct intercourse with the Crown of England, independently of the Madras Government. The British Government had the weakness to comply with a demand which gave to the illegitimate son of a dissipated noble the position of a sovereign prince. They deputed Sir John Lindsay as envoy to his Court, with powers independent of the Madras Government. The evil consequences of a measure so illjudged manifested themselves in a very brief period. The first great measure proposed by Muhammad Alí to Lindsay, and adopted by that inexperienced gentleman, was that they, the English, should ally themselves with the Maráthás and Muhammad Alí, to crush Haidar Alí, with whom, let it be borne in mind, the English had a mutually defensive alliance. The only reason for the contemplated war was the dislike for Haidar Alí entertained by the Nawwáb. Naturally, the proposal was rejected, and, shortly afterwards, Lindsay was removed. Haidar Alí, so far from displaying any feeling against the English, continued meanwhile to observe loyally the spirit of the treaty he had made in 1769. When the Maráthás, two years later, pressed upon him an alliance, the object of which was to assist that people in sweeping the English from their possessions on the

* For an admirable summary of the events of the reign of Haidar Alí I would refer the reader to Mr. Lewin Bowring's sketch, "Haidar Alí and Tipu Sultan," in the "Rulers of India" series.

Koromandel coast, he rejected the project; informed the English of its nature and of his action; added with the most perfect frankness that his reason for rejecting it was that success would make the Maráthás predominant in southern India; that it was his desire to remain on friendly terms with the nation whose representatives he was addressing; but, that, if his alliance were rejected, he must invoke the assistance of the French. The following year he again pressed the subject on the Madras authorities, but again did Muhammad Alí step in to upset the negotiation. The disloyal ruler of the Karnátik, whilst urging upon the Madras authorities the danger of an intimate alliance with Haidar, was pressing upon the latter the desirability of driving from India the "yellow-skinned foreigners." The very next year he despatched an embassy to Haidar's capital, the great fortress of Seringapatam, to negotiate an alliance for such a purpose. But Haidar never had had the smallest confidence in Muhammad Alí. He allowed his ambassadors to remain some months at his capital; then, having obtained from them a complete insight into the schemes of their master, he dismissed them with a letter to Muhammad Alí, informing him that as the climate of Seringapatam did not appear to be favourable to the health of his ambassadors, he would not subject them to further inconvenience. He had, in fact, read, in their admissions, the contemptible character of the Nawwáb of the Karnátik.

Haidar Alí had recognized that the Nawwáb, notwithstanding his many perfidies, had possession of the minds of the gentlemen who represented the Company at Madras, and that, so long as he should live, there was no chance of any cordial understanding between himself and the English. He recognized further that there was a spirit of unrest in the air; that the several chiefs and confederacies, to whom the fall of the Mughal Empire had given independence, would not be content to remain in subordinate positions without fighting for supremacy; that the Maráthás still counted on gaining the empire just missed at Pánípat in 1761; and that the English were exercising an influence, which, skilfully directed, might prevail against all the native powers. At this period Haidar Alí was an old man, who had lived every hour of his life. He had made, by means into which it is not necessary

to inquire too closely, but mainly by his superior natural abilities, a great kingdom which he was desirous to bequeath intact to his son. He could accomplish this, he felt, in the times he saw coming, if he could but secure the co-operation of the English. But his conversations with the emissaries from Muhammad Alí had satisfied him that no agreement with his views was to be expected from that quarter. From the hour of their dismissal, then, May, 1775, he renounced all hope of an intimate alliance with Madras, and entered into correspondence with the Governor of Pondichery, M. de Bellecombe. Bellecombe eagerly responded, and engaged to furnish Haidar with all the military stores he might require through the medium of the French fortress of Mahé, on the Malabar coast. He proceeded at once to act upon the requisitions of Haidar Alí, and the imports at Mahé became in the course of a few months of very considerable importance.

The breaking out of the war between France and England in 1777 found Haidar and the British still at peace. The former was, in fact, engaged in the reduction of places held by the Maráthás on the Malabar coast. But when, as soon as the knowledge of the war in Europe reached India, the Madras authorities sent a force to reduce Pondichery, and did reduce it, after a fairly long siege (August 8 to October 18), Haidar protested. Taken by surprise, and not having expected an action so prompt, he was unable, on the instant, to march to the support of his allies. For a moment, indeed, he hesitated as to the course he should pursue. In announcing to him the fall of Pondichery, the Madras Government had pressed upon him an alliance which would secure also the co-operation and friendship of Muhammad Alí. But Haidar knew the latter too well to believe that any alliance in which he was concerned could possibly be sincere. Unwilling, however, to commit himself, he replied in evasive terms regarding the proposed treaty; formally congratulated the Governor on the reduction of Pondichery; and reserved the discussion of other matters for an interview which he suggested. The Governor, Sir Thomas Rumbold, answered him by declaring his intention to send an envoy to the Court of Haidar, and to despatch a force to reduce the stronghold of Mahé.

Haidar was much concerned at this announcement, for, as we have seen, Mahé was his port of communication with France, and he determined to prevent its capture if it were possible. He wrote then to say that he regarded the several settlements of the Dutch, the French, and the English on the Malabar coast as equally entitled to his protection, the territory on which they had been formed now belonging to him; and that he should oppose the designs of any one of these powers against the settlement of another. He at the same time directed his agent at Madras to inform the Governor in the most explicit terms, that should he attack Mahé, he should not only aid in its defence, but retaliate, by detaching a body of troops to lay waste the province of Arkát. The Madras Government, however, paid no heed to these threats, but despatched the troops they had already collected against Mahé. Haidar carried out his word by aiding in its defence; and by hoisting his colours side by side with those of the French. To no purpose, however, for Mahé fell in the month of March to the force under Colonel Braithwaite.

Haidar was not quite ready for war, but he had not forgotten his threat. He wrote to Sir T. Rumbold to remind him of the notice he had given regarding Mahé; then, adding that out of respect for the King of England and the Council of Madras he had as yet taken no steps to retaliate, concluded by observing that the Governor was the best judge of his own conduct. The Governor replied in the feeblest terms, complaining of conquests which Haidar had made some three years previously, and which, at the time, had been allowed to pass unnoticed by the Madras Government. But fully sensible of the character for determination possessed by the ruler of Maisur, and of his ability to cause a great upsetting in southern India, he resolved to despatch to his Court, to conciliate him, an envoy of whose abilities and acquaintance with the ways and habits of thought of the natives he had formed a very high opinion.

This envoy was a German missionary named Schwartz, who lived generally at Tanjur, but who had travelled a great deal in southern India, and had gained a high reputation for piety, purity of manners, and for his simple and engaging disposition. A missionary may deserve such a reputation,

and yet be wanting in those qualities which combine to make the man of the world. It so happened that a few days before the arrival of Schwartz at Seringapatam, Haidar had received intimation that an English detachment under Colonel Harper had traversed without his permission his province of Kadapah on his way to take possession of Guntur, and this fact had not increased his amiability. He received Schwartz, however, with politeness, and conversed with him freely on the doctrines of the Christian religion. Regarding his German guest more as a private traveller than a political personage, he reserved the communications he desired to make on political matters for letters which he caused to be written to the Governor, and despatched by the hands of Schwartz. The latter, on his return to Madras, volunteered no communication to Council, nor did Council ask him for any. He had not kept any journal worthy of the name. His papers, examined after his death, contained mysterious hints as to the reasons which had actuated Haidar Alí in his political action, but nothing more.

In his letters to Sir T. Rumbold, Haidar Alí reviewed the actual situation and the causes that had led to it with great clearness and ability. In his indictment against the English he included their protected Nawwáb, Muhammad Alí of Arkát. He characterized in fitting terms the abetting by the English of Muhammad Alí's fraudulent conduct in 1752 with respect to Trichinápallí, and their subsequent action up to their violation of the treaty of 1769. He dwelt on their hostile action against Mahé, and the march of their troops through the province of Kadapah; and animadverted in strong terms on their action in abetting the rebellion of his subjects on the Malabar coast. He concluded by asking this pertinent question: "When such improper conduct is pursued, what engagements will remain inviolate?" He then added, "I leave you to judge on whose part engagements and promises have been broken."

Possibly the indignation caused by the incidents I have mentioned induced Haidar just about this period to commit an action from which, under ordinary circumstances, his better nature would have shrunk. Information had reached him that a Danish ship bound for the Malabar coast, having on board

six English gentlemen and a lady who had left England on a voyage of pleasure by way of Egypt and Suez, had arrived at the seaport-town of Kálikód.* The fact that the ship had on board English travellers determined Haidar to declare it contraband, and he directed that both ship and cargo should be seized and the English sent as prisoners to Seringapatam. On their arrival at that fortress, Haidar, who had hoped to find amongst them one or two at least who had been bred to arms, whom he might utilize to instruct his troops, discovered to his chagrin that they were all civilians. He accordingly directed their release. Their property, however, he retained, with the exception of a few articles just sufficient for their immediate wants.

The news of this treatment of British subjects roused great indignation at Madras, and the Governor promptly despatched Mr. Gray, formerly of the Bengal Civil Service, to demand the release of the British subjects, and at the same time to negotiate for a good understanding between the two powers. Gray reached Ambur; met there the released prisoners; then, although the passport he had received from Haidar limited him to a retinue scarcely sufficient to procure for him the convenience of a private traveller, he pushed on to Seringapatam. Unfortunately, he had come provided with presents calculated rather to increase than to assuage the ire of a Musalman ruler. One of these presents was a pigskin saddle, described as apparently "intended to try, not to assist the seat;" the other, a breech-loading rifle, "charged at the wrong end."† Haidar, designing to intimate that such presents were unsuited to the dignity of the giver and the receiver, returned them, with, however, an intimation that such return was not to infer hostility. But the Maisur ruler still refused to grant an interview to Gray. He lodged him poorly, and on the whole treated him rather as a spy than as an envoy. He detained him, however, under various pretexts until his preparations for war should be ready; then, having made up his mind that the sword only could resolve the

* Sometimes incorrectly written "Calicut." It was visited by Vasco de Gama in 1498.

† See Wilks's "History of Southern India," which I have followed in these details (2nd edit., vol. i. p. 441).

question, summarily dismissed him. Gray reached Madras on the 30th of March, 1780. A few days later, Sir Thomas Rumbold was succeeded as Governor by Mr. Whitehill. In the month of July following, Haidar, having arranged for the co-operation of the Maráthás of Barár and of the Nizám, and having massed at Bangalore an army counting eighty-three thousand warriors, declared war against the English. That same month he descended the ghâts, and "swept down on the plains like an avalanche, carrying destruction with him."* The coast war had begun.

I have been the more particular in describing the details which led to this war because of all the operations with which Mr. Hastings was concerned during his incumbency of office in India it was the war which tried to the most his resources, and which gave him opportunities for the display of the wonderful prescience and decision which with him were sovereign qualities. In the pages which follow in this chapter I have been content to lay before the reader a very brief sketch of the military operations, but in the chapter which immediately succeeds I have made it my principal duty to show the when, the where, and the how the action and the orders of the Governor-General made themselves felt, calling attention wherever necessary to the enormous influence which he exercised on the progress and the result of a war which, without such masterly guidance, might have terminated in a manner ruinous to British interests in India.

One word, in the first place, regarding Haidar's allies.

The high-handedness of the Madras Government in their dealings with Haidar Alí had been matched only by the recklessness with which, at the crisis long impending, they had succeeded in offending the Nizám. That prince, Nizám Alí, had granted to his brother, Basálat Jang, the jagir of Guntur, with the proviso that on his death it should devolve on the English. This grant had been confirmed, with certain provisos, by the second article of the treaty of 1768, made between that people and the Nizám. But Basálat Jang, to strengthen himself, had, six years later, engaged a body of French mercenaries, and had refused to obey the orders of the Nizám to disband them. In 1780, however, threatened by

* Bowring's "Haidar Alí and Tipu Sultan."

his brother, he implored the aid of the English, agreed to dismiss the French levies, to replace them by a British detachment, and to allow them to rent from him on lease the district of Guntur. This engagement was carried out, but with circumstances not anticipated by the Madras Government. For, whilst the march of the British contingent through his district of Kadapah angered, as we have seen, Haidar Ali, the transaction, carried into effect without his knowledge, so displeased the Nizám that he took into his own service the French troops dispensed with by his brother, and signed an offensive treaty with Haidar Alí. This alliance had the effect of bringing into the combination against England the Rájá of Barár, that member of the Bhonslé family whom Mr. Hastings had taken so much pains to conciliate.

The news of this alliance reached Hastings in the summer of 1780. He was at the moment surrounded by troubles. Francis and Wheler were still refractory; Barwell had announced his intention of resigning; the successor of Clavering, Sir Eyre Coote, though he had declared he would not enter into the past controversies between Hastings and his colleagues, was wayward in temper, and required a vast amount of managing. There were, too, troubles on the north-west frontier and in Oudh, to be presently related; troubles, too, on the south-east frontier, very difficult to arrange. Before the Governor-General, endeavouring to steer the State vessel through this sea of troubles, and already bending all his efforts to meet the Maráthás in the western presidency, there suddenly arose this new danger—a danger more threatening, more real, than all the others; for the power of the three allies on the Koromandel coast would, he knew, be enormously strengthened by the arrival there of a body of about three thousand French troops, known to have sailed from France, led by the once renowned Bussy, to endeavour to accomplish a task in which Dupleix and Lally with smaller numbers had only just failed. How, under such circumstances, handicapped in every direction, was the Governor-General of India to weather the storm?

Almost simultaneously with the news of the war, came the news of Haidar's earlier successes and the destruction of Baillie's force. Such news only excited Hastings to prompter

action. To send his best general, with all the troops that could be spared, to Madras was the first duty. To endeavour to detach the Bhonslé and the Nizám from the alliance was the second. To raise money for the continuation of a contest which threatened to last long, was the third. With the money so raised to provide fresh resources, the fourth. Simultaneously with these four efforts, to secure his position on the north-west frontier.

He carried out the first duty by despatching Sir Eyre Coote, with all the available troops, to Madras. The reputation of Coote was founded chiefly on the great daring he had displayed under other leaders, on the vote he had given on the eve of the battle of Plassey to fight under all circumstances, and on his known contempt of danger. He was not so vigorous as he had been, for, although only fifty-four, the climate had told greatly on his constitution; but he retained all his old fire and dash, and he was not likely to err on the side of caution. The deeds he accomplished during the campaign which had begun before he could reach Madras must be told very briefly.

Haidar Alí, with the force I have mentioned, amounting to eighty-three thousand men, of whom fifty-three thousand were tried regular troops, and four hundred were Frenchmen led by Lally, a nephew of the general of that name, and a hundred guns, burst upon the Karnátik with fire and sword in the second week of July. He met the scantiest resistance. The fort of Chitor, that nearest to and within the frontier, was carried at a single blow. On the 20th his right wing had penetrated to Portonovo on the coast, below Pondichery, whilst his right, led by himself, had occupied Kanchipuram, forty-two miles west of Madras. On the 10th of August he had occupied St. Thomas's Mount, ten miles to the north-west of Madras; and on the 21st he had invested Arkát.

Notwithstanding all the warnings he had given them, he had caught the English slumbering at their post. They had made no preparations to receive their unwelcome visitor. Even on the 21st of July, when certain information reached them that Haidar had forced his way through the passes, they were not disturbed; nor was it until the 24th, when

they could not doubt that he was at Kanchipuram, that they made the necessary preparations to defend the districts intrusted to their care. After much discussion, and in the face of many protests, the Council ordered that the Commander-in-Chief, Sir Hector Munro, the same who had won his spurs in the battle fought at Baksar against the Nawwáb-Wazir of Oudh and Mír Kásim, in 1764, should march with the 5209 men available at Madras on Kanchipuram; that he should there be joined by a detachment of 2813 men, under Colonel Baillie, from Guntur; and that, arrived at Kanchipuram, Munro should act according to circumstances. A free hand, in a word, was given him.

Munro reached Kanchipuram on the 21st of August. Haidar, meanwhile, had marched to invest Arkát. Munro resolved, therefore, to await, where he was, the arrival of Baillie. But he was never to see that general or his force. On its arrival at Perambákam, fourteen miles from Kanchipuram, it was suddenly assailed by the left wing of Haidar's army, commanded by his son, Típu Sáhib, and after three days of continuous marching and fighting, was destroyed almost to a man—a few who were taken prisoners excepted. Típu had been joined by his father during the fight. Munro was within six miles of the scene of slaughter on the 10th, and in the course of the afternoon of that day within two miles of Baillie's encampment. He had but to move forward to baffle Haidar, who, knowing the English well, was prepared for such a movement. But almost all men are liable to be stricken by panic, and there can be little doubt but that Munro, ignorant of the actual circumstances of the case, and believing probably that he might be overwhelmed by the masses of Haidar's army, acted with a caution more dangerous than rashness. He retreated to Kanchipuram, reached that place at six o'clock in the evening, and, deeming himself still unsafe, threw his heavy guns and stores into the tank, and moved early the following morning to Chengalpat, arriving there, after losing the greater part of his baggage, on the 12th. Meeting there a detachment under Colonel Cosby, he marched north-eastwards for the defence of Madras, reached St. Thomas's Mount on the 14th, and, moving thence to Marmalaon,

remained halted there, a river covering his front, until in November he was relieved by Sir Eyre Coote.

Why, after his victory over Baillie and the retreat of Munro, Haidar did not march on Madras and attempt to finish the war with one great stroke may never certainly be known. Probably, before taking such a risk, he preferred to secure the country behind him. He resumed therefore the siege of Arkát. Having taken that town after six weeks' open trenches, and the citadel the third day after the town had fallen, he marched westwards, and laid siege simultaneously to Vellur, Ambur, Wándiwásh, Permakoil, and Chengalpat. He was thus engaged, and had even taken Ambur (January 13, 1781), when information reached him that Sir Eyre Coote, having organized his army, had quitted Madras the previous day, for the purpose of trying conclusions with him in the field. Haidar was nothing loth to meet his adversary, provided that to himself might be left the choice of the battlefield. Instantly then he raised the sieges of the places his detachments were threatening, massed his forces, and marched to meet his enemy. A few days later the news that a French squadron had arrived off the coast, in the vicinity of Madras, induced in his mind the belief that Coote would be compelled to move to the defence of that place. Accordingly he pushed on rapidly to Kanchipuram to cut him off. But Coote had other thoughts. He had resolved to penetrate into southern Arkát, and retaking Pondichery which had expelled the small English garrison, prevent a junction between the expected French force and the Maisur army. He therefore revictualled the places Haidar had besieged, and then commenced his march by the line of the coast towards Gudalur.

In the presence of a French squadron commanding the sea the course taken by Coote was open to great danger. For whilst he was thus debarred from obtaining supplies by sea, it was in the power of Haidar, who commanded the whole length of the inner line, to starve him into fighting at a great disadvantage, or even into surrender. Haidar, who, uneducated though he was, was a born soldier, recognized his advantages at a glance, and resolved to profit by the false move of the Englishman. Instead then of

descending to attack Haidar on the coast, he marched on a line parallel to that of his enemy, across a country where he was safe from attack, except at great disadvantage to the attacker, and which commanded the only roads by which supplies could reach his foe. Coote, become at last fully sensible of the great risks he was incurring, and wanting badly supplies for his men and cattle, endeavoured, on the 10th of February, to extricate himself by offering battle to Haidar. Haidar naturally refused, and to Coote it appeared that, unless Fortune should work a miracle to save him, he must surrender. The fate which, under such circumstances, must have befallen Madras may be inferred from the fact that, outside the army led by Coote, Madras could dispose of but five hundred invalid soldiers.

But the miracle was worked. It happened in this way. The French squadron, with but one French regiment on board, had come from the isles of France and Bourbon, and had found the Koromandel coast open to its attacks. Its commander, the Chevalier d'Orves, having assisted in the successful revolt at Pondichery, now professed the desire to co-operate with Haidar. D'Orves had entered into communications with that ruler, and Haidar had asked for two favours: one, that the regiment on board the squadron might be landed to co-operate with him; the other, that d'Orves would remain at sea, off the coast, in sight of the English force, prevent all communications with it by that route, and witness its surrender. Never, Haidar pointed out, had France had such an opportunity. How the illustrious men who had previously served France in India would have clutched at such a chance; how Dumas and Dupleix and Bussy (in his earlier days) and Lally would have seized it need not be told here. These men had created opportunities, but now an opportunity had come, the like of which had never presented itself before. D'Orves need not have remained off the coast with his whole squadron. Two frigates, wrote at the time an English soldier,* would have

* The work, published in 1788, entitled "Memoirs of the Late War in Asia," written by Captain Thompson, who served therein, enters into very full detail of the occurrences of that war. The copy which I possess, and which I purchased in India, apparently once belonged to Marquess Wellesley.

done the work, for the work was simply to cruise off the coast and prevent supplies from reaching the shore. But, fortunately for the English, the Chevalier d'Orves had not been formed in the heroic mould. He was wanting in adventure, was lethargic, indolent, and apathetic. Just at the moment when the requests of Haidar reached him he received a despatch from Pondichery to the effect that the English squadron of Sir Edward Hughes had quitted the Malabar coast for that known as the Koromandel, and that a detachment from Sir Eyre Coote's army had entered Pondichery, disarmed the inhabitants, and destroyed the boats in the roadstead. This despatch decided him. Despite the entreaties of his officers, he gave orders to sail for the islands; nor would he, though earnestly importuned to do so, leave a single frigate to watch the inevitable surrender of the English army.

This was the miracle which saved Coote. From the instant of the departure of the French squadron all danger of starvation disappeared. Boats full of supplies reached him from many quarters. Having revictualled his army he engaged Haidar in a great battle at Chilambram on the 1st of July, and forced him, after a very fierce fight, to quit his hold of the coast. The two armies met again, on the 27th of the same month, at Perambákam. Here Coote, with twelve thousand men, assailed a strong position defended by seventy thousand. He failed, indeed, to storm it, but the impression he made on the Maisur army was so great, that Haidar, little disposed as he was to acknowledge discomfiture, quitted the field of battle at nightfall, and fell back on Tripasur, and then proceeded to invest Vellur. Thence he was driven by Sir Eyre Coote on the 27th of September, but on the departure of that leader for Madras, he resumed the siege with the greatest energy.

Suddenly, a gleam of good fortune came to illuminate the last days of the great Sultan. Early in the following year, Coote had made a great effort, bowed down by sickness as he was, to throw supplies into Vellur. In that attempt he had succeeded, and had then fallen back, harassed by Haidar, who, however, refused all the temptations offered him to accept battle. Coote returned therefore to Tripasur. No sooner had

Haidar realized this fact than he despatched, by forced marches, a strong detachment under his son, Tipu, to surprise Colonel Braithwaite, who, with about two thousand men, lay, isolated, in an open plain, on the banks of the Kolrun, forty miles from Tanjur. On learning the approach of the enemy, Braithwaite broke up camp and endeavoured to make for Tanjur. But attacked on the 16th of February, and the attack renewed the 17th and 18th, he was forced to succumb with the loss of five hundred killed, the survivors being made prisoners. This victory, which cheered much the spirit of the old warrior, was followed by the arrival on the coast of two thousand eight hundred and sixty-eight Frenchmen, the advanced main body of the troops commanded by Bussy.

At one time the name of Bussy had been a name to conjure with in southern India, but the Bussy who arrived to command the French in 1782 was but a shadow of the warrior whose deeds had electrified successive Subahdars of the Dakhin. The later Bussy had become nervous, corpulent, sluggish, and unenterprising. He had instructed Duchemin, who commanded the two thousand eight hundred and sixty-eight French troops, who had reached India, escorted by a squadron under the illustrious Suffren, not to fight, under any circumstances whatever, until he himself should arrive. Duchemin, who was but the shadow of a real man, had disembarked at Porto Novo on the 20th of April. Suffren, who had conceived the highest opinion of Haidar Alí, had arranged with that ruler that immediately on the debarkation of the French troops, they should be joined by six thousand infantry and four thousand cavalry from the Maisur force, and that Duchemin, incorporating these with his own men, should act in concert with Haidar. This arrangement was so far carried out that Duchemin attacked and occupied Gudalur on the 6th of May; then, marching with Haidar, occupied Permakoil, and then proceeded to invest Wándiwásh.

It was a point of honour with Coote that Wándiwásh, which, in every campaign against the French in India had proved a stumbling-block to their further progress, and the splendid defence of which, during the war then occurring, by Lieutenant Flint, had reflected on the English name a glory

which had added greatly to the prestige of the nation throughout southern India, should not fall into the hands of Haidar. Therefore, although he had an army of but twelve thousand men, of whom but a few more than two thousand were Europeans, and Haidar had sixty thousand, excited to the highest pitch by their recent victory over Braithwaite, including about four hundred Frenchmen under the younger Lally, and was assisted by over two thousand men under Duchemin, he did not hesitate a moment, but offered battle to the allied forces. It was a hazardous offer, for defeat meant absolute ruin; but the history of the world, especially of the military world, abounds in instances in which supreme boldness is supreme prudence; and this occasion was one of them.

Haidar was eager to fight. He felt sure he would win; that even were Fortune to prove adverse, his cavalry would prevent serious disaster. Not so, however, thought the feeble Duchemin. Bussy had told him not to fight before his arrival, and he pleaded Bussy's orders. When Haidar pointed out that those orders were not intended to apply to an occasion in which victory would seal the fate of the immemorial enemies of France, he pleaded the weak state of his health. In a word, he absolutely refused to fight.

This was a second lost opportunity; one had been thrown away by d'Orves, this was sacrificed by Duchemin. There was no help for it. Haidar, his heart swollen with rage and contempt, declined then Coote's offer of battle, and, raising the siege of Wándiwásh, retreated towards Pondichery, and occupied a strongly fortified position close to Kalinur. Coote followed him, not indeed with the idea of attacking him in the strong position he had chosen, but rather to cover a sudden assault he had planned on the town of Arni, the depôt of all the stores of the Maisur army. Flint, the hero of Wándiwásh, had bought the commandant of Arni, and it was believed in the English camp that the place could be taken before Haidar should receive intimation that it had been threatened.

But Haidar was well served. Through his spies he had followed Coote's movements with vigilance, and when he detected the despatch by him of a considerable detachment towards Arni, he sent his son Tipu with his best cavalry and

his French contingent under the younger Lally to throw themselves into that place; then, breaking up his camp at Kalinur, followed with his remaining forces in the track of Coote. So furious was he with Duchemin, that he did not communicate to him his intended movements, but left him to digest his spleen where he was, suspending, during his absence, his supply of provisions.

Coote had sighted Arni when Haidar (June 2) overtook him. He was surprised. In front of him were Típu and the younger Lally; behind him, Haidar. His troops had been marching several hours at a stretch, and were tired. To most men the situation would have seemed desperate. But the lion heart of Coote never wavered. Ill as he was, he determined to prove once again that the English could, under no circumstances, be conquered. His troops boldly seconded the inspirations of their commander. It was eight o'clock in the morning when Coote first heard the guns of Haidar. He had all his baggage to protect, and, as I have said, his men were tired. But never did they display greater coolness and greater discipline. By ranging his guns so as to ward off the attack of Haidar's horsemen; by manœuvring so as to occupy advantageous positions; Coote not only saved his baggage, but towards evening succeeded in capturing one gun, eleven tumbrils, and several ammunition carts, defended though they were by the corps of the younger Lally. He failed, however, to take Arni. Four days later, Haidar took his revenge for the loss just mentioned, by enticing Coote into an ambuscade, and inflicting a loss on him of one hundred and sixty-six men, fifty-four horses, and two guns. The hostile forces then separated, Coote returning to the vicinity of Madras, Haidar proceeding to prosecute the siege of Vellur. Very shortly afterwards the conditions of the war were altogether changed, on the side of the English by the departure of Coote, utterly broken in health, to Calcutta, where he arrived only to embark for England and to die as the vessel touched Madras; on that of the invaders, by the death of Haidar Alí, on the 7th of December of the same year. His mind was still vigorous, but the frame, sorely tried by the mode of his daily life, had broken down. He was but sixty-five when he was taken.

Of the remainder of the war it may suffice to state that it lingered on for fifteen months after the disappearance from the scene of the two principal commanders. During that time Bussy gave evidence that his powers had deteriorated, that he was no longer the man he had been. On the other hand the illustrious Suffren, in his many conflicts with the English squadron under Sir Edward Hughes, gave abundant evidence of abilities rarely equalled, and never, I think, surpassed by any naval commander in the world. On land, notwithstanding the inefficiency of Bussy, the turn of affairs had come to be rather in favour of the French. At the critical moment, however, news reached the belligerents that peace had been signed in Europe, the peace known as the Treaty of Versailles.* Shortly afterwards (May 11, 1784) Típu Sáhib, the son and successor of Haidar Alí, signed with the English at Mangalur, a treaty which guaranteed the restoration to the former owners of all the strong places taken during the war, as well as of all prisoners. The war, in fact, had left matters very much as they were before. The power displayed by Haidar had left, however, a deep impression at Madras; and it had become evident that the question, the vital question, had been left undecided; that the peace was but a truce.

I have thought it convenient to give a slight sketch of this important war from its commencement to its close, without interrupting the military narrative by disclosing the action of Mr. Hastings as event followed event, and victory and defeat alternated with one another. The action of the Governor-General in these particulars will have to be considered in connection with his action with respect to other matters which pressed upon him at the same period, often at the same moment. The consideration of all these matters has been therefore relegated to the chapter which immediately follows.

* The Peace of Versailles was signed on the 20th of January, 1783, but it became known to the belligerents in India only on the 3rd of September following.

CHAPTER XXII.

HOW HASTINGS MET THE DIFFICULTY OF RAISING FUNDS FOR HIS WARS—HIS PROPOSALS TO CHÉT SINGH, RÁJÁ OF BANÁRAS—HIS DUEL WITH FRANCIS AND ITS CONSEQUENCES—THE GREATNESS OF HIS WAR ADMINISTRATION.

WHILST the events recorded in the two preceding chapters were progressing, the position of Mr. Hastings in Bengal had been a position of constant worry, annoyance, and care. He stood, after a very brief period, alone in his Council. His colleague, Barwell, had announced, towards the close of 1779, his intention of quitting India, to enjoy in his native land the large fortune he had amassed. Coote had replaced Clavering, and Coote, honest and straightforward as he was, required managing. His presence, moreover, as Commander-in-Chief, during the troublous times then looming in a very near future, would, it was clear, be required on the decisive point where war should be waging. Under those circumstances, Barwell leaving, and Coote absent, it seemed as though the old chaos would recommence, and that Hastings would be outvoted in Council by Francis and Wheler, as he had been, in the times preceding, by Francis, Clavering, and Monson.

Such was the position when the news reached Calcutta of the misfortune to the Bombay army which led to the treaty of Wargáon. Hastings records in a letter addressed to Mr. Laurence Sulivan, that this defeat served to Francis as a "matter for triumph. He had foretold it (he said) as the inevitable consequence of distant expeditions, and trembled for the fate of Goddard's detachment." The news of the safe arrival of Goddard at Surat served to dissipate any alarms which might have been felt regarding him, proving to the Council that the fate of "distant expeditions," as Francis

styled this one, though Wargáon was but three days' march from Bombay, depended in India on the character and conduct of the commander of the force employed.

Another cause of trouble and anxiety to Hastings at this period was the state of the finances. Looking ahead, with one war, the Maráthá war, on his hands already, and with the prospect becoming every day more certain of a rupture with the great sovereign of Maisur, the Governor-General recognized that if he were to depend solely on the resources up to that time available, and sufficient doubtless for a period of peace, he would be quite unable to meet the expenditure required by two wars, waged simultaneously in different parts of the empire. He was most reluctant to impose new taxes, or to have recourse to the process of borrowing. But here his imagination, that supreme quality in a ruler, stood him in good stead. For with respect to Bengal and the adjacent provinces, the Government of India, he recollected, stood in the position previously occupied by the Mughals. They possessed the power which the great Akbar had wielded over all the States which had admitted his overlordship—the power of compelling vassal princes to contribute to the defence of the common empire. Standing, for all practical purposes as far as concerned the three provinces and the tributary zamíndárís, in the position of Akbar, Hastings resolved to exercise the authority which he had exercised. He would call upon the dependent chiefs, the protected rájás, the nawwábs, and the more wealthy zamindárs, to contribute their quota to the protection of the ruling power which protected them, and which would be ever ready to protect them, against a common enemy. How this appeal was responded to, and the consequences which ensued in one notable instance therefrom, will be related in the order in which the occurrences took place.

The large zamíndárí of Banáras was held, at the time of Clive's first appearance in Bengal, by a landowner of good family, known as Rájá Balwant Singh, who acknowledged as his overlord the Nawwáb-Wazír of Oudh, that Shujáu'd daulah with whom we have come so much in contact in the earlier stages of this biography. When, in 1763, the Nawwáb-Wazír, in temporary union with the penniless heir to the

Mughal throne, Sháh Álam, invaded the British territories, Balwant Singh repaired to the standard of his liege lord, and fought in that battle of Baksar which terminated so fatally (October 23, 1764) for the cause of the invaders. As one consequence of that battle the zamíndárí of Banáras was transferred from the overlordship of the Nawwáb-Wazír to that of the British; but this arrangement was not approved by the Court of Directors; and when the treaty of 1765 was concluded with Shujáu'd daulah, the zamíndárí of Banáras was restored to Oudh, the Nawwáb-Wazír contracting to continue Balwant Singh in possession on condition that he should pay the same revenue as theretofore.*

Balwant Sing died in 1770, leaving a son, Chét Singh. For a moment the overlord, the Nawwáb-Wazír, entertained the idea of refusing to acknowledge this young man; but the Government of Calcutta insisted that he should not only recognize his rights under treaty, but grant him a *sanad* (patent charter) under their guarantee. In the treaty made by Warren Hastings with the Nawwáb-Wazír in 1775, that prince ceded for ever to the British Government the sovereignty of the districts dependent on Chét Singh. The British Government then, in its turn, granted to Chét Singh a charter confirming him in his zamíndárí and the civil and criminal administration thereof, subject to an annual tribute of 2,266,180 Sikka rupees, on the condition that he should adopt measures for the interest and security of the country and for the preservation of peace. Chét Singh was also accorded the privilege of coining money.

Such was the situation when in 1778, in view of the necessity of raising resources to meet the expenses of one war actually raging, and of a second, the small cloud heralding which was visible on the horizon, Hastings, putting before him all the circumstances of the case, invited Chét Singh to contribute an annual subsidy of five lakhs of rupees for the maintenance of three battalions of sipáhís. Chét Singh consented very unwillingly to the arrangement for one year. He defrayed with equal discontent similar charges in 1779 and a portion of them for 1780; but the necessities of the British Government were so great that Hastings was obliged to

* Aitchison, "Treaties," 1st edit., vol. ii. p. 41.

call upon him, in the last-named year, to allow his cavalry to be employed for the general service of British India. For some time previously, more than dissatisfied at the calls made upon him, Chét Singh had kicked violently at the requisition of his liege-lord. The demand for cavalry was the last straw. He not only manifested great reluctance to comply with it, but entered into correspondence with the neighbouring chieftains, hostile to England. The consequence was that, in 1782, Mr. Hastings paid a visit to Banáras. The details of this visit, and of its weighty results, will be related in the proper place.

In the first paragraph of this chapter I have adverted to the prospect which had been opened by the avowed intention of Mr. Barwell, the constant supporter of Mr. Hastings, to quit India. On this subject Mr. Hastings had many conferences with Barwell before he would give his sanction to his departure. Barwell, who had, throughout the previous period of hostility, maintained warm social relations with the triumvirate, losing his money at the card-table to Francis, and courting, as it proved, ineffectually, the daughter of General Clavering, used his best endeavours, at this crisis, to patch up a reconciliation between Hastings on the one side, and Francis and Wheler on the other. To all outward appearance he succeeded. Towards the end of February, 1780, the contracting parties agreed to an understanding on which, in the future, the public business was to be conducted. No formal instruments passed between them.

"I regard it," says Hastings, writing to a friend, "as a deed of faith and honour, not of law, and I required none. Yet," he adds, "to prevent misconceptions and further cavils, I reduced it to writing and to separate articles. I showed the paper containing them to Mr. Francis. To the first article, the only one on which my heart was fixed and for the sake of which I yielded to the rest, he without hesitation cheerfully assented, and without reservation, adding that he meant not to take any advantage of Mr. Barwell's departure, nor to attempt to carry any point which he could not effect were Mr. Barwell still present, or words to that effect."

In drawing up the arrangement now to be set forth, a leading part had been taken by Sir John Day, a lawyer holding the office now styled that of Advocate-General, similar in almost every respect to that known in England as Attorney-General. The first article stipulated that neither Francis nor

Wheler should interfere in the conduct of the Maráthá war by Mr. Hastings. The other articles referred to patronage, such as the permission to Mr. Fowke to resume his former place at Banáras; to find an office of dignity for Muhammad Ríza at the Court of the Nawwáb-Názim; and to provide generally for certain gentlemen who had habitually supported Francis and those who worked with him. For the patronage Hastings cared personally but little; but his heart was bent on the prosecution of the dangerous Maráthá war. That war, we have seen in a previous chapter, had not been of his seeking. It had been the work solely of the Bombay Government. But, being in the quarrel, he was bent on comporting himself as a man not unworthy to represent Great Britain on the field of strife. It was on this account that he had sent Goddard to the rescue; and was now engaged, in order to detach Madhují Sindhiá from the alliance, in preparing a scheme which should strike that powerful chieftain in his most vital part, and force him to return to look after affairs nearer home.

This policy he carried out two months after the accommodation with Francis by espousing the cause of the Ráná of Gohad, and by directing Popham to enter into the campaign which terminated in the capture of the fortress of Gwáliár and the defeat of Madhují by Camac.* But the moment that Hastings propounded in the Council-chamber his intention to employ Popham on such an expedition, Francis, basing his action on a report from Sir Eyre Coote to the effect that Popham's force was far too weak for the service for which it was designed, opposed his employment. Hastings, uncomplainingly, at once modified his proposition. He proposed the relief of Popham by Major Camac, and the despatch of Popham's corps to join Goddard. Francis approved the first, but opposed the second part of the proposal. He insisted that Popham should be recalled, and his soldiers returned to the battalions from which they had been drafted. Again did Hastings yield; and an order was passed that very day, May 29, for the relief of Popham and for his recall.

But that was not all. Just a fortnight later Hastings, still clinging to his daring project of making war in the enemy's country, of striking a blow at the heart of Madhují,

* Both of these occurrences are recorded in chap. xx.

proposed that Popham's corps, still not disbanded, should join that of Camac, and march against the country dependent on Madhují Sindhiá, the extremities of which lay contiguous to the estates of the Ráná of Gohad. Both Francis and Wheler opposed this proposition, recorded a minute against it, and caused it to be rejected.

The opposition of the two councillors was so evidently a breach of the honourable understanding arrived at at the close of the preceding February that, still hoping to recall Francis to a sense of duty, Hastings called on him the following morning to explain the reasons, political and military, which had prompted him to insist upon the proposals which the Council had rejected. "He heard me," wrote Hastings to a friend, "with the cool and vacant attention of a man already informed, made his objections, and I left him." Then follows the account of a most curious occurrence.

"I ordered," continued Mr. Hastings, "one of my attendants to run before to Mr. Wheler's and give him notice that I intended him a visit. The man, and half a dozen voices joined to his, informed me that Mr. Wheler was with Mr. Francis when I arrived at the house and was still with him, so that the poor man must have lain concealed during the whole time of my visit, which lasted a full hour and a half."

Foiled by the confederates in the carrying into execution of his statesmanlike policy in the manner he had proposed, Hastings made an effort, at the meeting of Council a week later, to obtain consent for its execution on a modified scale. He submitted to his colleagues instructions authorizing Major Camac to proceed on the expedition with his four battalions only. But this plan was not only overruled; the majority recorded a minute almost tantamount to a prohibition to afford any aid whatever to the Ráná of Gohad. But as Francis and Wheler based their opposition mainly on the fact that the finances were in such a state that the treasury could not afford a fresh expedition, Hastings offered to contribute the estimated extra cost of the expedition, two lakhs of rupees, from resources which had unexpectedly become available to him. The following incident will explain how such a position had arisen. Chét Singh, the Zamíndár of Banáras, had, as I have said, displayed disinclination to comply with the demand for money and supplies transmitted to him by

the Calcutta Government. But yielding to the reasons assigned by Hastings, he had withdrawn his opposition, and, just at that time, had transmitted as a private present to Hastings about two lakhs of Sikka rupees. Hastings had refused the offering, and the messenger was about to return when the opposition of his colleagues to the expedition he had so much at heart—an opposition avowedly based on the emptiness of the treasury—inspired him with the idea of employing the amount of the offering for the public service. He therefore gave the Rájá's messenger the opportunity of repeating his offer; accepted the money, and immediately directed that it should be handed over to Mr. Croftes, the sub-treasurer, to be received in the public treasury as a deposit in his name. In announcing this fact to his correspondent in London, he gave him permission to make what use he might think proper of it, adding his declaration, upon his honour, that "I will never reclaim the money, and that I disclaim any title to it, as I should not have taken it but for and on the occasion which induced me to receive it, or one similar to it."

Before making this offer to the Council, Hastings had read for the first time the joint minute of his two colleagues, and in the tone and expression of that minute he discerned, or thought he discerned, a deliberate departure from the honourable understanding which had been arrived at at the close of February. He mentioned that fact in his reply-minute, which he delivered a week later (June 26), and then concluded with the offer to contribute to the expense of the expedition the sum he had just paid into the treasury. To this Francis replied the following day, Wheler countersigning; and in that reply he denied that he had given a pledge in the sense in which Hastings had interpreted his words. And yet, in the previous February, Francis had read the first article of the agreement which provided that he would not interfere with the conduct by Hastings of the Maráthá war. The proposed action of Popham would, Hastings foresaw, when developed into actual fact, stab Madhují to the heart, and convert him into becoming the most earnest advocate of peace. Yet Francis now contended that such proposed action would not be, properly speaking, a part of the Maráthá

war, and that he had intended his agreement to apply only to the carrying on of the war in the Bombay Presidency.

The scales fell from the eyes of Hastings as he perused the minute. He saw that he had been tricked and deceived, and was to be thwarted as in the olden days. In his extremity he appealed to Sir John Day, the Advocate-General, who had negotiated the agreement, and who occupied the position of an impartial interpreter of its provisions. Day at once proposed to see Francis privately. He saw him; found him still bent on the idea that Hastings would not be longer supported by authorities in England, and that within two months he would have to make way for a successor—who might be himself. He commissioned Day, however, to make a proposal to Hastings. This proposal was to the effect that if he, Hastings, would agree to suspend Camac's expedition until the receipt of the expected advices from England, which were to decide the future arrangements for the government of India, and which might be expected in the course of two months, he would solemnly promise that Hastings should dictate what measures he pleased, if, after that time he, Hastings, should be confirmed in the government.

Such a message deserved, and received, but one answer. A reply to a complaint of broken pledges, it was based, not only on a renewed pledge from the same tainted source, but on a demand that Hastings should refrain from a political action which had formally been agreed to, and which he deemed, and which events proved to be, essential to the safety of India. Hastings refused it, absolutely, unconditionally. Day carried back the refusal, whereupon Francis declared that the state of his health required change; that under such circumstances he could not argue; that he was going away for a week or so; and that Hastings might avail himself of his absence to carry, if he chose, all his proposals. He started the same evening for Chandranagar.

In his absence Hastings did not think it proper to avail himself of the liberty of action thus understood to have been granted him. I call it "liberty of action understood to have been granted," because it is quite possible that this expression, conveyed by Sir John Day to Hastings, might have been treated by Francis as he treated its corollary. Hastings thus

relates the whole affair. After Francis had uttered the words giving Hastings liberty of action during his absence—

"Sir John," he writes, "returned to me with this answer, which he thought definitive. I thought otherwise unless Mr. Francis would at the same time agree to withdraw all the minutes. This, he said, he understood; but, to be certain, he returned and asked Mr. Francis whether he would consent to suppress the minutes. Mr. Francis replied with all his heart; and this information Sir J. Day carried immediately to Mr. Wheler, and myself and Mr. Wheler with great satisfaction assenting, the minutes were accordingly withdrawn, and I renewed my motion for Major Camac's * instruction as I had before proposed them, letting the first opposition stand. It passed without objection. A few days after Mr. Wheler received a letter from Mr. Francis, expressing his astonishment to hear that the minutes had been withdrawn, and that it had been asserted to have been done with his consent, absolutely disavowing it, and declaring that he had consented to withdraw the minutes on the express and only condition, that Major Camac's operations should be confined to the province of Gohad, until the arrival of despatches from England notifying the future Government. Sir John swears that no such condition was either expressed or implied, and that he had precluded it by my peremptory rejection of it when it was first proposed, which he had conveyed in my own words."

The minutes were accordingly replaced, but the event rankled in the mind of Hastings. He felt more than ever that he was associated in public life with a man who had no regard for truth or honour, a man whose actions, unless controlled, would involve the country in disgrace and ruin. During the absence, then, of his colleague, he penned a minute to be presented to him on his return, on the evening before the meeting of the Council. The minute, which has become historical,—inasmuch as it not only caused a duel between the two senior members of the Government of India, but further, by the result of that duel, enabled Hastings to carry out the policy which saved the country,—after recounting the causes of complaint which Hastings averred he had against Francis, ran as follows:—

"My authority for the opinions I have declared against Mr. Francis depends on facts which have passed within my own knowledge. I judge of his public conduct by my experience of his private, which I have found to be void of truth and honour. This is a severe charge, but temperately and deliberately made, from the firm persuasion that I owe this justice to the public and myself as the only redress to both, for artifices to which I have

* In Mr. Gleig's Life of Hastings, Major Camac's name has been inadvertently rendered by the printer "Carnac."

been a victim, and which threaten to involve their interests with disgrace and ruin. The only redress for a fraud for which the law has made no provision is the exposure of it."

Strong language indeed; but as true as strong; as necessary for the solution of the many questions affecting the safety of British interests in India as true. It was time indeed that some such blow should be struck. There was actual war in western India, there were hostilities in central India; war was impending in southern India; and the entire preparations made with much forethought by the Governor-General were impeded by the obstinacy and personal rancour of one man. Surely the time had arrived when that great obstructor should be addressed officially in language which should point directly to him as the cause of the delay in action; which should show him to himself as he appeared to others. If the language employed was strong, it had become necessary that it should be strong; that the offender should be told in words which could not be mistaken, how he had forfeited the respect and consideration due to honest men. No one will affirm that the language used by Hastings failed either in directness of purpose or in force of expression. And it went home; home to the callous remnants of the heart; home as truly as the bullet from the trained rifleman goes to the centre of a target.

Hastings had despatched the minute to Francis on the evening of the day immediately preceding the Council meeting, because he did not wish to take his obstructing colleague by surprise. The honourable feeling which always characterized his actions prompted the desire that Francis should have at least one night to consider the situation.

At the Council meeting of the day following, the 15th of July, it was read. As soon as the business of the day had been settled, Francis requested Hastings to withdraw with him into a private apartment of the Council-house, and there, taking from his pocket a paper, he read to him a challenge in the terms noted below.* Hastings accepted the

* The letter of Mr. Francis ran as follows:—"Mr. Hastings,—I am preparing a formal answer to the paper you sent to me last night. As soon as it can be finished, I shall lay it before you. But you must be sensible, sir, that no answer I can give to the matter of that paper can be adequate to the dishonour done me by the terms you have made use of. You have left me no alternative but to demand personal satisfaction of you for the affronts you

challenge, and, with Francis, fixed the day for the meeting. It was to take place on the second day after—viz. Thursday, August 17.

The historic duel took place on an old road that separated the Kidarpur Orphan Asylum from Belvedere (now the official residence of the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal), Colonel Pearse acting for Hastings, and Colonel Watson for his opponent. The two seconds had arranged that the principals should fire together. Then, records Colonel Pearse—

"Mr. Hastings asked if he meant they ought to fire by word of command, and was told he only meant they should fire together as nearly as could be. These preliminaries were all agreed to, and both parties presented; but Mr. Francis raised his hand and again came down to his present; he did so a second time, when he came down to his present—which was the third time of doing so; he drew his trigger, but his powder being damp, the pistol did not fire. Mr. Hastings came down from his present to give Mr. Francis time to rectify his priming, and this was done out of a cartridge with which I supplied him upon finding they had no spare powder. Again the gentlemen took their stands, both presented together, and Mr. Francis fired. Mr. Hastings did the same at the distance of time equal to the counting of one, two, three distinctly, but not greater. His shot took place. Mr. Francis staggered, and, on attempting to sit down, he fell and said he was a dead man. Mr. Hastings, hearing this, cried out, 'Good God! I hope not,' and immediately went up to him, as did Colonel Watson, but I ran to call the servants."

Neither of the principals knew much about the firing of pistols. Mr. Francis, just before the duel, had declared that he had never in his life discharged one, whilst Hastings averred that he could not recollect having fired one more than once or twice. Francis was promptly carried into Belvedere House, where he was attended by Dr. Campbell, and by the Governor-General's own surgeon, Dr. Francis. The latter proceeded, as soon as he had diagnosed the wound, to inform Hastings that it was not mortal.

The news undoubtedly comforted Hastings, for, although he had displayed remarkable calmness and coolness throughout the affair, he dreaded nothing so much as the death by his hand of his constant opponent. Dr. Busteed tells us that the letter which, immediately on his return from the duel, Hastings wrote to his wife, who was then staying at Chinsura,

have offered me." See Busteed's "Echoes from Old Calcutta," beginning at page 92. Dr. Busteed gives a detailed and interesting account of the duel and the circumstances therewith connected.

"is very steadily penned."* He sent daily afterwards to inquire after Francis, but a few days later he received from that gentleman, through Colonel Watson, a message to the following purport—

"that Mr. Francis desired him to express the sense which he had of my attention to him on the late occasion of my daily inquiries after his health, and of the wish which I had expressed to visit him, for all which he made his acknowledgments; that he should always behave to me with every degree of respect, but must decline the offer of my visit and every kind of intercourse with me but at the Council table, desiring me to believe that this resolution did not proceed from any remains of resentment, but from the consideration of what he owed to his own character."

The enforced absence of Francis from Council gave Hastings the opportunity he had long been seeking, to employ Popham and his small body of heroic sipáhís. How, and with what decisive effect, Popham acted the very instant he received instructions to act with the Ráná of Gohad against Sindhiá; how, on the 4th of August, he stormed the strong fortress of Gwáliár, dealing Madhují Sindhiá a blow which compelled him to occupy himself exclusively with the affairs of central India, has been already told in the twentieth chapter. What had not been told in that chapter was the part, the leading part, which Hastings had in that campaign. He it was who planned it; who, in spite of opposition, insisted on carrying its principle into action; who risked his life that it might be undertaken. But for the duel the troops which triumphed on that ever-memorable occasion would have been re-drafted to the battalions whence they had been taken, and Sindhiá would have remained in western India to assist his brother Maráthá chieftains to crush Goddard.

Nor are the great merits of Hastings confined solely to the employment of Popham. It was he, too, who, struggling

* The letter ran thus: "My dearest Marian,—I have desired Sir John Day to inform you that I have had a meeting this morning with Mr. Francis, who has received a wound in his side, but I hope not dangerous. I shall know the state of it presently, and will write to you again. He is at Belvedere, and Drs. Campbell and Francis are both gone to attend him there. I am *well* and *unhurt*. But you must be content to hear this good from me; you cannot see me. I cannot leave Calcutta while Mr. Francis is in any danger. But I wish you to stay at Chinsura. I hope in a few days to have ye pleasure of meeting you there. Make my compts to Mr. Ross, but do not mention what has passed. My Marian, you have occupied all my thoughts for these two days past and unremittingly. Yours ever, my most beloved, W. H."

against the same opposition in Council, had despatched Goddard to the western Presidency. How, during the same year, that officer had taken the strong fortress of Ahmadábád, foiled Sindhiá and Holkar, and subsequently taken Bassein, has been recounted in the chapter already referred to. The hand had been indeed the hand of Goddard, but the brain, prescient, taking in and directing the measures to be accomplished amid difficulties till then never encountered in India, had been the brain of Hastings.

No sooner had these successes been achieved, when there burst upon Hastings the war in the Karnátik with Haidar Alí, and afterwards with Haidar Alí and the French. This war brought in its train many other difficulties, for it involved the invasion of the province of Orísa by the Bhonslé, the raising of money to meet the expenses of the campaign, the reorganizing of the effete Government of Madras, and many kindred anxieties. In the twenty-first chapter I have shown how the coast war was brought about; how Haidar Alí would have avoided it if he could have done so with self-respect; how the Madras Government, by their dealings with Basálat Jang, had driven the Nizam into alliance with the Maisur ruler; and how, by traversing the territories of that ruler without his permission, by storming Mahé in face of his prohibition, and by other acts of marked discourtesy, that Government had invited Haidar Alí to pour his troops into the Karnátik. It was upon the shoulders of Hastings that the duty fell of providing an efficient remedy for all these misfortunes. In difficulties the thoughts of every man in India turned instinctively to him. There were many men ready to act, few who knew how to act. It was for Hastings to tell them. What he told them, how he impressed his own energy on all his subordinates, I shall now proceed to record.

The news of the destruction of Baillie's detachment and that of the retreat of Sir Hector Munro to the vicinity of Madras, reached Calcutta almost simultaneously (September 23). Two days later the Council met to consider the best mode of meeting these calamities. Hastings came to that Council with his plans cut and dried. His proposal was (1) to fit out instantly an armament of European artillery and infantry to be despatched to the Karnátik; (2) to request

Sir Eyre Coote to proceed thither to take the chief command; (3) to despatch with him, for the sole use of the army, fifteen lakhs of rupees; (4) to endeavour to make peace with the Maráthás by the intervention of the Rájá of Barár. These points were at once agreed to, and Coote quitted Calcutta for the coast with his little army on the 13th of October.

But before that date Hastings had taken a very strong measure in support of British interests in the Madras Presidency. The Governor of that Presidency at the moment was Mr. Whitehill, he who, as senior member of Council, had succeeded Sir Thomas Rumbold. There could scarcely have been a less efficient man for the exercise of such duties than Mr. Whitehill. The English language provides us with but one word wherewith to express the several varieties of the male portion of the human race. Whether they be heroes or the opposite, whether they be brave or cowardly, elevated by great thoughts or bowed by petty instincts, they are included under the generic term, Man. In older days, when the Latin language prevailed, the world possessed the variation of Vir, representing the real man, the man of courage and metal, of noble thoughts and noble actions; of Homo representing the individual, the being who would never be worthy to be called Vir. The distinction is very important, very real. Of the one class it may be said that its members command events; of the other that events compel them. Of the one we have a perfect type in the hero of this biography; of the other Whitehill was a fair example. As Governor of Madras he had done everything to make this war certain. He had kept the district of Guntur after Hastings had ordered that it should be restored. He had done all in his power to irritate Haidar Alí. Such a man was surely not fit to be entrusted with the government of the Madras Presidency during the war which his faulty actions had invited. So, at least, thought Hastings; and so thinking he came down to the Council on the 10th of October, three days before the departure of Coote, to propose that Whitehill should be suspended. He carried all his colleagues with him, and the suspension took place.

To finish the Maráthá war as promptly as possible, Hastings entered at this time into correspondence with the

Barár Government. He was the more encouraged to hope for an early adjustment of the war, inasmuch as he felt that the very successes of Haidar would rouse the jealousy of the Maráthás. That this view was correct was illustrated by the communications he received from Nágpur, after the news of the defeat of Baillie had reached that city. Their tone displayed feelings regarding the Maisur chieftain far from friendly. They even intimated that the force which the Rájá of Barár had been compelled to send into Orísa would be prepared to co-operate with rather than to oppose the English troops in that province. These troops, consisting of six battalions of sipáhís and a company of artillery, were commanded by the Colonel Pearse who had seconded Hastings in his duel. Pearse was a man of considerable ability, and Hastings was hopeful that he might induce the Nágpur cavalry to march with him to the Koromandel coast to make there a diversion which could scarcely fail to affect the movements of Haidar. This plan was rendered impracticable by the refusal of the Nágpur cavalry to co-operate in it.

To meet the expenses of the war, Hastings had been most unwillingly compelled to have recourse to borrowing.

"We had formed," he writes, referring to this period, "three plans for raising money by loan, one simple at eight per cent., the second at four per cent., the interest, with one-fifth of the principal, payable by bills on England, and the third on annuities."

But so considerable became the military expenses that Hastings found it necessary ultimately to have recourse to more drastic measures. These will be referred to in their proper place.

From one constant and persistent trouble he was relieved during the course of this year. The duel with Francis had taken place on the 17th of July, 1780. Since that time Francis had been comparatively quiet. He had, we have seen, refused to have any except official transactions with Hastings; but he no longer so vehemently opposed him. He had come to the conclusion that the revenge he meditated could be carried out more easily in England than in Calcutta. He therefore, early in November, announced his intention to quit India. He had served there for five years; had made, by his savings and his success at play, about

forty thousand pounds;* he hated the country; and he had that other incentive to which I have adverted. The thoughts which crowded into the brain of Hastings, on learning of his adversary's intentions, were thus expressed by himself:

"His departure may be considered as the close of one complete period of my political life, and the beginning of a new one. After a conflict of six years I may enjoy the triumph of a decided victory, and many are the congratulations which have been laid upon it. But such a victory! An exhausted treasury, an accumulating debt, a system charged with expensive establishments, and precluded by the multitude of dependants and the curse of patronage from reformation; a Government debilitated by the various habits of inveterate licentiousness; a country oppressed by private rapacity and deprived of its vital resources by the enormous quantity of current specie annually exported in the remission of private fortunes; in supplies sent to China, Fort St. George, to Bombay, and lately to the army at Surat, and by an impoverished commerce; the support of Bombay, with all its new conquests, the charge of preserving Fort St. George and recovering the Karnátik from the hands of a victorious enemy; the entire maintenance of both presidencies; and, lastly, a war either actual or depending in every quarter, and with every power of Hindustan. These, and many more evils which I could enumerate, are the appendages of that authority which is devolving to me, and the fruits of that spirit of discord which has been permitted—how unaccountably. It has prevailed in this Government without an instant of remission, since the 19th of October, 1774, to the present hour."

After commenting upon that which might have been, had the Court of Directors removed him in 1774, Hastings adds the pregnant words that follow, the first outburst of his heart, on realizing that in the future he will be free from that continuous and venomous opposition which for six years had rendered his life a burden.

"Yet," he continued, "though I have not the fairest prospect before me, Mr. Francis's retreat will certainly remove the worst appearances of it; I shall have no competitor to oppose my designs; to encourage disobedience to my authority; to write circular letters with copies of instruments from the Court of Directors, proclaiming their distrust of me, and announcing my removal; to excite and foment popular odium against me; to urge me to acts of severity, and then abandon and oppose me; to keep alive the expectation of impending changes; to teach foreign states to counteract me, and deter them from forming connections with me. I have neither his emissaries in office to

* Busteed, p. 143. The passage does not actually state that Francis had saved forty thousand pounds; but intimates the determination of Francis, expressed at a previous period, not to leave India until he was worth "a clear entire sum of forty thousand pounds secure in England."

thwart me from system, nor my own dependents to presume on the rights of attachment. In a word, I have power, and I will employ it, during the interval in which the credit of it shall last, to retrieve past misfortunes, to remove present dangers, to re-establish the power of the Company and the safety of its possessions."

Yes, after the unintermittent thwartings and oppositions of his colleagues for six years—thwartings and oppositions, the nature of which the reader may conceive from the utterances above quoted, but which, otherwise, would have been inconceivable, Hastings at last had power. The period when this power came to him was when Haidar Alí, after having beaten Baillie and driven Munro to a defensive position covering Madras, was besieging the strong places of the Karnátik, and when he, Hastings, had pressed upon Sir Eyre Coote to proceed thither with the reinforcements his energy had made available, as the last hope of the country; when he had suspended the incompetent Governor of Madras, and made arrangements for the administration of that Presidency until a successor should arrive from England.

An officer of the Madras army, himself engaged in the operations against Haidar Alí, has thus recorded his sense of the action taken by Mr. Hastings at the critical period which supervened on the disastrous defeat of Baillie:

"In the ordinary routine of public business," wrote Colonel Mark Wilks, at the beginning of the present century,* "the mind of Mr. Hastings, elegant, mild, and enlightened, exhibited merely a clear simplicity of means adapted to their end; it was only in the face of overwhelming danger, that, spurning the puny impediments of faction, he burst through the trammels of vulgar resource, and showed a master spirit, fitted to grapple with every emergency, and equally capable of saving or creating an empire."

He had sent, we have seen, his last army and his best general to Madras. Not content with that, he had collected stores of rice and other grains to be despatched as speedily as possible to that capital, had organized flotillas, which, conveying similar stores, should watch the coast from Madras to Pondichery for the purposes of supplying the land forces whom, it was thought probable, Haidar might cut off from a supply by land. He gave further directions that the native population which, he foresaw, might possibly crowd from the

* Wilks's "History of Maisur." 2nd edition, vol. i. p. 463.

devastations of Haidar, behind the walls of Madras, should be removed, as occasion might offer, under proper escort, to Nellur and other towns in the northern Sirkars which would be, presumably, out of the range of Haidar's movements.

These arrangements were made on the instant, whilst, moreover, the war with the Maráthás was still continuing. Most anxious was he to conclude that war, which, it must be remembered, was not entered into by himself. The advices from General Goddard, appointed Commander-in-Chief in Bombay, urged upon him, at this period, the absolute necessity of concluding peace on almost any terms. No one recognized more clearly than Mr. Hastings the great advantage which would accrue to British interests from the conclusion of a war which must hamper all his efforts to oppose successfully the invasion of Haidar Alí, assisted, as it seemed certain that invasion would be, by a contingent of three thousand Frenchmen. Rarely has there been a man at the head of British interests in India who more completely recognized the imperial principle which has been and is the birthright of the English race. The principle which animated the race of sea-robbers who came forth from the fiords of the north to conquer Britain, has happily been inherited by their descendants who have, in their turn, conquered the greater part of the world. The principle of their forefathers was to "conquer and retain." To them it has not signified that other nations should follow in their wake, because it has almost invariably happened that when war had broken out with those other nations, their acquisitions became the spoil of the Englishman. To the capacious mind of Hastings it would have been a deviation from that principle to make a disastrous peace with the Maráthás in order that he might make more efficient head against Haidar Alí and the French. To the urgent request of Goddard and the Government in favour of peace, he replied, then, in these noble words—

"We wish for peace with the Maráthá State, but we will not make it on terms dishonourable to ourselves; we will not disgrace the English name by submitting to conditions which cannot be complied with, without a sacrifice both of our honour and interest. Yet such are the conditions prescribed in the paper before us. The distress which the Company's arms had suffered, and

their belief of our consequent inability to support the war against them, has raised their presumption, and induced them to insist on terms which the worst state of our affairs would not warrant us in yielding to. We are now morally convinced that nothing but a vigorous and successful prosecution of the war will prevail on them to make peace, or overcome their present disinclination to it. Peace is our object, and we are determined to pursue the only means which appear to us to lead to its honourable accomplishment."

These noble words form the key to the moral action of Hastings during these two wars, so full of peril to the British establishments in India. He wanted peace, but it should be "Peace with Honour." Any other peace would affect the British prestige in a manner which could not fail to be disastrous. From the hour in December, 1756, when Hastings had joined, at the mouth of the Huglí, the bands of fugitives from every factory in Bengal and Orísa, awaiting in safe anchorage the arrival of Robert Clive, to the moment when the settlement founded by that illustrious man had taken its place as one of the considerable powers of India, Hastings had marked how essential it was for the progress of that settlement, that it should never take a step backwards. Not in the extreme danger in which he was after the first victorious campaign of Haidar Alí, would he begin a retrograde policy. He was British to the core.

How, ultimately, after running many risks, the English so fought in the war with Haidar Alí, as to make that great ruler regret that he had entered upon a war with them, has been told in the preceding chapter. The dissatisfaction of Haidar Alí with the results of the campaign was believed at the time, but it was left to Mr. Forrest * to discover and to record that when the great chieftain died, a paper was found in the folds of his turban, urging his son and successor, Típu Sultán, to make peace with the English and on any terms. Haidar had for some time recognized the futility of further contest with the English. "I have waged," he said, shortly before his death, "a costly war with a people whom I might have made my friends, but whom the defeat of many Baillies and many Braithwaites will never destroy." This utterance was the result, not of any decline in his resources, for, when he died, his army was numerically stronger than when he had

* Selections from the Letters, Despatches, and other State Papers preserved in the Foreign Department of the Government of India, 1772–1785.

made his first victorious dash into the Karnátik; and he had still stored in his fortress of Seringapatam three millions in specie, besides jewels and valuables to a countless amount.* No! It was the outspoken testimony of his heart giving utterance to his conviction that the English were a foe different to any he had ever encountered on Indian soil; he might surprise their detachments; cut off a regiment or two, but he could not take the places which they defended, nor could he, with all his numbers, lower the stubborn pride of those haughty islanders.

To obtain a result so satisfactory to English pride, for, as related in the last chapter, the son, after an interval, followed the exhortations of the father, Hastings had to provide the ways and means. This was his greatest difficulty. He could send his best general, his most disciplined troops; he could despatch grain in abundance, and man country-boats which should escape the vigilance of the enemy; he could displace officials of proved incompetence, and select for special service agents whom he could trust; he could inspire confidence all along the line to such an extent that in the Karnátik he had come to be regarded as the saviour of India; but, after all, his great difficulty was to provide the money. Madras could contribute nothing, for not only was the Karnátik compelled to furnish the supplies of the armies of Haidar and Típu Sáhib, but during the war southern India was visited by one of those scarcities which come, even in these days, from time to time, to bring misery and want into the homes of the population. From Bombay likewise no assistance was to be hoped. From his granary of rich Bengal Hastings had to supply everything that was required, even to the money necessary for the payment of the troops. It was by answering always satisfactorily the calls made upon him in this respect, that Hastings proved his real greatness as an administrator. We have seen how he devoted the two lakhs of rupees, refused by him as a private present, to the necessities of the expedition of Popham; how, when he despatched Coote and his force to Madras, he had managed to supply him with fifteen lakhs of rupees. It remains now to add that Coote had scarcely landed in Madras when

* Wilks, vol. ii. p. 36 (2nd edition).

he reported the fact that that Presidency would be unable to furnish a single rupee for the support of the army, Haidar having become the acknowledged master of the rich plains of the Karnátik, and that he, Hastings, would be called upon to provide a monthly expenditure of seven and a half lakhs. Not a word of remonstrance is uttered by the great proconsul. "We must provide it," he writes heroically; and this when the Home Government was pressing upon him the necessity of furnishing them with the "investment" necessary to pay dividends to the shareholders.

He could not, and, under the circumstances, would not, furnish that investment, though he knew that the consequence would be to bring upon himself a storm of obloquy. Hear the bitter outpouring of his soul:

"With our past drains of the current specie of this country," he writes in a private letter, "which I compute at one karor of rupees [a million sterling] in each year; with both the presidencies of Bombay and Madras to maintain, and a heavy war to carry on for each from our own unassisted funds; with other enemies threatening these provinces, and the necessity of guarding against them by at least the replacing the battalions which we have sent to the Karnátik; it will be impossible to provide the investment. I know the personal consequences to which I shall expose myself by so general a disappointment, but I am without a remedy. It will be no act of mine, but of a necessity arising from causes independent of me and of this Government. I have neither engaged the Company in a war with the Maráthás nor with Haidar Alí; nor has any act of mine encouraged the Court of France to send a squadron and armies from Europe to assist in effecting our destruction. Pray see my letter.* I would have kept back the notice, but Wheler, whose sentiments on this subject are literally the same as my own, has told me that if I do not apprize the Court of Directors of the probability of this event, they will have taken the ships for the next year, the month of August being the time allotted usually for that disposition. I had rather incur a personal risk, than keep back an unpleasant report to a greater distance of time, with such ill consequences attending it."

Then he proceeds to discuss the means he will employ to furnish the funds necessary to meet the requisitions of the several armies. He must visit Oudh, whose resources have begun to fail him, dismally wasted and disordered by the effects of the disputed control—between the Nawwáb and his mother, the Begam;—he will visit Banáras; he will exhaust

* The letter announcing to the Court of Directors his inability to furnish the investment.

all the means at his disposal to raise money; he will change the whole system of revenue-collection, bringing the entire collection into Calcutta—a measure he proposed in 1773, but in which he was then foiled by his Council; he will do all that is possible in the way of raising money by loan. This had become more than ever needful, because he had to raise fresh battalions to replace those sent to Madras. The need of troops, indeed, was almost as great as the need of cash. To meet it we find Hastings negotiating with the Dutch East India Company for the loan, on high terms, of a thousand European infantry and two hundred European gunners. The negotiation indeed fell through, partly because of the delays of the Dutch, and eventually, when those delays had been surmounted, because Holland was drawn into the European combination against Great Britain. But the fact that the negotiations were entered into at the time when the Government was in dire straits for money, prove not only the greatness of his military necessities, but that he was a man who, in no circumstances, would shrink from the full responsibility devolving upon a Governor-General of British India. At all costs he would provide the troops necessary; and at all risks he would procure the money wherewith to pay them.

Fortunately, his hands were comparatively free. Francis had quitted Calcutta, to arrange in England a campaign of unparalleled vindictiveness against the colleague whom he had tormented, but who had always baffled him, in India; and Wheler, relieved by the departure of the man who, when present, had exercised over him a remarkable influence, was disposed to act loyally towards his chief. And it was because his hands were free that Hastings succeeded in waging, on at least equal terms, the two wars, until the period when that with the Maráthás was terminated by the treaty of Salbai * (the 6th of June, 1782); and the other, with Maisur, was concluded by the treaty with Típu Sultán, signed at Mangalur the 11th of March, 1784. Both these treaties left matters between the contracting parties in very much the condition in which they had been before the outbreak of the war. But there was this remarkable difference. The prestige of the English

* An additional article was added the 26th of May, 1783.

had increased, that of her enemies had diminished. The English Company, directed by Warren Hastings, had shown itself capable of making head, simultaneously, against the Maráthás and a Maisur directed by the genius of Haidar Alí, assisted latterly by a corps of about three thousand French disciplined troops.* Granting that the Maráthá confederacy was one of the most powerful of the confederacies then existing in India; that, at the time, the Maisur of Típu Sultán occupied the second place; the English had by this war risen to occupy third place, not third, indeed, by reason of inequality, but co-equal, in all respects, with each of the other two. The work of Hastings in those two wars had raised a conviction in the minds of the natives of India, that as England had shown herself the equal of the other two when combating against both, so, in any future contest, should the Almighty so will, with one or the other singly, the advantage must rest with England. It was Warren Hastings, in a word, who made it possible for his successor to break in half the power of Típu Sultán; who enabled the great Marquess Wellesley not only to destroy that power, but, within a brief period, to hurl the Maráthá confederacy from the lofty position which its chiefs had for fifty years been striving solidly to establish on the ruins of the Mughal empire.

But before the treaties I have referred to were signed, Hastings had had to accomplish other work of very great importance. In the chapters which immediately follow and which refer to a period during which the wars referred to were at their full height, I shall have to record his quarrel with the Chief Justice, his visit to Banáras, and his proceedings at Lakhnao.

* Serving with those troops as sergeant was Jean-Baptiste-Jules Bernadotte, afterwards Marshal of France, Prince of Ponte-Corvo, and, later, King of Sweden and Norway. In one of the encounters with the English Bernadotte was taken prisoner.

CHAPTER XXIII.

HASTINGS AND IMPEY—THE QUARREL WITH THE SUPREME COURT AND ITS SETTLEMENT.

WRITING to a friend in England on the 10th of November, 1780, Hastings, after detailing the measures he proposed to take with reference to the matters treated of in the last chapter, had added the following words with respect to a proposal regarding the better administration of justice which would, he thought, terminate the ill-feeling which had arisen between the Council and the Supreme Court, and to which I have referred in a previous chapter :—

"To these [acts of policy] I will add another domestic arrangement, calculated both for the effective administration of justice, and for the prevention of future contests between the Government and the Superior Court, by the appointment of the Chief Justice to the office of judge of the Sadr Diwání Adálat.* This measure was received by the public with all the prejudices which might be naturally expected to influence the minds of men heated by the late acts of the body of which Sir Elijah was the chief, and who, regarding it as an accession of power to the court itself, conceived themselves exposed to the worst effects of its resentment; but the most intelligent, and many even of the most violent, begin already to moderate their opinion of it. Indeed, I should wonder if they did not, for it requires very little sagacity to discover that an exclusive advantage conferred on one member of the court is by no means likely to increase either the authority of the whole body, or to strengthen its animosities. The Chief Justice, whose heart, though warm in both extremes, is animated with as much natural benevolence as that of any man living, not having the actions of others to defend, but left to his own impulse, will soon regain in this office the popularity which he once acquired and lost. The court will find him a milder advocate for an extension of authority which certainly did not belong to it, and which is now rendered less necessary even on their own grounds, than it was when, by the terrors hung over our judicial as well as ministerial officers, the course of justice had in effect no free current but in the channel of the Supreme Court."

* "Sadr Diwání Adálat," that is, the Chief Civil Court of Justice.

The proposition involved the nominating of the Chief Justice, Sir Elijah Impey, to be supreme judge and superintendent of all the Company's civil courts in the three provinces. There was very much reason in its favour. In the early days of the new administration, there had been a great deal of friction between the Supreme Court and the Council as to the power of the Court to issue process in certain circumstances. And this friction had gone on year by year progressing until, in 1779, it had attained a point entailing actual collision between the two highest authorities in British India. Hastings, notwithstanding his friendship with Impey—a friendship which had existed without a flaw since they had sat together on the same bench at Westminster—had insisted on the right possessed by the Government to prevent the exercise of power claimed by the judges; and he had gone so far as, with the approval of his colleagues, including Francis, to issue a proclamation authorizing disregard to the Court's processes, and he had supported this proclamation by an armed force. The Supreme Court, equally tenacious of rights which they deemed unquestionable, had replied by issuing warrants for the apprehension of the soldiers employed on such a service; they proceeded, indeed, so far as to cause summonses, on plea of trespass, to be served on members of Council, including the Governor-General himself. A very pretty quarrel ensued. The old friendship between Hastings and Impey was suddenly dissolved. Hastings pleaded that he was but the voice of the Council; Impey urged that he had been sacrificed to the new alliance between Hastings and Francis. There was no need for such excuses. Each was in his right, as each interpreted that right. It was the Act of Parliament of 1773 that was in fault. In a previous chapter I have shown how the members of the Supreme Court had been forced, on their arrival in India, to formulate, as it were, the charter of their own rights. Small wonder that, in so doing, they should, in the opinion of the executive power, have trenched on the rights of that power. But Impey believed, and therefore Impey insisted, on the maintenance, as an undoubted right, of the position he had taken up, and he declined to forego it, unless thereto forced by an authority higher than

that of the Governor-General in Council. On the other side, Hastings, equally jealous of his rights, was determined not to permit, under his very eyes, the exercise of an authority which aimed, he believed, at the constituting of an empire within an empire. He had the armed force of the Presidency at his disposal, and, jealous of his authority, he determined to repel aggression by the employment, whenever necessary, of that force.

When highly-placed combatants are equally confident of their rights, and equally determined to insist, whatever may be the consequences, upon asserting them, the situation cannot fail to become very serious. It did so become during the early part of the year 1780. In this quarrel both parties employed their full strength. Did the Supreme Court issue writs and summonses, the Council replied by proclamations and arrests. Captures, releases, distraints, rescues, became almost of daily occurrence. The Governor-General in Council charged the judges with arrogating to themselves the right to review the orders and proceedings of the Government as well as of the executive orders of the provincial councils which disposed of the revenue and judicial business in the districts. The Supreme Court replied that the Government was ready to support its subordinates in lawlessness and oppression, and that their supervision was absolutely needful. The late Sir James Stephen * has held that, on the whole, the Supreme Court had the better case; but it is not to be questioned that, in Calcutta, the public voice was strongly in favour of the action of the Government.

The virulence of the quarrel continued to increase as the year advanced. The Governor-General in Council proceeded even to the extreme measure of stopping the salaries of all the officers, including the judges, connected with the Supreme Court. The pressure on the poorer section of these officers became at last too intolerable to be borne, and this measure was withdrawn. Then ensued a lull. The duel between Hastings and Francis took place; and, during the period that followed, Hastings found time, amid the harassing

* "The Story of Nuncomar and the Impeachment of Sir Elijah Impey," vol. ii. p. 124 to the end of the volume. Stephen gives in detail the cases which arose from the quarrel.

supervision of measures entailed by the actual Maráthá war and the impending coast war, to devote a certain portion of his waking hours to the consideration of a plan which should not only provide a *modus vivendi* with the Supreme Court, but which should also legally ensure a reform of the evils, which had been pointed out in the correspondence with that Court, and the existence of which he could not deny. The result was the preparation of a scheme, the outline of which will be found in the first page of this chapter.

The main point—the *crux*, if I may so call it—of this scheme was to bestow upon the Chief Justice the additional office of judge of the chief civil court as a court of appeal, called in India the Sadr Diwáni Adálat. Now, there had been for a long period a court so called, the powers of which had been, since 1773, invested in the Governor-General. The court had been chiefly used for the hearing of appeals in civil cases, but it had in no sense been regarded as the principal civil court, and its proceedings had been characterized by considerable irregularity. The idea of Hastings was to transfer this court to the hands of the Chief Justice, carrying with it a salary of £6000 a year, the court to become in fact what it purported to be in name; and the office of judge to be held, and his emoluments to be paid, during the pleasure of the Governor-General in Council. The policy of such a proposal was masterly. It gave to the Chief Justice, in a legal manner, practically all that he and the other judges had been clamouring for; it gave to the public a real court of appeal in cases of civil procedure in place of a sham one; and it placed in the hands of the Governor-General in Council a remedy against scandals similar to those which had been witnessed during the months immediately preceding. It was a measure of conciliation, of justice, and of policy, worthy of the author. It terminated a period of strife in a manner which saved the dignity of both parties, for, whilst Impey was the real victor—if to gain all that one has contended for and to be paid for gaining be victory, entitled him so to be styled—the Governor-General's Council conceded a demand based on right, and yet held in its hands a power which, never likely to

be exercised, saved in the eyes of the public their prestige and their dignity.

It would seem strange, if we had not had so much experience of the man, that when Hastings submitted his plan to the members of his Council, Francis should have vehemently opposed it. His opposition was almost the last flicker of an Indian career well-nigh spent. He could not indeed say much against the provisions of the scheme; but, recognizing that it would settle the question, and settle it in a manner which would strengthen the position of the detested Hastings, he opposed it on the grounds that it would concede to the Supreme Court all that it had been fighting for. The measure nevertheless passed the Council. Impey accepted it as the termination, on a sound and practical basis, of a dispute which threatened to become interminable. Posterity has justified the action of the two principal factors in this quarrel. Although the Home authorities disapproved most strongly of the appointment of Impey, and ordered it should be cancelled, the principle which underlay it was too sound to be permanently rejected. Experience proved, whilst the arrangement lasted, that the scheme was well suited for the purposes for which it was intended. It caused to disappear the bitter conflict of jurisdictions; it restored the cordial co-operation which had existed between the Council and the Supreme Court; and it tended to a healthy supervision by the latter over the judicial actions of the Company's servants in the districts. Ultimately it brought under appellate jurisdiction of the Supreme Court all the district courts in the presidency. Impey was sacrificed, but the principle was saved, and that principle exists to the present day.

Yet, even with respect to this matter, which terminated a scandal which was fast growing to proportions dangerous to the State, it was necessary that there should be a scapegoat. Francis, we have seen, had opposed it. It would increase the power of Hastings; it would reunite, as in fact it did reunite, the severed friendship of Hastings and Impey. He marked it then in his note-book, as a scheme to be used with effect in England against the two chief negotiators. On his arrival in London he denounced the arrangement with so

much vehemence and apparent indignation; he so worked on the sense of justice of the administration, then in power, of Lord Shelburne, denouncing the salary accorded to the Chief Justice as a bribe to procure his assent to the one practical scheme, the adoption of which would terminate the existing quarrel, that the Ministry resolved to recall Impey.

It happened in this way. Francis, full of animosity, conscious that in a quarrel of more than five years' duration which he had provoked he had been decisively worsted, reached London on the 19th of October, 1781. He became at once the inspirer on all matters pertaining to India of Edmund Burke. Burke had just been appointed a member of the committee of the House of Commons, nominated to inquire into and to report on the "Administration of Justice in India," and accepting readily and without much examination all the venom regarding Hastings and Impey which Francis instilled into his ears, he so influenced his colleagues that on the 5th of February, 1782, the committee reported against the acceptance by Impey of the office of judge of the Sadr Diwáni Adálat. Upon this, on the 3rd of May following, the House of Commons, on the motion of a General Smith, passed a resolution urging upon the Crown the recall of Impey

"to answer the charge of having accepted an office granted by and tenable at the pleasure of the servants of the East India Company, which has a tendency to create a dependence in the said Supreme Court upon those over whose actions the said Court was intended as a control."

This resolution, in which the reader will easily discern the brain of Francis, was transmitted by the Prime Minister, Lord Shelburne, to Impey on the 8th of July, 1782. Impey received it on the 27th of January, 1783, but he did not leave India till the 3rd of December following, nor did he arrive in London till June, 1784. All this time and later he continued to hold the office of Chief Justice, and he held it till November, 1787.* This is not the place in which to record the story of the attempt to impeach him, except to state that

* Sir James Stephen writes, in the book so often quoted, "He was neither dismissed from his place nor called upon to answer the charge on which he had been recalled—nor indeed does any particular notice appear to have been taken of him till his name came to be mentioned in the debates on the impeachment of Hastings in 1787."

although the motion was dropped by the House of Commons, his name has been held up to odium and contempt by Mr. Mill and Lord Macaulay. Of Mr. Mill it is not necessary to speak: he was an advocate rather than a historian. But of the comments on Impey's career by Lord Macaulay, Sir James Stephen, a great admirer of the brilliant essayist, after dealing with them line by line, sentence by sentence, has thus recorded his judgment:—

"Of the attacks upon Impey which I have done my best to refute, it is fair to say that they occur in a review of which its author, when he wrote it, probably did not know the importance. To him it was a mere effort of journalism, hastily put together from most insufficient materials. To the memory of Impey it was a gibbet. To the whole English nation it has become the one popular account of the early stages of the Indian Empire—the accepted myth. Slightly to adapt the famous remark of De Quincey, in his essay on 'Murder as a Fine Art,' Impey has owed his moral ruin to a literary murder of which Macaulay probably thought but little when he committed it."

In concluding the chapter which has attempted to give a slight sketch of the quarrel between the highest civil authorities in India—its origin, its progress, and its wise termination—I should, I think, be wanting in justice to the two foremost men upon whom devolved the principal share in the contention, who were alike subjected therefore to the adverse criticisms of Parliament, and covered with censure by partisan historians and a reviewer most eloquent yet most unscrupulous, were I to refrain from recording the opinion of Hastings upon the act of the Chief Justice of Bengal which caused his recall. In a minute recorded in reply to an appeal made to him by Impey, Hastings wrote that his own leading motive in the arrangement he had made with Impey was to place provincial courts under the superintendence and instruction of the Chief Justice of the court, and so to avoid complaints against them to the Supreme Court. With respect to the salary to be attached to the new office, Hastings added:—

"I will not deny that I was pleased with the opportunity of being the instrument of placing in a conspicuous and creditable position of this service, and I may add profitable, a man for whom I entertained a sincere friendship, founded on a knowledge of his personal virtues and an acquaintance of more than thirty years." *

* Stephen, vol. ii. p. 234.

We must now hurry from the consideration of this episode—creditable to the two principals concerned, most discreditable to the envenomed partisans who thought to strike Hastings by dealing a blow at Impey, and giving evidence, on the part of the former, of a prescience to which posterity has borne grateful witness—to journey with him to the city of Banáras, there to record his negotiations with the feudatory of the Company, the Zamíndár Chét Singh.

CHAPTER XXIV.

HASTINGS AND CHÉT SINGH AT BANÁRAS—THE ARREST OF CHÉT SINGH—THE OUTBREAK AND ITS CONSEQUENCES.

THE reader has been told in a previous chapter * the earlier history of Rájá Chét Singh of Banáras: how he had succeeded his father, Balwant Singh, in 1770; how, in 1775, the districts he administered had been ceded in perpetuity to the British; how the British had confirmed him in his zamíndárí and in the civil and criminal administration thereof, subject to an annual tribute of 22,660,180 Sikka rupees, and on the condition that he should adopt measures for the interest and security of the country and the preservation of the peace; how also the Company had granted him permission to coin money. The reader has been further told how the financial necessities of Hastings had compelled him to revive towards Chét Singh and other chiefs the policy of Akbar and his successors, in virtue of which the vassal chief was bound, in times of danger or invasion, to assist his feudal superior; and how, in pursuance of that policy, Hastings had imposed upon the Rájá in 1778 the liability to pay annually a subsidy of five lakhs of rupees for the maintenance of three battalions of sipáhís; how Chét Singh had, most reluctantly, agreed to make the payment for one year; how the Calcutta Government, more and more pressed for money, levied, though it received only in part, the subsidy for the two years following, and in the third year added the obligation that Chét Singh should employ his cavalry in the service of the Company; and further, how Chét Singh, always reluctant, parting with his rupees as though they had been drops of his own blood, and only after threats of compulsion, had kicked at the last

* Chap. xxii. p. 330.

obligation, and had, it was discovered at a later period, entered into correspondence with others whom he knew to be disaffected.

Hastings had long felt the necessity of placing the relations between the Company and its vassal at Banáras on a footing such as would prevent any misunderstanding, and render impossible the quibbles which Chét Singh was always advancing. Of his right to demand a military contribution from Chét Singh there was no question. Chét Singh did not dispute the obligation, but being an avaricious man, the more avaricious because he was also rich, he disliked the idea of parting with his coin. He knew well that, under the Mughals, he would have had either to pay up promptly, to send his troops, or to see his districts occupied by the troops of the liege-lord. He could recollect how his father, Balwant Singh, had been compelled by the then Nawwáb-Wazír of Oudh, of whom he was the vassal in 1763, to join that prince in the invasion of the British territories. He could not plead then that the order was illegal, nor did he. He simply pleaded poverty. The first year, 1778, he had paid most grudgingly, raising difficulty after difficulty, ostentatiously increasing the burdens on his people, and thereby raising a much larger sum than Hastings had demanded, and storing the balance in his treasury. The second year he played the same farce over again. He even improved upon it, for, on the plea that he was being reduced to a state of indigence, he publicly offered his jewels for sale and withheld a large portion of the tribute. To give, moreover, a colour of truth to his representations, he withdrew the large balances he had lodged in the hands of the chief bankers of Banáras, and stored the money in the fort. Then, when the bankers, impoverished by the withdrawal, failed, he instanced the fact as a proof that poverty was universal, and that he was amongst the poorest.

Nor did he stop even at that paltry device. I have related that when called upon to permit his cavalry to be used for the general purposes of the country, he "kicked" at the demand. Of all the demands made upon him he regarded this one as the most obnoxious. From time immemorial the princes and rulers of India have loved display. In the olden days they

invariably neglected their infantry, and spent all their money on their horsemen, because these afforded them the opportunity of displaying to the greatest advantage their magnificence. Chet Singh was, in this respect, no exception to the men who had gone before him. His cavalry were the apple of his eye. Next to his hoarded silver he loved them before anything else on the earth. The demand of Hastings that a fixed number of these gorgeously attired horsemen should be employed for general service was, then, most obnoxious to him. Although he had at his daily disposal a body of cavalry exceeding in number, by several hundreds, the total amount of men asked for by Mr. Hastings, he pleaded that he had no cavalry; that his resources were used up; and that he could not therefore send a single horseman. From that moment, foreseeing that his reply would meet no cordial acceptance in Calcutta, yet believing that the Maráthá war and the coast war would so exhaust the means at the disposal of the British proconsul that he would be unable to avenge the insult he had offered, Chét Singh began to levy troops; to enter into correspondence with the Begams of Oudh and with Sindhia; to assume an air of independence not at all suited to his actual position; and to whisper his intention to resist the harassing demands of the foreign intruders.

Hastings, I have said, had long felt the necessity of mending or ending this condition of affairs at Banáras. But he had been unable to quit Calcutta, at first on account of the presence there of the obstructive Francis, and, after the departure of Francis, of the quarrel with Impey and the Supreme Court, referred to in the last chapter. The utmost he could do was to replace his agent at Banáras, the Francis Fowke mentioned in the earlier part of this biography as having sided against Hastings in connection with the Nand-kumár charges, and who had displayed in his office at Banáras a want of tact which had deprived him of all consideration, by a servant of the Company whom he could really trust. He had therefore recalled Fowke, and despatched to Banáras, in his place, a Mr. Markham, son of the then archbishop of York, a young man of considerable talent, and greatly affected to himself.

The next step Hastings proposed to take was of a character much more decisive. Francis had left; the quarrel with Impey had been settled; there remained in the Council at the moment Hastings himself and Mr. Wheler, now become tractable. He proposed then in Council that he should take the opportunity of the lull to visit Banáras and Lakhnao, at which capital also matters were in the worst possible condition, and to effect in both cities the reforms necessary for the compelling, in the one, of ready compliance with the will of the overlord; in the other, the restoration of prosperity and good government. To Wheler, in his absence, would be confided the administration of affairs in Calcutta.

In this chapter we have to do only with the visit to Banáras. There were many pressing reasons why the visit of Hastings should be prompt. The demands for money made by the armies rendered it absolutely necessary not only that Chét Singh should pay up his arrears, but that his practical refusal should not serve as an example to others. In India nothing is so contagious as example. The old proverb that "a stitch in time saves nine" is especially applicable to public affairs in that country. Hastings then talked but little of his intended journey. Wheler had agreed with him that it would be necessary to impose upon Chét Singh, for his contrarieties, his disobedience, and his incipient hostility, a fine of fifty lakhs of rupees. He thought it therefore politic to refrain from notifying his intention to visit Banáras until all his preparations should be completed. In the cold weather of 1781 they were completed, and Hastings, accompanied by Mrs. Hastings, and escorted only by the small body-guard which habitually attended him, started for Mungér, which ancient capital of Mír Kásim was to be his first halting-place. At Mungér he left his wife, who had but just recovered from a severe attack of illness, and proceeded with his body-guard towards Banáras.

Chét Singh had received due intimation that the representative of his overlord had quitted Calcutta to visit him. The news brought him at once on his knees. He hastened to make, through the agent, Markham, such representations as he thought would suffice to conjure the coming storm. Professing the deepest regret for his past conduct, he promised

that in future Mr. Hastings should find in him the most loyal and submissive of vassals. As an earnest of his intentions he offered at once to advance, for the service of the English Government, a sum of twenty lakhs of rupees. Receiving no satisfactory reply from Mr. Markham, the Rájá, taking as his escort six hundred horsemen—who by their presence afforded a living proof of the incorrectness of the representations he had made to Mr. Hastings regarding the number of his cavalry—proceeded to the classic field of Baksar, still memorable for the decisive victory of Munro, to render to the Governor-General the honour due from a vassal to a superior. Hastings received him politely, but declined to hold any political conversation with him until he should have personally examined at Banáras the pleas set forth by the Rájá for his non-compliance with the British demands. He wished to be quite sure before he should commit his Government to decisive action.

Arrived at Banáras the first act of Mr. Hastings was to transmit to the Rájá a paper setting forth the various grounds of complaint against him, and requiring him to furnish a full explanation of the reasons for his conduct in each particular instance. Chét Singh meanwhile, bitterly offended at the reserve displayed by Hastings, had had time to reconsider his position. It happened that, at the time, the city of Banáras was full of his own soldiers, cavalry and infantry, far outnumbering the slender escort of Hastings. At Shiwálá Ghât, one of the handsomest ghâts in Banáras, was a fortified building used by Chét Singh as his palace, and to the vicinity of this building, subsequently and to the present day known as the *khálí mahall*, or empty palace, troops to any number could be summoned at very short notice. At a distance of three-quarters of a mile from this fort, Hastings had taken up his quarters in a house known as the Garden of Madhu Dás, and there were with him some thirty English officials and his body-guard, consisting of about twenty horsemen. The difference between the position of Chét Singh and that of the Governor-General made, it is presumed, a very deep effect on the mind of the former. Certainly he believed that, of the two potent factors, he was the least assailable. The conviction of his own security and

of his overlord's weakness prompted him then to reply in a very supercilious manner to the interrogatories he had received that morning. But he little knew the character of the Englishman with whom he had to deal. A man so acute and so acquainted with the habits and mode of thought of the native chiefs, as was Mr. Hastings, could not fail to recognize in the terms of the Rájá's reply a deliberate intention to insult him. The reply, in fact, read between the lines, dared Hastings, in so many words, to assert his authority in the Rájá's own city, in the presence of his troops, under the eyes of his people. Hastings read the letter; passed for a second his hand over his brow, and then despatched a note to Markham directing him to proceed the following morning with two companies of sipáhís, which would then be available, to the Rájá's house at Shiválá ghât, and place him under arrest. Markham obeyed. Chét Singh seemed surprised, expressed his indignation at being subjected to confinement, but offered no resistance. Markham left the two companies of sipáhís on guard, and, armed with a submissive message from the Rájá, returned to report to Mr. Hastings the result of his mission. He had promised Chét Singh to return as soon as possible to Shiválá ghât, and this promise he kept. But meanwhile the information that Chét Singh had been arrested had been communicated to the Rájá's troops at his palace of Rámnagar. These crossed the river, fell upon the sipáhís, who had no spare ammunition, and destroyed them and their officers to a man. Chét Singh had, meanwhile, left the fort by a wicket-gate which opened to the river, and, descending the scarped wall by means of turbans tied together to a boat waiting for him, fled across the river first to Rámnagar, a bastioned castle, a mile from the further bank. It had been all over with Hastings if the victorious rioters had turned in the direction of the house he was occupying, in which were some thirty European officials and a few sipáhís. But infuriated savages seldom reason, and the men who had just rescued Chét Singh seemed more concerned in following him to his destination than in wreaking vengeance on the, to them, unknown quantity which is symbolized by an English Governor. Hastings was well aware of the danger which he had run.

"If Chét Singh's people," he wrote, "after they had effected his rescue, had proceeded to my quarters instead of crowding after him in a tumultuous manner, as they did in his passage over the river, it is probable that my blood and that of about thirty English gentlemen of my party would have been added to the recent carnage; for they were about two thousand, furious and daring from the easy success of their last attempt; nor could I assemble more than fifty regular and armed sipáhís for my whole defence."

But if Hastings exposed himself too rashly to the possible attack of an excitable population; if, in placing the Rájá under arrest, he counted too securely on the prestige attaching to the British name; he made ample atonement for his temerity by the conduct he displayed when he became thoroughly acquainted with the nature of the crisis which was upon him. There he was in the Madhu Dás Garden with some thirty English gentlemen by his side, and a few armed sipáhís. Outside of that garden all was riot and disorder. No one present within it could divine the moment when the energies which had enabled Chét Singh to escape might be turned against the Governor-General of British India. But great as was the danger, supreme as was the crisis, the heart of Hastings never for a moment quailed. In such a position he was supreme. Cool, calm, unflurried, he proceeded to take the measures which prudence and policy alike dictated. The agent Markham had returned from the slaughter at Shiwálá ghât, and with him were all the resources of the agency, messengers, orderlies, mounted and unmounted, men to be trusted even in an extremity so great as that then existing. By the aid of these trusty subordinates Hastings despatched notices to the fortress of Chanár, sixteen miles distant by the land route, where was a small British garrison; another to Colonel Muir, commanding the British force which had joined that of Camac and defeated Madhují Sindhiá, with whom he was at the moment negotiating; a third to Lakhnao, to acquaint the Resident that although there had been danger, such danger had passed, and that he required no assistance; another to Mrs. Hastings, to reassure her as to his personal safety. Then, looking in the face the immediate danger, he despatched instructions to Major Popham, the hero of Gwáliár, who had met him at Baksar with six companies of his regiment, to draw to him the other four companies of his battalion, then at Mírzápur, and adding to

them a company of artillery and one of a corps styled "the French Rangers," from the same place, to march on Rámnagar, storm it, and take possession of the person of the Rájá.

These arrangements were all excellent. But in war even excellent arrangements are liable to be upset by faulty movements of subordinates. A French statesman and diplomatist, giving his directions to an agent whom he was about to despatch on an important diplomatic mission, concluded them by warning him against the display of too much zeal. Such a warning was required at Mírzápur. The senior officer there, Captain Mayaffre, on being informed that it was essential without more delay than could be helped to storm Rámnagar, and that his garrison was to form part of the expedition for that purpose, the whole to be commanded by Major Popham, resolved, in the pride of his heart, not to wait for that officer, but to make the attempt himself. He made it, rashly and impetuously. To reach the gates of the bastioned palace he had to traverse narrow streets, with high balconies, all filled for the occasion with the adherents of the Rájá. In the attempt to rush these narrow streets, he became exposed to a continuous fire. It was still possible that he might have got through, when a bullet pierced his heart. There was no one near him to take his place, and the troops, discouraged, fell back, suffering severely in their retreat.

This event, which occurred on the 20th of August, rendered the position of Hastings at Banáras more than ever insecure. Information reached him which left no doubt on his mind that he would probably be attacked in his insecure position on the morrow by hordes flushed by the victory gained at Rámnagar. On the other hand, he had received from all sides comforting assurances. Major Popham was at hand, ready to do his will. Colonel Morgan, who commanded at Kánhpur, had, on the first intimation that the Governor-General was threatened, marched, before any instructions had reached him, from that place in the direction of Banáras. From Lakhnao he heard also that troops were marching to his rescue. Even from Chét Singh he had received overtures for peace and reconciliation. Amid these difficulties Hastings remained always the great man. He declined to treat with

the Rájá except on terms of his absolute submission. For the rest he felt that a small house within the precincts of the city of Banáras was not the place to conduct negotiations whilst rebellion was stalking in the streets and in the districts. He resolved accordingly to retreat that night to the fortress of Chanár, sixteen miles * distant. This retreat he and his companions accomplished; met a sipáhí regiment marching from Chanár to meet them; faced it about; reached the river-bank opposite Chanár at daybreak; then crossed the river and entered the fortress.

Once secure against any attacks Chét Singh might attempt against it, Hastings proceeded to direct the operations necessary to bring the Rájá to submission. That ruler, meanwhile, had seen his followers increase in a manner which scarcely left him master of his own actions. The repulse of the British from Rámnagar had inflated the brains of every man about him, and little was talked about but the expulsion of the western foreigners from the country. Chét Singh soon found himself at the head of some forty thousand men—of sorts—and he scarcely knew what to do with them. He had not been bred to arms, and nature had not compensated for the want of instruction. Under these circumstances he became the creature of the public voice of the camp. That voice, inflated by echoes from Rámnagar, prompted him to take up a position as near to the fort occupied by Hastings as might be possible. Accordingly he marched towards Chanár, and took a position close to the town and fort of Síkhar, on the left bank of the Ganges, immediately opposite to the first-named fortress. But meanwhile Major Popham had collected whatever troops were available, and, at the head of these, few in number, but strong in discipline and in leading, he beat up the Rájá's quarters on the 29th of August, and compelled him to decamp. Very much discouraged, the Rájá fell back on Patítá, in the Mírzápur district, five miles to the south of Chanár. There Popham assailed him on the 20th of September, captured the camp, and forced the Rájá to take refuge in Latífgarh, eight miles distant. Attacked there and again beaten the day

* The distance by the winding river route is thirty miles; but in the disturbed condition of the country the river route was impossible.

following, Chét Singh fled, with a few discouraged followers to take refuge in the hill-fortress of Bijaigarh.

Thither he had despatched a great part of his treasures and there he thought himself inaccessible. Bijaigarh, now in ruins, is situated on the summit of a very high hill in the Mirzapur district, nine miles to the south of the river Sôn, and fifty miles to the south of Banáras. The lofty hill, called by the natives a mountain, on the summit of which is the fortress, is covered from its base to its summit with thick trees and jungle, and is very steep and inaccessible. At first Chét Singh would not believe that Popham would dare to attempt it. But, satisfied later of the intentions of the English leader, and knowing that if the fortress were taken he must share its fate, he removed the bulk of his treasures before Popham could arrive, and, taking them with him, took refuge at the court of one of the petty princes of Bundelkhand, leaving his wife and mother to defend the fort. They carried out the task entrusted to them with great energy. But in the end the perseverance of Popham prevailed, and the Ráni, widow of the father of Chét Singh, felt herself compelled to offer terms. Her offer, which would have secured to her, if agreed to, a valuable district, bringing with it a considerable income, was transmitted by Popham to Hastings. Hastings, who had made, meanwhile, arrangements for the transfer of the entire province to the nephew of Chét Singh, refused to alienate from it so considerable a portion. Popham then made preparations for storming the place; but the terrified garrison surrendered on the sole condition of the safety of their lives. Popham found in the fort property of the value of twenty-three lakhs of rupees, and this he then and there, fortified by a carelessly worded paragraph contained in a letter from Hastings, divided among his troops.

The appropriation of so large a sum as twenty-three lakhs of rupees by the troops who had crushed the rebellion was a bitter disappointment to Hastings. He had looked forward to the capture of Bijaigarh as certain to afford some compensation for the expenses of the campaign, by furnishing him with funds, of which he was sadly in need. The disappointment was the keener, inasmuch as he could not deny that the private letter he had written to Major Popham on the subject

of the anticipated spoil, contained an expression, which, although he did not intend that it should bear the meaning attributed to it, justified the action of the Major and his troops.* Vainly did he endeavour to procure the return of the money; vainly did he request the transfer of it "as a loan." He got none of it.

Still he had some, and, in point of fact, no small compensation. He had lost the zamíndárí of Banáras when he received from that zamíndárí a tribute of twenty-two lakhs of rupees. By the exertions of his officers, stimulated by his unerring judgment, he recovered lands which returned him a tribute of forty lakhs. After the deposition of Chét Singh, Banáras became as much British territory as was Bardwán. Again, his repression of the rebellion had advertised to the princes of India the folly of attempting to resist the British authority, exercised, as was that authority, by a man of firm resolution and splendid courage. It is a very remarkable fact, a fact which evidences more than any other fact of his career the extent to which the character of Hastings had impressed the princes and people of India, that during this apparent ebb and flow of his fortunes at Banáras, he negotiated with Madhují Sindhiá that treaty of peace which dissociated him from the Maráthá confederacy and led to the treaty of Salbai. Not one prince in India took advantage of a position which, had it occurred to the majority of men,

* The expression was as follows: "With respect to the booty, that is rather for your consideration than mine. I should be very sorry that your officers and soldiers lost any part of the reward to which they are so well entitled; but I cannot make any objection, as you must be the best judge."

It is only fair that the explanation of this extract, given by Hastings in a letter to his friend, Major Scott, should be recorded. "I had not the shadow of a suspicion," he wrote in February, 1782, "that Popham would have taken any decided step in a matter of such concern without an authority from me, especially as I was so near. Judge of my astonishment when I tell you that the distribution of plunder was begun before I knew that the place was in possession, and finished before I knew that it was begun. A very uncandid advantage was taken of a private letter written by me to Major Popham on another occasion during the heat of the siege, at which time I made it a point to answer all his letters on the instant of their receipt, and generally by another hand, and often in the most familiar style. The fact is, that instead of receiving my letters as authority, they were afraid I should stop or qualify the distribution, and therefore precipitated it to prevent me."

In another portion of the letter Hastings states that Major Popham excused himself on the ground that "he could not withstand the universal clamour and vehemence of his officers for the scramble." Hastings adds: "The officers sent a very elegant sword as a present to me, and a set of dressing-boxes for Mrs. Hastings, all beautifully inlaid with jewels; I returned them all."

would have ruined them. The Nawwáb of Oudh pressed upon him such assistance as he could give; whilst the Rájá of Barár not only abstained from taking advantage of his distress, although pressed to do so by Chét Singh, but expressed his sincere desire for the repression of the rebellion. When he heard of the outbreak, though not yet of its repression, he requested that an English agent might be deputed to him to assist in negociating terms of peace with the administration of Puná.

Hastings was touched beyond measure at the sympathetic offers of aid in men and money, which, on this trying occasion, he received from so many parts of India, not less than at the energy with which English officers and men hurried to his rescue.

"I do not believe," he wrote, with pardonable pride, "that Sir Thomas Rumbold or Mr. Whitehill would have attracted so prompt an assistance had either held my station and experienced the like personal danger in it."

The capture of the fortress of Bijaigarh had finished the rebellion. In the interval Hastings had returned to Banáras, and had begun, thence, the work of reconstruction. There could, of course, be no question of the maintenance of Chét Singh, in any shape or form. That zamindar, after wandering from one Court to another, eventually took refuge at Gwáliár,* but from the date of the capture of Bijaigarh he passed entirely out of mind. Hastings found a successor to him in his nearest relative, outside the children he had begotten, in his nephew, the grandson of Balwant Singh, by name Mahíp Naráyan. With this ruler he made a treaty, in which, transferring to him in perpetuity the zamindárí and the revenues to be derived therefrom, but retaining in the Company's hands the criminal administration of the districts, and the civil and criminal administration of the city of Banáras, and declining to grant to the Rájá the right of coinage, he secured for the Company an annual tribute of forty lakhs of rupees. The new Rájá also agreed to pay up all the arrears due by his predecessor. These arrangements were signed on the 14th of September, 1781. With modifica-

* He died at Gwáliár in the year 1810. He thus lived to witness the destruction of the Muhammadan kingdom of Maisur, and the total defeat of the Maráthá confederacy.

tions relating to the civil administration of the districts, they continue in force to the present day.

In the next chapter I propose to recount the negotiations which Hastings was carrying on at the same time with the Nawwáb of Oudh and the Begam, the conclusions to which they tended, and the terms which he ultimately enforced. But I cannot delay till then to offer, with great respect to the reader, the impressions produced upon my mind by the conduct of Hastings during this critical period, from the very beginning to the end, that is, from his initial demand upon Chét Singh for a contribution to the defensive war in which the East India Company was engaged, until the day when he, a few hours after his arrival at Banáras, found that the explanations he had demanded from Chét Singh were "offensive in style and unsatisfactory in substance," * and directed consequently that he should be placed under arrest. It is not necessary in the present day, I would fain hope, to reply to the concocted charge that Hastings had a personal spite against Chét Singh, because he had, on a previous occasion, sent a message to General Clavering. If the Rájá had paid the sum at which he had been assessed for his military contribution, the fact that he had once sent a message to General Clavering would never have been unearthed. But the fact that it is about the only reason set forward as the cause of the dislike of Hastings to Chét Singh, and his consequent action towards him, proves the desperate straits to which the enemies of Hastings were reduced. This is specially to be remembered when the causes of Hastings' feelings for the Rájá were so open, so palpable, so expressed, as it were, by his acts. There was, it need scarcely be said, but one reason: Hastings wanted money to carry on the wars necessary for the defence of the empire; he made a demand upon Chét Singh for his proportion; Chét Singh delayed, quibbled, and finally refused to pay it.

But there are other critics more worthy of the steel of a historian than the authors of those old-wives' fables. Unwilling as I am to provoke a controversy with a gentleman distinguished alike as a historian, a philosopher, and a poet, who has, in India, served his country with credit, I cannot

* Lord Thurlow described them as "impudent falsehoods."

allow the criticisms of Sir Alfred Lyall * on this episode of the career of Warren Hastings to pass without comment. "It would be a radical error to suppose," writes Sir Alfred, when condemning the action of Hastings, "that an English Government in Asia can be administered on the Asiatic system." To this I would reply that every attempt to govern India on the purely European system has utterly failed.† In another work ‡ I have proved beyond contradiction how it was that an administration based solely on the English model caused the sipáhí army to mutiny and a large portion of the civil population to rebel in 1857. Since that period the administration of India, conducted purely on the European model, has more than once brought the British Indian Empire to within a hair's breadth of insurrection and ruin. There are few who know how deeply affected was the native mind by the Legislature, based solely on English ideas, to interfere with the marriage law. The reform advocated by the theorists became indeed law; but who can say the amount of bitterness it has left behind it? It was opposed to the ideas, the convictions, the long-nurtured prejudices of two hundred millions of people. Again, the European system of introducing the voting by numbers for the local legislative assemblies, absolutely foreign to native ideas, caused the greatest discontent amongst more than fifty millions of Muhammadans, the backbone of the fighting population of the north-west. Nor has the plan of governing, not on Asiatic, but on purely European principles, exhausted the vial of mischief inherent in it. The parliament of Great Britain decided, in the plenitude of its pharisaism and its ignorance, to condemn the consumption of opium in India; and the

* "Warren Hastings," in "English Men of Action," by Sir Alfred Lyall, K.C.B.

† Since these pages were in type, I have read, in the *Academy* of the 14th of July of the current year, a review by Mr. Morse Stephens, of Sir W. W. Hunter's important work, called "Bengal Manuscript Records." Mr. Stephens concludes that review with the following pregnant sentence thoroughly applicable to the subject discussed in the text. "But there is one impression forced upon the mind of the thoughtful reader which can hardly be transmuted into words—a sense of the hopelessness of any effort to apply our Western ideas and conceptions to Eastern conditions; a feeling of the utter futility of dealing, even with the calmest deliberation, on European lines with Asiatic populations, and a despairing consciousness that the best-intentioned Englishman may unwittingly impoverish the people of India."

‡ "The Indian Mutiny of 1857," Seeley.

Government of the day, obeying the mandate of the faddists and crotchet-mongers upon whose support it depended for its existence, despatched to India a Commission to examine as to the pernicious nature of the produce of the poppy as an article of consumption in its various forms. There was scarcely a man of the nearly three hundred millions who inhabit India who would not have been affected by the result of the inquiry, if that inquiry had forbidden the consumption of opium. It is understood that the report of the Commission will prove favourable to the continuance of the present system. But had it been otherwise; had the Commission recommended the cessation of the traffic; and had the Home Government, in consequence, decreed its cessation, there can be no doubt—amongst those who really know the Indian people—that there would have been a general uprising, an uprising so universal, so inspired by the heart of the people, that it would have been impossible for Great Britain—that Great Britain which permits the sale of intoxicating spirits in all the streets of all her cities, her towns, and her villages—to repress it. Every domestic servant would have been a conspirator. The form the disaffection would have taken would not have been modelled on the outbreak of 1857. In its conception and in its action it would have been more deadly than the massacre of St. Bartholomew, wider-reaching than the Sicilian Vespers.

Nor is the catalogue of the evils attendant upon purely European rule in an Asiatic country yet exhausted. Administration on European principles has killed the trade, destroyed the best industries of India, and has induced there a national bankruptcy. At the present moment, what with free-trade and a restricted currency, India is bankrupt. She might yet revive were her own industries to be protected. A hard and fast law in England has prevented the chance of trying such a remedy, because, forsooth, it would damage the industries of England. Thus, at a terrible crisis in the fortunes of India, Great Britain, ruling her, not on Asiatic principles, but on the principles dear to Europe, deliberately sacrifices her magnificent dependency to her own selfish interests.

With such results proceeding from the system of governing India on European principles, I may be excused if I venture, most respectfully, to differ from the axiom laid down by Sir

Alfred Lyall, when he virtually condemns Warren Hastings for employing Asiatic principles in his dealings with Chét Singh. No one has suggested whether any, and what other course was open to Hastings. He had in Bengal exhausted taxation. Neither Madras nor Bombay could supply him with a farthing. He had pushed the resources of borrowing to its extremest limits. He had practically two wars on his hands, defeat in either of which would have ruined British India. He could not do otherwise than fall back on the time-honoured policy of Akbar, and compel his vassal-chieftains to contribute to the general weal. If Akbar could induce representatives of the royal Houses of Jaipur and Jodhpur to lead their troops to fight his battles even at Kábul, surely Hastings, who in the three provinces was the recognized successor of Akbar, had the right to require his vassal, Chét Singh, to contribute to a small extent towards the defence of the country of which his zamindárí was but an outlying portion. Had he permitted himself to be bound by the hard and fast doctrine I understand to have been laid down by Sir A. Lyall, he might indeed have avoided the insurrection of Banáras and the risks to which he was there exposed, but he would have exposed British India to other and greater dangers, dangers which a statesman is bound to avoid. By no other means could he have raised money; and wanting money, the army commanded by Sir Eyre Coote in the Karnátik must have starved, or have surrendered to Haidar.

As it happened, the opposition of the avaricious Chét Singh to the payment of the contribution imposed upon him proved British India's safety. It caused his dismissal; and with that the payment by his successor of the arrears that were due. Further, it increased the annual tribute to the Company from twenty-two lakhs to forty. If such a result were the consequence of administering India on Asiatic principles, then posterity should be grateful to Warren Hastings that he had the sense to adopt such a method, that he did not allow himself to be led away from his plain duty by phrases. By acting upon the Asiatic principles of administration he saved British India. Had he acted upon those to which I have referred, he would have lost it.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE NAWWÁB-WAZÍR OF OUDH MEETS HASTINGS AT CHANÁR—HASTINGS DEVOTES THE PRESENT HE RECEIVED FROM HIM TO THE SERVICE OF THE STATE—NATURE OF THE SETTLEMENT MADE WITH THE NAWWÁB—HASTINGS RESTORES TO THE NAWWÁB THE PROPERTY OF WHICH THE BEGAMS HAD UNJUSTLY DEPRIVED HIM.

Hastings, whilst still at Banáras and Chanár, had continued his negotiations with the young Nawwáb-Wazír of Oudh, whose position, from the time of his accession up to the actual period, had continued to be a position of great difficulty and anxiety. The original cause of this evil case had been undoubtedly the spoliation by his mother and grandmother of the treasures left him by his father—a spoliation connived at, as already related, by the English Resident, Mr. Bristow, who, the reader may recollect, had been nominated to the post, against the protests of Hastings, by the triumvirate which formed then the majority in Council. To the spoliation of the Begams may be added the mutiny of his troops caused by the inability of the Nawwáb-Wazír to pay the arrears due to them, and the consequent disorganization of the entire province. The Hindu historian, Bahádur Singh,* has left a record of the manner in which the Nawwáb-Wazír suppressed this rebellion. The date he gives, March–April, 1776, is probably correct. But the difficulties of the Nawwáb-Wazír did not cease with the repression of the rebellion. What with payments to be made to the English; the expense of maintaining English troops; the maintenance of his own army; the support of the Court; and, I fear it must be added, the absence of a controlling and

* Elliott's "History of India by its own Historians," vol. viii. pp. 423–425.

organizing mind, he had never recovered, up to the period at which we have arrived, from his initial misfortune. He had started in his career as ruler heavily encumbered and without funds. So he continued. To the East India Company, as represented by the Government at Calcutta, he had become a very heavy defaulter. His stipulated payments to them had fallen into arrear; he had had to borrow from the English the main portion of the money requisite for the maintenance of the troops, who, by treaty, occupied portions of his province. But whilst the English had helped him with coin, they had debited the account of the Nawwáb-Wazír with the amount thus expended, and during the five or six years which had elapsed since his father's death the balance against him in their books had gone on from year to year increasing. It seemed indeed that the country which, under the rule of his able father, had been the strong support of Hastings in his difficulties, had, under the sway of the son, sunk to the position of an importunate dependant.

It was, however, not quite so. Ásafu'd daulah possessed many amiable qualities, and although, from inability, he had been unable to pay his debt to the English, he never forgot the friendship which had existed between Hastings and his father. When, then, he heard of the danger which Hastings had incurred at Banáras; of the revolt of Chét Singh; of the flight of Hastings to Chanár; of the abortive attempt to storm Rámnagar; he was most anxious to anticipate the interview which Hastings had promised him at Lakhnao, by proceeding in person to Chanár, and waiting there upon the British proconsul. There were, undoubtedly, many pressing personal reasons which prompted him to make an urgent request to this effect. Ásafu'd daulah had neither forgotten nor forgiven the spoliation of his heritage by his mother and grandmother. These two ladies still held in their hands, in the shape of landed properties which were inalienable, according to the conditions on which they held them, the larger portion of the goods of which they had robbed him. He knew that Hastings was in great difficulties for money; that he was pressed on every side; and he thought it possible that if he could help him in this emergency, he would help himself also. He saw before him, in fact, the chance of

persuading Hastings, in his extremity for money, to adopt a line of conduct, which would at the same time redress a cruel evil, and, by compelling the Begams to disgorge their stolen property, to replace him in the position his father had occupied, and which his father had intended him to occupy.

When Hastings received at Chanár the urgent request of the Nawwáb-Wazír of Oudh for permission to visit him, he was in the most acute stage of his monetary difficulties. Ruin seemed to stare him in the face. He had not received from Chét Singh one stiva of the tribute long overdue. He had to find money for the repression of the rebellion then raging. He had hoped to obtain something from the storming of Bijaigarh, but how Popham and his officers had in that respect disappointed him we have seen in the last chapter. But the position thus stated represents only the smallest part of the difficulties then before Hastings. It cannot be too often repeated that, throughout the period of the Maráthá war and the Coast war, and for at least eighteen months prior to the latter, the safety of British India depended entirely upon the brain of Hastings. Madras and Bombay were practically bankrupt. It was Hastings, and Hastings alone, who had to find soldiers, money, and all those appurtenances of war, which taken together, though the cost of each may be small, make up a very large total. In a time of war, too, the Civil Service of the country is liable to feel the general pressure, and it often happens that the receipts from the treasury fall into arrear. All these causes had told, and were still telling, on the position of Hastings. His position, be it recollected, was a position of the greatest responsibility. He could not afford to allow a single thread of his complicated policy—a policy, be it always understood, not complicated by any crotchet or failure of his own—to drop, without endangering the safety of the entire scheme, and with it the ruin of British India. Money was absolutely necessary to him. And he had no money.

In the circumstances in which he was at the moment, forced to take refuge in a fortress; to plan measures for the suppression of the rebellion, he did not feel personally inclined to receive the proffered visit of the Nawwáb-Wazír. Knowing that he had already set out, he despatched a messenger

with a letter in which he represented to Ásafu-d daulah the advisability of returning to Lakhnao. Fortunately, the Nawwáb was obstinate, and would not be denied. A few days later, accordingly, Hastings received the son of his old friend with the grace that was natural to him.

To Ásafu'd daulah the reception was most pleasing, for he had large personal interests at stake. He had indulged the most sanguine hopes from the result of the conferences he hoped to hold with the Governor-General. It was therefore a great object with him to conciliate Hastings. Reading between the lines of the letter Hastings had written to him to dissuade him from his visit, he had recognized the great difficulties under which the ruler of British India was labouring. The cause of those difficulties he rightly attributed to want of money. If, he thought, at his first interview, he could, in that respect, lighten the mind of his host, he would lay the foundation for a return of gratitude in the future. On this idea he proceeded. When the two had their first private conference the Nawwáb offered to Hastings, as a private present, partly in bills that would be met, partly in cash and jewels, a sum equal to ten lakhs of rupees. Hastings accepted the offer gratefully, even joyously. It relieved him from his most pressing difficulties.

It was afterwards made a charge against Hastings that he had accepted this considerable sum as a present to himself from a native Prince. Technically, the charge was true. He did accept it for himself, for to himself alone was it offered. But he used it in the same manner in which he had used the two lakhs offered him by Chét Singh. He paid the money, as it came in, into the public treasury, and used it for the public service. To judge impartially the conduct of Hastings, one must place one's self in the position of Hastings. He was administering an embryo-empire which would fall to pieces unless he could procure money. A native Prince offered him as a private present an amount sufficient to save the embryo-empire. Was Hastings to reject the offer because the donor gave it actually to himself, or was he to act as he did act, viz. to take the money, pay it into the public treasury, and, using it for the public service, save the empire? There can, I think, be but one answer to such a question. It is true

that, when reporting the transaction to the Court of Directors, Hastings suggested that the Court, considering the circumstances under which the money was given, might feel disposed to allow him to have the personal advantage of it. But it should not be forgotten that, during his career in India, he had noted that the Court of Directors had, on more than one occasion, granted similar requests. On this point, then, Hastings must be judged by the customs and practice of the epoch in which he lived, when the remuneration of the services was small, and its members were therefore allowed privileges which are no longer permitted, rather than by the practice of a later period, when salaries had been placed on a more becoming footing. As it was, the Court, then very hostile to him, refused to grant him a single farthing.

But, for the moment, the money saved him: saved British India. It gave him that which a business-man yearns for in a financial crisis; it gave him breathing-time. Before it was exhausted, money came in from other quarters; from the arrears due by Chét Singh, and for which his successor made himself responsible; and from other tributes, the payment of which had been temporarily suspended during the crisis, but which was resumed when it became generally recognized how thoroughly the great proconsul acted up to the principle of the Horatian maxim.* He was not indeed yet able to help to the full extent of their requirements the minor presidencies, but he could reassure his lieutenants; he could implant on the minds of all a portion of his firm and resolute nature; for he had other reserves, presently to be mentioned, on which he believed he could depend. Meanwhile he had his time always fully occupied. He maintained a daily correspondence with Popham; directed negotiations with more than one Maráthá Prince; corresponded with the new Rájá of Banáras, Mahíp Narayan; listened to the grievances of the Nawwáb-Wazír of Oudh; and, a little later, just after he had signed with him a new treaty, and had returned to Banáras, threw all his energies into the preparation of a plan of police-supervision for that city, the like of which

* "Æquam memento rebus in arduis
Servare mentem."

had never been attempted before in India. All this amid the clash of arms and the arranging of that practical system of foreign policy which, carried through with wisdom, enabled him a few years later, to hand to his successor, provinces firmly knit together, the nucleus of that empire which has become the wonder and admiration of the world.

The present from Ásafu'd daulah had, for the moment, saved him. But the interview during which it was offered and accepted proved to be the first of many interviews which Hastings had to hold with that Prince. Ásafu'd daulah had to lay before Hastings the overburdened condition of the province of which he was the ruler; overburdened because, with the sanction of the Calcutta Government, conveyed by the then agent, Mr. Bristow, he had been robbed, at his accession, of all the ready money left him by his father; and, beset by his mutinous troops, had been compelled by the triumvirate which then ruled in Calcutta, to undertake new and more weighty engagements with his father's ally, without any of the compensating provisions which that father would have secured. Fully admitting that his province had been badly administered, he pointed out that the British Government of the day, by tying his hands, had materially contributed to that result. He went further, and asked Hastings whether his past experience did not prove that it was more to the advantage of the British, that Oudh, the loyal and devoted Oudh, should be strong rather than weak. Hastings, recognizing the force of the arguments of the young prince, and most anxious to afford him the chance of recovering himself, agreed to modify the then existing treaty—the treaty forced upon the Nawwáb by the triumvirate. Under the terms of that treaty, Messrs. Francis, Monson, and Clavering had compelled him (May 21, 1775) to increase his payments for the British troops occupying Oudh to 2,60,000 rupees for each brigade; to cede to the British the districts of Banáras, Jawanpur, and Ghazípur; and had forbidden him to take possession of the private property which had belonged to his father, and which his mother and grandmother had seized. The most pressing conditions of this treaty Hastings now agreed to alter. By a new treaty negotiated and signed at Chanár, the 19th of September, 1781, it was arranged that

the Nawwáb-Wazír should be responsible for no payments on account of British troops, except for one brigade, at 2,60,000 rupees per mensem, instead of, theretofore, of two brigades and one regiment of cavalry; that the long list of British officers chargeable to the Oudh treasury should be destroyed, and its contents cancelled; that instead thereof, the Nawwáb should agree to defray the expense of one regiment of sipáhís, or twenty-five thousand rupees per month, whose duties should be to protect, at Lakhnao, the office, the treasury, and the person of the English Resident. Certain early dates were fixed on which the old arrangements should cease and the new arrangements begin. It was further provided that if, on any future occasion, the ruler of Oudh should require additional aid in troops from the British, the pay and allowances of those troops should begin from the date of their crossing the Karmnásá; or should the British require assistance from Oudh, the pay and allowances of the Oudh troops should be defrayed by the Company for the time they might serve.

The next clause in the treaty, designed by the Nawwáb-Wazír to remedy the crying injustice to which he had been subjected at the hands of his mother and grandmother, with the connivance of Mr. Bristow, at the date of his father's death, runs as follows:

"that as great distress has arisen to the Nawwáb's Government from the military power and dominion of the jagir-dárs,* he be permitted to resume such as he may find necessary, with a reserve that all such, for the amount of whose jagir the Company are guarantees, shall, in case of the resumption of their lands, be paid the amount of their net collections, through the Resident, in ready money." †

The candid reader will observe that, in this treaty the rights of the jagír-dárs of Oudh would seem to be specially guarded; for, whilst the clause authorized the Nawwáb to resume jagirs, it required him to grant equivalent pensions to the jagir-dárs whose estates had been guaranteed by the British Government in India. Now, the Government of India, administered by the triumvirate, had guaranteed (by the treaty of the 21st of May, 1775, and by two agreements dated the

* It may not be considered unnecessary to repeat that a "jagir-dár" is, in India, "the holder of land given by Government as a reward for services, or as a fee."

† Aitchison's "Treaties," 1st edition, vol. ii. pp. 93–95.

15th of October, 1775) to the mother of the Nawwáb, in consideration of a certain trifling payment to him, the full enjoyment and possession of her jagirs. It would seem, therefore, that the clause in the treaty of 1781 was powerless to affect that lady or her possessions. But during the conversations held by Ásafu'd daulah with Hastings at Chanár, the former had revealed certain facts of recent occurrence at Lakhnao which left no doubt on the mind of Hastings that certainly the younger Begam, known as the Bahu Begam, and possibly her mother, had received many letters from Chét Singh, and had supplied him with money, with men, and with arms; that he was even at the very moment in communication with them both. Under these circumstances the Nawwáb-Wazír proposed to Hastings that he should go beyond the text of the article of the treaty; that, in the view that the Begams, by the aid rendered by them to Chét Singh, had committed or been privy to acts of hostility against the British Government, he should declare forfeited the guarantee given by the Government of the triumvirate, and should assist him with British troops to recover the property of which, by fraud and falsehood, the Begam had despoiled him.

Hastings was sorely tempted. He was a fair-minded man, and he had highly disapproved at the time of the decision regarding the Bahu Begam which the triumvirate had sanctioned. Had he been then in possession of full authority, there would have been no necessity for a new treaty with the Nawwáb-Wazír, for he would never have sanctioned the impudent fraud by means of which the Bahu Begam had robbed her son of his heritage. He had always regarded that transaction as a perverse misuse of high-handed power. Still the actual Government had given its assent to it, and he had felt that the assent once having been given, he could not, without reasonable cause assigned, withdraw a guarantee which had been solemnly granted. In the long correspondence he had conducted with the Nawwáb, since the death of Clavering had made him comparatively free, he had received complaint after complaint of the hostile conduct of the two widows towards the unfortunate ruler; complaints of how they, under the direction of two able Ministers, whom they called eunuchs of the Haram, but who were really men of wealth, capacity,

and influence, had mocked him when he had applied to them in his distress; how the Bahu Begam had gone so far as to declare that she would rather throw her rupees into the river than bestow a single coin on her despised son; but he had not encouraged the Nawwáb to move one step beyond the letter of the agreement of October, 1775. At Chanár, in September, 1781, the case was altered. He had in his hands strong proof furnished by the Nawwáb that the Begams and Ministers had, at a crisis of the fortunes of British India, committed acts of hostility against the English. Was the proof sufficient, he asked himself, to warrant so great a departure from a treaty already signed and acted upon as that urgently pressed upon him by the Nawwáb?

For the moment Hastings gave no reply. He told the Nawwáb that he would write to the Resident on the subject, and that meanwhile he must be content with the clause of the new treaty. We shall narrate presently the action of the Nawwáb, merely premising that he returned to Lakhnao, content for the moment with the reply above quoted. It was after he had left that an event occurred which dispersed any doubts which until then Hastings might have entertained regarding the justice of the action towards the Begams which the Nawwáb had pressed upon him.

It happened that, a short time before, the Chief Justice, Sir Elijah Impey, had quitted Calcutta on his first tour of inspection of the district courts which the recent agreement with Hastings had placed under his supervision. He had but just heard, during his tour, of the outbreak at Banáras, when he received a pressing letter from Hastings begging him to pay him a visit at Chanár. Impey willingly complied; found his host engaged in writing a detailed account of all the circumstances of the rising, and especially of those circumstances which affected the criminality of the Begams. On this point the conscience of Hastings was not quite satisfied. He suggested, therefore, to Impey that he should proceed to Lakhnao to examine into the case by affidavits. This suggestion was acted upon. Without entering further into the details of the long examination that followed, it may be sufficient here to state that a perusal of a translation of the affidavits satisfied Impey that the Begams had been guilty

of the crime imputed to them. He reported to that effect to Hastings, and Hastings wrote then to the Resident, Middleton, giving him authority to further the designs which the Nawwáb had long meditated against the Begams.

To return now to the Nawwáb. That prince, immediately after his arrival at Lakhnao, had set to work with praiseworthy diligence to carry out the contemplated reforms. To dismiss the extra brigades, and to cancel pension-list; to resume some of the lesser estates which he considered had been improperly bestowed, was a work easy to execute. But when he applied to the Begams to refund he met with a curt and sullen refusal. The two favourites who, under the name of eunuchs, acted on their behalf in all matters affecting their property, were men, I have said, of great ability and influence. They had so schemed as to become masters of the situation, with the view of obtaining possession of the estates on the death of their mistresses, and they had persuaded them to agree that not a rupee of the hoarded treasure should be paid out without the countersignature of one or other of them, or, in some cases, of both. They had thus become mayors of the palace, privy to all the inner thoughts and designs of the two ladies. In the matter of the proceedings of the Begams with respect to Chét Singh, they had been advising parties, and it had been under the countersignature of both the ladies that the money lent to that rebel chief had been advanced. Equally with the Begams, they had thus made themselves guilty of levying war against the ally of their liege lord. The Nawwáb knew their power, their enmity to himself; and the weakness of his character made him dread the encounter which he saw was inevitable. Their refusal to disgorge added then to his irresolution.

He did not in the face of it dare to act. He had himself been guilty, in his hours of weakness, of conferring jagirs upon favourites utterly unworthy, and on the receipt of the refusal of the favourites to disgorge, he began to think that it would be better perhaps to leave matters alone. He was encouraged to take this view by the indifference displayed by Middleton. The Resident, in fact, from some reason which has not transpired, did not exert the influence he undoubtedly possessed, and which Hastings had pressed him to exercise,

but seemed inclined to leave the Nawwáb to his own resources. Thus, in the first skirmish, the Begams scored all round.

Such a result was not at all to the taste of Mr. Hastings. Demands for money from Madras, from Central India, from Bombay, in the Calcutta to which he had returned, were pressing upon the Governor-General, and to meet these, or a great part of them, he had trusted to the repayment of the arrears due by the Nawwáb-Wazír of Oudh. After settling matters at Banáras, organizing there a new police, and arranging with the new chief for the conditions that were to exist between the paramount power and the vassal, Hastings had, I have said, returned to Calcutta to a treasury almost empty, and to the necessity, greater than ever, for the prompt supply of money. He had thought that for present expenses he could certainly count on the Oudh arrears. And now he suddenly received a despatch informing him that as the Begams declined to disgorge, the Nawwáb could not pay him. Hastings was not the man to sit quietly under such an answer. He wrote very strongly to Middleton, and the latter, under the influence of that despatch, remonstrated with the Nawwáb, and threatened that in case he should delay further, he would take the matter into his own hands. Awed by that threat, the Nawwáb made up his mind to act with all the vigour of which his nature was capable.

The Begams and their Ministers occupied the palace at Faizábád, which had been the favourite residence of Shujáu'd daulah, and round which, on his return from his defeat at Baksar in 1763, he had constructed a lofty entrenchment, "whose ramparts of rammed clay frown over the Gogra." * Against this palace the Nawwáb directed a portion of the soldiers of the English brigade to march. They did march and invest the palace. Ásafu'd daulah then demanded the surrender of as much of the alienated property of the late Nawwáb as would pay the arrears due to the English up to the end of 1780. The Begams and their favourites, recognizing in the action of the Nawwáb the backing of Hastings, steadily abstained from offering armed resistance, but they as steadily refused to comply with the demand

* Murray's "Bengal:" 1882.

made upon them. Upon this the troops entered the palace, and carefully abstaining from intruding upon the women's apartments, seized the persons of the two favourites and brought them to the Nawwáb, who at once placed them in confinement. They were then required to sign such papers as might be necessary for the restitution to the Nawwáb of the indicated amount of his heritage. For two days * they hesitated; but at length the prison diet proved a persuader to men who had long lived in the lap of luxury. They gave orders for the required sum, and the Nawwáb received it. Some time, however, elapsed before he paid it to Middleton. Under similar pressure they paid somewhat later the amount due for 1781. Ultimately, of the two millions which had been illegally detained by the Begams, they refunded one million. The remaining million the Begams were permitted to retain for their own purposes.

Such, in brief, is the true history of a proceeding which was used at the time, and has since been abundantly employed, to stir up against the British proconsul a storm of hatred, indignation, and reviling. The accusers of Mr. Hastings did not scruple to base their charges upon the most absurd and cruel exaggerations, and the same course has been followed by some of their more modern imitators. Stories of torture practised upon the two favourites, to induce them to deliver up the money demanded; of cruelty practised upon the Begams; were and are still bandied about. It is sufficient to state here that the invectives of Burke and the calumnies of Macaulay have not a single basis of truth upon which to rest. No torture was practised on the eunuchs, no insults were offered to the ladies. The latter remained in their apartments attended upon as carefully, as sedulously, and as respectfully as theretofore. Their own conduct proves how chivalrously, under very trying circumstances, their comfort had been cared for. They both lived long enough to send their special thanks—"strong letters of friendship and commiseration"—to the man whom his slanderers accused of ill-treating

* Mr. Gleig wrote: "The eunuchs had not suffered long ere their resolution gave way; the necessary order for a payment was issued, and within a day or two of the application of this discipline, Mr. Middleton was put in possession," etc.

and insulting them. Yes, it was to Hastings, during his trial before the House of Lords, when an Oriental might well have believed that Fortune had for ever turned her back upon him, that these two ladies sent that consoling message. It speaks as much for the goodness of their hearts and for their gratitude as it testifies to the justifiable conduct of Hastings at the crisis. In his admirable and impartial work, Captain Trotter * has brought out this fact in a strong light; and he has added, on the authority of Lord Valentia,† who visited Lakhnao in 1803, that at that date the younger lady was "alive and hearty, and very rich," and that one of the "tortured" eunuchs was reported as being "well, fat, and enormously rich."‡

From whatever point the candid mind may regard this transaction, the conclusion cannot tend to the discredit of Hastings. To use the expression employed by the Bishop of Rochester on his trial: "The Nawwáb owed the Company a large debt; Hastings represented the Nawwáb's principal creditor; he compelled the Nawwáb to reclaim property unjustly withheld, and to apply it to the discharge of his debt." It is difficult for the candid mind above referred to to find a mistake in the manner in which Hastings accomplished this end. He had in 1775 protested against the spoliation of the Nawwáb by his mother; the triumvirate, however, had insisted upon approving that policy in spite of his protest, and had included it in a treaty they had forced upon the young Nawwáb. Under many temptations and implorings to modify that treaty, Hastings had declined to listen to the prayer, until it had been clearly proved to him that the Begams and their chief counsellors had assisted the rebel chief, Chét Singh, with men, money, and stores. That they did so cannot be questioned. Colonel Hannay, an actor in the scene, writing from Faizábád on the 8th of September, 1781, stated: "This town has more the appearance of belonging to Chét Singh than to the Wazír. . . .

* Captain Trotter's "Warren Hastings," in the Rulers of India series.

† See also note to Forrest's introduction to the same effect.

‡ It is not disputed that the eunuchs were kept for some time later by the Nawwáb in confinement, and were transferred to Lakhnao until the negotiations for the payment of the one million to be surrendered had been concluded; but with that Hastings had nothing to do; he probably did not know it.

Within these few days Shékh Khan, with near a thousand horse and foot, has marched from hence to Banáras." Again, a few days later, the same officer reported that the country from Faizábád to the Ganges was "in the utmost ferment," and that numbers of people, horse and foot, were daily sent to Chét Singh from Faizábád. The Resident, Middleton, reported to the same purport. In the trial of Hastings* it was proved to the satisfaction of the judges that the Begams did help Chét Singh with men, money, and stores whilst he was in arms against the English. After the receipt of proofs which he could not well doubt, and which the inquiry instituted by the Chief Justice decided him to regard as valid, Hastings determined to enforce his claim, to regard the agreement of 1775 as having become invalid by the treasonable action of the Begams. He therefore instructed the Resident to support the Nawwáb in his attempt to recover his heritage, and to see that with the firstfruits of the regained treasures left by his father he should pay his debt to the English. Neither in those instructions, nor in the mode of carrying them out, is there, so far as I am able to discover, a single detail worthy of censure. The apartments of the women were held sacred; the Begams and their attendants were not molested; payment of a portion of the overdue money was quietly demanded from the controlling eunuchs; when they refused to pay, quiet possession was taken of their persons; they were again exhorted to agree to the demand made upon them; and when they still refused, they were told that they must be content to forego, until they should see fit to comply, the succulent meals to which as Muhammadans they were otherwise entitled. For two days they had to be content to abstain from flesh meats. They did not care to try such an unaccustomed diet for more than forty-eight hours, and the second day they gave in.

To most men such a punishment will not appear a very excessive punishment. Most certainly an order to forego animal food for a limited period would not justify the application to it of the term "torture." Yet, as far as my inquiries have enabled me to penetrate, this was the head and front of the offence which has been denounced. To me it seems

* Forrest; Trotter.

that the conduct in question was not only absolutely free from blame; it was merciful. Even had it been otherwise, Hastings had no share in the directing of it. The measures taken were the measures of the Nawwáb; with the details of his action Hastings, who was in Calcutta at the time, had no concern.

It is very easy to criticize. Some men find it even congenial to their natures to trample on a reputation which has been trampled upon already. The question which always presents itself to me when I read such criticisms, and notice such an inclination to stamp with their feet on the departed great, is this: how, placed in the same circumstances, at the same period of Indian history, would these critics have acted themselves? Would they, to use the language of a distinguished writer, have refused "to bow before shadows, and to worship phrases"?* I cannot think it. Their criticisms forbid me to believe that, under similar circumstances, they could have, consistently with their avowed sentiments, dared to employ the means which alone could save the Empire. In a period of extraordinary distress; the British-Indian territories threatened on every side; the French hastening by the sea-route to assist the most powerful sovereign of southern India; the Governor-General destitute of money, whilst the armies of British India trusted solely to him for their supplies, their men, their money, their ammunition, their very means of existence:—such were the circumstances under which Warren Hastings saved the Empire. He saved it alone. He saved it because he refused "to bow before shadows, and worship phrases;" because, "sensible of the greatness of his position, he recognized the greatness of his duties;" because, "believing in his own energies, he dared to be great." He saved it because he procured, by means perfectly justifiable, and at which no moralist can cavil, the money absolutely necessary to assure the provisionment of his armies and of the British districts which otherwise would have been starved. And yet, the modern sentimentalist, arguing as though the India with which Hastings had to deal—the India in the throes of a revolution—had been the well-ordered and peaceful India of the present day, condemns

* Disraeli, in "Coningsby."

him for the methods he employed, though they were the only methods available. Surely posterity has cause to be grateful that the control of British India was in his hands, and not in the hands of his critics.

"To judge the acts of Hastings," writes Captain Trotter, in the work more than once referred to, always with respectful homage, "by the torchlights of party prejudice and passion, would be as unfair as to judge them solely by the ethical and political standards of our own day. Apart from the question of public needs, he had no reason to doubt that the Begams had been 'levying war against the Company,' besides being a constant danger to the peace of Oudh. The resumption of their jagirs was a stroke of sound policy, only too long deferred. The seizure of the treasure was justified by the Begams' conduct, both towards the English and their own sovereign. As for the eunuchs, it seems absurd to hold Hastings responsible for 'tortures' which were never inflicted, and for indignities of which, at the time, he never heard. Oudh was still in effect an independent State, ruled by its own sovereign; and Hastings deemed it no part of his duty to meddle with every detail of the measures adopted by his ally."

I commend this independent and impartial judgment to the consideration of those who have never had the opportunity of judging for themselves, from original sources, of the nature of the actual evidence upon which it has been sought to blacken one of the purest characters of Indian history; of the man who, with Clive and Wellesley, shares the glory of being one of the trio of statesmen, who, "believing in their own energies and daring to be great," founded, under circumstances of unexampled difficulty, the splendid Empire which is the brightest gem in the Imperial Crown of Great Britain.

CHAPTER XXVI.

MR. HASTINGS AGAIN IN CALCUTTA—HIS NEW COUNCILLORS—LORD MACARTNEY—PROCEEDINGS REGARDING HASTINGS IN ENGLAND TO THE BEGINNING OF 1784.

In the twentieth and twenty-first chapters I have narrated the course and conclusion of the Maráthá and the Maisur wars, and have shown how, thanks to the splendid energy and large brain-capacity of Mr. Hastings, "peace with honour" had, on the 11th of May, 1784, been re-established throughout India. The peace with the ruler of Maisur proved indeed to be but an armed truce; but it was a truce from which the better administration of the foreigners from the west would be likely to reap the greater advantage. The warrior, full of genius, who had made the kingdom of Maisur, had disappeared, to be succeeded by a son who possessed half his talents and a bigotry surpassing that of the most bigoted amongst his Ministers. It was most improbable, moreover, that the French, after their thorough failure, when their forces had been led by a Bussy, and their squadrons commanded by the illustrious Suffren, would ever again attempt to displace their old rivals for supremacy in southern India. On the other hand, Hastings for a time remained; and Hastings had, during his long tenure of office, laid down principles, which, followed almost literally by the greatest of his successors, the illustrious Marquess Wellesley, gained for England within twenty years that predominance in India which precluded all idea of rivalry, and which, if protected from the ignorant interference of the House of Commons, will secure for all time the permanent exercise of a sway, beneficial alike to the rulers and the ruled.

How, during the period which closed at the end of 1782, Hastings had been unceasingly employed in maintaining peace within his borders on the Bengal side; how he had been forced to put down a revolt in Banáras, to substitute there a willing for a recalcitrant ruler; how his necessities had forced him to obtain from Oudh the payment of moneys due, without which he would have been unable to carry on his administration, I have told in the last two chapters. But I have not yet been able to record how, during the whole of that period, and during the subsequent period up to the date of the peace with Típu Sultán (May, 1784), many harassing matters, with all of which he had personally to deal, had been forced on his attention; how the new Governor of Madras—presently to be referred to—had taken every opportunity to cavil at, even to dispute, his orders; how his masters in the India Office, always hostile, had acted towards him in a manner such as, had steamships and the telegraph been in existence, would have rendered all government impossible; how his own colleagues in Calcutta still combined to oppose him; and how, sustained only by his own conscience, and by the Court of Proprietors, which represented more truly than the Ministry, than the Court of Directors, and than the House of Commons, the real voice of the people of England, he had pursued his course on lines which he considered, and which were actually, the best calculated to promote the honour, the dignity, and the advantage of Great Britain in India. To some of these measures I now propose to advert.

I may premise by stating the case of Lord Macartney, the Governor of Madras, appointed during the war in the Karnátik. Lord Macartney was a man who, in a life of sixty-nine years, rendered considerable services to his country. Before coming to India he had, as plain Mr. Macartney, been Minister-plenipotentiary to Russia, and had signed there a commercial treaty with Count Panin, the Russian Minister, which, however, the Cabinet of London refused to ratify. Macartney, recalled, then entered Parliament, and became, in 1769, Secretary to the Viceroy of Ireland, Lord Sandwich. He was honoured with the Order of Bath in 1772, and four years later was raised to the Irish peerage. In 1775 he had

been appointed Governor of the Antilles, but, in attempting to defend one of those islands against the French admiral d'Estaing, he had been taken prisoner. He was, however, soon exchanged; and, on the 21st of June, 1781, was nominated to the Governorship of Madras. He arrived in that presidency very prejudiced against Hastings, jealous of his own authority, and yet finding that the prosecution of the war then raging depended entirely on the energies and foresight of the man whom he detested. His co-operation was in consequence so strained as rather to cause embarrassment than to assist the dominant power. In the negotiations with Típu Sultán for the peace which was finally concluded with that potentate, Macartney had almost frustrated the desired issue by displaying too clearly his desire for its attainment; and it had required all the tact of Hastings to convince Típu Sultán of the determination of the Supreme Government to continue the war rather than permit him to retain the places which the genius of his father had conquered. As an administrator, Lord Macartney displayed good abilities; but as the internal administration of Madras after the war did not bring him very much into contact with the Governor-General, I may take leave of him at this point.

In the Supreme Council there had been some changes. Wheler, after the departure of Francis, seemed inclined to give to Hastings the support which he had theretofore refused him, and, before the arrival of other colleagues, he did so. But Wheler was essentially a weak man, greatly influenced by his surroundings, and, in the presence of the new councillors—Messrs. Macpherson and Stables—he again began to hesitate. On the whole, however, he gave Hastings a support which to a great extent counteracted the mischievous cabals of his two juniors in position. The next colleague in rank, he who had succeeded Barwell, Mr. (afterwards Sir John) Macpherson, was a thorough obstructionist. Macpherson had been, at an earlier period in his Indian career, agent to the Nawwáb of Arkát, and, in that capacity, had imbibed all the prejudices and all dislikes of that most vicious prince. Appointed subsequently a writer in the Company's service on the Madras establishment, he had been removed,

on the motion of Lord Pigot, for having, when in England, written to the Nawwáb a memorial parading the important services he had rendered to him. But the Solicitor-General, Wedderburn, afterwards Lord Loughborough, having reported that Macpherson's removal was illegal, the Court of Directors, in 1870–71, nominated him, with the consent of the Crown, to succeed Barwell. An outsider, judging from his antecedents, would have hesitated to pronounce Macpherson to be a colleague with whom Hastings could work smoothly and advantageously. The outsider would have been right. Macpherson, though he displayed none of the malignity of Francis or of Clavering, was always a captious colleague. The real fact is that the men fresh from England had brought with them, stored in their minds, the prejudices of the India Office, and of some of the parliamentary factions; and these prejudices, rooted firm and fed from England, tended always to induce those who held them to receive with great hesitation the recommendations of the proconsul who was in every way, and enormously, their superior.

Nor was the third colleague, Mr. Stables, one whit more satisfactory. He became the intimate ally, the second self, of Macpherson. The state of the Council, with such colleagues, is thus graphically described by Hastings himself in a letter to his agent in England, Major Scott, dated the 15th of October, 1780:—

"You will wonder," he writes, "that all my Council should oppose me. So do I. But the fact is this: Macpherson and Stables have intimidated Wheler, whom they hate, and he them most cordially. Macpherson, who is himself all sweetness, attaches himself everlastingly to Stables, blows him up into a continual tumour, which he takes care to prevent from subsiding; and Stables, from no other cause that I know, opposes me with a rancour so uncommon, that it extends even to his own friends, if my wishes chance to precede his own in any proposal to serve them. In Council he sits sulky and silent, waiting to declare his opinion when mine is recorded; or if he speaks, it is to ask questions of cavil, or to contradict in language not very guarded, and with a tone of insolence which I should ill bear from an equal, and which often throws me off my guard of prudence; for, my dear Scott, I have not that collected firmness of mind which I once possessed, and which gave me such a superiority in my contests with Clavering and his associates. . . . I early remonstrated with Stables on his conduct, and asked him if, in my personal behaviour to him, I had given him any cause of offence. He declared that I had not, but treated him with an attention and confidence which had always

given him the greatest pleasure, or words to that effect; but talked of his situation, Company's orders, and expenses."

This extract will convey to the reader some idea of the difficulties which beset the everyday life of Hastings in Calcutta at this period. Those who have governed will recognize the enormous difficulty of governing with such colleagues. But for the occasional support of Wheler, the task of Hastings would have been impossible. Hastings had to encounter an opposition similar to that of the triumvirate of the earlier period, shorn only of the malignity of Francis. Nothing testifies more to his innate greatness and superiority than the fact that under such circumstances, and receiving constantly from the Court of Directors pointed disapprovals of his policy, especially of the policy with regard to Chét Singh, he was able to govern at all, and to govern well. One remarkable point in his conduct was this: that he never avoided, never shirked an encounter. He always stated the reasons for his proposed action, fairly, clearly, and convincingly. In this way, sometimes, though rarely, he even converted Wheler, after Wheler had been "got at" by the two others. From some measures which he deemed wise, such, for instance, as a measure to suspend Lord Macartney and his Council for an act of the grossest insubordination, coming after many others, he shrank in the presence of his opposing colleagues. Feeling he could not carry his Council with him, and recollecting the wise words of his old friend Dupré, "not to show his teeth without the power of biting," he mentioned the subject unofficially only. Recognizing at once that his colleagues would not thoroughly support him, he did not proceed further.

To recur for a moment to a period in 1781, when the difficulties surrounding Hastings were so great as to seem almost unsurmountable, I may mention one matter of internal administration in which he effected an advantageous change —a change which nevertheless exposed him to most unjust and malignant attack. The matter had reference to the collection of the revenue. He had had, from the earliest times of his sojourn in India—from the time when, shortly after Plassey, he had been Resident at Murshídábád, to the later

period, when, appointed Governor of Bengal, he had appointed provincial Revenue councils—taken the keenest interest in this question. He had long recognized that a proper revenue system was the foundation of sound finance and of pure administration; and he had realized, after an experience of three or four years, that the system of four provincial councils had led to abuses. He therefore proposed and carried a measure by which a Committee of Revenue in Calcutta, composed of four of the Company's civil servants, should be substituted for the provincial councils. Believing that the general collection of the revenue would be better performed by a native thoroughly acquainted with the habits of his own countrymen, Hastings proposed for the post of superintendent of the collections, under the Committee of Revenue, a native of great parts and experience, and, as he believed, of probity, named Gangá Gawind Singh, with the title of Diwán. So far as the purposes of the revenue were concerned the appointment answered all the purposes Hastings expected from it. He found Gangá Gawind faithful, diligent, and able.

"To myself," he added, "he has given proof of a constancy and an attachment which neither the fears nor expectation excited by the prevalence of a very different influence could shake, and at a time when those qualities were so dangerous that, far from finding them amongst the generality of his countrymen, I did not invariably meet with them amongst my own."

Yet, despite the high opinion of this official held by Mr. Hastings, probably because of it, his appointment of this trustworthy man caused his enemies in England to denounce Gangá Gawind as "a detestable instrument of corruption" in the hands of the Governor-General. It seems to me that it is only necessary to record that, on the same occasion, the same enemies declared that the reform of the Revenue system, of which the nomination of Gangá Gawind was a part, was a systematic plan of bribery and peculation, and that the members of the Revenue Committee were "mere tools to a detestable instrument of corruption." Now, prominent amongst those members, was Mr. Shore, the Chairman of the Committee, afterwards Lord Teignmouth, and at a later period Governor-General of India, a gentleman possessing the

highest sense of honour, and absolutely incorruptible. If Mr. Burke could denounce this high-minded English gentleman as a mere tool to a detestable instrument of corruption, because he had been nominated to his post by Mr. Hastings, can the world give the smallest credence to his charges against Gangá Gawind, unproven and denied? The question requires no answer.

For the moment I must ask the reader to travel with me to London to note there the action of the old enemies of Hastings, and of those of more recent appearance who had been stirred up mainly by the persevering spite of Mr. Francis. I may premise by stating that, notwithstanding opposition from many quarters, Hastings had been continued as Governor-General in the Act of Parliament of 1781, with powers neither diminished nor enlarged, still having but one vote in Council, still the target for hostile schemers. It was with reference to the appointment of Sir Elijah Impey to be chief of the Sadr Adálat Court, that the opposition of Francis first made itself manifest. Instructed by his envenomed utterances, Edmund Burke began in the House of Commons a series of vehement attacks, imputing the most corrupt motives to, and inventing the most malignant fictions regarding, Warren Hastings. The Prime Minister, Lord North, with whom the Governor-General had held a continuous correspondence, very full on his part, explaining all his acts and unfolding all his motives, had never liked Hastings. Professing much, dangling before him a peerage, he had always left him in the lurch whenever a crisis occurred. In the battle with the triumvirate he had thrown his great influence in the scale with the latter. He had, as we have seen, powerfully assisted in the intrigue for the replacement of Hastings, which the timely death of Monson rendered abortive. Writing smooth words, he had always watched the opportunity to strike. The failure of his policy with respect to the colonists in America had, indeed, of later years, caused him to abate the display of an animosity which still, as events proved, burned strongly within him. He displayed this feeling when Burke, towards the close of 1781, opened his attack regarding the appointment of Impey. Avowing his conviction that Hastings

had been guided in that appointment by pure motives, Lord North yet declined to defend the act itself. A Committee, of which General Smith was the chairman, was then appointed to examine and to report on the case. The conclusions of this Committee, composed to a great extent of the enemies of Hastings, could scarcely be doubtful. Instead of limiting their inquiries to the matter submitted to it, the members of it called for papers, papers especially which bore upon the alleged resignation of Hastings, hoping to found thereon matters of accusation against him. In this they failed; but their report, submitted to the House in February, 1782, displayed an animosity which, based apparently on public grounds, imposed for a time upon many, and tended to range in the ranks of the enemies of Hastings a certain number of men who up to that period had shown a disposition to be neutral.

Nor were the Directors of the East India Company more favourably disposed towards their great servant than was the House of Commons. The despatch which they sent out, blaming in every particular his conduct with respect to Chét Singh, stands a model of unjust, unstatesmanlike, and ignorant criticism. The motives which inspired it were ill-concealed by the tenor of the despatches which accompanied it. The gravamen of Hastings' offence had been the replacement, at Banáras, of Fowke by Markham, and at Lakhnao, of Bristow by Middleton. Of the effect of these criticisms on Hastings I shall write in the next chapter.

Nor were matters in the Government and in the House mended for Hastings when, on the 16th of March, 1782, Lord North's ill-starred Ministry came to an end. He was succeeded by the Marquess of Rockingham, under whom Lord Shelburne held office as Secretary of State, and Burke as Paymaster-General, but without a seat in the Cabinet. A French writer has called Burke "the soul of the Ministry," and undoubtedly his influence in it was very great. Mr. Gleig * tells us that whilst Lord Rockingham was entirely in the hands of Burke, Burke's political opposition to Mr. Hastings had degenerated by this time into rancour.

* "Memoirs of the Life of the Right Hon. Warren Hastings," by the Rev. G. R. Gleig, M.A., in three volumes: vol. ii. p. 474.

"He threatened," continues Mr. Gleig, "to resign office as paymaster of the forces, unless the strength of the Cabinet were put forth against his enemy; and the Cabinet, not very cordial upon any point, yielded to his violence in this." *

Thus it happened that the change of Ministry brought but little consolation or support to Mr. Hastings. On the 15th of April following, the new Advocate-General, Henry Dundas—who, in later years, as Lord Melville, was attacked in a similar manner before the House of Commons and tried before the House of Lords—made a most violent attack upon Hastings. Burke, who supported him, not only proposed to effect an entire change in the constitution of the East India Company, but obtained leave to bring in a Bill for that purpose. By the exertions of the friends of Mr. Hastings this action was deferred. It was, however, followed up by the indefatigable Burke. Allied then with Charles Fox he carried everything before him in the House of Commons, and finally caused to be accepted forty-four resolutions, one of which, aimed specially at Hastings, declared "that it was the duty of the Court to address the Crown for the removal from India of all those whom the House had censured."

Then was shown, in a manner worthy to be remembered, that there are occasions when the voice of the House of Commons does not represent the convictions of the nation; when faction, inspired by sordid motives, runs counter to the national conscience. No one will pretend for a moment that the unreformed House of Commons of the last century represented the feelings of the educated classes regarding India to the same extent as did the proprietors of the East India Stock. The interests and fortunes of those proprietors were bound up in the good and righteous administration of their possessions in India. They were determined that the voice of an interested and malignant faction should not prevail so far as to affect injuriously the Governor

* Mr. Gleig adds the reasoning which led to such an ignominious conclusion. He tells us that Lord Shelburne and Lord Ashburton, considering the threat made by Burke to resign his office, exclaimed, "What can we do? We entertain the highest personal respect and regard for Mr. Hastings, but the interests of the nation are at stake, and we cannot, to save an individual, however meritorious, ruin our party and break up the Government."

It is consoling to reflect that the Government was broken up despite of its members having acted on the very dubious morality indicated by the words of two of its leading members.

who had done so much for them. Promptly then they took up the glove cast in the arena by Edmund Burke, summoned a public meeting of the proprietors, and, amid the frantic exultation and enthusiastic shouts of an enormous majority, passed the resolution, "that the Court of Directors is not bound to attend to any suggestions which may emanate from any one branch of the legislature."

For the faction in the House of Commons—none the less a faction because it expressed the views of a temporary majority—this resolution was a knock-down blow. But when, a little later, a garbled account of the action of Mr. Hastings at Banáras reached the country, the faction once more raised its malignant head, and on the 27th of May, Dundas gave notice that the following day he should move a resolution for the recall of Mr. Hastings, Burke supporting him and announcing that he and his friends would endeavour to obtain their end through the channel of the Court of Directors. The friends of Hastings promptly waited upon the Chairman of the Court, and obtained from him a pledge that, upon receiving the requisition from the Government, he would refer —as he was bound in law to do—to the Court of Proprietors. This was done. Again did the proprietors meet; again did they debate the question; and once again did they save India. They passed with acclamation the resolution that

"The Court of Directors be recommended not to take any steps for the removal of the Governor-General, without laying their proceedings before a General Court, to be specially called for the occasion."

The second interference on the part of the Court of Proprietors shelved the question in the moribund House of Commons. The efforts which Major Scott directed to the exposing of the true meaning of the opposition of Francis, rendered that personage for a time the object of general contempt. "That Smith [the chairman of the committee], or Francis, would have been the man [to succeed Hastings] I have not a doubt," wrote Major Scott on the 26th of June, 1782, "had we not fully and clearly explained their characters to the public." Again, alluding to the arrangement said to have been made that Lord Cornwallis had been privately nominated to succeed him, he wrote:

"We have fairly knocked up Smith and Francis, and whenever you do come away, my dear sir, it will surely be to your honour that a man of the highest rank almost in this country is pitched upon to succeed you."

Just one week after the date of this letter the death of Lord Rockingham caused a change in the *personnel* of the Ministry. The King sent for Lord Shelburne; Fox and Burke resigned; William Pitt became Chancellor of the Exchequer; Henry Dundas remained. But, notwithstanding that Burke no longer was a Minister, his opposition never waned. Closely allied with him were the majority of the Court of Directors. Amongst themselves these had resolved to remove Hastings from India. In the third week of August some of the leading Directors drew up resolutions, in which, after acquitting Hastings of "corrupt motive," and of any suspicion "of peculation," they proposed that he should be—

"removed from the Government of Bengal, such removal to take place on or before the departure of the last ship of the season after these advices shall arrive in Bengal; that E. Wheler and J. Macpherson, Esq., having concurred in opinion with the said Warren Hastings, Esq., be also removed, and that Sir Eyre Coote, having applied for a successor, be also removed."

The names of the successors to these four gentlemen were not stated, but the blanks left were to be filled up only in case of the resolution being carried.

Mr. Gleig states that the secret prompter of this manœuvre was Lord Shelburne himself, who, whilst professing to be a friend to Hastings, was secretly anxious that he should be got rid of without scandal. More even than in the present day the Ministers of the Crown were utterly ignorant about India. They often agreed with the Court of Directors in the transmission of despatches which, had the instructions therein contained been acted upon, would have caused in that country the greatest confusion and trouble. Fortunately the long sea-voyage greatly assisted the Governor-General; for it almost always happened that when the despatches did arrive events had taken a direction quite foreign to their purport. At the time of which I am now writing the craze at the India Office was to restore Chét Singh to the zamíndárí of Banáras. Such a measure could not have failed to shake the authority and lower the prestige of the Governor-General, engaged in two wars in different parts of India which called forth all his

resources. With this despatch, or included in it, was a direction that Fowke should be restored to the Residency of Banáras, and Bristow to that of Lakhnao. How Hastings dealt with these instructions I shall state when I return, as I shall in the chapter that follows, to the narrative of his proceedings in Calcutta.

It is impossible meanwhile to slur over the proceedings of his enemies in the mother-country. In December of the same year, Dundas, who, it will be remembered, had in the month of May preceding, passed certain resolutions against Hastings, which the action of the Court of Proprietors had rendered innocuous, made a violent attack on that body, and gave notice that after Christmas he would again call the attention of the House to the subject. He demanded further that copies of the late proceedings at the India House should be laid on the table. The same night Charles Fox denounced Hastings as a great public delinquent; whilst Burke surpassed even himself in the reckless violence of his animadversions. Looking back to these debates, it seems wonderful how a man in the position of Mr. Hastings could have stood his ground for a week against the fierce opposition of the House of Commons, assailed alike by members of the Government and members of the Opposition, the Prime Minister secretly working against him. The true explanation may lie in the fact that the unreformed House did not really represent the nation. The King's wishes then counted for something, and George III., strong in insight, had formed a high opinion of Hastings.

The attacks were constantly renewed. Dundas brought in a Bill for the better government of India, one clause of which provided that Hastings should be recalled, and be replaced by Lord Cornwallis. The friends of Hastings opposed this Bill so manfully that it was abandoned. Meanwhile the Secret Committee was endeavouring to unearth from the proceedings of Hastings in India some matter which they might shape into a tangible charge against their intended victim. For some time they could not get beyond Chét Singh (a very hard nut to crack), when suddenly the arrival of the despatches of Lord Macartney, inveighing against Hastings, accusing this man who had, with the most remarkable fore-

sight and energy, provided resources for the whole of British India, as having wasted the resources of Bengal, as having starved the war in the Karnátik for the purpose of pressing that against the Maráthás, threatened to rouse public opinion against him.

The reader who has accompanied me so far will recognize how utterly false was the charge; how Hastings, standing alone, had fed the English troops in the Karnátik; had provided Madras with soldiers and a general; had done for that presidency more than he had done for his own, at the same time that he was supplying Goddard in Bombay with counsel and money. His had been the brain which had conceived all, foreseen all—made possible success in every quarter. The war with the Maráthás was, though Macartney did not know it, approaching a favourable conclusion, and that conclusion had been the work of the Hastings whom, in his despatches, he was maligning. Hastings had to bear all this—this latest slander added to the many slanders directed against him. Ignorance sat in high places, and statesmen made of ignorance a deity. If there were one point more than any other in the Maráthá war on which Hastings had reason to pride himself, it was that conduct towards Madhují Sindhiá, which brought that chieftain on his knees and made him the most earnest advocate of peace with the English. Yet he had to read a report of the speech of the Prime Minister of England, Lord Shelburne, in which that statesman did not hesitate to assert that Hastings had been duped by Sindhiá, and that there was no prospect of peace with the Maráthás. If ignorance was so honoured in the highest places, is it a wonder that her sway became universal in matters concerning India?

But again did the situation change. On the 21st of February, 1783, Lord Shelburne resigned his office, and there came into power that coalition ministry, of which, in the House of Commons, Fox was the leading spirit. Burke, not admitted to the Cabinet, had a subordinate place in this short-lived administration. He, as was to be expected, inaugurated the anti-Hastings campaign by proposing that a Parliamentary Commission should be appointed to investigate on the spot the merits of the Indian Government. The absurdity of the proposal may be gathered from a glance

at the names of those he would have nominated as Commissioners. They were Philip Francis, General Burgoyne (the man who persecuted Clive to death, and who himself surrendered a British army at Saratoga), Lord Macartney (whose ignorant criticisms on the action of Hastings during the Coast war I have just exposed), Mr. Long, and Mr. W. Burke, both notorious for the parts they had taken against Hastings. So absurd and so palpably unjust was the combination of names that Burke was unable to obtain for his motion the consent of the Cabinet.

I have called this Ministry a short-lived administration. From the first hour of its existence it was doomed. The King, who represented in this respect the feelings of his people, detested it. It would be foreign to this biography were I to enter into the reasons which determined its existence. It must suffice to say that after the House of Lords had rejected the Bill for the better government of India,* introduced by Mr. Fox, and which, if carried into effect, would have anticipated the evil consequences which in the present day have resulted from the bestowal upon a prejudiced and ignorant majority of the House of Commons the right to interfere with the customs of natives of whom they know nothing, it was clear that the end could not be far off. On the 18th of December the coalition ministry was dismissed. William Pitt, called by the King to be Prime Minister of a minority, after defeating every effort of an Opposition filled with rancour to unseat him, appealed to the country on the 25th of March, 1784, and obtained a majority which gave him sixteen years of continuous power. I must leave him in the exercise of his great functions to return to Mr. Hastings in Bengal.

* This Bill provided that the authority of the Company should be transferred to seven Commissioners, nominated by Parliament for four years, after which they were to be named by the Crown; the management of commercial transactions with India was to be placed in the hands of a Committee of Directors, named by the Proprietors.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE CLOSING SCENES OF MR. HASTINGS' ADMINISTRATION IN INDIA—PITT'S INDIA BILL—HASTINGS QUITS INDIA.

Amongst the matters which continued to press heavily on the attention of Mr. Hastings after his return from Banáras were the affairs of Oudh. The Nawwáb-Wazír had displayed, in the carrying out of the measures with regard to which he had come to an agreement with Hastings at Chanár, especially with regard to the payment of arrears due to the Company, an infirmity of purpose not easily reconcilable with his promises. It seemed, moreover, to Hastings, that the Resident, Middleton, had not pressed upon him with sufficient vigour the necessity of adhering to engagements, long since signed and ratified. To remove the uneasiness which, Middleton informed him, the Nawwáb-Wazír felt on many points of the agreement he had entered into, and to give him satisfaction on others with respect to which he entertained fears and suspicions, Hastings, on the 9th of May, 1782, deputed his own confidential secretary, Major Palmer, to proceed to Lakhnao, and, in co-operation with Middleton, to discuss freely with the Nawwáb-Wazír the hesitations which had arisen in his mind, and apparently in the minds of the most influential men about him, with the view of arriving at a conclusion consonant alike to British interests and the interests of Oudh.

Middleton was a great personal friend of Mr. Hastings; he had proved himself an able political officer; he possessed tact and judgment: but sometimes, even the greatest of men have their hours of weakness and their hours of indolence. There can be no doubt that, in dealing with the Nawwáb-Wazír, Middleton had displayed a slackness which was totally

at variance with the energy which had theretofore characterized his actions. Had he been wiser than he was, he would have recognized in the act of the Governor-General, viz. that of despatching Palmer to wake him up, a gentle hint that his lukewarmness had been noticed at Calcutta; and he would have at once bestirred himself to bring to a successful issue the work required at his hands. But, instead of adopting so prudent a line of conduct, Middleton, regarding the advent of Palmer as a rebuke, hung back from cordial co-operation with him, and began to talk of resigning his post. But as one matter, to the accomplishment of which the attention of Middleton had been repeatedly and most specially called by the Governor-General, viz. the full payment by the Nawwáb-Wazír of his debt to the Company, had been allowed to remain on the shelf, Hastings positively refused to accept any resignation that might be tendered by that gentleman until the money due should have been paid. The delay still continuing, Hastings wrote on the 10th of August to Middleton a letter which brought the matter to a definite issue.

"I have received," so he expressed himself, "your repeated assurances, addressed to myself and the Board, that the Nawwáb's debt to the Company should be completely discharged by the end of the year. In my fears for a disappointment in this expectation, and in the contrary belief that in its actual train the debt is more likely to exceed the amount at which it stood last year than to be paid, I hereby apprize you that if at the end of the *Fasli* year,* any part of it shall remain in arrear, I shall move the Board to call upon you publicly to account for it; and that you may know that this declaration is not made on light grounds, I shall enter a copy of this letter upon the Company's records. It will do you no injury if you disprove the justice of my suspicions by the effects of your exertions."

This letter, angry in its tone, for it was written after other letters of a milder character had failed to produce any result, is a complete answer to those who have endeavoured to prove that Middleton had been thrown aside because he had not sufficiently supported the Nawwáb-Wazír in wringing the

* The "*Fasli* year" is the solar year, introduced into the Indian system by the Emperor Akbar. At the time of its introduction it agreed with the "*Hijra*," or commencement of the Muhammadan era (July 16, 622 A.D.), but the *Fasli* years being solar, they fell behind the *Hyra* era at the rate of three years per century.

repayment of his father's treasures from the Begam. It was because, the order for the money having been obtained, the Nawwáb-Wazír delayed to apply it to the purpose of carrying out the agreement he had made with Mr. Hastings, that Middleton was censured. It was a question of discipline. Not in the present day would a Resident be retained at a native Court, who should display the same neglect of his orders as had been manifested by Middleton.

Palmer, meanwhile, had not proved himself a *persona grata* to Middleton, and Hastings, recognizing that the two men could not work together, directed the former to quit Lakhnao and proceed to the Court of the last of the Rohilá chiefs, Faizu'llah Khán, still as ever under British protection. At the same time he wrote to the Haidar Bég, chief minister of the Nawwáb-Wazír, to inform him of the instructions he had given to Middleton, adding that unless Ásafu'd daulah should pay the arrears due to the Company, and unless his minister should bestow proper attention to the gathering in of the collections for the ensuing year, he would insist that the Nawwáb should intrust the administration to fitter hands.

I have narrated in the last chapter, how, early in this year, the Court of Directors had despatched positive instructions to Mr. Hastings to reinstate Mr. Francis Fowke as the Resident at Banáras, and Mr. Bristow at Lakhnao. It is always a misfortune to a Governor-General to have forced upon him men of whose character and previous conduct he does not approve, and who have, in his opinion, but poor qualifications for the post thrust upon them. Bristow proved no exception to the general rule. At the meeting of the Calcutta Council called to consider the question, Hastings, yielding to the orders he had received; pressed by Macpherson; nettled too, perhaps, by the breakdown of his own candidate, Middleton; somewhat encouraged, likewise, by the promises made to him by Bristow, signed the nomination. But, like most men of his stamp, Bristow had learnt nothing and forgotten nothing. He proceeded to Lakhnao, to be a thorn in the side of his own Government, a spear in the hands of those who leaned upon him. The arrears due to the Company by the Nawwáb had meanwhile, thanks to the insistence of the

Governor-General, been paid before the close of the period he had insisted upon so resolutely.

Under compulsion from the same dominant quarter, Hastings restored Fowke to the Banáras agency. He had by this time received letters from the Court of Directors expressing their disapproval of his Banáras policy, and hinting in no guarded words their intention to direct him to restore Chét Singh. In their despatch the Directors had denounced the action of Hastings with respect to that chief as "improper, unwarrantable, and highly impolitic, and" (such as) "may tend to weaken the confidence which the native princes of India ought to have in the justice and moderation of the Company's government."

The reply of Hastings to the animadversions of his masters in Leadenhall Street gave no uncertain sound. He took up their allegations one by one, and boldly declared them to be utterly false. What those allegations were the reader will gather from his replies. The conclusions of the Court above quoted, "arrived at from the facts advanced in proof of them, will," he wrote, "fail, if the facts themselves have no existence." He then proceeded, most logically, to disprove the existence of the alleged facts.

He denied them, one after the other, in the most positive manner. He denied that the Bengal Government had ever pledged itself that the free and uncontrolled possession of the zamíndárí of Banáras and its dependencies should be confirmed to Chét Singh and his heirs for ever. He denied that the Bengal Government had pledged itself to make no other demand upon Chét Singh, or to exercise any kind of authority within the dominions assigned to him, so long as he, Chét Singh, should adhere to the terms of his agreement. He denied that he had ever required Chét Singh to keep up a body of two thousand horse, contrary to a declaration made by the Governor-General in Council that there should be no obligation on him to do so; adding that his demand was solely that the number of horse Chét Singh did maintain should be employed for the general service of the State. Denying, again, that Chét Singh was bound by no other service to the Company than that which compelled him to pay his tribute, Hastings asserted that he was further

bound "by the engagements of fealty, and absolute obedience to every order of the Government he served." Of the accuracy of this statement, he gave the clearest proof. Referring then to the assertion of the Court that Chét Singh was a native prince of India, he held up to scorn the ignorant officialism which had committed itself to such a blunder:

"I deny," he wrote, "that Chét Singh was a native prince of India. He is the son of a collector of the revenue of that province, which his acts and the misfortunes of his master enabled him to convert to a permanent and hereditary possession. This man, whom you have thus ranked among the princes of India, will be astonished, when he hears it, at an elevation so unlooked for; nor less at the independent rights which your commands have assigned him; rights which are so foreign from his conceptions, that I doubt whether he will know in what language to assert them, unless the example which you have thought it consistent with justice, however opposed to policy, to show, of becoming his advocates against your own interests, should inspire any of your own servants to be his advisers and instructors."

Having delivered this withering rebuff, and referred the Court to his own narrative of the outbreak at Banáras as a true record of his proceedings at that place, and of the circumstances which led to those proceedings, Hastings turned to discuss, in a dignified and lofty strain, the censures which the Court had seen fit to pass upon his moral character, as implied in the charge of breach of faith. In rebutting this charge, he was not less successful than in his treatment of the title of Chét Singh to be an Indian prince. A breach of faith, he argued, necessarily implies antecedent and existing engagements, and can only be construed to be such by the express terms of those engagements. Entering then into a detailed narrative of his dealings with Chét Singh, he vindicated his action, and proved the charge of the Court to be absolutely baseless. With respect to the hint, as he understood the terms of the Court's despatch, that his masters might possibly direct him to restore Chét Singh to his former position at Banáras, he promised to display the same "ready and exact submission" to the Court's orders, with respect to dealing with him, as he had shown to its directions to replace Mr. Markham by Francis Fowke, and Mr. Middleton by Bristow. "Of the consequences of such a policy," he added, "I forbear to speak."

Dealing then, in a tone of lofty indignation, with the deliberate manner in which the Court had not hesitated to lower the influence and hamper the authority of its chief executive officer, Hastings thus retorted on his masters, pointing out the evil effects their policy had produced:—

"But it is not in this particular consideration," he continued, "that I dread the effects of your commands. It is in your proclaimed indisposition against the first executive member of your first Government in India. It is as well known to the Indian world as to the Court of English proprietors, that the first declaratory instruments of the dissolution of my influence in the year 1774 were Mr. John Bristow and Mr. Francis Fowke. By your ancient and known constitution the Governor has been ever held forth and understood to possess the ostensible powers of Government. All the correspondence with foreign princes is conducted in his name, and every person resident with them for the management of political concerns is understood to be more especially his representative, and of his choice, and such ought to be the rule; for how otherwise can they trust an agent nominated against the will of his principal; or how, knowing him to act under the variable instructions of a temporary influence or the casual dictates of a majority, can they rely on the measures which he may propose, and which a sudden change of influence, always expected in a deviation from constitutional forms, may undo, and subject, in every instance of their connexion, to a continual fluctuation of affairs?"

Pointing out then how the Court's order to restore Francis Fowke to Banáras and Bristow to Lakhnao, issued independently of his advice, had wholly deprived him of his official powers both in the province of Oudh and in the zamíndárí of Banáras; that his general influence throughout the provinces under his sway had been in consequence wholly lost; or that what might remain of it was sustained only by the prescription of long possession or personal attachment impressed by habits of frequent intercourse, Hastings added—

"I almost shudder at the reflection of what might have happened had these denunciations against your own minister in favour of a man universally considered in this part of the world as justly attainted for his crimes [Chét Singh], the murderer of your servants and soldiers, the rebel against your authority, arrived two months earlier."

He then proceeded to show that at that time Madhují Sindhiá was endeavouring, under very difficult circumstances, to persuade the ministers and allies of the Peshwá to agree

to the terms of peace with the Company which were afterwards signed. On this he writes:—

"I dare to appeal even to your judgment for the reply, and to ask whether the ministers of the Peshwá, possessing the knowledge of such a circumstance, would not have availed themselves of it to withhold their consent to the treaty, either by claiming to include Chét Singh as a party to it, or either overtly or secretly supporting his pretensions, with the view of multiplying our difficulties,"

or, he added, in so many words, waiting for the supersession of the Governor-General with whom they were then treating. Passing on then to a touching vindication of the high and pure principles which had animated him throughout all the phases of his administration, Hastings concluded a very remarkable and noteworthy despatch, by expressing his desire that the Court would be pleased to obtain the early nomination of a person to succeed him in the Government of Fort William; declaring that as soon as he could do so, without prejudice to the Company's affairs, he would resign the service, stipulating at the same time that

"if in the intermediate time you shall proceed to order the restoration of Chét Singh to the zamíndárí from which, by the powers which I legally possessed, and conceive myself legally bound to assert against any subsequent authority to the contrary, derived from the same common source, he was, for crimes of the greatest enormity, dispossessed, and your Council shall resolve to execute the order, I will instantly give up my station and the service."

The despatch finally concluded with an acknowledgment of the zeal for the public service and the support rendered to him by Mr. Wheler, "since the time that we were first in the habit of mutual confidence," that is, since Mr. Wheler was freed from the influence of Philip Francis.

The censures of the Court of Directors, and the attempts, described in the chapter immediately preceding, of a section of the House of Commons, in combination with, and partly deriving their information from, the majority of the Court, produced gradually, as Hastings had anticipated, a feeling of hostility towards himself amongst his colleagues in the Calcutta Council. Macpherson and Stables, never very cordial, took their tone from the aspect of affairs in England, and, during the period of the Coalition Ministry especially, seemed to take pleasure in thwarting all the measures

suggested by the Governor-General. With Lord Macartney, too, his relations became daily more and more strained. Nor was the condition of affairs in Oudh and Banáras sufficiently prosperous to console him for the hostility of his Council. We have seen how he had been forced to replace Macpherson by Bristow at Lakhnao. In the preceding chapter I have told how Bristow, quitting Calcutta with fair promises on his lips, had speedily given evidence that he had, in the interval between his first and second residentship, learnt nothing and forgotten nothing. On the first occasion he had been the complacent ally of Bahu Begam, and had assisted her to despoil her son, the Nawwáb-Wazír. For that prince Bristow had then displayed a contempt bordering on rudeness. He had now returned to the Oudh capital, animated by the same prejudices, and by a resolve to rule himself under the name of the Nawwáb. As on the first occasion he had endeavoured to govern through the Begam and her ministers, so now he selected the chief officer of the Nawwáb, Haidar Beg, and endeavoured, behind the back of the Nawwáb, to associate himself with that nobleman, to the detriment of his master's interests. But Haidar Beg was the same minister whom Hastings had already warned, and he was too shrewd a man to run his head into a noose for the sake of a man like Bristow. The Nawwáb, too, who had assented with no little misgiving to the nomination of Bristow to his court, warned of his intrigues, complained of his conduct to Major Palmer, just returned from his visit to Faizu'llah Khán, and Palmer transmitted the complaints to Hastings, with the additional information that Bristow, repulsed by Haidar Beg, had taken the matter into his own hands, and was monopolizing all the powers of administration in Oudh. Hastings laid the correspondence before Council, and the members of Council promptly demanded an explanation from Bristow. Bristow replied by an absolute denial of all the charges alleged against him, but offered no proof whatever in support of his denial. Then ensued in Council a scene only surpassed in its scandalous character by the scenes which had been of constant occurrence during the era of the triumvirate. Hastings insisted that Bristow should be called upon to

produce proofs as to the truth or falsehood of the charges made against him, and which the Nawwáb was prepared to establish. His colleagues, on the other hand, led by Macpherson, insisted that the word of Bristow should be accepted as a sufficient answer to the said charges. They carried the day, Hastings being unsupported even by Wheler. There remained then to the Governor-General but one resource, and that was to refer the whole matter to the Court of Directors. It was but a poor resource, for it left, meanwhile, the authority of the Governor-General defied and stranded. But as it was the only course he could take, Hastings took it, though with but a scant hope that the reference would produce any satisfactory result. I have only to add, with reference to the unanimous vote against the proposal of Hastings, that Macpherson, the leader of the Opposition, supported by Stables, his *âme damnée*, had intimidated Wheler into agreeing with him.

Whilst engaged in discussions of this nature; in endeavouring to correct the mistakes which Lord Macartney was making in the treaty he was attempting to effect with Tipu Sultan, and from which, but for the action of Hastings, he would have excluded the Nawwáb of the Kárnatik; in guiding the hand of the Bombay Government in matters relating to the Maráthá alliance; in preparing to meet a famine which, from the failure of rain in the due season, threatened to spread from Lahor to the Karmnásá—the river which divided Bihár from Banáras; and in dealing with ordinary matters, in themselves of importance, though not requiring special mention, Hastings had found time to examine into the results of a reform he had two years before effected in the salt department, by the establishment of salt agencies, each under the supervision of a competent civil officer, directly responsible to an official comptroller. At the close of 1783, Hastings received the report that these agencies were producing, after defraying all their own expenses, a net profit of more than fifty lakhs of rupees yearly. The just pride with which he regarded this result of a work he had undertaken on his own responsibility, "every member of the Board opposing it, and even my friend Mr. Barwell not daring to take his share in the hazard of it," found vent

in a private letter to his friend Major Scott. In that letter he pointed out that the revenue from salt, a clear net income of more than fifty lakhs, was unincumbered with official charges; that it constituted a rich dominion without garrisons or a military establishment, and was all of his own creation. Surely no pride could be more just than that which he thus simply expresses in a letter to a private friend.

Every letter, that is, every confidential letter, written by Hastings at this period shows how thoroughly sick of India he had become; how the constant, and apparently never-ending opposition which he experienced from his own colleagues; from his masters in London; and, very often, from the agents he had been compelled to nominate to important posts, was telling upon him. To add enormously to his official troubles, there came just at this time the necessity to separate temporarily from his wife. Mrs. Hastings had borne the climate of Calcutta for fourteen years. During that entire period, if we except the short transport from Madras to Calcutta, the changes of air she had attempted had not taken her very far from Calcutta. She had visited Chandranagar, and Chinsura, had once accompanied her husband as far as Mungér, and had, at a later period, joined him at Banáras. But the time had at last arrived when changes of this character no longer produced the invigorating effect which she had derived from them at an earlier period. The English in India possessed not then those magnificent ranges in the Himálayas, on the Nilgíris, or at Mahábaléshwar, to which the invalid could resort to regain the colour and the appetite which a persistent residence in the sultry plains of India had caused to fade and had impaired. The one remedy was a voyage to Europe; a return to the home of childhood; to the climate which, much abused, and sometimes most apt to find out the weak points in a constitution not naturally strong, has yet braced up to action, from time immemorial, a race of warriors second to none in the world. Most unwilling was Hastings that his wife should separate even temporarily from him. Their common life had been a life of unmixed happiness. Not the shadow of a cloud had ever risen between them. She had been more than his wife; she had been his friend. Endowed munificently by Nature, and her mental

gifts matured by reading and thought, she was capable of understanding the difficulties which beset him, and of taking the part of an adviser and a sympathizer. Despite the circumstances antecedent to her marriage with Hastings, she had conquered public opinion in Calcutta, even as she, at a later period, conquered it at the court of her sovereign in London. Even the most bitter enemies of her husband spoke of her with respect. She always knew how to do the right thing; and she always did it. Of Hastings she was the life, the solace, the joy; and to her he was the hero, the man of men, the demigod.

And now they had to separate for a time. The state of Mrs. Hastings' health towards the close of 1783 rendered it impossible for her to remain longer in the plains of Bengal. She must sail for England. Hastings longed, with a longing those can imagine who have been as happy in their married life as he and his wife had been, to accompany her. But Duty, with her stern but silent influence, stepped in to prevent him. He was told by his medical advisers that she must go.

"Had affairs gone on but indifferently," he wrote to his friend Scott, "it was my intention to leave India in January next [1784]. But as my presence may be a kind of check on Macpherson, who I am convinced would observe no bounds with the Nawwáb-Wazír, were I out of the way, I cannot in honour depart till I receive either an answer to my letter of March last, or till my successor is nominated, and either arrived, or so near, that my departure, if pressed by the season, may produce no intermediate ill consequence; that is to say, I will wait, if necessary, till the next season, which is at least one year longer. In the mean time, as Mrs. Hastings' constitution visibly declines, though not subject to the severe attacks she used to experience, she will part at the time which I had fixed for mine with her, and I shall do all that I can at this early period to make the resolution irrevocable. I stay most reluctantly on every account, for my hands are as effectually bound as they were in the year 1775."

Mrs. Hastings did embark for England on the 10th of January, 1784. Writing to Impey, who, as told in a previous chapter, had been summoned to answer the charge preferred against him with respect to his acceptance of the office of judge of the Sadr Adálat Court, and who had already reached England, Hastings thus expressed himself: "I have made a sacrifice of my own judgment, my ease, and possibly the comfort and happiness of my whole life, to the opinions of others."

In this he meant to say that whilst he, blinded by love, had thought that his wife might remain by his side, he had yielded to the strongly expressed opinion of the physicians. To her, his "beloved, his most amiable, his best Marian," his loving words have the ring of the truest eloquence.

"I followed your ship with my eyes," he wrote from Kalpí, forty-eight miles from Calcutta towards the sea, in his first letter after her departure, "till I could no longer see it, and I passed a most wretched day, with a heart swol'n with affliction and a head raging with pain. . . . Of one thing I am certain, that no time nor habits will remove the pressure of your image from my heart nor from my spirits, nor would I remove it if I could, though it prove a perpetual torment to me. Yesterday as I lay upon my bed, and but half asleep, I felt a sensation of your hand gently moving over my face and neck, and could have sworn that I heard your voice. Oh that I could be sure of such an illusion as often as I lay down! And the reality seems to me an illusion. Yesterday morning I held in my arms all that my heart holds dear, and now she is separated from me as if she had no longer existence. Oh my Marian! I am wretched . . . I love you more than life, for I would not live but in the hope of being once more united to you. O God, grant it! and grant my deserving, my blessed Marian, fortitude to bear what I myself bear so ill; conduct her in health and safety to the termination of her voyage, and once more restore her to me with everything that can render our meeting completely happy. Amen, amen, amen." *

The letters which followed were of the same affectionate and loving character. Space alone fails me to introduce to the reader the full text of a correspondence which Sir Charles Lawson, who examined it at the British Museum, describes as "probably unique," from the love, respect, and admiration which breathed in every line. With fervour Hastings recalls, in these letters, his happiest moments; asks his Marian to recollect, "with what delight you have known me frequently quit the scene of business and run up to your apartment for the sake of deriving a few moments of relief from the looks, the smiles, and the sweet voice of my beloved;" tells her, on the receipt of his first letter from her, despatched from St. Helena, how it had made him so happy; how it had given him food upon which to exist for a week to come; how he tells her that he never loved her so much as that moment. The reader will realize, from the perusal of these few extracts,

* Extracted from correspondence in the British Museum. See also Dr. Busteed's "Echoes from Old Calcutta;" also Sir Charles Lawson's interesting monograph on Warren Hastings.

which could be multiplied *ad infinitum*, how thoroughly his "beloved Marian" had possession of him.

From writing the first-mentioned of these letters Hastings returned to Calcutta—to work. He had now one more inducement—the greatest of all—to break as soon as possible with India: and for ever. It was his great desire, as it has been the desire of so many who have devoted their lives to their country in that great dependency, "to leave the stage of active life while my fortune is in the zenith of its prosperity, and while I have a constitution yet reparable." But he had to deal with men who had no bowels of compassion; who were bent on thwarting and opposing him; who, if, in the agony of his heart, he had stooped to ask of them peace, would have replied in the style in which the revolted Jehu answered the second messenger of King Joram, and afterwards King Joram himself.

On his return to Calcutta, Hastings applied all his energies to the measures necessary for alleviating the distress threatened by the want of rain, the aspect of which became every day more threatening. To retain sufficient food for the possible needs of the districts round the capital, he placed an embargo on the ships freighted with grain by speculators, and stored in several centres the products he had purchased. Providentially the scarcity, though severe, did not reach the length of a famine, properly so called. Towards the end of January rain fell in the north-western provinces in sufficient abundance to secure the summer crops. The precautions he had taken did not the less serve to maintain a supply for Bengal and Bihár sufficient to feed the people until the wheat harvests should ripen.

The cold season of 1783-4 had been particularly unhealthy for Europeans, and many of the English residents of Calcutta had been forced to take leave of absence for change of air. Macpherson had arranged to proceed to Ganjam to sniff the sea air in that town of the northern Sirkars; Stables had decided to run up to Mungér; Wheler remained, however, and Hastings had hoped, with his assistance, to bring up all arrears of business. But matters in Oudh had by this time attained a crisis, to solve which Hastings felt his presence at Lakhnao would be absolutely necessary. Bristow, unable to

make a tool of the chief Minister, Haidar Bég, had written to the Council letters full of charges against that official, because, forsooth, he himself, having assumed a power which was not his by right, had discovered that nobody would obey him. In the middle of the previous December, before the two councillors had departed respectively for Ganjam and Mungér, Hastings had brought the matter before Council for consideration and decision, and had plainly told his colleagues that in the state of anarchy in Oudh caused by the want of accord between the Nawwáb-Wazír and the British Resident, they would have to decide which of the two high officers they would support. Both Macpherson and Stables, whose policy in supporting Bristow had brought about the crisis, acted in a manner which supplied an additional proof to the many with which the world's history abounds—that men who revel in destroying are rarely able to create. The alternative suggested by Hastings frightened them. They adjourned the discussion, in order that, in the flow of private conversation, they might find out the real bent of the secret inclinations of the Governor-General. Finally, after some manœuvring, Macpherson held a conversation with Hastings, in consequence of which the latter gave Wheler, to be shown to his colleagues, a paper containing the requisitions he was prepared to offer as the very utmost he would concede. Either, he wrote in so many words, the Resident's office must be abolished, and the Nawwáb-Wazir restored to his absolute authority; or the majority in Council—the thick-and-thin supporters of Bristow—must prescribe to that gentleman a line of conduct, and keep him within its bounds.

Up to that period the chief difficulty of the Governor-General had lain in the fact that, against his strongly worded protests, his colleagues had insisted on giving a free hand to Bristow. The real meaning of the alternative he presented was that if the English were to interfere at all in the affairs of Oudh they must compel the Resident to obey orders. Macpherson and Stables had recognized the drift of the Governor-General's minute; but being men possessing no imagination, and therefore void of creative power, they had hesitated as to the course they should pursue. To abolish the office of Resident was impossible, so long as the English

Government should be resolved to maintain in India the position it had assumed. On the other hand, recognizing, as they could not fail to recognize, the glaring demerits of Bristow, they could not make up their minds as to the manner in which they should deal with him. At last, after many hesitations, on the 31st of December, they practically laid down their arms. They agreed that Bristow, the cause of all the anarchy, should be recalled; that his office should not be filled; but that Mr. Wombwell, the accomptant of the Company, should continue at Lakhnao, to receive from the Nawwáb-Wazír the written securities of bankers of credit for the payment of the arrears still due to the Company, and for the still accumulating debt. The colleagues of Mr. Hastings further stipulated that Hastings should take upon himself the sole responsibility of this policy.

Such was the agreement arrived at immediately before the departure of Mrs. Hastings for England. The necessary instructions had been transmitted to Bristow, and Macpherson the same day, Stables somewhat later, had proceeded to their destinations at Ganjam and Mungér. It was to preside over the execution of this policy that Hastings had hurried, after taking the last glance at the ship which was conveying all he held dear in the world, from Kalpí to Calcutta. He was not very sanguine as to the success of the policy.

"I have indeed conquered," he wrote to Scott on the 10th of January, "but I feel little inclined to triumph in my victory; for my hands are yet fettered; and such is the wretched state of the Wazír's affairs, that nothing can be more discouraging than the prospect before me. If the Nawwáb-Wazír shall desire me to come to his assistance, I shall offer it to the Board, and shall be better pleased if they refuse than if they assent to it. Yet I will do what I can to obtain their assent."

The anarchy prevailing in the ruling centres at Lakhnao constituted, in Mr. Hastings' mind, a crisis which his presence on the spot alone could solve. Just before the departure of Mr. Stables he had penned a minute, to be discussed and decided in Council, in which he had tendered his services to proceed to Lakhnao. Macpherson had left before the minute had been prepared; Wheler, to whom Hastings had imparted his views, had promised to support it; Stables, on the other hand, on the eve of starting for

Mungér, had declared that he would oppose it. The minute was laid before Council on the 20th of January. Wheler strongly supported the proposal it contained; Stables, as had been anticipated, opposed it. The grounds upon which he based his opposition were two. The first was to the effect that a Governor-General could not legally quit the Presidency; the second, that the Council was expecting to receive from England a new scheme for the administering of the Company's affairs in British India. Hastings, however, overruled the opposition of Stables, and fixed the 15th of February as the day upon which he would quit Calcutta for Lakhnao, carrying with him the full powers of the Council for the settlement of affairs in the province of which that city was the capital. He recognized, and all the good men in India recognized, the absolute necessity for such a personal visit. There was little, in the opinion of the natives of India, that could not be effected by his presence on the spot; but that presence was essential. He himself, whilst regarding his journey as an extreme measure, had more confidence in the result than he ventured to express.

"I know that I can do more good," he wrote to Scott on the 8th of February, "if I have time allowed me, and it is my ambition to close my government with the redemption of a great government, family, and nation from ruin, and however I am defeated in the extent of my design, I am confident that I shall leave my affairs at least not worse than I found them. I depend much on the dependence of the Nawwáb and his ministers, who have no resource if they forfeit my friendship, and on the public opinion. This will greatly facilitate my measures, though in the result it may hurt my credit, as I shall certainly disappoint it, do what I may. In a word, it is the boldest enterprise of my public life, but I confidently hazard the consequences."

Hastings quitted Calcutta to carry out his important mission on the 17th of February, and passing by Baksar and Banáras, in due time reached his destination. It cannot be said that his journey was uneventful, for from his entry into the zamíndárí of Banáras to his arrival at that city, and thence to Jusi—on the left bank of the Ganges, just opposite the fortress of Allahabad, the then frontier town of Oudh—he was followed and persecuted by mobs of complainants setting forth their poverty and their grievances. The fact was that the famine had been felt much more in the frontier zamíndárí

than it had been in Bengal. There, there had been no provident Governor to lay up stores for a possibly trying future. Rather, the native officials who administered the province under the Rájá had directed their main energies to the feathering of their own nests, and had done absolutely nothing for the poorer classes. This state of things forced itself on the mind of Hastings as he journeyed from Baksar to Banáras, beset and interrogated by, and in turn interrogating, the starving population of the districts. He made notes of all the circumstances which, in his opinion, had tended to cause a misery unexampled in his experience, and some time after his arrival in Oudh despatched to his colleagues an exhaustive minute on the subject, detailing the evil and suggesting the remedy; pledging himself, moreover, that if they would accept his views, he would guarantee the future prosperity of the zamíndárí and the payment of its tribute. Although the correspondence bears a date subsequent to that of his arrival at Lakhnao, it will be more convenient if I deal with it in this place.

From several interviews Hastings had at Banáras with all sorts and conditions of men, he had realized that whilst, within the limits of the city, there had been but little distress; without those limits, poverty, misery, even starvation, had reached a point sufficient to shock men ordinarily insensible. The cause of this difference he attributed to the fact that whereas, by the treaty of September, 1781, it had been agreed that, within the city, the civil and criminal jurisdiction should rest in the hands of the Company; outside the city, that is, within all the districts, the criminal administration only should be under the same supervision. For the performance of the civil duties the Rájá would provide. To administer the responsibilities devolving upon him for the city, Hastings had appointed Muhammad Rízá Khán, the same whose name appears so often in connection with Nandkumar in the earlier pages of this biography; and the great experience of this Musalmán, combined with the profound respect he entertained for the Governor-General, and, it might be added, with the regard for his own good name, had so worked together as to produce on his part an administration which maintained order in a city always somewhat inclined

to turbulence, whilst, in its general results, it secured the well-being of all, even of the poorer classes. In the districts, after a time, an opposite system had prevailed. The Rájá who had succeeded Chét Singh, Mahip Naráyan, had indeed at first nominated for the civil administration a man of probity, though devoid of the mental activity and of the hard nature necessary to secure prompt results. Under his administration the peasantry were comparatively content, but the returns to the treasury were tardy. This administrator therefore was dismissed, and his successor was told that his first duty was to remit the revenue, no matter what means he might employ to collect it, on the date on which it might become due. The result was punctual payment of the revenue, but a starving population. At the time of the visit of Hastings the misery had been aggravated by that failure of the rainfall to which I have previously referred. Hastings having, as I have said, taken copious notes of all he had seen and heard, devoted himself, during his stay in Oudh, to the drawing up, for transmission to his colleagues in Council, of an elaborate scheme for the reform of the civil administration of the districts; for the weeding out of worthless officials, and their replacement by men of probity and tried capacity; for the establishment of a regular revenue system for which he took as a model that which he had introduced into Bengal; and for the examination and confirming of land-tenures, at the moment a somewhat complex and difficult question. He transmitted to Calcutta the paper embodying these reforms. There, his colleagues, at the first blush, were inclined to reject it. In their view all that came from Hastings was suspicious. But a thorough examination of the paper convinced them, after a criticism that only just fell short of rejection, that the reforms it embodied were absolutely necessary. They then passed it; but on two conditions, viz. that the Company's revenue should not be affected by the changes it involved; and that Hastings should assume the entire responsibility of enforcing it. To the last condition—always imposed by mediocrity upon genius—Hastings took no exception. Nor did he hesitate to guarantee the first.

At last, on the 27th of March, he reached Lakhnao. He

stayed there, or, at least, in the province of which it was the capital, just five months, occupying himself with the development of a scheme which, whilst restoring to his proper place the Nawwáb-Wazír, should secure to the people, as far as legislation could secure it, some degree of protection for their lives, and security for the carrying on of their industrial pursuits. His early care was to adjust the long outstanding accounts between Oudh and the Company. He did this with so much tact and judgment that ten weeks later he was able to report that not only had all the principal accounts been adjusted, but matters had been placed in train to secure regular payments for the future.

"I have adjusted," he writes to Scott on the 12th of June, "all the disputed accounts between the Nawwáb-Wazír and the Company, and formed the mode of monthly adjustment with the joint signatures and interchange of the minister and our accomptant, which will preclude all future differences, the past being the accumulation of years. The minister has formed all his plans for the ensuing settlement, for the retrenchment of expenses, and the establishment of new and necessary offices; and promises me that all will be in complete execution within a month from this time. He desires me to remain a little longer to give them effect in the first operation, and I have fixed the day of my departure. The settlement will be generally fixed for five years, and if the rains set in well, there will be a sufficiency to pay all the debt of the Company considerably within the next year, *i.e.* from 1st of September to 1st of September, and provide for a new military establishment."

There are two other matters connected with his stay in Oudh which seem to me to require special notice.

The first of these relates to his behaviour towards the Begams. The reader will not have forgotten the story, how, on the death of the late Nawwáb-Wazír, his principal widow, acting with her mother, had appropriated to herself the whole of the property, properly the appanage of the successor of the late Chief, of the value of about two millions, stored in the palace at Faizábád; how she had refused to part with more than a comparatively infinitesimal portion of this treasure to her son, the actual Nawwáb-Wazír; how, in consequence, the province, and with the province, its ruler, had fallen into great embarrassments; how, from the want of cash to pay the troops, the army had mutinied and a rebellion had followed; how, in consequence of the scarcity

of coin, the Nawwáb-Wazír had been unable to keep his monetary engagements with the Company; how, at a crisis of the fortunes of the English—engaged in war with the Maráthás and Haidar Alí—the Nawwáb-Wazír had visited Chanár to implore the good offices and the aid of Hastings; how the latter, recognizing that the misfortunes which had overwhelmed Oudh since the death of Shujáu'd daulah had been due to the spoliation of the son by the mother, had authorized the Nawwáb to employ such measures as might be necessary to recover at least a portion of the inheritance of which he had been unjustly despoiled; how, in consequence, the Nawwáb had besieged the Begams in their palace at Faizábád, and had compelled their trusted officers to yield the sum actually necessary for his purposes. But, subsequently, the Nawwáb had made other demands which, the Begams believed, had not been authorized by Mr. Hastings. They therefore laid the case before that gentleman and begged that he would look into the matter. Hastings entered into the matter in the manner natural to him. He sifted it, that is to say, to the bottom; recognized that whilst the actual Nawwáb-Wazír had not recovered from the Begams more than he had had a legal right to demand, yet that, under the altered conditions which he himself had during his visit initiated, and which were then coming into operation, the Nawwáb could afford to be generous. He noted further that the demands made by the Begams were in themselves inconsiderable; that they affected comparatively small properties in which they had long taken a personal interest; that with them it was a case in which feeling and sentiment had by far the largest share. Satisfied that it would be good policy on the part of the Nawwáb to yield to a demand the granting of which would do more to heal the ancient quarrel than any amount of protestations, he approached Asafu'd daulah, and persuaded him, though not so easily as he had hoped, to accede to his wishes with respect to his mother. It was a very gracious, a very politic, and a very wise action on the part of Hastings; yet, strange to record, not one of his actions has been more misjudged; not one has been more misrepresented; for few has he incurred greater obloquy and that kind of general condemnation

which is the natural resource of the orator or of the writer who, instead of judging for himself from public documents, takes refuge in the sophistical arguments of inflated rhetoricians, or of writers who have followed him, and who, equally with himself, have not cared to stop at any calumny which would blacken the character of the man, *justum et tenacem*, whose intellect towered above their own.*

The other matter which engaged largely the attention of Hastings whilst sojourning in Oudh, and in which he took a very deep interest, was one in which Prince Jawán Bakht, eldest son of the Emperor Sháh Álam, took a leading part. Since we last met Sháh Álam his fortunes had been every day declining. He had become in every sense a puppet king, surrounded by merciless adventurers, unable to leave his capital, and subjected to daily insults. Prince Jawán Bakht, whose whole soul revolted against the insults to which the chief of the Mughal dynasty was subjected, managed, whilst Hastings was at Lakhnao, to escape from the Imperial city. He then made his way into Oudh, and presented himself to the Governor-General, begging for the assistance of the English to restore the authority of the Mughal. Hastings might well have remembered how the father, the actual emperor, had been in a situation not very dissimilar; how he, too, had quitted Dehlí, a fugitive with but scant resources, to implore, first, the assistance of the Nawwáb-Wazír of Oudh; and, after their joint defeat by Munro at Baksar, that of the English; how, eventually, with the aid of the Maráthás, he had entered Dehlí, and, once seated on the throne, had failed to act up to the promise of his early youth. The son had now come to implore the assistance similar to that which the father, just before the second administration of Lord Clive, had almost succeeded in gaining from the government of Mr. Spencer. But there was a fascination about the demeanour of Jawán Bakht which, if it suggested to Hastings any comparison with the father, was a comparison wholly to his advantage. His romantic escape from Dehlí, a description of which he had written, abounding in incidents which displayed a tact, a

* I refer the reader to Thornton's "History of the British Empire in India," 2nd edition, pp. 178, 179.

fulness of resource, and a readiness of wit far beyond the average, produced on the mind of the Englishman a most favourable impression. "He seems to be," he wrote, "of a different character, and has given proofs both of his courage and attachment on some pressing exigencies." He was just the man, Hastings believed, to whom might be entrusted, with some degree of confidence, the work of restoring, in the country between the Jamná and the Ganges, the districts now almost without any government at all; or, if there were any government, it was the haphazard administration of the adventurer and the plunderer. He believed, further, that unless some assistance were rendered with that object, the dynasty of Taimur would be destroyed, and the reign of anarchy would be permanently established.

Further conversations with Prince Jawán Bakht having strengthened this view, Hastings wrote to his colleagues in Calcutta, and set before them the whole case. He urged the claim which the House of Taimur had on the English, its representative having abandoned his title to tribute for the three provinces, on the condition of English support in an emergency; the hopes excited in the breasts of the Royal family by his arrival at Lakhnao; the outrages offered by adventurers to the Royal authority; the character of the young prince; the great advantages which would accrue to English interests from his presence, in a responsible position, and under English guidance, at Dehlí; and, lastly, the culpable remissness of the Company in not having foreseen and prevented the actual crisis. He concluded with pointing out that, unless the English had intended to interfere in a revolution which, there was strong reason to believe, would entail the actual destruction of the ruling House, they ought to have refrained from appointing—as they had appointed—a minister to reside at the court of the Mughal.

Sir Alfred Lyall has well remarked that if Hastings had succeeded in carrying his Council with him on this point, he "would have anticipated prematurely by twenty years the exploits of Lord Lake and Lord Wellesley." The adverb used by Sir Alfred applies exactly to the situation. Hastings doubtless would have succeeded, but he would have raised on all sides enemies with which British India was not then

strong enough to cope. Even Marquess Wellesley, who eventually did carry into execution a policy tending to the same results as those indicated by Hastings, was compelled, before advancing beyond Kánhpur, to destroy absolutely the power of Típu Sultán in the south; to drive the successor of Madhují Sindhiá from the north-west Provinces; to beat the Bhonslé at Assaye; and to initiate the policy in the carrying out of which Lord Lake drove Holkar across the Satlaj. In the course of the second part of those four sections of a great policy the illustrious Marquess did recover, and did restore to the representative of the House of Taimur, the imperial city, which, in after years, was to become the most important factor in the history of a revolt unparalleled—alike for its causes and for the testimony it bore to the splendid qualities of the race which conquered—in the history of the world.

Whilst, then, history will accord to Hastings the credit for a design which, in its theory, was replete with generous instincts, and which displayed a deep insight into a future which, as the great sovereign of the Panjáb once remarked, would encircle the map of India with a red border, we may be thankful that the scheme was not attempted prematurely. The Council, despite the eloquent advocacy of Hastings, refused to give him the necessary powers. Even Wheler kicked; and Hastings, still convinced of its wisdom, was compelled to refuse the prayer of Jawán Bakht, to consign his plan to the pigeon-holes of his bureau, and to cancel the appointment of an officer to act as British Agent at Dehlí.

The other matters which had required the presence of Hastings at Lakhnao had been completed by the end of August. There he had accomplished much in the way of pacifying the country; of establishing regulations which, if adhered to, would secure the happiness and security of the several classes of the country. Amongst the reforms he effected may be cited the formation of an establishment for military purposes on a regular system, very similar to that governing the sipáhí force in British India; the settlement of all arrears, and the providing of a system, akin to the budget system, by which certain sums derivable from the actual

revenue were to be set apart for specified services. Warned by the action of Bristow, he had been careful to restrict within specified limits the power of the Resident. That officer, whilst the mouthpiece of the Council, was absolutely prohibited from interfering in the internal affairs of the country. Hastings had endeavoured, moreover, to reduce the burden which a previous policy, not applicable to the actual circumstances, had imposed upon Oudh—the burden of supporting a brigade of British troops stationed on the northern frontier of that province; but in this endeavour he was foiled, the Council deeming it preferable that the Nawwáb should bear a portion of the British military expenses rather than that Right and Justice should have their sway. Nevertheless, despite of the two disappointments I have enumerated, Hastings accomplished much for Oudh, and he quitted Lakhnao, at the end of August, very hopeful that his reforms would bear rich fruit.

"In the art of administrative organisation," wrote recently Sir Alfred Lyall,* who once administered the very province which has been mainly the subject of this chapter, "Hastings always displayed skill and knowledge to a degree that places him far above all his predecessors and contemporaries in India, who indeed (except Clive) were for the most part remarkably deficient in the higher qualifications for the political settlement of a great country. We may therefore fairly regard Hastings as the founder of the school of administration, which has since had a not unsuccessful development in India, and as the ancestor by official filiation of a long line of not unworthy descendants, who have continued his traditions and continued his methods of revenue management and orderly internal reformation throughout the provinces which have from time to time been added to his original Presidency of Bengal."

These eloquent words, springing from the quarter whence they emanate, speak volumes for the great powers of Mr. Hastings. It is much, indeed, to follow and to work out fresh lines on a track the principles of which have been laid down with care and judgment by another, and, pursuing that course, to obtain results such as those which have placed the Civil Service of India in the lofty position which it holds in the world. But there is a merit greater even than that—the merit of having been the original designer; of having been

* Lyall's "Warren Hastings," p. 172.

the man who out of chaos created the well-ordered plan; who indicated the leading features on which those who were to come after him would be obliged to work. That credit and that glory belong to Warren Hastings.

Hastings quitted Lakhnao on the 27th of August. The rainy season having well set in, he resolved to proceed by boat from Daundiákherá, a town on the Ganges, fifty miles south from Lakhnao, and thirty to the south-east of Kánhpur. He had a wet and unpleasant march.

"The plains," he wrote to Mrs. Hastings, "were overflowed, and every hollow way became an impassable river; insomuch that many people, and some of my own, were drowned in attempting to pass the depths which but a fortnight before were dry ground."

The Nawwáb accompanied him part of the way, and would have proceeded as far as Banáras, but for the inclemency of the weather and the badness of the roads. On the 5th of September, Hastings reached Daundiákherá; and, on the day but one after, "in an evil hour," he wrote, "put off, or rather attempted it, against a strong wind, beating us on a lee shore." Almost immediately he suffered shipwreck. The rudder, already patched, broke; the boat became unmanageable, and, driven rapidly by the stream, in a few seconds was stranded. As it was impossible to repair the rudder, Hastings took a less cumbersome boat; reached Mirzápur at three o'clock the following afternoon; and arrived at Chanár at eight o'clock on the morning of the 7th.

We may perhaps advantageously rest for a few hours with Hastings at Chanár, and whilst he is waiting to receive news from England of the very greatest importance, though he scarcely anticipated their nature, we may take a glimpse of the mode of life he was leading, a type of that which he had led throughout his sojourn in the East.

"It will be of consequence to you to know," he writes to his wife at this period, "that though I have been very much exposed to both extremities of heat and wet, I have not suffered from either, having invariably preserved my health in every occasion of exertion, and never complaining but when I have been at rest. My complaints, such as they are, evidently proceed from the weather, and are languor, lassitude, and inactivity. I eat sparingly; I never sup, and am generally a-bed by ten. I breakfast at six. I bathe with

cold water daily, and whilst I was at Lakhnao twice a-day, using sooreys * cooled with ice. Though my mind has laboured under a constant and severe load, yet the business which has occupied it has been light, with no variety to draw my attention different ways, and with little vexation. To these may be added, that unless everybody was in a conspiracy to deceive me, all ranks of people were pleased, not because I did good, but that I did no ill. With such advantages I ought to do better."

Hastings closes this part of his letter with the remark that although he requires a multitude of aids to cure him thoroughly, they may all be included in two comprehensive terms—"a hard frost and my own fireside."

He had reached Chanár on the 7th. On the 8th he received from England the first news of the dissolution of Parliament on the 25th of March, and of the happy result of the elections of May, showing that a hundred and sixty friends of the coalition had lost their seats; and that Mr. Pitt had an ample majority. With this news came an intimation, though not in an authoritative form, that the Ministry intended to begin the session by introducing a Bill for the regulation of the superior government of India. He was assured, likewise, that his credit stood very high alike with the Company, the Ministers, and the public, and that new and distinct powers would be added to his office. This information did not, however, affect the resolution Hastings had arrived at to leave India at the beginning of the following year. "I am more confirmed," he wrote to his wife, "in my determination of leaving India in January next by every argument which has been urged against it." He was not so vain as to believe that it was the wish either of the actual Government or of any other Government, that he should remain for any purpose but as a cypher to keep the office open for one of their own followers; and he was not pleased "to be made so pitiful an instrument." The only conditions, he declared, on which he would remain, were these: viz. that the Court of Directors should order the Council to yield him the lead, with the responsibility, on all matters on which he should differ from his colleagues, or they should differ from him; and that they

* A Soorey, properly Surábí, signifies a porous earthen goblet, of a globular shape, capable of containing a sufficient quantity of water to give a good douche.

should require him, in virtue of such an order, to stay on. Under such circumstances, he wrote—

"I should deem myself bound, against every consideration of domestic comfort, of life, of fortune, though I were now to sacrifice them for ever to remain; . . . if not, I will not, though all my friends should unite in soliciting it."

There were many reasons which weighed with him in coming to this resolution. Like every man of extraordinary capacity, Hastings was thoroughly conscious of his own powers. For years he had been galled by the conviction that his long struggles with Clavering, Monson, and Francis, had warred against the thorough development of his well-considered plans. His actual position at the moment he wrote the words I have quoted, was but another chapter of the same struggle. He longed, with the ardent longing of genius, to be free to put into action the thoughts his brain might conceive, free from the ignominy of being compelled to hammer into the heads of men cursed with mental sterility all the reasons for his procedure.

"It is hard," he wrote in the letter already quoted from—"it is hard to see the good that I could do, and am not permitted to do it; and harder to be made accountable for the acts of others, and to be regarded as the only manager of affairs, when I have no more than a single vote with the others who are determined to say 'no' to all that I propose."

Nor had he any reason for remaining on financial or other grounds. "My income," he wrote, "is not equal to all my present expenses; I shall have hardly a competency, let me arrive in England at whatever time." The other circumstances which prompted him to adhere to his resolution to retire were his declining health; the loss by the separation from his wife of domestic happiness; the probability of rendering this everlasting by a longer residence in a climate which had become noxious to him; his inability to conduct the necessary measures of administration with associates "who are bound in opposition to me, and will not act on their own authority;" the certainty of incurring censure for results for which he, bound to his colleagues, would not be really responsible; and, lastly, "the hazard of some fatal

disaster, in consequence of the same want of union, which is a want of government."

Hastings had not despatched the letter containing these reflections when, on the night of the 30th of September, he received the happy news that his wife had quitted St. Helena on her way to England; that she had derived great benefit from the voyage, and was looking better than his correspondent—who was no other than the Markham whom he had made Resident at Banáras, and who had subsequently been obliged to cede that office to Fowke—had ever seen her. It is difficult to imagine his delight when he received this news. In the loving letter which he penned at once to her of whom he was always the lover, he poured out all his thoughts, all his hopes for the future.

At Chanár and Banáras Hastings remained till the 22nd of October, engaged alike in watching from a close distance the immediate results of the reforms of which he had, in Oudh, laid the foundation, and in giving effect to the measures he had recommended for the better administration of the Banáras zamíndárí. His return thence was hastened by information which reached him of the death of his colleague, Mr. Wheler. He set out accordingly on the morning of the 22nd for Baksar; slept there, and proceeded the next morning to Patná, arriving there at eight o'clock the same evening. Remaining at Patná one day, he pushed on in his boat, and reached Bhágalpur on the night of the 24th. He left on the 27th; reached Rangámatí, in the Murshídábád district, on the 29th; stayed there a day and a half, and pushed on thence to Sukságar, thirty-five miles to the north of Calcutta, at noon on the 31st. There—his colleague, Mr. Stables, being absent from Calcutta, and the other, Macpherson, being sick—he stayed a few days. In the second week of November we find him again at the capital, meeting his two colleagues in Council, "hitherto," he adds, "in good humour."

If at any moment Hastings had hoped that he would find in William Pitt a statesman who would support his forward policy, he was soon undeceived. To a letter addressed by Hastings to him as to his official chief, in which he had entered at some length, and with some enthusiasm, into his plans regarding the Prince Jawán Bakht, he received,

in the third week of November, a reply which forced upon him the conviction that he had nothing to hope for from the statesman who had in his hands the moulding of the new policy for India. There had been a strong feeling, or rather a strong sentiment, gradually rising in political circles in England, that matters in India had been proceeding rather rapidly; and ill-informed people, who knew nothing at all about the country, nor of the influences which had impelled Hastings to engage in the Rohíla war; into the war with the Maráthás; and afterwards, into a life-and-death conflict with the great ruler of Maisur—assumed with a light heart the position of censors. We have seen in our own day, especially in the House of Commons, that nothing is impossible to the brazen-faced critic, who, possessing but a smattering of general information, has no knowledge of the special subject upon which he may choose to descant. There were faddists even in those days; and the men who supported the fallacies they propounded had this advantage over their successors in boastful ignorance, in that they had, in the line they had taken against Hastings, the support of men of intellect and weight in the House. The impression had consequently begun to prevail that these wars had been initiated for the personal advantage of Hastings. Otherwise, asked the ignorant denunciators, why should he have engaged in them? There can be little doubt but that speeches to this effect, continually repeated, constantly insisted upon, had had some effect upon the mind of William Pitt, who, like most of the statesmen of that day, had to depend for his knowledge of India on the reports of partisans, often interested, never quite impartial. That Pitt had imbibed some of the crotchets; that he had been for the moment captivated by the sonorous phrases in favour of peace which filled the air; may be gathered from the speech he delivered when he brought in his Bill for the better government of India. There was but little in the scheme itself that commended itself to Hastings. He saw in it the transfer of the political power of the Company to a Board dependent on the Minister of the day, and therefore on the House of Commons. He read in it also, though his own name was not mentioned, many indications of want of faith in

himself. When he read how Pitt had urged the necessity of curbing the ambitious spirit of conquest in the Government of Bengal; how he had denounced the arrangement made between the Governor-General and the Chief Justice for the better carrying on of civil procedure in Calcutta, as being disgraceful to the national character and shocking to the feelings of humanity; how, alluding evidently to the manner in which Hastings had baffled previous efforts to recall him, he had spoken of the necessity of severely punishing disobedience of orders; the conviction rushed upon him that he himself was the object aimed at; that it was he who was to be sacrificed. Carefully considering, a little later, the Bill, in its complete form, he found all his previous impressions confirmed. "It is," he wrote, "so unequivocal a demonstration that my resignation of the service is accepted and desired that I shall lose no time in preparing the voyage."

He was, indeed, supremely mortified at the turn events had taken. His correspondence with Scott had led him to believe that the young Prime Minister was favourably disposed towards him; that the Lord Chancellor, Thurlow, had pressed his claims upon him; and had even gone so far as to assert that they were both indebted to the action of Hastings in India for the high positions which they occupied. But Pitt had no personal knowledge of Hastings. A member of the House of Commons, he had listened to the vituperation heaped upon him by politicians of repute; and he had been unable, from his inner knowledge of the circumstances of India, to rebut all the charges preferred against him with so much volubility and persistence. It was not that he believed those charges. He had never examined them. Some of them required explanation; but they were "not proven." And being not proven, that is, there being a possibility that they might be true, Pitt was unwilling, at this crisis of his young fortunes, to take a step which might increase his difficulties. To have cast his shield over Hastings might, he possibly argued, entail upon him the necessity for a laboured defence against charges to which his particular friend, Dundas, had previously committed himself. He desired, in a word, to launch his new Bill with a new crew, entirely unconnected with the scandals and quarrels of the past.

Hastings, on the other hand, had hoped much from the advent to power of the Pitt Ministry; still more, from its recent confirmation in office. That the Ministry would lose no time in dealing with India by means of a new Bill he had foreseen. But he had believed that such a Bill, whilst maintaining the chartered rights of the Company, would effect reforms in the governing Council in India by bestowing upon the Governor-General the power, whenever he might deem it necessary, to override his colleagues, and that to himself would be entrusted the carrying out of this reform. In his theory the members of Council were to be, as they are at the present day, advisers only. Conscious, in his heart of hearts, how he had slaved for India; how the good which had been effected during his administration had been accomplished despite of opposition such as would have overwhelmed an inferior man; and yet, how much more he might have effected had his hands been free; he had never doubted but that the Prime Minister would place in his experienced hands the task of carrying out arrangements which, as far as the administration in India were concerned, were the very arrangements that he himself had suggested. From the greatness of his hopes in this respect may be measured the greatness of his disappointment. In his letter to Scott, commenting on the Bill and on Pitt's speech in introducing it, he laid bare the bitterness he experienced. Pitt, he said, in so many words, had introduced him to his audience as a being clothed with the attributes of ambition, of a spirit of conquest, of a thirst of blood, of a propensity to the expenditure of money, of improvidence in creating overcharged establishments, of disobedience to orders, of rapacity, of plunder, and of extortion. That the Prime Minister should paint such a picture, so little representing the actual facts; that the world should apply it to himself, was most intolerable. He would, however, do nothing precipitately; but should he, up to the 31st of January, 1785, hear no more on the subject from England, he would act on his previously announced resolution, and leave India for ever.

Having thus announced his intention, Hastings made an appeal to his colleagues to carry out, after his departure, the system he had devised for the affairs of Oudh. They gave

him at once the promise he asked for. They supported him likewise in maturing a scheme he had drawn up for retrenchments in the civil administration. Then he wrote, signed, and sealed a letter to the Court of Directors announcing his resignation of his office. A few days later, having converted his private property into money, and settled all his private affairs, he made over to Mr. Macpherson, on the 1st of February, 1785, at the last Council he attended, the keys of the Treasury and of Fort William; and the same evening set out for Khejírí, the station near the mouth of the Hugli, whence the arrival of ships from England is first noted. On the 5th the good ship *Berrington* was signalled; the following day he was in occupation of his state-room; on the 7th the ship sailed; and on the 8th the pilot left her. The personal connection of Hastings with India was severed for ever.

There are some matters connected with his departure from the country he had governed so long and with so much ability, and had placed on a basis such as made it possible for the great Marquess who followed him some twelve years later to accomplish the welding together which he had meditated, which must not be left unrecorded. Amongst these are his farewells to his colleagues, to his friends, and to the soldiers who had so gloriously carried out his orders. To the members of Council, composed of men who had never heartily supported him, and who, though free from the malevolent bitterness which had characterized his earlier colleagues, he offered, in a last State-paper, his warmest and most affectionate wishes for the prosperity and success of their public administration, and for their private ease, credit, and happiness. To the members of the Civil Service generally he expressed his regret that the custom of the service had not provided any regular channel by which he could fitly acknowledge the benefits he had derived from their labours. He declared his conviction, based on his experience of their labours, that the character of that service had been marked during his administration by "a liberality of sentiment, a susceptibility and firmness of attachment, a disdain of sordid emolument, a spirit of assiduity, and consequent expertness in business." His sentiments towards the

army were expressed at a review, held shortly before his departure, of the troops who, under the leadership of Colonel Pearse, already mentioned in these pages, had fought against Haidar Alí and his son.

"As he rode bareheaded," writes Captain Trotter, in his excellent monograph,* "in a plain blue coat, along the diminished ranks of sipáhís dressed in motley and patched uniforms, the cheers that greeted him showed the strength of the hold on the affections of the Bengal army."

Colonel Pearse, who, with two of his officers, received a sword of honour, was requested by Hastings to thank the officers and men for their past services. To every sipáhí who had served in the wars in western and southern India a medal was granted; and to every soldier, European or native, a gratuity for his services during the war.

On the eve of his departure, as soon, in fact, as the date of it had been irrevocably fixed, valedictory addresses poured upon him. Those who signed these addresses had nothing more to hope from the illustrious man who had secured to them a long prosperity. There were doubtless some amongst them who recollected the condition of the three provinces at the period when he took the reins from the hands of Mr. Cartier. Then all classes were suffering; credit had vanished; the Maráthá scare was in the minds of all; the frontiers were uncovered; bands of robbers were harrying the districts; there was no settled government; no fixed system; there was rivalry between Calcutta and Murshidábád; the scandal of a great trial was hovering over the land and infecting the atmosphere. There was not a man in Bengal who had not benefited by the rule of the strong man who had produced order out of chaos; who, despite all opposition, had introduced a pure system of administration. The expressions in the addresses presented to him on his departure were the genuine expressions of gratitude for public benefits introduced; for reforms which had ensured the general prosperity; for laws which, so far as laws could affect the question, had rendered that prosperity permanent. It was remarked, moreover, that the signatures to the addresses did not represent one class in particular; they were general; it might be said they

* "Rulers of India: Warren Hastings," by Captain L. J. Trotter. Page 194.

were universal; for, as all classes had benefited equally, it was not for any one class, it was felt, to lag behind. His reputation, all over India, was at the highest point. The statesmen and the warriors of the independent native States combined with the people over whom he had ruled to render him the homage which the people of India, a people very true in their judgment of character, confer only on men greatly gifted; men who govern in the manner which, whilst inspiring respect, ensures sympathy and approval. It was felt throughout India that the well-being of the natives of the provinces had been far more cared for than had that of the people of India who lived in States governed by native princes. If, as I believe it does, the same conviction prevails at the present day, it is not fit that Great Britain should withhold from one of the greatest of her proconsuls the credit for the splendour of an administration which laid the foundation upon which has been constructed an empire which, gained with unsurpassed glory, administered upon principles of toleration, of justice, of one law alike for the governors and the governed; recovered, when for a moment it seemed to have slipped from her hands, by the display of a valour and a devotion unparalleled in the history of the world; an empire, moreover, which, the brightest gem in her Imperial Crown, constitutes her strength, her prestige, her influence amongst the nations of the earth. Let it never be forgotten that it was Warren Hastings who laid down the principles upon which that great Dependency is governed at the present day; that adherence to those principles has secured a steady march of prosperity and well-being; whilst a temporary departure from them, whether by an attempt to force western ideas into the inner life of an oriental people, or by the introduction of crotchets, which, however excellent theoretically, may be interpreted by the people whom they would affect as a breach of the customs which have descended to them from a very remote antiquity, and which have all the strength and tenacity of a religion, has ever produced a loss of confidence such as has always been, and always will be, the parent of disaffection and disaster.

But I cannot be content with so tame a record of the great deeds Hastings had accomplished. He shall tell the

story himself; tell it in the inspiring words which he addressed to his judges in England, and which are as true as they deserve to be immortal :—

"The valour of others acquired, I gave shape and consistency to, the dominion which you hold there [in India]; I preserved it; I sent forth its armies with an effectual but economical hand, through unknown and hostile regions, to the support of your other possessions; to the retrieval of one from degradation and dishonour, and of the other from utter loss and subjection. I maintained the wars which were of your formation, or that of others, not of mine. I won one member [the Nizám] of the great Indian confederacy from it by an act of seasonable restitution; with another [Mudhají Bhonslé] I maintained a secret intercourse, and converted him into a friend; a third [Madhují Sindhiá] I drew off by diversion and negotiation, and employed him as an instrument of peace. When you cried for peace, and your cries were heard by those who were the object of it, I resisted this and every other species of counteraction by rising in my demands, and accomplished a peace, and I hope everlasting, with one great State [the Maráthás]; and I at least afforded the efficient means by which a peace, if not so durable, more seasonable at least, was accomplished with another [Típu Sultán].

"I gave you all, and you have rewarded me with confiscation, disgrace, and a life of impeachment." *

* Forrest.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

HASTINGS ARRIVES IN ENGLAND—A WEEK AFTER HIS ARRIVAL EDMUND BURKE GIVES NOTICE OF HIS INTENTION TO MAKE A MOTION REGARDING HIS CONDUCT—PRIVATE LIFE OF HASTINGS IN ENGLAND—THE DEBATES AND THE IMPEACHMENT.

HASTINGS described his voyage to London in terms almost as terse as those employed by Julius Cæsar on a memorable occasion: "A pleasant voyage; without bad weather; a clean and tight ship; officers of skill and attention, even of science; a society that I loved; and a rapid course." Leaving the Sandheads on the 8th of February, he landed at Plymouth on the 13th of June. The same afternoon he started for London; slept that night at Exeter; reached and slept at Shergold the next day; the day after at Staines; and arrived at London at a quarter to nine the next morning. There he learned that Mrs. Hastings had left for Cheltenham to drink the waters. However, there was much for him to do in the official world. So despatching an express to her to join him, he called upon Lord Thurlow; saw Lord Mansfield at Westminster Hall, and engaged to dine with him the following Sunday; left his name at Mr. Pitt's, at Mr. Dundas's, at Lord Sidney's, and at Mr. Davayeux's. The latter being Chairman of the Court of Directors, Hastings wrote to him also to announce officially his arrival. The day following he received a letter from the Prime Minister desiring to see him at three o'clock. Accordingly, after visiting Lord Lansdowne, he waited upon Mr. Pitt. It would be interesting to have a detailed account of that interview, but I have been unable to discover any allusion to it. The same afternoon, at a quarter to seven, Hastings started for Maidenhead to meet Mrs. Hastings on her way from Cheltenham. He

found her, to his delight, in excellent health, "better," he wrote to a friend, "than I have known her possess for some years." The next day he returned with her to town.*

Whilst they are making that short journey the reader may care to contemplate the personal appearance of one of the two travellers about, alas! to be subjected to a persecution surpassing even that which had assailed Clive; a persecution which was to exhaust all his savings; to make his life a perpetual struggle, to do everything in fact except to break down that iron resolution, to impair a sweetness of temper such as has never been surpassed, to disorder the even mind conscious of integrity. Happily the memoirs of Wraxall † furnish a striking portrait of the appearance of Hastings at this period. After stating that on his landing in England he had attained his fifty-second year, Wraxall continues:—

"In his person he was thin, but not tall; of a spare habit, very bald, with a countenance placid and thoughtful, but when animated, full of intelligence. Never perhaps did any man who passed the Cape of Good Hope display a mind more elevated above mercenary considerations. Placed in a situation where he might have amassed immense wealth without exciting censure, he revisited England with only a modest competence. . . . In private life he was playful and gay to a degree hardly conceivable, never carrying his political vexations into the bosom of his family. Of a temper so buoyant and elastic, that the instant he quitted the Council board, where he had been assailed by every species of opposition, often heightened by personal acrimony, he mixed in society like a youth upon whom care had never intruded."

Sir Alfred Lyall has also unearthed from the reminiscences of Nicholls, a member of Parliament and frequenter of society at that period, the following criticism:—"I think," wrote Nicholls, "that he [Hastings] was a man of the most powerful mind I ever conversed with." With respect to Mrs. Hastings it may be said that whilst her appearance, her manners, and her conversation excited admiration, the critics gossiped regarding her antecedents, commented upon her audacity in declining, in accordance with the then existing fashion, to powder her hair, and remarked with malevolence on the magnificence of the diamonds which she wore so freely.

* For these details and others of a similar character I am indebted to Sir Charles Lawson's Monograph, previously quoted. Sir Charles extracted them, he tells us, from a diary kept by Mr. Hastings, and which he had been privileged to see.

† The passage has also been quoted by Sir Alfred Lyall.

Such were Hastings and his wife, when, full of hope that justice would be rendered him, the former paid his official visits before settling down, as he hoped eventually to be able to do, in his native county. There were some few matters of no great importance connected with his recent office which had in the first instance to be attended to.

Amongst the distractions of the voyage Hastings had found time to commit to paper a review of the state of Bengal at the time he quitted it; to dwell upon the several acts of his administration which had combined to bring the three provinces into the condition in which he had left them. In compiling this narrative he had not failed to indicate the principles which had guided him in the past, and which, he urged, must always guide a capable administrator of British India in the future. The inferences to be drawn from the narrative were so clear as to make of this State-paper a manual of a value scarcely to be surpassed. In it Hastings had pointed out how the British tenure in Bengal, dating practically from the loss of Calcutta to Siráju'd daulah, and thus cradled in disaster, had been "nourished by fortune"—alluding to the period beginning with Plassey, and concluding on the date, 1762, when Munro stood victorious on the field of Baksar. From that time their administration had been "shaped by necessity." Of that necessity he, mainly, had been the instrument; and he had used his opportunities in such a manner, that when the crisis arrived, and he had had upon his hands, at one and the same time, the Maráthás, Haidar Alí, and the French, their united force had been unable to destroy "the solid fabric he had built up, or even to filch any portion of it." The great principles for the government of India which he had supported, and which he commended to future rulers were: just government for the people; firmness and impartiality in the administration of the law; free play for commercial enterprise and for the development of the country's resources. With respect to the foreign policy of British India, he laid down the principle that peace should be maintained so long as peace with honour could be secured; but he would never sue for it. Should the native powers, or one of the native powers, display, by preparations which could not be mistaken, a determination to attack the British

possessions, then it would be wise to anticipate them, and by an offensive defence, prevent invasion—perhaps even more. Under all circumstances he would maintain the inviolability of treaties. In laying down this essential axiom he pointed out the misfortunes which had ever followed a breach of it. Finally, he commented strongly on the necessity of investing the Governor-General with supreme power in his Council, whenever he might deem the exercise of it absolutely necessary.

The reader will, I am sure, pardon me if I quote, with reference to this paper, the eloquent and striking comments of a writer who has himself enjoyed the experience of governing in India :—

"These passages," writes Sir A. Lyall, in the monograph to which I have so often referred, "are suffused and instinct with the glow and spirit of the writer's character and temperament; with his self-reliance, firmness of purpose, hardihood, and ambition; showing a man capable of standing by friends and against enemies, and indicating the dangerous and slightly vindictive element in him that might come out under close pressure. They illustrate also his faculty of looking through and beyond the passing clouds of adverse circumstance and accidental failure by which men are so easily blinded and dispirited, and of fixing his eyes steadily on the main chances and essential conditions of success. He saw not only the sea of troubles which encompassed the English in India, but the calm and open waters which were to be reached by resolute and skilful navigation. So long as he could keep the vessel's head straight on the point to which he had set her, neither waves nor wind, nor a mutiny on board, could wrench the helm from his straining hands. His own business had latterly rather been to save the ship than to sail it; and he did save it at all personal hazards, risking his reputation as freely as men risk their lives in a storm. The rest of the great enterprise he was obliged to leave to others; but he foresaw plainly the potency of expansion contained in the superiority already acquired by the English in India, and the ease with which his successors might realize his vision of a spacious, flourishing, and pacific dominion."

I have quoted this passage in its entirety, because I think it describes in the fewest possible words the character and policy of the man who built so firmly on the territories which Clive had acquired. Reading them one sees at a glance what Hastings was. The lofty aims, the self-reliant character, the thoroughness of the man stand out as though we could see himself at work. We recognize the secret of his success; the reason why all his enemies, one after the

other, Francis and Clavering, Nandkumár and Chét Singh, Macpherson and Stables, and, in the manner yet to be related, Burke, Sheridan, and their co-conspirators, went down before him. The reader who wishes to see what Hastings was, need but impress upon his mind the striking words of this searching passage.

With the minute to which this passage refers in his hands, Hastings called upon Dundas, now Treasurer of the Navy, and who, in a former parliament, had been his uncompromising opponent. Dundas kept it to read, and a little later professed to have derived much instruction from it; though, if we may judge from his after-conduct, it is scarcely possible that he could have drawn from it the conclusions which I have quoted in the page immediately preceding.

Meanwhile, Hastings, rejoicing in his return, in the society of his gifted wife, in the reception he had met with on every side, was not disturbed by any thought of the cloud which Burke had pointed to on the distant horizon. On the 22nd of June he went to Court; was presented to the King by Lords Sidney and Onslow, and was graciously received. Six days later, he went by appointment to the India House; was "received with honour" (his own words); was "thanked unanimously," and dined with the Directors at the London Tavern. The Chairman, he stated in a letter to a friend, in reading the resolution of the Court, dwelt with a strong emphasis on the word "unanimously." In the same letter he narrates how the King and Queen had given him a most gracious reception; and how the President of the Board of Control had been "more than polite" to him. About this time, dining at Twickenham, he met the gifted Fanny Burney, to read whose first novel, "Evelina," Edmund Burke had sat up all night. The description by this lady of her impressions of the Anglo-Indian guest are especially worthy to be recorded.

"I was extremely pleased," she wrote to her father, "with the extraordinary plainness and simplicity of his manners, and the obliging openness and intelligence of his communications. He talked of India, when the subject was led to, with the most unreserved readiness, yet was never the hero of his own tale, but simply the narrator of such anecdotes or descriptions as were called for, or as fell naturally with other topics."

On the second occasion of their meeting, these impressions were more than confirmed. Miss Burney recorded in her diary that she was "quite charmed" with him; adding—

"and, indeed, from all that I can gather, and all I can observe, he appears to me to be one of the greatest men now living as a public character; while, as a private one, his gentleness, candour, soft manners, and openness of disposition, make him one of the most pleasing."

Subsequently, meeting him for the third time, she recorded that she passed an agreeable evening at the Lodge, the residence of Hastings at Tunbridge Wells, "with that very intelligent and very informing man," whose "lively and very pleasing wife contributed largely to the evening's well-doing."*

Unable at the moment to re-purchase Daylesford, although he offered Mr. Knight, the grandson of the gentleman who had purchased it in 1715, considerably more than its market value, Hastings settled for the moment in London, first in St. James's Place, afterwards in Wimpole Street, and made thence occasional excursions to Cheltenham, Bath, and other congenial places. Finally, pending the unbending of Mr. Knight's resolution regarding Daylesford, he purchased "a very pleasant little estate of ninety-one acres in Old Windsor, called Beaumont Lodge" (the Lodge referred to by Miss Burney in the preceding paragraph); and for the time made it his pleasant home.

But during the whole of this period his enemies had been at work. Just one week after his arrival at Plymouth, Burke gave notice in Parliament that he "would at a future day make a motion respecting the conduct of a gentleman just returned from India." Some months elapsed before he felt himself in a position to fulfil this threat, and the interval had seemed to work against him. Hastings and his wife had made a very favourable impression, not only on the King and Queen, but on society generally. It is true that Pitt had withheld any official recognition of his great services, the rumour being that he declined to recommend for honours a public servant over whose head charges, such as those which Burke was meditating, were impending. It was

* Sir Charles Lawson's Monograph, p. 19.

generally understood, however, that should the action of Burke collapse, those honours would be forthcoming. But as time passed it seemed as though it were possible that Burke might be induced to forego the opportunity for which he had been long working. Unfortunately, Burke had acquired a smattering of acquaintance with Indian affairs, which, uncorrected by real knowledge, was constantly leading him into blunders. In this respect he was the type and precursor of the travelling Briton of the present day, who, his mind well-stored with insular prejudices, finds in his three months' conversations in India with English-speaking natives, too polite or too self-interested to contradict him, a confirmation of all his crotchets. In the session of 1785, before the return of Hastings, Burke had constituted himself the champion of the Nawwáb of Arkát, the same Muhammad Ali who is known in history as one of the most faithless and corrupt of men. In his sweeping denunciations on that subject Burke had included the Ministry of the day, especially the Prime Minister, who, he said, showered gold, like Nero on his pretorians, on his Indian adherents. The orator had proceeded then to declare that he bound himself over to spare no pains in the prosecution of a full and severe inquiry into Indian affairs. Pitt had listened with silent disdain to the invectives discharged at himself; but it was remarked that he did not utter a word in defence of the Indian administration. Following this demonstration, came the return of Hastings and the consequent notice given by Burke. Then he was eager to "spoil" for the attack; but, even if he had not been, there were at his elbow men with whom it had become a passion to ruin Hastings. The malignant Francis, beaten in fair fight in India when all the chances were in his favour, and who had accepted his defeat with a snarl; the friends of Clavering and Monson, eager that baffled mediocrity should now take its revenge on genius; a little later, Lord Macartney himself, angry still that Hastings had not left him the free hand which would have made of the treaty with Típu Sultán an abject surrender; angrier still because when Hastings quitted the scene of his triumphs, he had not been appointed his successor; the friends, moreover, of the two Fowkes and Bristow, and such kindred malignities, ready to

instil their venom into the ears of the gifted statesman who had allowed himself to be perverted; these, and others with them, were all resolved that such a chance of vengeance should be utilized to the utmost. Burke had no chance of escape even though he had wished it.

But he did not wish it. He had come to regard Hastings as a personal enemy; and the popularity which Hastings had gained since his arrival combined with the stimulants of Francis and his friends to compel him to persevere. He felt all the difficulties of the attack. The men of position, of judgment, and of mark who had met Hastings—and they were not a few—had been deeply impressed by him. They had found in him, combined with great modesty, a well-stored mind. To them he had appeared, as he had appeared to Fanny Burney, "a very intelligent and a very informing man," without an atom of conceit, and withal candid and straightforward. He had therefore, Burke recognized, made his way, and had become, as that rancorous partisan was fain to admit, popular in a House which, in its then unreformed state, largely took its cue regarding prominent individuals from society's verdict. Writing to Francis, Burke laid stress on the difficulties of bringing home the charges against Hastings on account mainly of the growing popularity of his intended victim; confessed his conviction that it would be impossible to persuade the House to convict him; and added, that all he could hope to obtain was a minority sufficiently large to justify his own action in bringing against him the charges of which he had given a shadowy notice. He did not the less apply to the task he had undertaken his great industry and his vast talents. In December he had sent to Francis the draft of the first charge of the general accusation, that referring to the Rohíla war. The next month saw the arrival in London of Lord Macartney, full of bitterness against Hastings, another "discontented gentleman," the venom of whose soul was to add to the forces gathering against the ex-proconsul.

Meanwhile Hastings was enjoying himself in the manner I have already narrated. In London, rejoicing in the society of cultivated friends; travelling to the most picturesque portions of the most charming of the counties of southern and south-

western England; engaged in negotiations for the purchase of the property which had belonged to his family, the recovery of which had been the dream of his boyish days and had never left him; in the constant companionship of the most charming of women, whose refined manners and bright intellect had won for her everywhere the most cordial reception; in arranging his house at Tunbridge Wells; and in corresponding with Lord Thurlow and others. Rumours naturally reached him, whilst engaged in the pursuits congenial to him, that Burke, supported by, and in correspondence with, Mr. Fox and Mr. Grey, was threatening great things; but these rumours did not disturb him. It is fair indeed to believe that he rather hoped that Burke would bring the matter to an issue in the House of Commons, for, conscious of his own rectitude, he was confident that the result would be to place on the journals of the House a vindication so clear as to cancel the effect of the censures which, whilst he was in India, had been recorded therein. However, he displayed no excitement, no curiosity even, regarding the hostile movements of his enemies. Calm as he had been at Banáras, when threatened by an infuriated mob, he stood there to await the issue, very ready to answer all his accusers.

From the Ministry he had received no sign, nor had he sought any. He had a powerful friend in the Lord Chancellor, Lord Thurlow; he had received civilities, nothing more, from Mr. Pitt and from Dundas; and he believed that, as a body, the Government, more instructed in Indian matters at the moment than it had ever been before, would recognize that justice demanded that they should support him. But Hastings was not the man to rest his hopes on the support of any man or of any body of men. He was so confident of the justice of his cause; so self-reliant; so conscious of his own rectitude, that he felt prepared to meet, as he did meet, arrayed against him, the attacks of the greatest orators in England, certain that ultimately truth would assert itself. Upon such a man the threats of Burke and the snarlings of his lesser enemies could make no impression. He continued his ordinary life, happy in the actual present; ready, when occasion should demand, to meet his accusers face to face.

At length the new year came round, and in the second

month Parliament met for the despatch of business. A day or two before its meeting, there had been held at the Duke of Portland's house a great meeting of the opposition leaders, and these had pressed upon Burke the inadvisability of, at such a juncture, pursuing his attack on Hastings. But Burke's obstinacy was proof against the wishes of his political friends. He was, in fact, too deeply pledged to Francis, and felt he could not draw back. It would seem that Hastings was equally anxious to bring the quarrel to an issue; for, when Parliament met, his friend Major Scott rose in his place, and reminding Burke of the notice which he had given regarding Hastings at the close of the previous session, desired him to name an early day for acting upon it. The challenge was promptly accepted; Fox rose immediately to assure Scott that the business would not be neglected; thus giving time to Burke to produce from the repertory of his teeming brain the well-known repartee that a general did not consult his enemies as to the time or place for a battle. On the 17th of the month, in accordance with the pledge thus virtually given, Burke rose, and having caused to be read the vote of censure passed upon Hastings in 1782, moved, in a Committee of the whole House,

"for a copy of the correspondence which had passed between Warren Hastings, Esq., late Governor-General of Bengal, and the Court of Directors of the Honourable East India Company, between January, 1785, and January, 1786."

It is from this date, the 17th of February, 1786, that the trial of Warren Hastings is considered to have begun. It is just possible that but for the action of Scott in making the first move against the enemy, it might have been avoided. But it is by no means certain. Wraxall, indeed, held that opinion; so likewise does Sir Alfred Lyall; and they have some basis for their belief. On the other hand, it must be remembered that the censure passed upon Hastings in 1782 still remained recorded in the journals; and that those journals contained no vindicatory record in his favour. It is consistent with the courageous character of the man that he preferred to force the battle rather than that the journals of the House of Commons should contain, unreplied

to, a record regarding himself, which he knew to be unjust and untrue. In this view it may, I think, be held that, whilst the action of Major Scott would have been most imprudent if Hastings had had cause to blush for the acts of his administration, it was, in the circumstance of his consciousness of rectitude, and of the existence in the journals of the censure of his conduct, the action of a man who preferred to all worldly considerations the assertion of the "chastity of his honour."

Regarding the trial it is unnecessary to enter into very minute details. I shall, however, place before the reader, in as clear a manner as I can, the salient points of the long and tedious proceedings. I may begin by recording that, after an animated debate, Burke's motion of the 17th of February was opposed, on the ground that the forms of the House required that an accuser should, in the first instance, state his case, and then ask for the production of documents to support it. This view was supported by Pitt, and was carried.

Again, on the 3rd of March, and again, a few days later, Burke asked for other papers, those connected with and bearing on his charges against Hastings with respect to his conduct of the war with the Maráthás. Once more did Pitt and Dundas resist the motion, on the general ground of inexpediency of commenting on conduct which, by the treaty which had terminated the war, had saved the British Empire in India.

Repulsed in these initial skirmishes, Burke brought forward, on the 4th of April, eleven out of the twenty-two charges on which he proposed to ground an impeachment. There can be no doubt * but that in the preparation of these charges Burke was greatly aided by Francis.

"The charge brought by Mr. Burke against Mr. Hastings," wrote Nicholl,† "were on those subjects which had been a matter of discussion between Mr. Francis and Mr. Hastings, while the former gentleman was in India; the impeachment of Mr. Hastings was therefore a continuation of Mr. Francis's opposition to Mr. Hastings' government. All the materials for twenty-two charges brought forward by Mr. Burke were furnished by Mr. Francis."

It can be easily imagined, then, that the speech with

* Gleig's "Warren Hastings," vol. iii. pp. 281, 282.
† Nicholl's "Recollections," quoted by Mr. Gleig.

which Burke, on the 4th of April, introduced the first eleven of these charges was marked by a bitterness hardly equalled in political warfare. The voice indeed was the voice of Burke, but the venom was the venom of the man who, for five years, had done in India all he had been able to do to thwart Hastings in the exercise of the functions entrusted to him by the Crown and by the Company, but who, in that ignominious attempt, had been baffled, beaten, and humiliated. This was his revenge. It may never be known how it was that this man, who was great only in calumny, managed to seduce Burke to take the leading part he assumed in the persecution of Hastings. Francis had not only prevailed upon Edmund Burke to be his advocate; he had instilled into him his own venom, his own personal bitter hatred, more, much more, than his own conviction of the unworthiness of the intended victim. If, in one sense of the term, the orations of Burke, of Sheridan, and of one or two others of the managers of the assault on Hastings may be regarded as eloquent specimens of the use to which the English language can be applied, it cannot now be denied that they deserve to be reprobated as having been based on statements which were false, as having been inspired by motives unworthy of an honest man. If a hundredth part of the charges brought by Burke and his fellow-conspirators had been true, Hastings would have been unfit to associate with honourable men. It was the safety of Hastings, throughout this long prosecution, that, notwithstanding that his case was managed badly; that he had against him the most eloquent orators in Parliament; that Pitt and Dundas declined to defend him; he knew that he deserved well of his country; that the charges brought against him were false.

The first eleven charges brought forward by Burke on the 4th of April imputed to him (1st) "gross injustice, cruelty, and treachery against the faith of nations in hiring British soldiers for the purpose of extirpating the innocent and helpless people who inhabited the Rohillas" (*sic*); (2nd) the authority delegated to him by treating the Emperor Shah Alam with the greatest cruelty, in bereaving him of considerable territory, and in withholding forcibly the tribute

due to him of twenty-six lakhs of rupees annually; (3rd) various deeds of extortion and mal-administration against the Rájá of Banáras, some of which were specified; (4th) the subjecting of the Royal family of Oudh to numerous and insupportable hardships; (5th) the bringing of the "fertile and beautiful" province of Farrukhábád to a state of the most deplorable ruin; (6th) the impoverishing and depopulating of the province of Oudh, and rendering that country, which was once a garden, an uninhabited desert; (7th) the wanton, unjust, and pernicious misuse of his powers in "overturning the ancient establishments of the country, and extending an undue influence by conniving at extravagant contracts, and appointing inordinate salaries;" (8th) "the receiving of money against the orders of the Company, the act of Parliament, and his own secret engagements; and applying that money to purposes totally improper and unauthorised;" (9th) "the having resigned by proxy for the obvious purpose of retaining his situation, and denying that deed in person, in direct opposition to all those powers under which he acted; (10th) treachery to Muzaffar Jang, who had been placed under his guardianship; (11th) the perpetrating of enormous extravagance and bribery in various contracts, with a view to enrich his dependents and favourites."

It would be an insult to the common sense of my readers were I to do more than to point out the combined ignorance and venom displayed by these charges. Fortunate was it for Great Britain that the destinies of her great dependency had not been entrusted, during the critical period covered by those charges, to the men who attacked Hastings. To the reader who has followed the career of that illustrious man from the initial war in Rohilkhand to the day when he finally quitted India, the feeling which will first present itself will be a feeling of contempt for the men who could thus misrepresent all the actions of his career. As for bribery, it may be said at once, not only that the hands of Hastings were clean, but that, as Wraxall truly stated in a passage I have already quoted, though he had possessed numberless opportunities to acquire money in the manner hallowed by the practice of almost all his predecessors in the administration of Bengal, he had used none of them. He had returned to

his native country with a moderate fortune, estimated at about £100,000, every farthing of which had been gained by legitimate trading. The salaries he had sanctioned would, in the present day, be regarded as unworthy of acceptance. On the other charges it is unnecessary to enter, for this volume has been written in vain if the preceding pages have not disproved them.

Possibly supreme contempt for the felon weapons of attack used by his adversaries contributed somewhat to decide Hastings to petition to be heard in his own defence at the bar of the House. The other reasons which influenced him will be duly stated in their place. Politically, the wisdom of such a course may be doubted. The House of Commons is in many respects a peculiar body. Very critical regarding oratory, it has been rarely influenced by personal pleadings of an accused at its bar. The accused, unaccustomed to the ways of the House, is apt to be diffuse when he should be curt, and, especially in a case connected with India, to attempt to explain circumstances which, beyond the ken of the ordinary member, often grate upon his prejudices. Sir Alfred Lyall has well pointed out that under circumstances not very dissimilar Clive entrusted the management of his case to the practised Wedderburn; and that Sir Thomas Rumbold had been content to confide his defence to the adroit Rigby; and that both these accused emerged victorious from the trial. It is more than possible that if Hastings had pursued a similar course he would have been spared the anxiety and the expense—which nearly equalled the bulk of his fortune—of the trial in Westminster Hall. But he acted according to his nature. He had been accustomed all his life to face difficulties, to look his enemy in the face, and he could not find it in him to flinch on this occasion; to entrust to another that which he felt he could do and ought to do himself. Doubtless, considering the temper and the traditions of the House of Commons, his judgment was in default. But the error was the error of a brave man who cannot bring himself, in the decline of his life, to turn his back on danger. I may add that the course he pursued was approved by Lord Thurlow.

The House, despite the opposition of Burke, granted the

prayer of Hastings, but gave him only five days within which to prepare his reply. "I have," he wrote to a friend, "but five days granted me to defend myself against sixteen historical libels, to which three more were added, and other two, before the second day of my appearance."

On Monday, the 1st of May, at a quarter before four, Hastings made his appearance at the bar of the House of Commons, and began to read the defence he had prepared and committed to paper. After reading the first three parts of it he handed over the paper to his friend Markham, and he and two clerks of the House, who in turn relieved him, continued the reading till half past ten. The next evening Hastings himself finished his task, and then applied for permission to lay his defence on the table. This permission was granted; and a motion made by his friend Scott, that the defence should be printed, was unanimously agreed to. Hastings was greatly pleased with the patience and attention with which he had been heard, and with the effect he believed he had produced.

"I was heard," he writes to a friend, "with an attention unusual in that assembly, and with the most desirable effect; for it instantly turned all minds to my own way, and the ground which I then gained I still retain complete possession of."

The examination of witnesses began the same evening. I do not propose to enter upon ground already covered in this volume, and the repetition of which could only be tedious. Rather would I follow the demeanour of Hastings at this supreme conjuncture of his fortunes. It has been said, and I believe truly, that in the little circumstances of life we can trace with almost absolute certainty the true character of a man. Let us examine, then, that of Hastings at this critical period. He was practically on his trial. The charges against him had been printed and published, and at the first moment had produced a very unpleasant feeling in the public mind. "Have we been consorting," asked society generally, "with a man who is a robber, a cheat, and a murderer?" But this impression did not last long. In its turn the defence was published, and the perusal of it dissipated whatever doubts might have arisen regarding his character. "My credit," he wrote

a few days later, "now stands higher by many degrees than it ever did."

His remarkable self-reliance; his determination to trust to his own energies; his conviction that every day's examination would more and more establish the purity of his motives and the necessity for his proceedings; his inner sense of the services he had rendered to his country, shone forth conspicuously at this time.

"I have not," he writes, "visited any of the ministers since the prosecution began. I have not been at the levee nor drawing-room. I have not desired the attendance of a single member. I have broken engagements which were officiously, but kindly, made to bring me acquainted with members of the House. I have disdained every species of management. I have acted against all that the world calls discretion. Every artifice of a man who has long thrown away the check of shame has been practised against me. Yet," he added, conscious of the goodness of his cause, and convinced that ultimately truth would prevail, "I promise you that he will be most foully discomfited, and my name shall shine the brighter for the means which have been taken to extinguish it."

It seemed indeed at the moment that a very brief period would witness the complete triumph of the arraigned ex-Governor-General. It had been noticed with satisfaction that, in the debate on the first clause, the conduct of Hastings with respect to the Rohíla war, Dundas had spoken against the charge, and the Prime Minister had voted with the majority that the conduct of Hastings was not deserving of censure. Pitt, moreover, in order that he might become thoroughly acquainted with the Indian terms and Indian customs, discussions regarding which would certainly arise, had requested Hastings to furnish him with a correct view of the nature of a zamíndárí tenure. Hastings sent him the required paper on the 8th of June. His friends, coupling this request with the vote on the first question, and the speech of Dundas, came to the conclusion that the support of Pitt for the entire issue at stake was certain. Hastings himself was almost alone in combating this argument. Accustomed all his life to read men, he had recognized that between himself and the Prime Minister there was no affinity of character. In the first year of the persecution of Hastings, Pitt was but in his twenty-seventh year. He was just entering upon the second quarter of that period of an administration (1784–1792) which a

French writer has described as "the most peaceful and the most successful in the history of England." He was essentially a Minister for peaceful times; and he thought, though events were to undeceive him, that it might be quite possible to carry on the government of the country in such a manner as to escape entanglement in the wars and troubles of the Continent. His great father had revelled in conducting successful warfare. But as a great writer has told us, "his genius was of a different bent, his eloquence of a different class, his statecraft of a different school." It is quite possible to conceive that, having regard to his love of peace in the abstract; having imbibed, from the results of the struggle with the American colonists, a horror of war; the younger Pitt may have had little sympathy with a man whose Indian administration had been to a great extent associated with deeds of war and violence. On this point all must be more or less conjecture. But there remains the fact that in the intercourse in England the demeanour of Pitt towards Hastings had been cold and stately, whilst Hastings, with his wonderful power of reading the character of those whom he came into contact, had imbibed the conviction that he could in no circumstances depend upon the unvarying support of the Prime Minister in rebutting the charges brought against him in the House of Commons.

The event proved that Hastings had been more clear-sighted than his friends. On the 13th of June, Fox opened the debate on the Banáras charge in a speech full of malignity against the accused. When, after a short interval, Pitt rose to follow him, the friends of Hastings regarded the triumph of Hastings as assured. The House was full. A treasury circular had been sent out the previous evening urging the supporters of the Ministry to attend to vote against Fox's motion. The supporters had responded by their presence, and their chief had risen to reply to Fox. The enthusiasm which the rising of Pitt had provoked continued during the greater part of his speech. He proved that the argument upon which Fox had relied, viz. that Chét Singh was not a vassal of the Company, and that therefore was not liable to be called upon to contribute to the defence of its possessions, was utterly untenable. He proved further that in proposing to

inflict upon him a fine for his contumacy Hastings had been within his rights. Then suddenly he turned. Though in inflicting a fine the ex-Governor-General had been within his rights, it was clear to him, he went on to say, that Hastings had intended to inflict a penalty utterly disproportionate to the offence; and that the infliction of a penalty of half a million for a delay in the payment of £50,000, was a proceeding which "destroyed all relation and connection between the degrees of guilt and punishment;" that the actual punishment was "utterly disproportionate and shamefully exorbitant." He then, to the amazement of the House, announced his intention to vote for the motion.

This intention took by surprise alike the Ministerialists and the Opposition. The former had been specially summoned to vote for the motion. Some of them, unable to follow the reasoning of their chief, obeyed the direction of the circular and voted against it. But the great majority followed the lead of the Prime Minister. The vote was decisive of the whole question, for it practically committed the House of Commons to the impeachment of Warren Hastings.

Successive writers have failed to state in a manner which could carry conviction the absolutely certain reason for this sudden change of front on the part of William Pitt. Lord Macaulay has admitted that the reasons put forward in the House by the Prime Minister are totally inadequate and unworthy of his great ability. It must be borne in mind that up to the 13th—the day of the debate—Pitt, by authorizing the circular to his supporters to attend to vote against the motion had advertised to them his intention to support Hastings. In the interval between the announcement of that intention and the actual debate something had occurred which had induced him to change his mind and to support Fox. He had had to seek for a plausible reason; and the only reason which had suggested itself to him was to find fault with a detail. Unable in his conscience to condemn the main policy of Hastings in his relations with Chét Singh, he could, he thought, without wounding that conscience, dwell upon the disproportion of the punishment to the offence, and urge that such disproportion gave evidence on the part of Hastings of a foregone conclusion, or, as he styled it, "an intention" to

push the Rájá to extremities. It was rather a plausible than a logical reason, for if Hastings was within his rights, as Pitt admitted he was, in punishing Chét Singh, he, on the spot, acting at a time when British India was threatened on every side, was the man of all others the best qualified to measure the punishment which should purge the iniquity and contribute to the general safety. But the expedient served his purpose. Something in the interval between the periods I have mentioned had occurred to render it desirable to Pitt that Hastings should be condemned, that Burke's motion should be carried. What was the circumstance which had occurred?

The latest biographer * of Mr. Pitt has attempted to solve the question. After alluding to the rumours of the hour, Lord Rosebery adds

"But there is no necessity for any explanation, except the straightforward one that after a detailed examination of the charges and answers, completed after the Rohíla debate, and discussed at length with Dundas, Pitt was led to the conviction that he could not defend Hastings, or risk the reputation of his Government by associating it with the acts of the Hastings administration."

Proceeding then to quote a letter to Mr. Eden written by Pitt, very little germane to the question, merely stating that he (Pitt) "had hardly hours enough to read all the papers" on the question; and one from Dundas to Lord Cornwallis stating that he had examined with Pitt the various articles against Hastings with his defences, and had found the former to be too strong to be opposed, Lord Rosebery concludes by urging, in so many words, that in the circumstances of his position Pitt would rather have avoided than courted a breach with his political friends, many of whom were personal friends of Mr. Hastings.

But this explanation fails to explain. It does not account for the circulation, by Mr. Pitt's authority, of the "whip" sent to all his supporters on the 13th of June; nor does it enter upon the actual ground of the discrepancy between that "whip" and the vote of Mr. Pitt and his immediate friends. In fact, it neither explains nor attempts to explain the circumstance which, on the very day of the debate,

* Lord Rosebery's "Pitt." (Twelve English Statesmen.)

changed the evident intention of Mr. Pitt as notified in the circular, which could not have been issued without his authority. On this point I find a far more clearer and more satisfactory guide in Sir Alfred Lyall.* After remarking that contemporary opinion took the same view of Pitt's conduct as that to which I have referred as having been arrived at by Lord Macaulay, Sir Alfred Lyall thus continues :—

"There is the story, told thirty years later by Hastings himself as a well-attested anecdote, of Dundas having visited Pitt early that morning, and having persuaded him after three hours' discussion to abandon Hastings; there is the suggestion that Dundas was jealous of Hastings as a probable rival at the Board of Control; and there is Lord Campbell's story of Pitt having received, a few hours before the debate began, intelligence of Thurlow's assertion that he would put the Great Seal to a patent for Hastings' peerage under the King's authority, without consulting the Minister. All these tales may have some truth in them, and the last of them, if authentic, would go far to account for Pitt's action in the matter; for nothing could have been more calculated to irritate him than Thurlow's ostentatious patronage of Hastings, or a threat of dealing with the King over his head."

Lord Campbell's story fits in well with the actual circumstances of the case; with the fact that Pitt, after summoning his adherents to attend the House and vote in favour of Hastings, changed his mind at the last moment, and spoke and voted against him. It is at least as probable that Dundas, who had in previous years, joined with Burke and Fox in the attack on Hastings, should have retained some of his old rancour; and that that rancour should have been stimulated rather than lessened by the favour which had been shown to the accused statesman and to his wife by the King and Queen. Trifles, in themselves light as air, have before this influenced the fate of individuals and of nations; and there is no doubt whatever in my mind that it was a personal reason which decided Pitt and Dundas to throw over, at the last moment, the lion at bay. They had recognized that he was a lion; in his nature a king of men; that George III., who had great experience of the race, had recognized his great capacities and the noble character; and that distrusting his nature, Pitt and Dundas had feared lest, released from the toils which unscrupulous enemies had drawn around him,

* Lyall's "Warren Hastings." (English Men of Action.)

he might supplant one or other of them in royal and in popular favour. This at least is certain, that on the morning of the 13th of June, Pitt had summoned his adherents to come and save Hastings; that during the day he changed his mind; that, speaking in the House, and justifying the main policy of Hastings, he condemned it on an "intention" (his own word); and that he succeeded in carrying the motion for his impeachment by a majority of thirty.

The one man who seemed to be least affected by this extraordinary vote was Hastings himself. He had always thought it possible that on some occasion of the proceedings Pitt might turn against him, and he accepted it as a great general would accept the news that, at a critical period of a campaign, a first-rate Power might declare war against him. He neither complained nor did he display the slightest mortification. Writing to his friend Thompson, in India, announcing Pitt's vote against him, he says: "I have been declared guilty of a high crime and misdemeanour in having *intended* to exact a fine too large for the offence, the offence being admitted to merit a fine, from Chét Singh. Matters," he added, "will take their own course." Referring then to the fact that neither his credit nor his character had suffered with the public by the last vote, he continued: "I have not solicited, nor will I, the interest of a single member of the House, and after what has passed, am indifferent about the issue, provided only that it be speedy." After a few remarks on the effect of the action of the Opposition, he proceeded insensibly to the more genial subject of his own pursuits. He tells his friend about his new house in Old Windsor; how it was in very deed a Horatian villa; how he had seen nothing in England to equal it; and how his wife's health had improved since they had occupied it. Then follows a sentence, displaying the contented mind which can adapt itself to all circumstances, and which, after having dealt with the fate of nations, finds a deep interest in the commonest rural pleasures: "We are much interested in the success of our haymaking, which has been prodigious, and never feel a tendency to be out of humour or spirits but when we look towards London." He proceeds to ask his correspondent to

send him seeds from India and from Bhutan. He had, at the time, one cause of anxiety, his greatest, and it was absolutely unconnected with the business before the House of Commons. When he had quitted Calcutta for England, his valet, to whom he had entrusted the care of packing his property, had forgotten to include the article of furniture which contained all his private papers. Hastings had discovered the loss only when the shores of India were fading from his view, and he had written pressing letters that the article should be forwarded with all possible haste. He concluded the letter from which I have been quoting with a further exhortation regarding it. "It pains me to recur to the subject of my bureau. I have not received any information from you or Larkins about it. You cannot conceive my anxiety." Ultimately it came safely to hand.

The speech and vote of Mr. Pitt on the subject of the Banáras charges practically decided, I have said, the question of impeachment. Pitt, urged by Dundas, had been the arbiter of the situation. It was his action which restored courage to the drooping hearts of the Opposition, which encouraged Burke, which gladdened the soul of Francis. The world wondered, the friends of Hastings stood aghast, there was much murmuring among the supporters of the Minister. But the deed had been done. Never again could Hastings take a position which might threaten the position of Dundas or cause anxiety to Pitt. But there came, after a lapse of years, whilst Hastings was still living, an occasion when the debate of the 13th of June, 1786, may possibly have recurred to the minds of both the chief actors in that political drama. In the spring of 1805, in the last session of Parliament ever attended by William Pitt, Mr. Whitbread moved resolutions affecting the honour, the character, and the integrity of Mr. Dundas, then become Lord Melville. When the resolutions were put to the vote, the numbers for and against them were even, and the Speaker was called upon to give the casting vote. He gave it in favour of Whitbread's motion. The announcement caused the Prime Minister, he himself said at the moment, "a bitter pang," * words uttered in such a tone that made the hall resound, and "seems yet to fill the ear."

* Lord Brougham's "Historical Sketches of Statesmen who flourished in the time of George III."

Lord Melville was ultimately acquitted; yet, during the interludes of his trial, he may have remembered and regretted the vote which, greatly by means of his action, had been cast against Hastings, and, by the light of the events that followed, cast unjustly.

The impeachment was now inevitable. The great speech of Sheridan on the subject of the conduct of Hastings regarding the Begams of Oudh—a speech said to have been, up to that time, the most telling ever delivered in the House of Commons, but which, after all, was the result of the prostitution of splendid talents to the gratification of personal hatred and the desire of personal vengeance of his friends,* brought the matter to a decisive issue. The Ministry supported the second reading of the hostile motion, nominated Burke to be the first member of the Committee of Impeachment, but refused to allow Francis, despite the anger of Burke at the omission, a place upon it. In May of that year, Burke, attended by a considerable following, formally impeached Hastings at the bar of the House of Lords. Hastings was taken into custody by the sergeant-at-arms, and was then released on bail, with sureties to an amount which has been variously stated. Nine months were yet to elapse ere his trial would begin.

* The speech was suited to the temper of the time, and was, as I have said, in the opinion of contemporaries, the greatest ever delivered. I do not think it would be so considered in the present day. It might pass as a theatrical denunciation. But a speech which was based on falsehoods, and illustrated by coarse abuse, would not, I would fain hope, arouse at the close of the nineteenth century any other feeling than a feeling of indignation.

Many years after the acquittal of Hastings, he and Sheridan were guests of the Prince Regent at Brighton. Prompted by the prince, Sheridan took occasion to advance to Hastings. Addressing him, he said: "The part which I took in events long gone by must not be regarded as any test of my private opinions, because I was then a public pleader, whose duty it is, under all circumstances, to make good, if he can, the charges which he is commissioned to bring forward." The speech rather disgusted than appeased Hastings. He drew back, looked his enemy in the face, bowed, and was silent. The apology was too much of the nature of the utterance of a hired bravo to be acceptable to that lofty mind. See Lawson's Monograph.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE TRIAL IN WESTMINSTER HALL: ITS PHASES AND ITS RESULT.

THERE was nothing, then, for Hastings to do but to bear with patience the interval which should elapse between the vote of the House of Commons and his trial. That House had decided that he who had given all his talents and energies to the service of his country, had committed acts which in the opinion of the majority required investigation and, possibly, punishment. For the nine months which elapsed between the vote of the Commons and the trial, Hastings was then at the bar of public opinion, and, under such circumstances, public opinion, uninstructed and not caring to be instructed, muttering commonplaces, is always inclined to look askance at an accused statesman. But it is not too much to affirm that, throughout this interval, the mind of Hastings remained as firm, his courage as supreme, as they had been when the turbulent crowd of revolters had gathered round the house and garden he occupied at Banáras. Not Caius Marius, when with a word and a glance he affrighted the tall Gaul who had been sent to take his life, displayed a self-confidence more assured, a brow more serene, than did this proud and daring statesman. Practising that introspection which the brave and honest man alone dares to face, he could not admit that in any single particular his opponents had made out their case. His intentions had been pure; placed in very difficult circumstances, he had not, in action, passed, in a single instance, the bounds of political necessity; and he had ministered to the greatness and influence of Great Britain in a manner which had made possible to his successors the establishment of a British-Indian empire on a solid

basis. Writing on this subject to a friend, four months after the vote for his impeachment, he recounts the principles which had ever guided him in his administration. He places first "integrity and zeal;" then "affection for my fellow-servants, and regard for the country which I governed;" next, "official regularity;" 4th, "accuracy and collateral provision in the creation of new officers or systems of policy, in instructions for political nogotiations, and in the constructions of treaties;" 5th, "sincerity and unreserve in my dealings with the chiefs in connexion with our Government;" 6th, "a study to choose agents most fitted for their trusts, confidence liberally given to them, and their conduct guarded from the hazard of every responsibility which belonged in right to himself;" and lastly, "patience, longsuffering, confidence, and decision."

These, surely, are the sole principles which can ensure success in administration; and it is only fair to him and to the great majority of the illustrious men who followed him in his high office to conclude that the success he and they achieved has been due to the recognition by them of these lofty maxims.

Even before the impeachment was actually voted, he had been by no means content with resting his defence on his own consciousness of well-doing. He had realized that he had to deal with enemies bitter, unscrupulous, and bent on his destruction. In the proceedings in the House of Commons these men had not hesitated to represent the sentiments of the natives whom Hastings had governed as being hostile to himself; and the assertion that the Governor, on his retirement, was pursued by the hatred of those whom he had governed, had been regarded by many as a strong point against him. To contradict these opinions based on hints and insinuations, Hastings wrote in February, 1787, to Sir John Shore, to inform him of the charges which had been brought against him, and asking him to obtain the opinion of those natives of India, the best qualified to form an opinion, on certain matters which he enclosed, and to transmit such opinions to him.

"I wish," he continued, "to make my appeal to the justice and generosity of those to whom it best appertains, to pronounce upon my real character, according to their several relations or concerns with the Government of

Bengal, during the periods in which I held an efficient share in its powers; that they may declare whether I deserve these imputations, or whether I am entitled to their testimony of the reverse."

The questions upon which he desired the opinions of the natives whom he considered the most enlightened, are too important to be omitted, for they go to the very root of the charges against him. They were as follows:—

(1.) "Whether I have countenanced or permitted, or whether I have not, on the contrary, to the utmost of my power, prevented men in office or favour from oppressing or plundering those who were subjected to their authority or influence;

(2.) "Whether the provinces have been infested with robbers, or plundering sannyásís, as much during my administration as in the times preceding it;

(3.) "Whether the provinces have suffered the calamities of either war or famine during my administration; or whether they have not enjoyed both uninterrupted peace and abundance, though our Government and nation were for years engaged in wars with powerful states and neighbours, and were at one time threatened with a dearth from the same causes which produced one in 1768;

(4.) "Whether I have oppressed the raiyats by intolerable or unequal taxes, for the public service; or whether I have not rather multiplied the sources of public wealth, and equalized the burthens imposed on the people;

(5.) "Whether I have neglected the administration of justice; or whether I have not established Courts of Civil and Criminal Justice, and supported both in the exercise of their functions beyond the experience of any former time;

(6.) "Whether I have offended or discountenanced the laws, customs, and religious worship of the country; or whether I have not respected, protected, and conformed to them;

(7.) "Whether I have shown a disregard to science; or whether I have not, on the contrary, by public endowments, by personal attentions, and by the selection of men for appointments suited to their talents, given effectual encouragement to it;

(8.) "Whether, in my public negotiations and in my general intercourse, I have made use of artifice and trick, or of truth and plain-dealing;

(9.) "Whether I have affected a display of state; whether I have ever shown an inordinate solicitude for my personal safety; or whether I have not been thought to err in the opposite extremes;

(10.) "Whether I left the country in a better state of population and cultivation than I found it;

(11.) "And lastly, whether the English name, power, and influence were ever greater, more respected, or more extensively known in India before than during my administration, and particularly at the close of it."

During the period preceding the trial, Mr. and Mrs.

Hastings had their head-quarters at Beaumont Lodge, the place they had purchased in Old Windsor, though the visits to St. James's Place became necessarily very frequent. The business of preparations for the defence required, indeed, constant sojourns in London; and these interfered greatly with the more enjoyable recreations of the Lodge. The thunder-cloud of the impeachment was always darkening the atmosphere. It was a sword of Damocles suspended by a thread; and although the consciousness of having deserved well of his country never left Hastings; although he believed he should establish the shamelessness of his accusers to the satisfaction of the House of Lords; although he even doubted occasionally whether the impeachment would be persevered with; still the uncertainty of the issue, the necessity of providing evidence, could not fail more or less to affect him. However, he bore the situation most manfully; his head was as erect, his demeanour as stately, as it had been in the height of his power. He longed that the uncertainty should cease, that the hour should arrive when he might be free to clear his character. When at last that hour did arrive it found him ready.

When, on the 3rd of April, 1787, the House of Commons had decided to exhibit articles of impeachment against Hastings at the bar of the House of Lords, the leaders of the Opposition had proceeded to nominate a Committee to whom the management of the impeachment should be entrusted. The names of Burke, of Fox, of Sheridan were accepted without sign of disagreement. But when Burke proposed that of Philip Francis, there was a general murmur of indignation. Burke had been very eager that the friend who had supplied him with the details which he had used to so evil a purpose should be one of the managers. He had written to Dundas to warn Pitt that his character was involved in the carrying on of the impeachment, and that it would be dangerous to him were Hastings and his friends to triumph and form a party against him in the country.* Dundas had engaged to support the proposal, and he did so. But the House—

* This warning on the part of Burke proves that in his mind at all events there was little doubt as to the real reason which had caused the conversion of the Prime Minister to the prosecution of Hastings.

warned by Windham that impartiality, the first duty of a judge, had never been reckoned among the qualities of an advocate; and that Francis had displayed a personal feeling regarding Hastings which quite unfitted him for the former position—refused to place Francis on the Committee. Pitt, concurring in this view, voted with the majority. The other members of the managing committee were Sir James Erskine, Mr. Thomas Pelham, Mr. Windham, Mr. St. John, Mr. Anstruther, Mr. Adam, Mr. Taylor, Mr. Grey, General Burgoyne, Mr. Welbore Ellis, Mr. Frederick Montagu, Sir Grey Cooper, Sir Gilbert Elliot, Mr. Dudley Long, Lord Maitland, and Mr. G. A. North.

At ten o'clock on the morning of the 13th of February, 1788, the House of Lords met, and, after a short discussion, transmitted a message to the House of Commons to the effect that the House was about to transfer its sittings to Westminster Hall for the purpose of proceeding upon the trial of Warren Hastings, Esq. The Commons replied by notifying by message that they were ready to substantiate the charges. The Lords were then called over by the clerk, and having been arranged by the principal king-at-arms, about a hundred and seventy of them proceeded to take the places assigned to them in Westminster Hall. The appearance of that hall on this memorable occasion has been described in language very picturesque and very eloquent by Lord Macaulay. It is impossible that any one reading that striking description should fail to see before him the judges in their vestments of State; the procession of peers, clad in gold and ermine, many of them known for the splendid services they had rendered to their country; the brothers and sons of the King, among them the Prince of Wales, "conspicuous by his fine person and noble bearing;" the Queen, and by her side "the fair-haired young daughters of the House of Brunswick," flanked on either side by the beauty and loveliness of the land; the ambassadors of foreign countries; the illustrious Gibbon, the majestic Siddons, the renowned Sir Joshua; she to whom the heir to the throne had secretly plighted his faith, in all the glory of her voluptuous charms; Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire, who had won his election at Westminster for Mr. Fox, Dr. Parr, Mrs.

Montagu, and a host of other celebrities, who combined to make an assemblage the like of which no one then born had ever witnessed.

Nor was the grand hall of William Rufus unworthy of the company it contained. As I write there faces me a picture of the inflexible Strafford defending himself, in words which melted into tears many of his audience, against the charges preferred by another House of Commons. Macaulay reminds his readers that the same hall had witnessed the condemnation of him who is still deservedly styled great, the illustrious Francis Bacon; of Somers, and of the Martyr King. Its walls were hung with scarlet. The galleries were filled in the manner I have described. The avenues to it were lined with grenadiers, the streets were kept by cavalry. It was a scene to be witnessed, a scene which the gorgeous picture, drawn by Lord Macaulay, and of which I have given but a dry epitome, can enable every reader to picture to himself.

I have mentioned the decorated hall, the splendid trappings of the peers; the managers in their box; the Queen, the Prince of Wales, the members of the royal family, the peeresses; the beauty and intellect of the land; but, as yet, I have been silent regarding him who was the most striking figure in the entire brilliant assembly. And yet, it was upon that figure that all eyes were fixed. More than the managers,* more than the Queen and her daughters, more than the Prince of Wales, more even than Mrs. Fitzherbert, than the Duchess of Devonshire, than Mrs. Siddons, than Mrs. Montagu, did a little man, "dressed in a plain poppy-coloured suit of clothes," rivet attention. The picture of him by Macaulay as he stood at the bar at which Strafford and Charles I., Bacon and Somers, had stood before him, in all respects save one, is too true, too graphic, to be omitted. The accused

"was not indeed unworthy of that great presence. He had ruled an extensive and populous country, had made laws and treaties, had sent forth armies, had set up and pulled down princes. And in his high place he had so borne himself, that all had feared him, that most had loved him, and that

* This Lord Macaulay denies. He asserts that the managers attracted more attention than the accused. But, judging from the recorded opinions of contemporary writers, I think he was mistaken.

hatred itself could deny him no title to glory, except virtue. He looked like a great man, and not like a bad man. A person small and emaciated, yet deriving dignity from a carriage which, while it indicated deference to the court, indicated also habitual self-possession and self-respect, a high and intellectual forehead, a brow pensive but not gloomy, a mouth of inflexible decision, a face pale and worn but serene, on which was written, as legibly as under the picture in the Council-chamber at Calcutta, 'Mens æqua in arduis.' Such was the aspect with which the great Proconsul presented himself to his judges."

It is impossible to add a word to this eloquent picture. To the words "except virtue" I, in common with the greater number of those who have, by the aid of original documents, studied the career of this illustrious man, take exception. To me it seems a contradiction that the man who, by the admission of Lord Macaulay, deserved the title of the "great Proconsul," could be wanting in virtue. *Virtus* (virtue) is the quality of the VIR, the heroic man; and, as I read his character, no man ever possessed that quality to a greater measure than did Warren Hastings.

The counsel for the accused were men who were either then famous, or who had displayed ability of a nature which was sure to lead them to the highest places in their profession. Erskine had refused the offered brief. But in his place stood Edward Law, afterwards Lord Ellenborough, then in his thirty-eighth year, and he led in the case. Energetic and conscientious, but inclined to be very urgent in pressing his points, Law was in many respects the advocate the case required. It was his first great case, and it made him. Associated with him were Dallas, afterwards Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, and Plomer, afterwards Vice-Chancellor and Master of the Rolls, but who was destined, before he obtained that promotion, to defend, before the same high tribunal, one of the chief conspirators against his actual client—Robert Dundas, Lord Melville.

The House of Commons was represented by Dr. Scott, Dr. Lawrence, Messrs. Mansfield, Piggot, Burke, and Douglas.

Hastings, after the usual preliminaries, was accommodated with a chair, close to his counsel; and after a short speech from the Lord Chancellor, Lord Thurlow, who presided, the trial began.

It would be tedious to note all the details of the various

phases of a trial which lasted seven years. The reader who has followed me so far, will know better even than did the judges the several acts in India of the accused, and the gloss which defeated malice had put upon them. It will suffice here to state that the first two days of the trial were occupied in reading the charges and the reply of Hastings—the latter being to the same purport as that which he, assisted by Markham and the clerks of the House, had read at the bar of the House of Commons. On the third day Burke arose, and began, wrote Wraxall,* who was present as a member of the House, "an oration unequalled, either in antiquity, or in any modern period of time." After stating the great disadvantages under which Burke laboured, as compared with Demosthenes when he denounced Philip of Macedon; and with Cicero when he attacked Verres; inasmuch as whilst the former had visited Macedonia, had seen Pella, and had conversed with Philip; and Cicero had been quæstor in Sicily before he opened his attack on Verres; Burke knew Bengal but by report, and had never seen either Muhammad Rizá, or Nandkumár, or any of the agents, enemies, or ministers of Hastings; Wraxall proceeds to bestow unstinted praise on the accuracy displayed by the orator in all the details connected with the conquest and subsequent development of what was then British India. Certainly, if the story told by Burke had been true, and those details had been accurate, the geographical and historical knowledge of his prompter, Philip Francis, must have progressed by leaps and bounds since the memorable day when, in the Calcutta Council, Hastings placed on the table a map of India, and vainly asked the triumvirate to indicate the position of Rohilkhand. The one remark which occurs to the mind of the expert of the present day when he reads the testimony of Wraxall as to the accuracy of the geographical and historical knowledge of the orator, is that suggested by the proverb that "in an assembly of the blind the one-eyed man is king." There were but few members of those present on that memorable occasion who possessed sufficient knowledge to criticize his statements. However, for four days did Burke continue his denunciations and his descriptions.

* Wraxall's Posthumous Memoirs, vol. iii. p. 20.

"At the conclusion of the third morning," writes Wraxall, "it is true that his bodily powers becoming unequal to sustain so arduous an effort, he was compelled by indisposition to postpone his further observations. But resuming with new vigour the task on the following day, he finally accomplished it."

The "energy and pathos of the great orator," Macaulay tells us, produced a wonderful impression on his audience. Lord Thurlow was touched; Hastings himself could not resist the penetrating force of his eloquence. Ladies were in a "state of uncontrollable emotion;" "Mrs. Sheridan was carried out in a fit." Of the concluding words of the oration the cold-blooded critic of the present day, knowing the actual facts better than Burke knew them; recognizing that the eloquent words were based upon statements which were not true, and upon allegations which an unimpassioned examination would prove to be unfounded; that these poisoned arrows were aimed at the reputation of a man who had rendered splendid services to his country; who, when the folly and incapacity of some of his judges had lost for Great Britain magnificent colonies across the Atlantic, had laid the enduring foundations of a counterbalancing empire in India; and who was now assailed by a malignity unsurpassed in the history of the world; can accord to it only the merit of having been a well-arranged theatrical declamation, based upon terrible imaginings. Even Wraxall, who had bestowed so much praise on the speech itself, seemed to feel that there was something very doubtful in the peroration. "If it was not ludicrous—for extremes touch"—he wrote, "it was appalling." Lord Macaulay gives to the whole speech unstinted praise. But let the reader who has followed me so far, or he who may have studied the facts for himself, decide in his own mind whether an orator, referring to the man who had rendered splendid services to his country, deserves praise or reprobation for applying to him the terms I am now about to quote:—

"Therefore," concluded Mr. Burke, "hath it with all confidence been ordered by the Commons of Great Britain, that I impeach Warren Hastings of high crimes and misdemeanours. I impeach him in the name of the Commons' House of Parliament, whose trust he has betrayed. I impeach him in the name of the English nation, whose ancient honour he has sullied. I impeach him in the name of the people of India, whose rights he has

trodden under foot, and whose country he has turned into a desert. Lastly, in the name of human nature itself, in the name of both sexes, in the name of every age, in the name of every rank, I impeach the common enemy and oppressor of all."

Goldsmith, in his "Vicar of Wakefield," has supplied us with a word which can be applied with absolute accuracy to the "theatrical fustian" contained in this peroration. It is alike a criticism and a commentary. That word is "Fudge."

This may be the most fitting place to lay before the reader the remarks on his general career in India, and on the charges in the impeachment contained in the paper which Hastings had submitted in reply to those charges. Burke, in the speech of which I have just spoken, had referred contemptuously to those remarks as "that indecent and unbecoming paper which lies upon our table." "Yet," writes Sir Alfred Lyall, "although it is not a model of judicious pleading, the answer contains matter for the attention and even the sympathy of a dispassionate reader." * It runs as follows:—

"In truth the articles are not charges, but histories and comments. They are yet more; they are made up of mutilated quotations, of facts which have no mutual relation but are forced by false arrangement into connection, of principles of pernicious policy and false morality; assertions of guilt without proof or the attempt to prove them; interpretations of secret motives and designs which passed within my own breast, and which none but myself would know. . . .

"With respect to the general subject of the charge, I must beg leave to observe that it has been composed from a laboured scrutiny of my whole official life, during a most important and weighty administration of thirteen years, comprehending perhaps a greater variety of interesting events than have fallen to the lot of any man now living; events not brought to the public view by their notoriety alone, but all the subject of minute record. . . . All my actions have undergone, and even during their actual progress they underwent, such a severity of investigation as could suit only a mind possessing in itself an absolute exemption from error. In the present occasion I am put to a harder test; for not my actions only, but my words, and even my imputed thoughts, as at the final day of judgment, are converted into accusation against me. And from whom is this state of perfection exacted? From a man separated, while yet a schoolboy, from his native country, and from every advantage of that instruction which might have better qualified him for the high offices and arduous situations which it became his lot to fill."

As soon as the excitement caused by Burke's eloquent denunciation had somewhat subsided, Fox proceeded to

* "Warren Hastings," by Sir Alfred Lyall. P. 202.

announce the procedure which the managers of the impeachment proposed to adopt. They would, he said, substantiate each charge separately; the House would then hear the defence of Hastings, and any evidence which might be produced by him; then the managers would reply. "By this mode of accusation," wrote Wraxall, "proceeding to a conclusion on every *specific* article, previous to opening another head of charge." To this course Law, the leading counsel for Hastings, strongly objected, declaring it to be subversive of all equity, and contrary to the practice of judicial courts. The question having been debated in their own House, the Lords, on the initiative of Lord Thurlow, decided by eighty-eight votes to thirty-three that the contention of Law was right, and that the managers must complete the whole of their case before the counsel of the accused should be required to utter a single word in his exculpation. Fox, after a great deal of grumbling at this ruling, proceeded then to open the charge relating to the conduct of Hastings towards Chét Singh.

"During the months of March, April, and May," writes Wraxall, "Hastings' trial had advanced by slow gradations, impeded at every step by the examination of witnesses and recapitulation of evidence." It was towards the beginning of June that Sheridan, whose speech in the House of Commons had commanded so much admiration and applause, determined to produce an even greater effect on the brilliant assemblage which still continued to crowd the hall of William Rufus. The 3rd, the 5th, and the 6th of June were the days he had chosen for the display of his splendid powers. He had, we are told, "thoroughly rehearsed his part." "Accustomed," Wraxall tells us, "to study theatrical effects at Drury Lane, he did not neglect to observe its principles or to practise its rules." The same authority states that probably two-thirds of the English peers and peeresses, accompanied by their daughters, were present on this occasion; and that every part of the vast edifice was crowded to excess. We learn from Lord Macaulay that it was said "that fifty guineas had been paid for a single ticket." But Sheridan's speech from first to last, though it produced a great effect, had a theatrical ring about it. The orator depicted in glowing and

impressive terms the woes of princesses who had suffered no wrong. His periods produced, however, a deep impression on the ladies who were present. But that was all. "Who that knew Sheridan," writes Wraxall, "his mode of thought, his habit, his character, and even his manner of subsistence, could believe that he was solely impelled by the abstract love of justice? To men so experienced the speech was simply a *coup de théatre*." When he concluded, Lord Macaulay tells us, Sheridan "contrived, with a knowledge of stage effect which his father might have envied, to sink back as if exhausted into the arms of Burke, who hugged him with the energy of generous admiration."

Practically the speech of Sheridan and the consideration of the charge with respect to the Begams of Oudh closed the proceedings in Westminster Hall in 1788. During that session but two of the twenty charges exhibited against the accused had been considered. The illness of the King reached in November of that year such a point that Pitt was unable to conceal its serious nature from the public. The Regency Bill which he proposed, and in which he supported the right of Parliament to settle the regency, absorbed for a time the entire interest of the political world. In consequence of this, and—notwithstanding the recovery of the King in February, 1789—of the discussions in the House of Lords on the Regency Bill, the interest in the trial of Hastings waned considerably. But seventeen days were devoted to it in 1789. Another matter, likewise, of world-wide importance was beginning to excite a growing and a greater interest in the public mind. The storming of the Bastille on the 14th of July, following closely upon the meeting of the States-General of France, had opened out prospects which appealed with irresistible force to the lovers of freedom on the one hand, and to the supporters of order on the other. Then, too, the trial of Stockdale, a printer who had published a telling pamphlet exposing the motives which had actuated many members of the House of Commons in their attack upon Hastings, a trial undertaken at the instance of the majority of that House, superseded for the moment the consideration of the events in Westminster Hall. Erskine defended Stockdale in a speech which must be regarded as a masterpiece.

The manner in which the jury responded to the reference he made to the trial of Hastings gave a very fair indication of the popular view regarding the laboured prosecution of that illustrious man. He spoke of the "terrible, unceasing, exhaustless artillery of warm zeal, matchless vigour of understanding, consuming and devouring eloquence," which "was daily pouring forth upon one private unprotected man." The jury showed their sense of the justice of these remarks by acquitting Stockdale.

Even at the close of 1789 the confidence of Burke in the issue of the trial had begun to diminish. The fact that during that year but two charges out of the twenty had been argued; that the still voice of the public had given evidence in various ways that its sympathy was with the accused; the gradually increasing interest in the progress of the French Revolution, had all contributed to divert his thoughts from the main issue. The acquittal of Stockdale he regarded as a sure indication of the direction in which the wind was blowing. On this point he confided to Francis his wish that he could retreat with honour from the prosecution. He felt that he had become unpopular. A vote of censure, passed by the House of Commons upon him for the manner in which he had charged Hastings and Impey with having caused the death of Nandkumár,* had given him a tolerably clear

* Some of Burke's outbursts are almost too scandalous to print. I submit them to the reader to show to what a point party spirit and prejudice, perhaps personal interest, will carry a man so great in many respects as he was. Of Hastings he had said, "He murdered that man (Nandkumár) by the hands of Sir Elijah Impey. . . . He gorged his ravenous maw with an allowance of two-hundred pounds a day. He is satisfied without sucking the blood of fourteen hundred nobles. He is never corrupt without he is cruel. He never dines without creating a famine. He feeds on the indigent, the decaying, and the ruined, and them he depresses together, not like the generous eagle who preys on a living, reluctant, equal prey; no, he is like the ravenous vulture, who feeds on the dead and enfeebled; who destroys and incapacitates nature in the destruction of its objects while devouring the carcases of the dead, and then prides himself on his ignominious security; and his cruelty is beyond his corruption. At the same time there is in his hypocrisy something more terrible than his cruelty. . . . His crimes are so multiplied that all the contrivances of ingenuity to cover them are abortive."

Another specimen of his bad invective runs thus: "This swindling Mecænas—swindling of glory, and obtaining honour under false pretences—a bad scribbler of absurd papers, who could never put two sentences of sense together." Describing the actions of Hastings in India, Burke thus characterized them: "Such are the damned and damnable proceedings of a judge in hell, and such a judge was Warren Hastings." . . . Again he calls him "a

indication that the tide which he had taken at its first flood was beginning to ebb. It had been hoped that this vote would induce him to throw up his case in disgust; but, Lord Macaulay assures us, "his zeal for what he considered the cause of justice and mercy triumphed over his personal feelings."

In 1790 the declaration by Fox of his sympathy with the French Revolution produced a coolness, always thenceforth to increase, between Burke and himself. The same year Burke produced and published his "Reflections" on the same absorbing event. This book interpreted and gave a language to the thoughts of many of the followers of Pitt, and, to a great extent, affected Pitt himself. As time went on the estrangement from Fox became more and more pronounced, the drawing towards his rival more evident. Under such circumstances, and under the increasing influences disseminated by the Revolution, it is not wonderful that the interest in the impeachment considerably diminished. In 1790 the great Tribunal sat but for a fortnight, and that period was mainly occupied by a speech by Fox on the charge of the internal mal-administration of Hastings, and its attendant corruption, and by incessant disputes regarding the admissibility of evidence. At the close of the previous year Hastings, relegated—by the fact that the impeachment had made but scanty progress, and had been discussed for only seventeen days in the course of the year—to constant anxiety and great expense and compulsory abstention from public affairs, had

captain-general of iniquity, thief, tyrant, robber, cheat, swindler, sharper. We call him all these names, and are sorry that the English language does not afford terms adequate to the enormity of his offences." . . . Lastly, in the peroration of the speech in which Burke impeached his intended victim before the House of Lords, he thus spoke regarding the crimes he attributed to him: "They are crimes which have their rise in avarice, rapacity, pride, cruelty, ferocity, malignity of temper, haughtiness, insolence; in short, everything that manifests a heart blackened to the blackest, a heart dyed deep in blackness, a heart gangrened to the core. . . . We have not chosen to bring before you a poor trembling delinquent. . . . We have brought before you the head, the chief, a captain-general of iniquity—one in whom all the fraud, all the tyranny of India are embodied, disciplined, and arrayed." Such are a few of the specimens of Mr. Burke's oratory; of the language he considered it consistent with his self-respect to employ in the denunciation of one of the most illustrious and single-minded men British India has brought to the front. The oratory is the oratory of the gutter. Apparently at the moment of delivery it carried away the audience; but the reaction was sure to follow, and it followed even sooner than its author had imagined.

brought to the notice of the Lords that up to that time but one-tenth of the charges had been examined, and that only on the part of the prosecution. He received a civil reply but no promise of redress. We have seen that in 1790 the same practice prevailed. But in the autumn of that year Parliament was dissolved, and the friends of Hastings hoped that the newly-elected members might be indisposed to proceed with the impeachment. The point was raised on the assembling of the new Parliament, and the question was asked whether a dissolution did not terminate the whole proceedings. Upon a majority deciding that it did not, the friends of Hastings moved that the impeachment be stopped. But they were again defeated. It was, however, decided that, in order to hasten its course, the managers should withdraw the articles which they regarded as the most easily dispensed with. "In truth," writes Macaulay, "had not some such measure been adopted, the trial would have lasted till the defendant was in his grave."

By this time indeed the trial had become more than a pageant. Not only had foreign politics begun to absorb the minds of the managers; but it had become generally understood that a very large majority of the House of Lords had expressed strong opinions in favour of Hastings. The gross denunciations of Burke, the vindictive acrimony of Fox, and the "theatrical gag" of Sheridan, had failed to influence the opinions of men who, in the calmness of an atmosphere less charged with acrimony than that of the House of Commons, had chosen to allow their consciences to dictate their vote. On such men the plethora of words uttered by the managers, supported by the concocted evidence of Philip Francis, had had an effect the exact opposite of that which the utterers had hoped for. Long before the defence had begun the minds of the majority were made up. They had resolved to reburnish the honour of Great Britain, to render tardy justice to the man splendidly deserving, the attack upon whom had deeply stained that honour, by a verdict of acquittal.

In May, 1791, Hastings again represented to his judges the hardships entailed upon him by the perpetual delays in the prosecution of the trial. He stated that he was sixty

years old; that he had been a prisoner of the House for four years, loaded and tortured by the most virulent accusations; and that at the actual rate of progress he had no human expectation of living long enough to make his defence, or to hear judgment. For the moment he obtained no promise; but in May of that year the prosecution closed. Hastings then read his defence; and for the year the proceedings terminated, the tribunal having sat only five days.

Before we dismiss that year, however, it may be convenient to examine for a moment the points of the defence, or rather of the reply, which Hastings made to the long prosecution. After stating that of the thirty-four witnesses he had called many were dead, some had returned to India, some were dispersed, he knew not whither; he asked the Tribunal, in view of the many sufferings of the long trial, to pronounce sentence at once. He would be content to waive his defence; but, he added, he would add just one word on the subject of the cruelties and atrocities charged against him, and as to the epithets showered upon him by his accusers. He would simply reply that he had had the satisfaction of seeing all his measures accomplish the designs they were intended to effect; that his political conduct had been invariably regulated by truth, justice, and good faith; that he had resigned his charge of India in a state of established peace and security, with all the sources of its abundance not only unimpaired, but improved. "I am arraigned," he said, "for desolating the provinces in India which are the most flourishing of all the States in India. It was I who made them so. I gave you all; and you have rewarded me with confiscation, disgrace, and a life of impeachment." He further declared in the most solemn manner that in no instance had he intentionally sacrificed the interests of his country to any private views of personal advantage; that according to his best skill and judgment he had invariably promoted the essential interest of his subordinates, the happiness and prosperity of the people committed to his charge, and the welfare and the honour of his country. With regard to Chét Singh and the Begams of Oudh he justified his action from first to last. He declared—and he was justified in the declaration—that he regarded this action as just in itself; as warranted

by the actual circumstances of each case; and that it needed no justification. If, on the other hand, it should be considered that such justification was necessary, it was ready to his hand. But for the sums he had obtained from Chét Singh and from the Nawwáb of Oudh (through the Begams) he must have lost British India. By means of those sums of money he had been able to supply the armies in the field when they were in the last stage of exhaustion. His action had been based on the purest motives, and was morally unassailable.

His manner as he spoke the simple but indignant words in which he exposed the malice of his enemies was touching in the extreme. He stood there the plain, honourable English gentleman—evidently a man of brain and capacity, confronting a troop of roysterers who were endeavouring to rob him of that which he held more worthy to retain than life itself.

"From the beginning to the end of his trial," writes Sir Alfred Lyall,* "he never failed to confront and contradict his accusers; nor was Burke a whit more convinced of his atrocious villainy than was Hastings of his own spotless and unassailable innocence."

The trial still lingered on. In February, 1792, Law opened the defence. He was followed by Dallas in his best style. Then began the examination and the cross-examination of witnesses. By the mouth of these witnesses the calumnies of Burke were one after the other exposed. Vainly did the prosecuting counsel attempt to intimidate them. Their browbeating was so marked that even the elder Mill—who in his history has done all in his power to discredit Warren Hastings—was forced to record that in the courts of justice the rule of decorum and humanity had been habitually violated; that disgust and indignation were aroused by the efforts made, often successfully, to throw a witness into confusion, "for the sake of destroying the weight of his testimony and defeating the cause of truth." The trial was adjourned in October. This phase of it concluded with a solemn declaration from Hastings regarding the personal fortune he had acquired in India. On this point he in the most solemn manner protested

* Lyall's "Warren Hastings," p. 210.

that he had at no time possessed a fortune in excess of £100,000; that all his property stood pledged for the costs of the trial. In that fortune and the uses to which he had devoted it, are to be found, he added, "the enormous fruits of thirteen years of imputed rapacity and peculation, and more than thirty years of active and important service." Again did he appeal to the Tribunal to hasten the proceedings of the trial; but in vain.

The following year, 1795, was chiefly noticeable, in connection with this trial, for the examination as a witness of Lord Cornwallis, summoned in that capacity by Hastings; by the conclusion of the examination of the witnesses for the defence; by the replies of the prosecution; by the summing-up of Burke, in a speech in which, whilst repeating all his calumnies regarding Hastings, he showed that his mind was bent on the doings of the Jacobins, and on the labours of the guillotine. With that speech the prosecution closed. Before the year ended Pitt had moved and carried in the House of Commons a vote of thanks to the managers of the impeachment for the ability with which they had executed the commission entrusted to them by the House.

Early in 1795 the House of Lords resolved themselves into a Committee of the whole House to consider the evidence, and to discuss the several points on which their judgment might still be in doubt. The Ministry meanwhile had been re-constituted. The split between Fox and those who had been convinced by the writings and speeches of Burke on the subject of the French Revolution had become complete. The Duke of Portland and some of the old Whigs had joined the Ministry; Lord Loughborough—the Wedderburn who had defended Clive, but had ever displayed hostility to Hastings—had succeeded Lord Thurlow in the office of Chancellor; Dundas had become Secretary for War. Between Burke and Fox coldness had succeeded friendship: they scarcely spoke to one another. Windham had followed Portland, and had become Secretary at War.* Sheridan, Gray, and Elliot remained faithful amongst the faithless to Fox.

The above were not the only changes which had taken

* There were then three Secretaries of State connected with the War Department. *Vide* Acland and Ransome's "English Political History," p. 157.

place since the commencement of the trial. Of the one hundred and seventy peers who had marched on the opening day in splendid procession to Westminster Hall, sixty had been laid in their graves. A hundred and twenty untitled statesmen connected with the impeachment had accompanied them thither. Of many others the politics had, we have seen, entirely changed. Thurlow, who had quarrelled with his friends and had not joined their enemies, sat isolated and alone, still, however, in the matter of the final judgment, true to the cause of Hastings, supporting him against the caustic criticisms of his successor. Perhaps more than any other factor affecting the case the political atmosphere of England had altered. It was certainly not the least of the effects of the French Revolution that English politics had widened in their scope. Great Britain had been made to realize that, despite the peaceful declarations of Pitt, she would have to prove that she was a part and parcel of Europe; and the First Minister who, in bringing in the budget of 1792, had declared that he hoped for a durable peace, was himself obliged, in February of the year following, to declare against France a war which, with but two slight intermissions, lasted till the summer of 1815.

It was amongst these changes that the Lords met to consider the evidence on the charges against Hastings. After several days' discussion, they arrived at a decision on every count, and on the 23rd of April they adjourned to Westminster Hall to deliver their judgment by the mouth of Lord Loughborough. Only twenty-nine peers voted. Each of them, called up in his turn by the Lord Chancellor, was required to reply to this question: "How says your Lordship? Is Warren Hastings, Esquire, guilty or not guilty of high crimes and misdemeanours, charged by the Commons in the ( ) article of charge?" The peer addressed was required to lay his hands upon his breast,* and to reply either "Guilty" or "Not guilty," adding, in each case, "upon my honour." The number of charges against Hastings had

* The fashion of the Muhammadans, when making solemn affirmations. I was assured at Buda-Pest a few years ago that a Musalman who will give a questioner an assurance, placing his right hand on his breast, is invariably trusted. I have found it so in India.

been reduced to sixteen. The first and second related to his conduct towards Chét Singh and the Begams; the next six charged him with personal corruption; the ninth accused him of granting an improper contract to a son of the Chairman of the Court of Directors; the tenth, of improperly borrowing money for the use of that gentleman; the eleventh, of the same offence in favour of one Charles Crofts; the twelfth, of the same in favour of Sir Charles Blunt; the thirteenth, of making irregular and excessive allowances to Sir Eyre Coote (then, the reader may remember, engaged in the terrible war with Haidar Alí and the French); the fourteenth, for irregularly appointing James Auriol to be agent for the purchase of supplies for Madras, etc., at a commission of fifteen per cent.; the fifteenth, of a similar action in favour of John Belli, at a commission of thirty per cent.; the sixteenth included the rest of the impeachment of the Commons, huddled together in one article. On these charges the peers were called upon, on that 23rd day of April, to declare their judgment.

I have said that only twenty-nine peers voted. Of these all voted against Hastings on the tenth charge, viz. that of borrowing money for the uses of Mr. Sulivan; all acquitted him on the third charge, a charge of personal corruption. On the other charges he was also acquitted, being, in most cases, supported by at least twenty-three, and condemned, except in two instances, by but three. On the charges relating to Chét Singh and the Begams, he had twenty-three in his favour, and six against him. Under these circumstances the Lord Chancellor summoned him, for the last time, to the bar of the House, and informed him that the Lords had honourably acquitted him. He was then discharged.

In his diary, Hastings recorded the following note of this event:— *

"I attended at 12. Was called in about 12.45, and ordered to withdraw. The Lords gave the verdict. I was called in, and informed by the Chancellor that I was acquitted by a great majority, and discharged about ten minutes before two. At four I called upon Lord Thurlow. The following were my guests: General Calliaud, Sir F. Sykes, Sir E. Impey, Mr. Sumner, Mr. J. Sullivan, Colonel Poona, Mr. D. Anderson, Mr. Baber, Mr. Auriol, Mr. Gall,

* Sir Charles Lawson's Monograph, p. 21.

Mr. Thompson, Charles, Major Scott, Major Osborne, Sir J. D'Oyley, Mr Lowe, Mr. Plumer, Mr. Dallas, Mr. Shawe, Mr. T. Woodman, Colonel Hastings, Mr. Payne—in all twenty-two."

The trial had extended over seven sessions of Parliament, from February, 1788, to April, 1795, and had occupied a hundred and forty-eight sittings of the Court. These, however, seldom lasted more than three hours; often less. In defending himself, Hastings had incurred a debt in excess of his accumulated savings, for the verified legal costs reached a total of £75,000. His means were further straitened by the failure, about this time, of a Dutch firm with which his wife had deposited the accumulations from her marriage settlement. But amid all these trials his heart remained brave; his courage was still strong. Though in his sixty-third year, he felt within him all the resolution to continue to combat valiantly against the storms of Fortune. The greatest Tribunal of the nation—the Tribunal which had struck down the daring and loyal Thomas Wentworth, which had sent to the block the Royal grandson of a martyred Queen, which had not spared Bacon, which had dealt kindly only with Somers—had absolved him of all those crimes which the combined ignorance and venom of the majority of the House of Commons had brought against him. Well might he argue that, judging from the analogy of similar practice in private life, it was fitting that the House of Commons, which had lost the case it had forced upon him, should recoup him for the expenses to which he had been put in repelling the shameful charges it had preferred. Then, too, there was the India Office—the India Office for which he had done so much; on which, in trust for the Crown, he had bestowed the foundations, almost ready for the superstructure, of the most magnificent Empire the world has ever seen—an empire wider than the Persia of Alexander, richer than the Gallia of Cæsar, more concentrated and more homogeneous than the vast territories of Trajan. Would the India Office do nothing for him who under its shield had made possible the acquisition of this splendid dominion? It was in the service of the India House, in the necessary service of rooting out evil-doers, of clearing and rounding his borders, of impressing upon chiefs and people the necessity to respect an

Englishman's word, to obey implicitly the command of the overlord, that he had provoked that animosity, that hatred, that thirst for vengeance which had all but ruined him. Could the India House leave in the lurch this man who had made, who had preserved, who had solidified the dominions which he had received from his predecessor, indebted, famine-stricken, plundered, overrun by robbers? It was not to be thought of. Least of all men mercenary, Hastings felt, as every great general in the hour of victory has felt, that a battle is not won until it shall have been followed up. Before the greatest Tribunal in the world he had vindicated "the chastity of his honour." It would be for him now to endeavour to force from his baffled enemies some return for the outlay they had compelled him to incur. His life had been a life of continuous warfare. He had triumphed in India; he had triumphed in Westminster Hall—he must triumph once again, and again upon a field into which he had been forced by his adversaries.

CHAPTER XXX.

SOME SIDE-LIGHTS OF THE TRIAL.

The violence of the language employed by Burke throughout the prosecution of the famous trial has been more than once referred to in these pages, and specimens of his vituperative oratory have been given. Although his speeches have been praised by the politicians and essayists who have accepted the guilt of Mr. Hastings as a conclusion so certain that it was not worthy to be inquired into, the great bulk of mankind, reasoning from the evidence produced in support of the charges, and comparing that evidence with the great achievements of Hastings, with the spontaneous evidence of the worthiest natives of India as to his merits, have arrived at a very different conviction. During the course of the trial public opinion which, at the outset, was strongly against Hastings, veered round very decidedly in his favour. The violence of the speeches of Burke and Sheridan defeated the purposes for which they were delivered. It soon became evident to men who refused to allow their passion to override their judgment that it was impossible that a man so infamous as was this creation of the minds of the managers could have administered India for so many years with results so prosperous to her people. The managers had ranted about whole districts depopulated; about provinces turned into a desert. The evidence showed smiling fields, a contented people, and thickly populated districts. Gradually the truth filtered into the minds of the general public; and, as it so filtered, it gradually found expression by the hand of the caricaturist. The virulence, the malice, the personal vindictiveness of the orators were painted first in Gillray's print—"The Political Banditti assaulting the

Saviour of India." Here men saw Hastings covering himself with a shield of honour, Burke discharging a blunderbuss at his chest, Fox attacking him with a dagger from behind, and Lord North robbing him of some of his money-bags. Another print represented "The Manager of the Trial in Distress." In this Burke, Fox, and the other accusers were being thrown from a bridge, whilst its supports were giving way. A third, called "The First Charge," represented Chét Singh deprived of his hukká, whilst Burke, the accuser of the man who had seized it, energetically appeals to the audience whether the latter be not guilty of not suffering the Rájá to smoke for two days. Another, styled "the Galantee Show," represented Burke as a showman, exhibiting, by means of a magic lantern, a Banáras flea magnified to the size of an elephant, and a Begam wart as large as Olympus, Pelion, and Ossa piled on one another. Of the same character are the "Begam's Tears," tears of exaggerated dimensions, and an "ouzle" as large as a whale. The last on the subject appeared very shortly after Hastings had been acquitted. Sayer published a large print, which he called "The Last of the Managers' Farce." In this he represented the bust of Hastings rising from black clouds of calumny, and surrounded with glory; Burke as the conjurer, with his hand full of charges, and described as "one of the managers and a principal performer, who, having out-Heroded Herod, retires from the stage in a passion at seeing the farce likely to be damned."*

I have referred to the extreme nature of the violence Burke imported into his speeches, and of the manner in which the perusal of them affected the elder Mill. Professor H. H. Wilson, whilom Boden Professor of Sanskrit at Oxford, is even more outspoken. Annotating, in his edition of Mill's "History of India," the events of the great trial, Wilson recorded his conviction that "Burke's oratory was a tissue of falsehood," that "nothing had occurred to justify his exaggeration," to pardon "his unnatural appetite for disgusting details," or to excuse his "prejudiced disposition to listen only to *ex parte* evidence, and an imprudent readiness

* For these extracts I am indebted to Mr. John Timbs's "Anecdote Biography."

to credit the exaggerated language of complaint." The investigation was not "instituted to ascertain truth, but to fix criminality upon Hastings." *

Was he sincere? This is a question which cannot but have occurred sometimes to the mind of the Anglo-Indian, who, realizing, as he pursues the study of the administration of Hastings, the innate greatness of his character, finds it impossible to fathom the real motives of a man, greatly gifted, who should devote the last eight years of a parliamentary career of great brilliancy to the striking down of one of the foremost figures of the age. The prosecution of Hastings was indeed the last parliamentary act of the career of Edmund Burke. No sooner had the House, in the autumn of 1794, passed a vote of thanks to the managers of the trial than Burke sent in his application for the Chiltern Hundreds, and never sat again in Parliament. For the three or four years immediately preceding his fortunes had been at a very low ebb indeed. In 1789, writes Wraxall, he had sunk very low in popular estimation. From that depth it was not the prosecution of Hastings, but the views he published regarding the French Revolution, and for which he was richly rewarded, which ultimately raised him. The thoroughness which he had thrown into his work as one of the managers of the trial had worn him out: his health failed, his temper grew sharp and acid, his narrow circumstances preyed upon him. Yet there can, I think, be no doubt but that in the prosecution of Hastings not only had he been sincere, but he remained convinced of his guilt to the very end of his life. He had been worked up to this conviction by Philip Francis.

"But for the *animus* of Francis," writes an author from whom I have largely quoted in this chapter,† "and the cool malignity with which he toiled, there might have been no proceedings at all. The circumstance that Francis was an intimate friend of Burke had also great influence on the origin of the trial."

From another writer of the period, to whose "Reflections"‡ I have been often indebted, I cull the following as proving

* See Sir Charles Lawson's Monograph, p. 21.

† Timbs's "Anecdote Biography," p. 251, and note.

‡ Nicholl's "Reflections of the Reign of George III." The passage is also quoted by Mr. Timbs.

that, in his prosecution of Hastings, Burke, however wrong-headed we may consider him, was very obstinate in his belief.

"I had lived," Mr Nicholls wrote, "in habits of acquaintance with Mr. Edmund Burke. I had no prejudices against him, for he had not at that time involved my country in the crusade against French principles. Before he brought forward the charges against Mr. Hastings, he conversed with me very fully on the subject. I put this question to him: 'Can you prove that Mr. Hastings ever derived any advantage to himself from that misconduct which you impute to him?' He acknowledged that 'he could not;' but added that 'his whole government of India had been one continued violation of the great principles of justice.' Before the charges were laid on the table, I had a second conversation with Mr. Burke on the subject. When he found that I persevered in my opinion, he told me, 'that in that case I must relinquish the friendship of the Duke of Portland.' I replied that that would give me pain, but that I would rather relinquish the Duke of Portland's friendship than support an impeachment of which I did not approve."

That Burke to the very end of his life was convinced of the absolute integrity of his motives in pursuing Hastings with such extraordinary bitterness is a statement for which we have his solemn word. In 1796 he wrote:—

"If I were to call for a reward (which I have never done) it should be for those services in which, for fourteen years without intermission, I showed the most industry, and had the least success—I mean in the affairs of India. They are those on which I value myself the most: most for the importance, most for the labour, most for the judgment, most for constancy and perseverance in the pursuit. Others may value them for the *intention*. In that surely they are not mistaken."

We may grant the intention; we can refuse neither the perseverance, the constancy, the importance, nor the labour; but as for the judgment I can only affirm that if to be the impassioned tool of an envenomed partisan; to cast to the winds every sense of honour, of fair-dealing, of justice, and of truth, every recollection of services rendered to the country, of a devotion to her interests so deep as to stifle all desire for private advantage; if to act in such a way be to act with "judgment," then and then only can it be said that the claim made by Burke to such a distinction can be recognized.

Burke "claimed," writes Sir Charles Lawson,* "to be a sober and reflecting man, according to the powers that God had given him; but he lived long enough to know that public opinion, which had been once in his favour, had gradually turned, and pronounced him in the wrong. He survived the conclusion of the trial but little more than two years; and though he maintained to the last that he had acted rightly, he made a dying request to a friend, 'to erect a cenotaph most grateful to my shade, by clearing my memory from the load which the East India Company, the King, Lords, and Commons, and, in a manner, the whole British nation (God forgive them) had been pleased to lay as a monument on my ashes.' With ill-regulated zeal he devoted nearly ten years of his life to the effort to prove Hastings to be a miscreant, and he succeeded in gaining for the object of his ruthless condemnation public sympathy as a martyr. Had it not been for the impeachment, which made him first notorious, and then famous, Hastings might have sunk into the obscurity in his native land that is the frequent destiny of men who have occupied exalted office in India. It was Burke who raised a cenotaph to Warren Hastings which does not lose its interest for the contemplative observer as the years roll by."

Of the other two principals in the attacks on Hastings, there stand forth Fox and Sheridan. Francis, never in the front, was the busy fiend who provided them with the slanders, the calumnies, the falsehoods, which constituted their common property. Of Fox it may be said that he was a politician. He took his side, and he stuck to it. We, in the present day, see the politician, pure and simple, following a course precisely similar. There was no conviction in his utterances. He had not the passionate enthusiasm of Burke. There were many reasons why Hastings might have been personally obnoxious to him. Hastings stood high in favour with the King and Queen. For some time it seemed probable that Pitt would support him. When Pitt deserted Hastings, Fox had committed himself too much to turn round. In the early days of the attack, moreover, Burke was the Mentor of the Whig party; Fox was his political pupil. The denunciation of Hastings promised, too, at first, to be a popular cry. These reasons may perhaps suffice to a certain extent to account for the action of Mr. Fox.

Sheridan, fortunately, has spared us the trouble of seeking for his reasons. He told them to us when he told them to Mr. Hastings at Brighton: "I was then a public pleader, whose duty it is, under all circumstances, to make good, if he

* Lawson's Monograph, p. 21.

can, the charges which he is commissioned to bring forward." The reason is complete.*

Of Philip Francis it is not necessary to add a single word. If his actions, as set forth in this volume, fail to present him as he was to the reader, no words of mine can be effectual. By the managers he was thoroughly trusted, and they repaid his services by constant panegyrics. Listening to some of these uttered one day by Grey, Hastings, Miss Burney tells us, could not refrain himself, but, seizing a pen, wrote these impromptu lines—

> "It hurts me not that Grey as Burke's assessor
> Proclaims me tyrant, robber, and oppressor,
> Though for abuse alone meant;
> For when he calls himself the bosom friend—
> The friend of Philip Francis: I contend
> He made me full atonement."

It was curious to note how prompt were the antagonists of Hastings to interpret to his disadvantage every incident which might, by exaggeration, or comment, or unfair inference, be turned to his injury. The story of the Haidarábád diamond is well known, but it will bear repetition. On the 2nd of January, 1786, the day on which the House of Commons had resolved to impeach Hastings on the Banáras charge, Hastings received from the Nizam, through the English Resident at his court, a diamond as a present for the King. Hastings forwarded the little case containing the diamond, and the letter from the Nizam accompanying it, to the Secretary of State, Lord Sidney, to be presented by him to his Majesty. Under ordinary circumstances the matter would have ended there. But it was noticed that when Hastings presented himself at Court, the diamond shone conspicuously on the King's finger, and many a sneering reference was made to the fact that his presence had so soon followed the despatch of the jewel. Stories, meanwhile, had been industriously spread in the House and elsewhere, that the letter from the Nizam was a forgery, and that the diamond was a bribe from Hastings intended to conciliate the royal favour. The members of the House of Commons had swallowed so

* See note to p. 462.

much that they were ready to accept this *canard* also, though it might have been known that there was not a man in England capable of forging such a letter as that of the Nizam; and that, had the story been true, it would have been easy to drive it home to Hastings, and to ruin him irretrievably.

Other stories relating to the enormous wealth accumulated by Hastings were also carefully circulated: one to the effect that he had freighted several ships to convey his fortune to Europe by way of Amsterdam. In January, 1787, Burke actually applied to the House to have Hastings committed to close custody on the plea that £300,000 had been sold out of the public funds to enable the owner to defeat the ends of justice by fleeing the country. In point of fact, Hastings, at the highest tide of his fortune, never possessed more than a third of that amount. In the same spirit, Burke, in 1789, referring to a complaint which had reached him as to the enormous cost devolving on the accused in his efforts to vindicate his honour, urged that a man who had amassed an enormous fortune by peculation and bribes would scarcely feel the outlay of £30,000.

Until the tide turned; that is, until the exaggerations and inventions of Philip Francis, as interpreted by Burke, by Fox, by Sheridan, and by Grey produced a reaction in his favour in the minds of the Commons, of the Lords, and of society generally, not to speak of the general public, who had pronounced much earlier in his favour, the position of Hastings and his wife was extremely painful. Yet, throughout this trying period, they were both to prove to the world how entirely applicable to them was the Horatian motto, to which the reader may perhaps pardon me for again referring.* Writing to his friend, Thompson, in India, in the autumn of 1787, from Beaumont Lodge, Hastings makes but one slight allusion to the trial which had already begun, and that only to alleviate the anxiety he knew his friend would feel on his behalf. "You will suffer," he writes, "by all the past advices from England in your concern for me. As for myself, I have made up my mind for the worst that can befall me." Dwelling then for a few lines on the compulsion under which he had been to kneel before the

* P. 276.

House of Lords, he glides imperceptibly into the pleasanter description of his home-life.

"I have the pleasure to tell you that I pass the best part of the year in the place from which this is dated, with great comfort, and almost delight, and have the satisfaction of seeing Mrs. Hastings' health proceed in improvement, though it is yet delicate, and subject to frequent and sudden ailments. She has suffered more than I have done from my prosecution, and I only from her sufferings (except the instance mentioned above)."

When he first arrived in England, Hastings, judging others from himself, did not think it possible that he could ever be arraigned before a public tribunal for his administration of British India. He was simple enough to believe that the plain, unvarnished story of all that he had suffered, all that he had accomplished, would be accepted. He was inexperienced enough to hold the conviction that a political assembly cares really for truth. Soon was he to realize that truth is the very last commodity it values. The majority take infinite pains to keep it at the bottom of the well. As his mind gradually awoke to this fact, he became absolutely indifferent to the nature of the charges that might be brought against him. Knowing those actually preferred to be utterly false, he did not care how many others might be superadded. In one of his letters, alluding to this subject, he intimated that he would not be surprised if he were to be charged with having been concerned in the revolt of the American colonies. To the last he was confident that the truth, long repressed, would in the end prevail. Not for an instant did he falter in that belief. Throughout, his behaviour was that of an honourable English gentleman, confident in himself, confident in his cause, confident in the energies which in India had not been altogether misapplied, and which were never more ready, never more active, than during these, the hours of persecution and adversity. Tried in the fire as few had been before him, he emerged, in his sixty-third year, with those energies unimpaired; his principles confirmed, his knowledge of the baseness of which human nature is capable enormously increased. He had realized that the villains of Bengal and Banáras, the Nandkumár, the Chét Singh, the Muhammad Rízá, had their counterparts in England.

Whilst the trial was progressing, Hastings had succeeded

in repurchasing Daylesford. It had been the dream of his life to become the possessor of the ancestral estate. For three years the actual owner, Mr. Knight, had carried on a negotiation on the subject—a negotiation longer, Mr. Hastings remarked, than would have served for the acquisition of a province. But, in the course of the year 1788, both parties came to terms, and Hastings acquired the property for the sum of £11,424, and an annuity of £100 a year for Mr. and Mrs. Knight. His first care was to pull down the mansion he found existing, and to build a new one in its place. How he further improved it will be told when I reach the period of his life after the trial.

We have arrived now at the conclusion of that trial. I have collected here a few scattered incidents, if such they can be called, connected with the actors in it, and, under ordinary circumstances, the chapter would end here. But there lie before me, as I write, copies of the congratulatory letters written and despatched from India on the occasion of the news of his acquittal reaching that country. So far as I am aware, these have appeared only in a semi-official publication of the last days of the last century; and it is fit, I think, that the admirers of the great Proconsul should be afforded the opportunity of noting the extent to which he was appreciated in the country in which he had ruled so long, and ruled with such magnificent and lasting results. No one can affirm that these letters represented a sense of favours to come.*

They represent the real feelings of the principal British inhabitants of Calcutta; of the commanding officer and garrison of Chanár; of Colonel Popham, of Gwáliár fame, and 68 officers and the staff posted at Fathgarh; of Colonel Forbes and the entire officers of the force stationed at Kánhpur (68 officers and staff); of Colonel Morgan and 175 officers and staff at Fort William and Barrackpur; of Colonel Brisco and 103 officers and staff at Dánápur; of the Lieutenant-Governor and the gentlemen supervised by him at Fort Marlborough: in fact of the whole of the Bengal Presidency. The first of these addresses was

* *Asiatic Annual Register for* 1790, 2nd edit. (Miscellaneous Tracts). p. 178.

transmitted to Hastings by the Court of Directors, through the Chairman and Deputy-Chairman of the East India Company. Their letter ran thus:—

"We have the commands of the Court of Directors to transmit you the address of the inhabitants of Calcutta on your late honourable acquittal by the House of Lords: we have great pleasure in obeying these commands, which convey so honourable a testimony of the esteem and affection of so respectable a body of men, who had such opportunities of appreciating your character."

The reader might find it tedious to read every word of these addresses; but I may be permitted to cull from each of them one or two of the more salient passages expressive of the causes which had inspired the signatories with an affection and admiration for their late Governor-General, not surpassed even by the enthusiasm called forth by the great Marquess Wellesley.

"We cannot but admire," wrote the inhabitants of Calcutta, "the patience, fortitude, and resignation, with which you have borne a trial unexampled in length, and a scrutiny into character, motives, and actions, the most strict and minute that ever was instituted. But, upheld by conscious innocence, you have given an example of your reliance on the justice of your cause, which we doubt not will carry conviction to the world and to posterity, equal to the verdict of the illustrious tribunal before which you have appeared."

The address from the officers stationed at Chanár is particularly impressive.

"Relieved from a long and painful anxiety," they wrote, "respecting the event of your unmerited prosecution and trial, the officers and staff at this station indulge the warmest sentiments of their hearts in congratulating you on your honourable acquittal.

"Having been ever fully impressed with the highest sense of your merit, they cannot but rejoice that your character, after the severest investigation, has been so amply and so honourably justified.

"All Europe must now join with them in acknowledging the wisdom and justice of those measures, which, by conciliating the minds of the native powers, ensured success to those exertions you so happily employed, to the preservation of the British Empire in the East, against the united efforts of the most powerful enemies."

Colonel Popham and the 68 officers and staff at Fathgarh wrote, amid much more:—

"While they testify their inexpressible satisfaction at the result of an inquiry which will transmit your name to posterity with deserved and unfaded

lustre, they cannot but feel a very particular self-gratulation, on finding their own sentiments of your wisdom, zeal, and important public services, confirmed by the almost unanimous verdict of the most respectable tribunal upon earth, and the general voice of the nation."

Even more emphatic and more touching is the address of Colonel Forbes and the 106 officers and staff stationed at Kánhpur:—

"During a trial which, for severity of scrutiny and intolerable procrastination, is without example in the annals of the world, we have beheld you, Sir, patient and magnanimous, deporting yourself in a manner becoming the saviour of British India. Our solicitude was great, but we had no fear of the issue, though we feelingly lamented the precious years that have been lost to the public, which might otherwise have been employed in the service of the State, at a period as interesting and momentous, as your trial has been afflicting and unprecedented. May the remainder of your life, Sir, be long and happy; and we hope that this grateful tribute from a body which have been witnesses of the brilliant acts of your dignified and meritorious administration, will descend, with the name of Hastings, to posterity, as a token of the veneration and esteem in which we have ever held your character."

Colonel Morgan and the 175 officers and staff located at Fort William and Barrackpur, after expressing in terms not less feeling their congratulations and their admiration, concluded their address with these eloquent words:—

"With us, and with the natives of this country, your name must ever be revered, and, with Clive's, be handed down with honour, respect, and admiration, to the latest posterity."

Not less earnest and hearty are the wishes expressed in their address by Colonel Brisco and the 103 officers and staff stationed at Dánápur:—

"Long may you live, Sir, an ornament to the nation which will, at length unblinded by prejudice, be fully convinced of the ample support and benefit it received from your administration in India; and will, no doubt, do justice to that exertion, ability, and patriotism, which, surmounting every difficulty and obstruction, secured those possessions unimpaired to the mother-country although assailed by the combined powers of Europe and the East."

To these addresses Hastings despatched two separate replies. To that received from the inhabitants of Calcutta which had been forwarded to him through the Court of Directors, he wrote an answer, which he despatched, under

a covering letter, to the Chairman and Deputy Chairman. In the former we find these pregnant words:—

"To a man, whom a strange fatality has involved, through the course of a long official life, in an unremitting struggle for the means of discharging with effect the duties of his station, and guarding his reputation from dishonour, declarations of applause and affection from those who stood, by position, nearest to the seat, or influence, of that authority in which he so long participated, and whose operations he, in a great measure, directed, are of more worth than any that wealth and honours, united, could yield. Such, I can truly affirm, they are in my estimation of them.

"You, gentlemen, have many claims of old to my regard. There was a time in which even the authority of my public office derived a considerable support from the influence of your good opinion of the manner in which it had been exercised. The knowledge of your sentiments, publicly and authentically expressed on the day of my departure from Calcutta, contributed largely to support my credit with my countrymen at home, when, but for this, and similar aids, it must have sunk under the pressure of accusations heaped upon me without number, and yet unrevoked, in the name of the most revered body upon earth. These are personal benefits which I must ever remember with a grateful heart: nor is the impression made upon it by the prompt and ardent zeal which you have ever manifested to co-operate with the Government itself, in seasons of great exigency, less deeply marked, though blended with an esteem arising from a more disinterested consideration."

Hastings concluded this letter by the placing on record his sense of the patriotism and fair-dealing towards the children of the soil, in words which, later events have proved, apply equally in their general character to the British residents in Calcutta of the present day.

"In the many different occupations I have filled in India, from my early youth upwards, I have had more opportunities of knowing the general character of my countrymen resident in it, but more particularly in the provinces of Bengal, than almost any other man; and I dare to pronounce, as I would if called upon before the judgment-seat of Heaven, that in the sentiment and practice of the two best affections which constitute the bond of society, namely, public spirit and generosity, they are not surpassed, if equalled, by any people upon earth."

In the covering letter to the Chairman and Deputy-Chairman of the Court of Directors, Hastings expressed his deep sense of their kindness in having consented to become the channel of communication between the British inhabitants of Calcutta and himself. He thanked them further "for the handsome and dignified terms in which" they "had

been pleased to execute this commission." Then follow these words—words which may speak for themselves :—

"My sufferings have been great; but they have been converted into blessings by the consequences which they have drawn upon me. My acquittal, though by the highest and most respectable tribunal upon earth, I consider but as an exemption from infamy. It was followed by the declaration of the collective body of my late masters that I merited positive approbation. The Court of Directors added the most honourable and impressive testimony to that judgment. My fellow-countrymen, both civil and military, of that establishment, whose interests were, during a course of many years, committed to my charge, have repeated the same sentiments; and the former have indirectly appealed to that Honourable Court for the confirmation which it had already given of it."

To the addresses of the officers of the army Hastings replied in a long letter addressed to the senior officer, Major-General Charles Morgan. The letter is important from the encomiums pronounced in it on the officers of the Indian establishment. Hastings had had experience of the splendid discipline of the sipáhí army officered by British officers, in the terrible war with Mír Kásim; in the various phases of the Rohíla campaign; during the two Maráthá wars; in the still more serious struggle with Haidar Alí and Típu Sultán; and in many apparently minor, but in themselves important, engagements. He had realized the axiom which, after the first Afghán war, found expression from a very distinguished officer who had served in that war, that, given the condition of good leading, the sipáhí would go anywhere and do anything. The "good leading" was in those days as in these, and as always, the main factor. And that "good leading" was, in India, almost entirely the monopoly of the British officer. It was, therefore, with the most profound conviction of their truth that Hastings, in his letter to General Charles Morgan, penned the words which follow:—

"I owe much to them [the officers of the Bengal army] for whatever degree of reputation the world may be pleased to allow me. It has been my boast, and though repeatedly proclaimed, even on that ground on which the most laboured efforts were made to blast my good name, it has never been contradicted, that in the course of an administration of thirteen years and in periods of more than common difficulty I never joined in the formation of any military operation which did not ultimately succeed in the complete attainment of its destined, or a better purpose. . . . Among the numerous

accusations with which I have been heavily charged, it was one, that I had rashly precipitated the Company's interests, and even safety, into situations of unequal danger. And true it was, that if I had had but common instruments to work with, I should have thought as they did who laid that guilt to my charge, because they knew not that no enterprise was too great for men, who, possessing, in common with their brethren of these kingdoms, the virtues of courage and honour, joined to them a professional knowledge wrought by constant practice to perfection; men, whose daily habits, even to their amusements, were military, and who regarded every service in which they were engaged as their own."

In referring, in this heartfelt reply to the army, to the comradeship which should bind the army to the members of the Civil Service, and the latter to the army, Hastings once again anticipated the gallant conduct which the members of the Civil Service have always displayed, but especially under circumstances more trying than those which he had witnessed.

"In our community," he added in his letter to General Morgan, "it has sometimes happened, as in the best it must, that parties have been formed which have unhappily divided men's affections with their opinions from each other. But no instance has ever yet occurred in which the interests of their state were threatened with external danger that did not unite all hearts and hands in the same common cause, and in one determined and confident resolution to maintain it, what power soever might assail it. This observation comprises both branches of the service, the civil equally with the military; and too highly do I estimate the spirit and liberality of the latter, to fear that I may displease them, by ascribing to the former this participation in those qualities which constitute the true basis of public virtue. It is to these energies and to this bond of union that Great Britain is indebted for her Indian Empire. May the same spirit ever animate every corps and every department of that service to the same honourable and prosperous exertions; and may their parent State, more and more known and knowing, love and cherish those virtues from which it has derived so many and great benefits, and on which it depends for their duration and improvement."

The fact that the contemplation of the character and conduct of Hastings had been able more than ten years after he had quitted Calcutta to draw from the men whose action he had directed, who had been witnesses of the consequences of his exalted policy, unsolicited, so high a testimony to the respect and admiration he had inspired, is of itself no slight title to the reverence of posterity. These men were honourable men: many of them were of proved ability. They had been

on the spot at the very time when Hastings had carried out the policy for which he had been condemned by the House of Commons. For them he could do nothing. The long trial had deprived him of his power and of his influence. That in such circumstances they should volunteer such testimony proves that those who had been ready to risk their lives and to shed their blood for the policies which he directed was a real man; a Vir; a director of other men; a man who, in all times, would have been followed and obeyed. The letters I have quoted were the homage paid by capable soldiers to a chief whom they would have followed to the death.

CHAPTER XXXI.

AFTER THE TRIAL.

HASTINGS had been acquitted by the highest tribunal in the land. But the necessity imposed upon him by the House of Commons to defend his character had entailed upon him an expenditure equal to his entire fortune. The legal expenses alone had involved him in a debt of about £60,000, after having paid £15,000 in cash. In these circumstances he argued that it was but fair that the costs of the trial should be borne by the prosecutor. That prosecutor was the House of Commons, which had fallen under the spell of the magician whom Francis had induced to become the minister of his spleen. Acting under his spells, it had voted the impeachment before the House of Lords of a man declared by his judges to be innocent. Surely it was but common fairness that the prosecutor should pay the costs of the prosecution in which he had failed.

The axiom of Mr. Disraeli, "Justice is Truth in action," * was an axiom which had commended itself to Mr. Hastings throughout his long and successful career; and he proceeded at this crisis to try how it would affect the First Minister and the House of Commons. He memorialized the House, setting forth the exact circumstances of the case; stating what his circumstances had been; how the necessity which had been imposed upon him by the House to vindicate his honour had involved him in heavy debt; and asking compensation for the charges he had incurred. The memorial Hastings forwarded to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Pitt. One word from that illustrious man would have sufficed to render

* "It has been said by a great writer that 'Grace is Beauty in action.' I say that 'Justice is Truth in action,' and I exact it from the noble lord."—Mr. Disraeli's speech in the House of Commons in 1850.

to Hastings the justice he demanded. He was complete master of the House of Commons. The Opposition, under the influences excited by the French Revolution, had completely dwindled away. But there were many reasons why Pitt could not bring himself to support the prayer contained in the memorial. He had been practically one of the authors of the impeachment. But for his sudden vote on the Banáras charge, the action of Burke and his friends would in all probability have collapsed. Burke, at that time, believing that Pitt was against him, had renounced all hope of success. The impeachment, then, had practically been the doing of Pitt. He had drilled himself to believe, we are bound to admit, that Hastings had committed many of the crimes charged against him. The fact that it may have been a belief based on ignorance of the circumstances of India does not excuse him. On the night upon which he gave his vote against Hastings on the Banáras clause the impeachment of Hastings had become certain. He had made himself, by that vote, not only one of the authors of the impeachment, but the principal author. The acquittal of Hastings had been a disproof of his infallibility. It had been a blow to the pride of one of the proudest of men. It was not to be supposed, then, that Pitt, being what he was, would, with his own hand, remove the stigma which he had been instrumental in persuading the House of Commons to cast upon Warren Hastings. To support the demand that the House should pay the costs of a trial for which he had ostentatiously voted, but which had terminated in the acquittal of the accused, was a course to which his nature could not bend.

But there was still another reason for his refusal. Burke, who, when the trial began, had been the close ally of Fox, had broken with all his friends on the subject of the French Revolution, and had become the pensioned ally of the Tory Minister. The "immortal thoughts" on the subject of that upheaval of old Europe, given to an excited world, had drawn in their train ministers and people, the Prime Minister leading the way, and had fixed the policy of Great Britain for the five and thirty years that were to follow. How was it possible that Pitt, by sanctioning the memorial of Hastings, should break with the Mentor from whose inspired lips he had

listened to the principles on which the foreign policy of the country should be conducted. The opinions of Burke regarding the guilt of Hastings had not been changed by the verdict of the House of Lords. He had attributed that verdict entirely to corruption. His utterances regarding Hastings continued as bitter and as unmeasured as they had ever been. No sooner did he learn that Hastings had memorialized the House for compensation for the expenses to which he had been put by the action of the House than he wrote to the Lord Chancellor (Loughborough) to protest against the infamy of condemning the Commons in costs and damages, and granting pensions to "the accused and accursed."* Considering the existing relations between the writer and Pitt, it would have required a great amount of moral courage on the part of the latter, had he been inclined that way, to acquiesce in the prayer of Warren Hastings. But, for the first of the reasons I have given, he did not possess the inclination.

"His pride forbade him to forgive the defeat that Hastings had inflicted upon him; and though Hastings had been honourably acquitted, Pitt was willing to mulct him in the whole of his fortune, and to leave him, notwithstanding his eminent services, to starve. There was a littleness in this, to say the least of it, that was unworthy of so great a man." †

Pitt returned the memorial with a short note to the effect that, "under all the circumstances, he did not conceive that he should be justified in submitting the petition of the late Governor-General of India to the consideration of the sovereign." On receiving this intimation, Hastings, on the earnest advice of his friends, bestirred himself to appeal to the Court of Directors. It was not willingly that he had recourse to a procedure which he felt, and felt strongly, ought not to have been rendered necessary.

"I have been subjected," he said to his friends, "to a long, and, as the issue proved, an unmerited prosecution at the instance of the people of England, or at least of their representatives. It is for the country at large, not for any corporate body of its inhabitants, to replace me on the ground which I occupied ere the prosecution began; and if Parliament refuse this act of justice, I must submit. I can have no claim whatever upon the Court of Directors."

* Lyall's "Warren Hastings," p. 224.
† Lawson's Monograph on Hastings, p. 22.

Yet there was much to be said on the other side; and his friends, many of them influential men connected with the India Office, argued that it was not quite reasonable to urge that he had no claim on his masters. The Court of Directors, they urged, had approved the proceedings upon which the charges against him had been based. In his person, then, as the servant whose deeds it had approved, the Court was on its trial; in that sense it was bound to see that their servant should not be damaged by having had to defend actions which, in point of law, were actions against the master. After much correspondence, it was finally determined to submit to the Court of Proprietors a proposition that the Court should pass a resolution agreeing, with the sanction of the Board of Control, to defray the bare expenses occasioned by the trial.

The Court met on the 29th of May, 1795. The proceedings began by the proprietors passing unanimously a vote of thanks to Hastings in acknowledgment of his distinguished services. Other proposals, for the payment of the legal expenses of the trial, and for conferring upon him an annuity of £5000 per annum, were indeed passed, after having undergone the ordeal of the ballot. But for these, under Pitt's India Bill, the sanction of the Board of Control was necessary. That meant the sanction of Mr. Pitt, and that sanction was refused. The Board, after considering both questions, declared that the opinions of the law-officers of the Crown were to the effect that the difficulties in the way of agreeing to the payment of the law expenses were insurmountable; whilst, as regarded the pension, it refused its concurrence.

This decision meant the absolute ruin of Hastings. That which all the malice of his enemies had been unable to effect, the *non possumus* of Mr. Pitt's administration threatened to bring about. But at this supreme crisis the Court of Directors took up the cause of their injured servant with considerable energy. They entered into correspondence with the Board of Control on the one side, whilst on the other they applied to Hastings to lay before them a detailed statement of his financial and territorial position. Hastings, in submitting the former, showed how the expenses of the trial

had almost equalled the amount of the accumulations he had brought with him from India, and that for the payment of the same he had bound himself. With respect to the acquisition of Daylesford, he wrote:—

"I possess the estate of Daylesford in Worcestershire, which cost me, including the original purchase, and what I have expended upon the house, gardens, and lands, about £60,000. The estate is 650 acres, and may be valued at £500 clear yearly rent. . . . In 1789 I purchased the principal part of the estate, and about two years since the remainder. It was the spot in which I had passed much of my infancy, and I feel for it an affection of which an alien could not be susceptible, because I see in it attractions which that stage of my life imprinted on my mind, and my memory still retains. It had been the property of my family during many centuries, and had not been more than seventy-five years out of their possession." *

The persistence with which the Court pressed the claims of their injured servant eventually triumphed. The consent of the Board of Control was at length secured to a compromise. On the 2nd of March, 1796, the Court announced the terms of the new arrangement. Under it Hastings was to receive the capitalized amount of an annuity of £4000 a year for twenty-eight years and a half, with retrospective effect from June, 1785, equal to £42,000; further, he was granted a loan, free of interest, of £50,000 for eighteen years. It may be convenient to add here that, on the expiry of the term of the annuity in 1814, the Court continued it, at the rate of £4000 a year for the remainder of his life; whilst, after Hastings had repaid £16,000 on account of the loan of £50,000, they remitted the balance. Considering the splendid services of the recipient, of the great expense to which he had been put to defend his conduct when acting on behalf of the Company, the provision cannot be styled liberal. It scarcely, taking into account the repayment of £16,000, paid the expenses he had incurred on account of the trial. It will seem still less liberal when we compare it with the handsome annuities bestowed in our own times for a short single campaign, notably that on the Satlaj. But whilst the friends of Hastings complained, he himself only expressed his gratitude.

"I have yet a further debt of gratitude," he wrote on the 6th of May of

* Lawson's Monograph, p. 88

the same year to the Chairman and Deputy-chairman of the Court, "to acknowledge to the Honourable Court of Directors for the loan of £50,000, which they have generously granted to me, in consequence of my late application, which certainly was not made with such an expectation. As a relief from distress, I received it with a grateful heart; as an implied effect of the same generous acceptance of my services, I feel a gratification from it of a different kind, and scarcely inferior to the former."*

Hastings, in point of fact, knew well that all his thanks were due to the Court of Directors; that their more liberal intentions had been thwarted by the Board of Control. To Edmund Burke, to whom the year following the information of the benefits conferred on his intended victim was conveyed by his physician, Dr. French Laurence, the news was as wormwood. Broken in health, despondent, almost at the gate of death,† he could not help indulging in a gibe at the man who had beaten him. Neither the death of his son nor the prospect looming in the near future could assuage the rancour of his spirit. He could not resist the conviction that the friends of Hastings were nursing him for a peerage, and he said so.

Mr. Disraeli has described in one of his lighter works the course taken by Pitt to break down the insurmountable barrier erected by the great families of England at the Revolution of 1688. "Mr. Pitt," he wrote, "made peers of second-rate squires and fat graziers. He caught them in the alleys of Lombard Street and clutched them in the counting-houses of Cornhill." Certainly under no circumstances would he have recommended Hastings for a peerage. The successors of Mr. Pitt inherited all his prejudices without all his genius. It was better, perhaps, that Hastings should live, should descend to posterity as a great Commoner—the title won by the first William Pitt from a people who adored him—than be merged amongst the men who had been ennobled by the process so graphically described by Mr. Disraeli. Until after the death of Pitt there is nothing in the correspondence of Hastings to lead us to believe that he had any great desire to become a peer. Injudicious friends had indeed dangled a title before him. Lord Thurlow had said to Major Scott before Hastings had left Calcutta, that

* *Asiatic Annual Register* for 1799 (Miscellaneous Tracts), p. 181.
† He died the 8th of July, 1797.

"it would be base and dishonourable in Ministers not to advise his Majesty to confer some mark of royal favour" upon so eminent a man. Upon this point Lord Thurlow was always very keen. The reader may recollect that the sudden revulsion of Pitt against Hastings was attributed to an intemperate threat said to have been made by that lord to the effect that he would affix the Great Seal to a patent of nobility in favour of Hastings, with or without the sanction of the Prime Minister. Pitt had refused to submit the name of Hastings as the recipient of an honour so long as grave charges should be hanging in suspense over his head. After the acquittal he would not. So the matter rested until the death of Mr. Pitt in January, 1806. But shortly after that event Hastings made an effort to secure the removal from the journals of the House of Commons of the charges branding him as false to his trust and a traitor to his country. The story of the interview held by Hastings on this subject with the Prince of Wales, and afterwards with Lord Moira, tells its own tale.

The Prince of Wales had always expressed himself favourably disposed towards Hastings. Two months after Mr. Pitt's death Hastings asked his Royal Highness for an interview. The request was graciously acceded to, and Hastings took the opportunity to submit a statement of the injuries he had suffered from his impeachment. He had at first hoped, he said, that employment might have been offered him either at the Board of Control or in the Government in India. Setting aside these expectations, which, he said, he perhaps ought not to have entertained, he had hoped that he might at least obtain a reparation from the House of Commons. Acquitted of the charges brought against him, his name yet stood branded on the records of that House. He then proceeded to suggest, indirectly, that the best mode of wiping away these slanderous charges would be to confer upon him a peerage. The Prince heard him attentively, cordially assented to the proposal, and recommended him to attempt to carry it through by means of Lord Grenville or Lord Moira. Subsequently Hastings saw Lord Moira, who meanwhile had discussed the subject with the Cabinet, and had discovered from the

utterances of many of its members that the fears of some, and the old grudges of others, would effectually bar the way to honours and employment to his correspondent. Lord Moira communicated this result to Mr. Hastings, and then and there the matter ended. Never again did Hastings put forward claims for honour or for office.

The refusal affected neither the temper nor the contented spirit of this great Englishman. "Men at some time are masters of their fate," says Shakespeare. It is one of the truest consolations of adversity that a man true to himself, conscious of his own rectitude, is independent of the good opinion of the dispensers of places and honours. Ovid has explained to us the secret of true happiness. Through the vivid glasses of the Latin poet we see the disgraced hero and the miserable scum whose calumnies caused his disgrace.

> "Conscia mens recti famæ mendacia risit;
> Sed nos in vitium credula turba sumus."

The members of the Cabinet might well cherish their rancours and their grudges. They could prevent the man whom they had judged and acquitted from sitting in their midst, but they could not deprive him of one friend whose affection he cherished. They could not force ill-feeling or want of harmony into the mansion of him who in so many ways soared above them. Whatever might have been the inventions, the calumnies, the backbitings of the men who opposed him, Hastings could not but feel that in fair fight he had overcome them. He was the victor: they had never seen his back. And it was because Hastings was conscious of his uprightness, that he continued, after the monetary difficulties caused by the trial had been to a great extent overcome, that happy and contented life at Daylesford which, had the *credula turba* possessed the smallest foundation for their calumnies, would have been impossible to him. The world, the world of fashion, of frivolity, of twisting politics and scheming intrigue, continued to know him not. But I trust I may venture, with the greatest humility, to record in this place my conviction, that, in the inmost recesses of his heart, he had overcome that world.

CHAPTER XXXII.

DAYLESFORD.

In the preceding pages I have preferred to present a continuous story of the political life of Warren Hastings, rather than break the thread of the narrative by a description of the intellectual occupations with which he beguiled his hours, or by a dissertation on the literary tastes which found congenial employment in reading and composition. And yet Hastings was endowed by nature to take a very prominent place in science and literature. In his earlier days in India he had, as I have recorded, opened communications with Thibet, and had transmitted the report drawn up by his assistants to Dr. Johnson for his perusal and advice. He founded in Calcutta a college for the education of young men of the Muhammadan faith; and this college still flourishes, a worthy reminiscence of the large views of its founder; whilst to the Asiatic Society, which has accomplished so much for the literature of the East, he gave a steady and earnest support. The manner in which, just prior to 1775, he caused the Hindu criminal law to be codified and translated into English, marked an era in the criminal legislation of British India. The benefit derived from that act alone can scarcely be exaggerated.

He was very fond of poetry. During his last voyage from India he devoted a very large proportion of his leisure hours to dallying with the Muse. His productions will repay perusal in that they give indications of the elegant mind, the round masculine nature, and depth of vision of the man. He continued this occupation to the end of his life. Some of his impromptus were excellent. Of these, in the last chapter but one, I have given a specimen. Here is another. I must

premise that, during the trial, Mr. J. L. Abbot, R.A., had, amongst many others, painted a portrait of the accused. Hastings, when he saw it, was struck by the benevolent and tranquil expression given by the artist to his features, in marked contrast to that which those who only knew him from listening to or reading the vituperations of Burke and Sheridan would have been inclined to attribute to them. He at once seized the pen, and wrote the following lines:—

"A mouth extended fierce from ear to ear,
With fangs like those which wolves and tigers wear;
Eyes whose dark orbs announce a sullen mood,
A lust of rapine and a thirst of blood.
Such Hastings was, as by the Commons painted,
(Men shuddered as they look'd and women fainted)
When they display'd him to the vacant Throne,
And bade the Peers the labour'd likeness own;
And such in all his attributes array'd
Behold him here on Abbot's canvas spread!
'Tis true, to vulgar sense they lie conceal'd,
To Burke, and men like Burke, alone reveal'd.
They, their own hearts consulting, see him here
In lines reflected from themselves appear;
With metaphysic eyes the picture scan,
Pierce through the varnish, and detect the man.
To Burke it shows a soul with envy curst,
Malignant, mean, and cruel when he durst;
To Sheridan, a foe to shame, untrue
To every kindred tie, and social too;
To Fox, a shuffling knave, with false pretence;
Michael alone descried his want of sense;
And all in avarice agreed to find,
Or make, the ruling passion of his mind.
Yet he has friends, and they—nay, strange to tell,
His very wife, who ought to know him well,
Whose daily suff'rings from the worst of men
Should make her wish the wretch impeach'd again—
Believes him gentle, meek, and kind of heart.
O, Hastings, what a hypocrite thou art." *

To such a man exclusion from public affairs was no real

* Sir Charles Lawson's Monograph. Sir Charles, after stating that the portrait represents a very benevolent and tranquil face, with much earnestness of expression, adds, "Mr. Woodman-Hastings has favoured me with a copy of the following lines, at the expense of the managers of the trial, which Hastings was prompted by Abbot's picture to write."

punishment. In his wife, one of the most charming of women; in himself, in his friends, he had unfailing sources of intellectual wealth and social happiness. As an occupation he had the nurture and direction of his property: the doing in Worcestershire on a small scale of that which he had attempted to carry out in India on a larger; with, too, almost as great a comparative tenuity of resources. Fortunately, at Daylesford, there was no triumvirate to endeavour to control his actions; no malignant Francis to misrepresent his every action; no Nandkumár to bring against him accusations based on forged documents; no Chét Singh to stir up his frontier; no Ásafu'd daula to represent his own poverty and his distress; no Maráthá confederation to assail him in the west; no Haidar to threaten him with destruction in the south. From such scourges he was free: free, moreover, to indulge his own refined tastes; to mingle with friends who had been tried in the fire; to hear from India of the development of the policy which he had initiated, the budding of his own plans. During bygone years his prescient mind had looked forward to that development, to that budding just as he had hoped it would develop and bud. A great triumph, an innermost joy, was it for him, when the great Marquess, who, when he had been assailed by the House of Commons and arraigned before the House of Lords, had joined in the cry against him, returned now to acknowledge the heavy debt which India and Great Britain owed to Warren Hastings; to admit that it was he, and he only, who had made possible the result which himself had accomplished. There was, up to a certain point, a similarity in their immediate fate, for the great Marquess found himself attacked in the House of Commons immediately after his return, by a miscreant named Paull; and he experienced some difficulty in shaking off him and his kindred associates.

The twenty years which, after his acquittal, Hastings was destined to pass in the quiet of Daylesford, were, in Europe, years of unsurpassed warfare and turmoil. They were years memorable for the appearance in this planet of that transcendent Genius, the greatest the world has ever seen, to whose triumphant car were chained for long the monarchs of old continental Europe; and who, after having all but

subjugated the world, was ultimately baffled by Great Britain. They were indeed marvellous times, and the owner of Daylesford, who had himself for thirteen years struggled with fortune, could only watch from his pretty property, himself quiescent, the changing phases of events from the marvellous 1796 to the tragedy of "dull St. Helen's, with its gaoler nigh." For him action in the great world's affairs no longer existed. He had but the little world of Daylesford to console him: and on him, great and unshaken in mind, able to content himself equally in the hall of his mansion as in the palaces of India, there devolved a happiness greater than that of Pitt, dying prematurely worn out; of Dundas, forced to resign all his appointments; of Sheridan, with his waning reputation and his scanty means; of Fox, who retasted power only on the eve of quitting life.

He had much that was material to occupy him. There was first the pulling down of the old ruin of Daylesford and the building of a new mansion near its site. He was engaged in building this mansion whilst the trial was progressing. It cost £40,000; and, adding to that the purchase-money of the estate and other necessary charges, Hastings calculated the entire amount dispensed on these accounts at £60,000.

"The house," writes Sir Charles Lawson, "is built of the pale grey stone of the neighbourhood, on an eminence, in an undulating and well-wooded park of about six hundred acres, which is entered by three lodges. The style of architecture is severely simple, but is favourable to internal comfort."

No one could see it without recognizing that it was built for the exercise of hospitality. Attached to it were three sets of stables; a highly cultivated kitchen-garden, and an outer garden.

"The pleasure-grounds"—I quote from the same writer—"were laid out by a notable landscape gardener, and are very beautiful, with their extensive lawns of velvet-like grass, their beds of flowers, and their clumps of fine trees. The plantations are exceedingly attractive. They contain a great variety of indigenous trees, including some grand elms and beeches, and many exotic trees that Warren Hastings introduced and acclimatized. There are also several charming lakes, that are believed to be full of fish, and alongside one of these is a romantic footpath that leads to the village. By the carriage-road the house is nearly a mile from the lodge close to the village. At the two farms on the estate Hastings endeavoured to cross English sheep and goats with breeds from India."

In every sense of the term Hastings assumed from the very outset, at Daylesford, the position of a gentleman who cultivates his own property.

"In all the pursuits of an agriculturist," writes Mr. Gleig, "he took the deepest interest. He bred horses, reared sheep, fattened bullocks, sowed and reaped corn, and exhibited in each of these occupations, as one after another they engrossed him, not less of knowledge than of enthusiasm. As a horticulturist, likewise, his name can never be mentioned without respect. His gardens were perfect models of that graceful style which, owing all its beauties to the skill of the artist, yet appears to be the production of untutored nature. He took infinite pains, moreover, to possess himself of the seeds of plants and herbs which he had admired in their native soil of India, and which he believed were not too delicate to be reared and brought to perfection in England."

In a word, Hastings applied to the development of his property and of his farms all his energy. Whatever he did, he did with all his might.

But neither in the garden nor on the estate generally was his whole time spent. Literature, poetry, friends, and, above all, the adorable wife, were the constant solace of his hours. Amongst his papers, Mr. Gleig wrote that he found essays, dissertations, criticisms, poems, on almost every conceivable subject; all, in his opinion, showing talent, and many of them extraordinary merit. Hastings was in the habit of reading aloud to his family and friends; he was a good reader and took pleasure in the task; he was an early riser; bathed daily in cold water; and was very fond of riding. He loved the horse. To the daily society of that splendid animal he had been accustomed all his life, and he was in every sense of the term its master. He was proud of displaying his skill and his temper: his power to ride horses which others had found difficult to control. He was very hospitable; delighted to see old Indian friends around him; to make acquaintance with their children, and to assist them in their start in life by a display of sympathy and interest. In fact, in his life in Worcestershire, he combined the qualities of an energetic, even an innovating, agriculturist with those of a good neighbour, a devoted friend, and the most charming of companions.

It must not be supposed that some of his friends did not

continue to dangle before him the temptation of a seat in the House of Commons. But if he felt any longing in that direction, he never allowed it to appear. He was ready enough to counsel his friends on matters of this nature. Writing to a very intimate friend on the subject of the misfortune which must result from two or three friends contesting the same seat, he thus expressed himself:—

"To have governed the first and only valuable portion of the British Empire in India thirteen years; to have received at my departure and since the fullest assurance of my carrying with me the regrets and affections of my fellow-servants and countrymen there, and to find myself without interest with those whom I had successfully served, and without interest with my associates at home, might have been a subject of mortifying reflection to a mind even less susceptible than my own; it has had less influence on mine by my incessant care to preclude or run away from it; and I am afraid this has grown into such a habit that I give way to it in cases where I ought not, as in the present."

Devoting the remainder of the letter to the discussion of the impossibility of the success of his friends unless one of them at least should see his way to retire, and laying down certain elementary rules which should guide their action, he refers to the happiness which has attended his own life, living, though isolated, on his property.

"Of the ingredients of happiness which I once enumerated in rhyme, I possess all (and the catalogue is pretty large) but one; and that occasionally comes and goes. Daylesford is very much improved since you saw it, both in its ornamental acquisitions, its comforts, and its husbandry. My beloved wife is what she was in her moral and spiritual substance, and I should and ought to be perfectly contented, if her health (which is not worse, but rather better) was more stable. The worst is, we live too much secluded from society, excepting that of our neighbours, and too remote from our friends; but our hearts turn to them with as much warmth as ever, and with as hearty an interest in their concerns."

A little before this time, 1800, distractions of another nature had come to absorb his attention. He had discovered that he had been living at too rapid a rate; and that what with the repayment of his loan to the Company, the deductions made by the Company, and the expenses into which he had been in a manner driven, he had incurred debts which would before long more than exhaust all his resources. The fault had not been so much his own, as the fault of those

who, on the morrow of his acquittal, had first declined hi just application to the effect that those who had caused th expense which had been proved to have been unnecessar should pay the cost; and, afterwards relenting, had com promised the matter in a manner, which, whilst not completel clearing him, had placed upon his shoulders a burden o repayment too heavy for them to bear. He expressed hi case very fully in a letter addressed to the Court of Directors dated the 16th of June, 1799, and which he forwarded through his friend Sir Stephen Lushington. This letter states so clearly the consequence of the results of a compromise which did not effect the purpose which it professed to have in view, that I make no apology for inserting here that portion of it which bears upon the facts of the question.

"When a trial of nine years, instituted on charges preferred against me in the name of my country, had left me, though acquitted, exhausted of my whole fortune, and sinking under a load of debt, which had been contracted by it, your honourable Court, acting on the declared wishes of the Proprietors of the East India Company, my honourable employers, and participating in the same spirit of generosity, stood forth for my relief: and for this purpose, on the 20th of February, 1796, you passed two resolutions in my favour, one to grant me an annuity of £4000 for the period of twenty-eight years and a half, commencing from the 21st of June, 1785; and the other to lend me the sum of £50,000, without any interest, for the term of eighteen years, upon my giving security to your satisfaction for the repayment thereof. Both grants were declared to be intended for the purpose of relieving my present embarrassments, and the first to be made in consideration of important services rendered to the East India Company by me whilst I was Governor-General of India, and particularly in the increase of the revenues of the Company."

Proceeding then to acknowledge that he did receive in due course the amounts above specified, he calls attention to the principal condition under which the loan was granted; viz. that it must be repaid by instalments of not less than £2000 per annum; and that it be fully repaid at the expiration of eighteen years from date of loan. But that was not all. By a subsequent order, based upon the resolution of the Court granting the loan, Hastings was required to deliver, and did deliver, separate assignments of £1000 out of each of the half-yearly payments of his annuity for the payment of £36,000 of the loan of £50,000, and of his estate of Daylesford, rated at £14.000. for the remainder.

"To this arrangement," he continues, "I submitted with great, though silent regret, and some mortification. I considered it a direct contradiction to the terms of the loan; for instead of being exempted from the payment of interest, I was charged by it with an interest of four per cent., only one per cent. being remitted of the rate which might legally have been taken. It defeated, in a great measure, the beneficent purpose of the loan, by leaving me nearly as much encumbered with debt as I was before, transferring what I owed, rather than extinguishing it."

After dwelling for a moment on the reports which had been circulated that he was a man "of superfluous opulence" simply to show their absurdity, Hastings proceeded to argue that he had accepted silently the decree of the Court because he had no legal claim on the amounts which they had reclaimed, and in the hope that, by observing a line of strict economy, he might confine his expenses within the limits the Court had practically assigned. Experience, however, proved that the mode of repayment ordered by the Court would entail upon him the loss of his property of Daylesford, "which," he added, "I shall have no means of redeeming." He concluded his letter by praying, not for further relief in money, but that the Court would render effectual the relief already authorized, by permitting him, as originally sanctioned, to hold the loan without interest.

"That is to say," he added, "that you will be pleased to order an account to be made out, and annually renewed and kept, of the accumulated sums withheld from my annuity, and the growing interest, so that I may still reap the full benefit of it, in the same manner that I might have done had the whole been paid into your hands; but that it remain a deposit in yours, for the repayment of your loan when that shall finally become due, as far as its accumulation shall suffice for that end; and that credit be then given me for the amount, set in opposition to that of the amount of loan, and the balance only charged on my estate for the remaining payment."

It is satisfactory to record that the Court of Directors promptly and unanimously acceded to the proposition submitted to them by their distinguished servant. But again there had been a miscalculation. The resolution of the Court, by directing that the £2000 annually deducted from Mr. Hastings' annuity should be invested in Company's bonds, brought him no actual relief: his income for the time being was not thereby increased. His embarrassments then, far from lessening, increased with each year. Thus it happened

that in 1804 he was compelled once again to bring his monetary affairs under the cognizance of the Court of Directors.

But, before despatching to that body an official letter bearing upon the subject, Hastings deemed it advisable to seek interviews with the Prime Minister, Mr. Addington, and the President of the Board of Control, Lord Castlereagh. By both of these he was well, even cordially received; by the first indeed with a great deal of sympathy. Satisfied that no obstacles would be offered by the Ministry, Hastings then approached the Court of Directors. Here, too, he found a most friendly spirit prevailing. The Court clearly recognized that, under the circumstances of the Hastings property, it would be cruel to insist upon the repayment of the loan. They therefore not only wiped out the £34,000 remaining unpaid, but, to assist Hastings in obtaining the sum necessary for the redemption of the mortgage on Daylesford, they antedated his annuity by one year; that is, they made him a present of £4000.

The period at which this arrangement was arrived at was the period when the peace of Amiens had recently been broken, and Pitt had just made clear his intention to resume the power which he had laid down in 1801. There was a very strong feeling among the country gentlemen of England that under the circumstances Addington was the safer statesman for the chief direction of affairs. In an interview Hastings held with Addington on the 5th of May, he represented in respectful and fitting terms this feeling. Submitting to the Minister, as no one could with greater reason, that the voice of the House of Commons was not the voice of the people, he assured him that the general feeling in England was one of disgust at the unnatural combination against him:—

"The people see and know," he added, "that an ample, sufficient, and well-distributed provision has been made against the threatened invasion; they see resources called forth, for which no one gave this country credit; they are pleased with the economy of the public expenditure; they have proclaimed a spirit of zeal and unanimity, which they certainly neither showed nor felt during the last war, nor during the late administration," and much more to the same effect.

Addington was much touched: but the die had been cast. He proceeded very calmly and deliberately to set before his visitor reasons which rendered it impossible that he should decline to make way for Mr. Pitt. "You shall be the judge," he said, "whether or not I can, with propriety, remain in office." Hastings heard him to the end, and was then forced to admit that there was but one course open to the Minister, consistent with his honour and his duty—he must resign. Relating this interview many years later to Mr. Gleig, Mr. Addington, then Lord Sidmouth, stated—

"I do not hesitate to confess that I was better satisfied with myself, as well as with the decision at which I had arrived, after I found that the latter carried with it the approval of a man so competent in every respect to try the question as Warren Hastings." *

From the summer of that year, 1804, the life of Hastings was for a long time free from monetary cares. He still continued the old ways of domesticity and hospitality. In public affairs he continued to take an interest the more absorbing as the war between Great Britain and Napoleon seemed every year to gather to itself the character of a duel. The year following, 1805, witnessed the disgrace of his old enemy, Dundas, the Dundas who, it was believed, and I think with truth, had incited Pitt against him on the memorable occasion of the debate in the House of Commons on the Banáras charge. Perhaps no man ever worked so cruel a wrong to another as Dundas did to Hastings on the forenoon of the day of that discussion. It was Dundas, every one believed, who had influenced Pitt to change his mind; to join with the calumniators of Hastings; and practically to decide the impeachment. It would be interesting to speculate what would have been the fortunes of the able man who had ruled India with so much credit if Dundas had not interfered; if Pitt had cast his vote in his favour, instead of against him. Such a man, with a fair field before him, must have gone far. And now he heard that the placeman who had shut out from him that field; who had ruined his public life; had been impeached on a charge of peculation. The matter was specially brought to his notice by a friend, more ardent in his

* Gleig's "Memoirs of Warren Hastings," vol. iii. pp. 418–420.

cause than he himself cared to appear, in a letter in which he indulged in a violent attack on the accused, and on the Minister who had so passionately defended him. The reply of Hastings reads like the judgment of history:—

"Your reflections," he writes, "on the detection of Lord Melville's [Dundas had become Lord Melville] corruptions are just. I should not have passed so severe a judgment on them when the public was first in possession of them as I do now, when I see them not only countenanced, but defended by the first servant of the kingdom, and an attempt made by the same man and his dependents to blacken the character of Lord St. Vincent, one of the first, if not the first, naval commander of this or any other country and age, in his zeal for his avowed friend. It may and will lower the character of Mr. Pitt, but it will not affect his stability."

The year following Hastings held that interview with the Prince of Wales of which I have already given a sufficient account. The failure of the object for which he had asked the interview left no sting behind it; none certainly that affected his cheerful and contented nature. He had done that which he regarded as a duty. It was not for him to repine because the wielders of power could not remove from their natures grudges based on charges proved to have been unfounded. Warren Hastings was born to do great things: but he could not whine in the ante-chambers of the powerful. Throughout his life he acted in a manner to compel respect from those with whom he came in contact. They rendered to him that which they recognized he rendered to himself.

The house at Daylesford had been furnished most sumptuously.

"Hastings," writes Sir Charles Lawson, after a visit he paid to Daylesford, "was remarkably attached to his home; and its surroundings and embellishments testified to his innate love of the beautiful in Nature and Art. The cruel ordeal through which he had passed at Westminster Hall did not, as it might well have done, render all things associated with India distasteful to him. He was proudly conscious that he had deserved well of his country, however ill the representatives of that country had acknowledged his services; and, having fought a good fight against great odds and great prejudice, it was an abiding source of gratification to him to recall the incidents of the best years of his life, which he had given, in the society of his wife, to India. Consequently, his halls, so large, were hung around, not with trophies of the chase, for he was no sportsman (though Francis, as has been shown, realized to his cost that he could shoot straight), but with paintings, drawings, and illuminated parchments that recalled to his mind scenes and studies of the far

East, and suggested topics of conversation with the guests whom he loved to have around his table. He never forgot that he had filled an eminent office under the Company and Crown; and he regarded it as to some extent incumbent upon him to adopt a style of living in keeping with the position which had been once his."

Again :—

"Hastings made a small collection of paintings by such old masters as Teniers, Matsys, Ruydael, Correggio, Rembrandt, etc.; but he was probably more proud of his numerous specimens of the skill of Hodges and Zoffani, whom he cordially encouraged when those two artists visited him at Government House, Calcutta. Several of Hodges' Indian landscapes are still preserved at Daylesford; and among them the most notable are views of Calcutta from Fort William; of Alipore, near Calcutta; of Banáres; of the Taj Mahall, at Agra; of Gházípur, on the Ganges; of Katrá; of Shikohábád; of the Himalayas, etc."

Once again :—

"Hastings was rich in prints, miniatures, enamels, etc., and his collection of Persian drawings was especially remarkable. His library was extensive, and included numerous folio and quarto volumes of high repute. Amongst these were many works on India, and two copies of a book containing a summary of the debates in the House of Lords on the evidence in the trial of Hastings, with a proof portrait of Lord Thurlow, the Chancellor."

Much more might be gathered from the same source; but sufficient has been narrated to show the mode of life of the retired statesman; the resources at his disposal; the contentment and happiness which shed their rays over his declining days. One year followed another without perceptible alteration. The new interests which arose were the interests taken in the new generation, in the sons and daughters of Indian associates. The D'Oyleys, the Thompsons, the Cockerells, lived again in their children. Sometimes Hastings and his wife were cheered by a visit from her son by her first marriage, now become Colonel Imhoff, soon to attain a higher rank and to gain considerable reputation as a soldier, and his young wife. Again we find him obtaining, through his good friend, Colonel Toone, a cavalry cadetship for a nephew of Mrs. Hastings. Again he is interesting himself in watching the intrigues which followed the death of Lord Cornwallis at Gházípur, relative to the appointment of a successor to the vacant office of Governor-General.

The office, it is well known, was ultimately conferred upon Lord Minto, who learned in India to appreciate the man whom he had helped to assail in England. There had not been wanting other candidates for the office. Hastings had given his firm support to the policy of the great Marquess, which was but a continuation of his own; he had witnessed with pain and disgust the retrograde action of Lord Cornwallis and Sir George Barlow, his temporary successor. "I am sick of looking to India," he wrote in December, 1806, "because I see nothing done for the advancement or preservation of our property in it that I like; nothing, indeed, that I do not dislike." He expressed himself, however, "pleased with the resistance which was made by the Court of Directors to Mr. Fox's persevering attempts to force upon them the appointment of Francis and Lord Lauderdale to the Government of India;" from which it may be gathered that the old leaven still rankled in the breast of Charles Fox.

It is interesting to read the opinion of so shrewd a contemporary regarding Napoleon, given at the time when that great warrior was engaged (in the winter of 1806–7) in endeavouring to expel the Russians from Poland.

"You may think Napoleon," he writes, "a wonderful man, but do not say so. As we cannot cope with him, it is the fashion to scold at him, and call him opprobrious names. I think we begin to drop the invectives of contempt. He is at present well employed in the subjugation of Poland, that is, in delivering it from its imperial and royal depredators. Surely the hand of God is in his present project. I am pleased with it, because it is a retribution of justice; and I am the more pleased with it, because it employs his strength, and may employ it for a length of time to come, on objects in which his success cannot prove hurtful to us, and at a distance which ensures our safety for at least a twelvemonth to come."

In the course of the next four years an event occurred which had the effect of completing an object Hastings had very much at heart, viz. the union of his own family with that of his wife, to regulate thereby the succession to the Daylesford property. He regretted that he had had no family by his second wife. He tenderly loved her, and he was anxious that in the future possessor of the property the blood of the Hastings family should mingle with that of Chapuset. It was then with the greatest satisfaction that he

witnessed the marriage of his nephew, the Rev. J. B. Woodman, rector of Daylesford and vicar of Brackley, with Mademoiselle Louise Chapuset, daughter of Mrs. Hastings' brother, Baron Chapuset.* The marriage was a happy one, and fulfilled all the wishes of the nearest relatives of both parties. The male issue of the union, Mr. Warren Hastings Woodman, occupies Daylesford at the present day.

The time was now fast approaching when Hastings was to be called upon once more to tread the floor from which on his return from India his name had suffered so many insults—the floor of the House of Commons. The time of the renewal of the charter of the East India Company was approaching, and the Government, anxious to receive the best information regarding the working of the revenue and judicial systems of India, and on other matters pertaining generally to that country; feeling moreover that no living man was so capable of giving them the information they wanted as he who had founded both systems, who had watched their initial working, and who had perfected them during the earlier stages of their progression, summoned Hastings from his retirement to give his evidence before both Houses. Hastings was then eighty-one years of age, but he bore his years well, and his intellect was as keen, his memory was as retentive, as during the more active periods of his life. He responded eagerly to the summons, and, on the appointed day and hour in April, 1813, appeared once again at the bar of the House of Commons. Accommodated with a seat within the bar he was examined for three or four hours. Then there occurred an ovation which I prefer that he should relate himself.

"When I was ordered to withdraw, and was retiring, all the members, by one simultaneous impulse, rose with their heads uncovered, and stood in silence till I passed the door of their chamber. The same honour was paid me, though of course with a more direct intention, by the House of Lords." . . . "Throughout the whole investigation," wrote Mr. Thompson to Sir Charles D'Oyley, "the most marked attention has been paid, both to his person and opinions. The very officers of both Houses seem to have vied with each other in manifesting their respect for him."

* Baron Chapuset was the last of Mrs. Hastings' three brothers. Of the others, one died in India; the other, fighting as a subject of a King who was the ally of Napoleon, in line with the French, was killed in action in the Voralberg. See Lawson's Monograph, p. 25.

It would appear that his luminous answers gave both Houses a lead, a direction, by the following of which a practical character was imparted to proceedings which might otherwise have failed in that essential.

Surely after such an experience Hastings was justified in concluding, as he did conclude, that the receptions given him by both Houses of the Legislature were "two most affecting and convincing proofs of my having outlived all the prejudices which have, during so many past years, prevailed against me." "It might have been confidently believed," writes Sir John Strachey, in the preface to his admirable work on the Rohíla War, that, after his death, "he would be remembered not only among the most wise and courageous among the founders of the Indian Empire—for that even his enemies could hardly deny—but as one of the most virtuous." Alas! that Sir John should have been compelled to add the words that immediately follow. "This was not to happen. As time went on the truth became more and more forgotten, while the writings of Burke, his great accuser, were imperishable." In this place I must be content to record the lamentable fact. On the other causes, mentioned by Sir John Strachey, which contributed to imprint on the mind of the nation the false ideal which has so long prevailed, I have dwelt specially in the preface. I shall refer to it incidentally in the concluding chapter.

To the generous mind of Hastings, however, the touching reception accorded to him by both Houses of Parliament appeared an absolute obliteration of past insults. The attention paid to him by the Prince Regent and others the year following—the year styled the year of the deliverance of Europe—was calculated to confirm this impression. The Prince had, a short time before, called Hastings to the Privy Council. The continental rulers who had been content, between 1809 and 1812, to grovel in the antechambers of the great Emperor, had crowded, on his downfall, to visit the Regent of the island, the valour of whose sons had set them free. To these the Regent presented Hastings with many complimentary words. He could not but feel that this man, who had made the British Empire in India, was, in very deed, more than worthy to be presented to men who had been forced,

for a time, to bow the knee to Napoleon. He had done more than any of them: he had never stooped to the humiliations to which they had been long accustomed. He was, in the highest sense of the term, England's truest hero. And yet, to employ the very words of the Prince Regent, he was "the most injured of men." Had the Prince, I wonder, ever reflected as to who they were who had made him so? Injury to an innocent man implies the necessity of reparation. Surely the fact that to this man all reparation had been refused must have occurred to the mind of the presenter when he brought into close contact with the continental sovereigns the hero, for the absence of whose decorations and titles he thought it thus necessary to apologize.

But if such a thought did occur it led to no action. Hastings died undecorated, and the calumniators stepped unchecked into the vacant space. His grave still gapes for the vindication which is his due. Into that grave have been poured the poisoned decoctions of Mill, the venomous distillations of Macaulay. But the grave still gapes. Nor will it close until not only full and complete justice shall have been rendered to the immortal dead, but until the people of England shall have recognized the wrong perpetrated by their forefathers and their contemporaries, a wrong in which they have been participators more or less silent, towards one of the greatest, the most virtuous, and the noblest of England's sons.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

WARREN HASTINGS DIES—SOME FEATURES OF HIS CHARACTER.

In the year immediately preceding that during which occurred the events noted at the close of the last chapter—the year 1813—Hastings was first attacked by gout. It was not, he states, a painful attack, but it continued long, and kept him sedentary while it lasted. Soon after that enemy had disappeared he received from the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Oxford the announcement that it was intended to confer upon him, at the ensuing commemoration, the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws. To Oxford, then, he proceeded, and there he received a splendid ovation. As he entered the Sheldonian theatre the undergraduates rose to a man, and greeted him with deafening applause. Of all the names that were presented for honour not one received the enthusiasm that greeted his. Again was he the hero of the hour. Touching, indeed, must it have been to the grey-haired octogenarian to listen to the shouts of the rising youth of England. It came to Mrs. Hastings and himself as a very sweet offering—

> "The deep, well-omen'd voice of thunder, given
> To speak and ratify the will of Heaven."

But once again monetary cares threatened to overwhelm him. The annuity which the Company had bestowed upon him had been granted for a limited period, and that period was now approaching its end. Hastings had exceeded by twelve years the term which is regarded as the allotted period of man's life, and he was still erect and strong. Once again, then, he was obliged to communicate with the Court of Directors, this time expressing a desire that the name of Mrs. Hastings might be added to the annuity patent, so that she

might continue to enjoy it in the event of her outliving him. Compliance would have been a very gracious act. It was hoped, too, by Hastings and his friends that the amount of the annuity might be raised to £5,000. The Court, recognizing that it had been intended that the annuity should be a provision for life, granted the extension of it for the remaining years of the applicant's life, but declined either to increase the amount, or to continue it to his wife, should she survive him.

To the presentation of Hastings to the allied sovereigns on the occasion of their visit to England in 1814 I have referred in the last chapter. In the course of the year Hastings presided at a dinner given at Guildhall by the gentlemen connected with India to the Duke of Wellington, and proposed the health of the warrior who was, the year following, to measure swords with Napoleon. Notwithstanding a premonitory symptom * in the early part of the year, he was feeling well; strong enough indeed to bear without fatigue the unwonted dissipation of the festivities. Giving, in a letter to a friend, an account of these, and of his presentations to the several crowned heads, he added:—

"I have a freer and purer sensation of satisfaction in informing you that I have borne my part in all the late ceremonials and festivals at Oxford, a scene of incessant fatigue during three complete days, without the least injury to my health, and since my return, the dinner at Guildhall, with a cold caught on the journey of my return to town, and not increased by this last and severe trial of my constitution. From these proofs of what I can endure, I think I shall last through another winter."

In point of fact he lasted four years after the date of that letter; nor was it until the middle of the fourth year that his constitution gave signs that it was approaching its term. Throughout the period, Mr. Gleig tells us, the tenor of his existence was as calm, as even, and as undisturbed "as if he had never filled in the eye of the world a wider space than appertains, as a matter of right, to the well-educated country gentleman." He was contented and happy. The only anxieties which assailed him were those connected with the

* On the 13th of January, 1814, he noted in his diary: "I was seized about three with a total loss of articulation and want of power in my right hand, for the first time." Lawson's Monograph, p. 26.

future of his most beloved and ever-charming wife in case he should be called away before her. He would have been supremely happy could he have felt that his death would make no change in her comforts. She had been all in all to him. For her his love had never waned. She was, wrote Miss Burney, "so adored by her husband that in her sight and conversation he seems to find a recompence adequate to all his wishes, for the whole of his toils and long disturbances and labours." To his last hour she remained his beloved, his beautiful Marian. To him the supreme desire of his life was to assure her happiness.

In May, 1818, the first decided change took place in him. The nature which had borne the burden of eighty-six years began to crumble away. First he realized that walking irritated his nerves, bringing on confused and distant sensations, "as of the sound of distant multitudes." Four days later the irritation had spread to his eyes. Eight days later still, his nights became unquiet. On the 19th, he had to quit his bed and seat himself in a chair. The day following he made the last entry in the journal which he had kept since the 18th of January, 1784, the day before Mrs. Hastings had quitted India for Europe.

Realizing that his end was approaching Hastings made a supreme effort, through the intervention of an influential friend, to prevail upon the Court of Directors to continue to his wife the annuity which they had conferred "equally upon his services and his sufferings." In his letter on the subject he referred specially to the service Mrs. Hastings had rendered to the State at Patná, at the time he was threatened at Banáras; and told how she, by her firm attitude and presence of mind, had preserved order in that dangerous city. Not many days after this request had been despatched the end came. On the 22nd of August, 1818, after an illness which had lasted six weeks, surrounded by his wife, Sir Charles and Lady Imhoff, the Woodmans, and one or two others of his dearest friends, he rendered his soul to his Maker. He had suffered greatly; the power of deglutition had failed him; and as the eminent physician, Sir Henry Halford, explained, he had been living for some time past on his own substance. He was worn to a shadow. But though

the consequent agony was intense, not one single impatient expression, it is recorded, ever escaped him. He died, surrounded and blessed by those who knew him best; by those who loved him best; by those whose belief in him through good and evil report had never been shaken.

He was buried at Daylesford. The funeral, although it had been intended it should be strictly private, was attended by all the nobility and gentry of the neighbourhood. A suitable inscription, commemorating, briefly, the events of his career, was placed within the church. His age was eighty-five years and eight months. "He came to the grave in full age, as a shock of corn cometh in his season." *

By his will, dated July 27, 1811, he left everything to his wife, and made her his sole executrix. As the Court of Directors did not see fit either to comply with the dying request of their servant regarding the continuation to the widow of the pension he had enjoyed or of any portion of it; and as it did not apparently occur to them to raise a monument to his memory, his widow determined to assume the latter part of the duty. The tablet, surmounted by a bust which attracts the visitors who crowd into Westminster Abbey, was erected at her cost, and bears upon it the inscription which she wrote. This inscription, worthy of its object, will be found in the second page of this volume.

Mrs. Hastings survived her husband nearly twenty years, cherishing his memory and adored by her dependents and neighbours. She died in her ninety-second year.

It devolves upon me now to write a few last words with respect to the illustrious man of whose splendid career, of whose misfortunes, of whose struggles with malevolence and unscrupulousness, and of whose manly acceptance of the result of these struggles, I have endeavoured to write an impartial account. The character of such a man may, it is true, be gathered from the record. The reader who shall accept the record, will see the man as he really was. He will see a man educated in one of the best of the public schools of England; he will see him, imbued with the traditions which furnish a boy with strength, experience, and

* I have borrowed this passage from the book of Job from Sir C. Lawson's Monograph, who applied it to a similar purpose.

worldly wisdom sufficient to enable him to make a good start in the battle of life, entering, still young, upon a service not yet illustrated by the great name of Clive, and the prospects of which were unknown and unknowable. He sees him arrive in Bengal; there, relegated to the drudgery of office-work, gain the good opinion of his immediate superiors; then he notes how, detached on special duty into the interior of a country ruled by the arbitrary representatives of the Mughal, he bends all his attention to his duties; how he gains the goodwill of those with whom he comes into contact, European as well as native; how he devotes his leisure hours to the acquisition of the languages, the language of the people as well as that of the court; how, in a revolution which ensues, he bears himself so bravely and so discreetly, that for a brief interval, after the expulsion of his countrymen from Calcutta, he is able to maintain, in the very capital of the tyrant, a correspondence with the various classes that tyrant had hoped to plunder. He sees him, finally, able to make his way to Faltá; attract there attention by his language and his bearing; and, finally, accompany thence the energetic Clive on that forward march which was to invert the conditions till then existing between the native ruler and the western adventurer, to seat the latter in the place of which the former had proved himself unworthy.

Then begins the second act of the drama. First at the capital of Bengal, where he learns to know and to appreciate thoroughly the native character, thus gaining an intuition which is to stand him in good stead all his life; distrusting Nandkumár from the very outset; recognizing in Mir Jafar and in his son Míran men of blood and of faithlessness, yet very scrupulous himself in his earnest desire for fair-dealing with the natives. We see him holding the balance until the first departure of Clive removes the strong hand which had repressed corruption, and leaves him a member of the Council which, under the presidency of Vansittart, is to guide the fortunes of England in Bengal. What do we witness next? We see at least this: that, when all about him are corrupt, his hands are clean; when all take bribes to revolutionize the native government, his purse remains empty. We see further that, the revolution once having

been accomplished, he and Vansittart struggle bravely but ineffectually against their corrupt colleagues to secure to the natives of the provinces some sort of justice; some remedy against western greed and western rapacity. We see war precipitated despite of the efforts of these two men, both of whom are borne down by a tyrant majority. Finally, for the moment, we see Hastings return to England, carrying with him but a moderate fortune, whilst his colleagues had accumulated their hundreds of thousands.

Thus far there is no stain, no hint at a stain, upon the character of this brave man. He has returned clean-handed from that India which had already gained an unenviable reputation for the manufacture of "Nabobs." He settles down to the life of literature and art which accords with his tastes and his acquirements. For a time he has no thought of returning to the East. But unfortunate investments suddenly force his hand. He applies to the Court of Directors for employment; obtains it; and proceeds to Madras as the second in the Council of that Presidency.

Here again, acting cordially with the true-hearted Dupré, he once again gains golden opinions. To his masters it seems that in him they possess a servant whose one determination is to do his duty; to devote himself to their interests. They mark how he reforms the commercial relations between their factors and the native traders, to the great advantage of both. They observe how, whilst under his influence and that of Dupré, Madras is steadily progressing, Bengal, under the successors of Clive, is, from a combination of causes, as rapidly retrograding. Believing, and rightly believing, that these results may be in a great measure due to the character of the individual at the head of affairs, they resolve to despatch Hastings to assume chief authority in Bengal.

Hastings proceeds thither. He finds the three provinces but just recovering from the effects of a most terrible famine; the treasury is empty; credit no longer exists; of confidence in the governing English there is none; the roads are infested by footpads, and as though that were not sufficient, a body of religious mendicants, vowed to poverty, have taken to highway robbery on such a scale as to necessitate the despatch against them of large bodies of troops. Add to

this, he finds an *imperium in imperio*. The native capital, Murshídábád, is the monetary capital of the provinces, the centre of all monetary transactions, the storehouse of the revenue, which its officers collect. The situation was infinitely worse than that which had existed on the morrow of Plassey, when everything could be done in the manner which the conqueror might direct. Clive had been compelled, from his position, to institute the double government, which, from the faults of both races, but mainly, I think, from the faults of the English, had culminated in the actual deadlock. To add to the difficulties of Hastings, he and the provinces adjoining those he administered, were threatened by a Maráthá invasion.

Yet, in two years, there prevailed in the English provinces order, credit, good administration. The footpads had disappeared; the highways were respected; of the religious mendicants not one remained within the borders; Murshídábád had been deposed, whilst Calcutta had assumed her proper place; the English received the respect due to the authors of good government; the revenue had recovered a certain amount of elasticity; whilst, and especially, owing to the foreign alliance Hastings had contracted, the Maráthá scare, which, for the preceding century, had been so baneful to Bengal; and the effects of which Hastings had witnessed when he was working under a native Viceroy near to Kásimbazár, had been—so far as concerned his north-western borders—rendered impossible for ever. The means he employed to bring about this great result were the alliance with Oudh and the Rohíla war.

That the administration of Hastings had commended itself in some sort of way to the Home authorities, was proved by the fact that when changes were made in England in the composition and powers of the Executive, he was retained as its chief, though without the power to override his colleagues. Then began the most crucial period of his career. Brought in contact with three men whom I have sufficiently described in this volume—men who had made the voyage to India in the same ship, and who displayed their hostility to their senior colleague at the very moment of landing—he had to undergo the mortification of seeing his

best measures rejected by men ignorant not only of the country and its history, but of the very rudiments of the art of governing, and the place of those measures taken by crudities which could only lead to injustice and disaster. It is a simple truth to say that never has a great governor, before or since, been placed in so painful a position. And when, added to that, he had to witness these colleagues routing out all the details of his administration before their arrival, with the avowed hope of finding therein materials which they could use to his discredit; abetting interested speculators in bringing against him charges of bribery and dishonesty; making of personalities a policy, and of heaping insult upon insult; can we wonder that his cup should become full to overflowing? Who that reads the disgraceful record can fail to pay respectful homage to the courage, the patience, the coolness, the fixity of purpose, the singleness of mind, the longsuffering, displayed by that gallant heart in the presence of the studied insults, the daily opposition, the reversal of his political action—such as would drive many a man in that position to despair? There is no part of the life of Hastings more worthy of study than that section of it which began with the arrival of the triumvirate and ended with the death of Clavering.

When, after a lengthened martyrdom, the departure of Francis left his hands free, Hastings had to continue and to close two great wars with the most powerful of the native princes—with the Peshwá and with Haidar Alí. To carry on these wars he had to make money-arrangements with his vassal-ruler of Banáras and with the divided rulers of Oudh (the Nawwáb and his female relatives). These he carried out—I will say only this much in this place, for the debated matter will come on later—in a manner which enabled him to secure the retention by the British of their Indian possessions, and to add to the renown of his country. Again I affirm that there was not another man in India capable of securing so great a result.

Such, told in the briefest possible form, was the Indian career of Hastings. Starting in his administration of Bengal with worse than empty hands, he left the provinces prosperous as they had never been before; with credit such as they had

never had before; their borders secure as they had never been before; the name of Great Britain greater and more honoured than it had ever been before; British India recognized as one of the three great powers of the peninsula—in the opinion of many the greatest, for she had encountered the two others at one and the same time, and had been bested by neither. And we are to be told—it is to be crammed down the throats of Englishmen and Englishwomen that the man who accomplished these results was not a great man in the highest sense of greatness; that he had occasionally committed deeds hard to justify and easy to condemn; that he was of the type of the sons of Zeruiah, so able and so unprincipled; and we are to be told this because unprincipled politicians railed at him whilst he lived, and notwithstanding the fact that the railings of these politicians were pronounced by the highest tribunal in the land to be founded on falsehoods. We are to be told this, and to be silent. It is not fit, under such circumstances, that those who love and honour and reverence great deeds and the man who performed them should be silent.

I propose to examine in detail the estimate of Hastings recorded by the eloquent historian who constituted himself, more than half a century since, the advocate of those who had brought about the impeachment of Hastings; to examine, and, if I can, to refute, his every objection to the claim I assert on behalf of the great Governor-General; and I ask the candid reader to judge whether in his denunciations of Hastings there remains to Lord Macaulay the vestige of an argument.

"With all his faults, and they were neither few nor small," wrote Macaulay in his famous essay, "only one cemetery was worthy to contain his remains. In that temple of silence and reconciliation, where the enmities of twenty generations lie buried, in the Great Abbey which has during many ages afforded a quiet resting-place to those whose minds and bodies have been shattered by the contentions of the Great Hall, the dust of the illustrious accused should have mingled with the dust of the illustrious accusers. This was not to be. Yet the place of interment was not ill chosen. Behind the chancel of the parish church of Daylesford, in earth which already held the bones of many chiefs of the house of Hastings, was laid the coffin of the greatest man who has ever borne that ancient and widely extended name. On that very spot, probably, fourscore years before, the little Warren, meanly

clad and scantily fed, had played with the children of ploughmen. Even then his young mind had resolved plans which might be called romantic. Yet, however romantic, it is not likely that they had been so strange as the truth. Not only had the poor orphan retrieved the fallen fortunes of his line; not only had he repurchased the old lands, and rebuilt the old dwelling; he had preserved and extended an empire. He had founded a polity. He had administered government and war with more than the capacity of Richelieu. He had patronised learning with the judicious liberality of Cosmo. He had been attacked by the most formidable combination of enemies that ever sought the destruction of a single victim; and over that combination, after a struggle of ten years, he had triumphed. He had at length gone down to his grave in the fullness of age, in peace after so many troubles, in honour after so much obloquy.

"Those who look on his character without favour or malevolence will pronounce 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. But though we cannot with truth describe him either as a righteous or as a merciful ruler, we cannot regard without admiration the amplitude and fertility of his intellect, his rare talents for command, for administration, and for controversy, his dauntless courage, his honourable poverty, his fervent zeal for the interests of the State, his noble equanimity, tried by both extremes of fortune, and never disturbed by either."

This, then, is the summing-up of the great essayist, whose sketch of the career of the victim is a long and eloquent tirade against his actions during the greater portion of his second service in Bengal. In the summing-up Hastings is made to appear as one who would have been absolutely perfect had his otherwise lofty nature not been marred by somewhat lax principles, by a somewhat hard heart, by a deficiency of respect for the rights of others, and by a deficiency of sympathy for the sufferings of others. If we go back to the body of the essay we shall find that the judgment of the historian regarding the want of respect for the rights of others, the want of sympathy for the sufferings of others, the laxness of principle and the hardness of heart, is based upon statements regarding Hastings which modern investigation has thoroughly disproved. Let us take these charges in their due order. The first of them refers to the Rohíla war. Later investigation has clearly proved that Lord Macaulay utterly misunderstood the character of that war. He has invested a tribe of Afghan robbers, who had descended from their native hills to occupy a fair region which was not their own,

and who proved as faithless to their neighbours as they had been oppressive to the aboriginal inhabitants, with all the virtues and patriotism of a people native to the soil. He has treated them as though they had been the aboriginal inhabitants, as though Hastings and the ruler of Oudh had expelled them, not because their word could not be relied upon, not because their presence in the districts they had stolen endangered the safety and tranquillity of India and was a constant lure to the Maráthás, but because they were innocent men whose territories were coveted by their neighbours. Lord Macaulay has drawn his account of the Rohíla war partly from the inventions of interested critics, partly from the allegations of the English commander whose greed for gain was discountenanced and disappointed by Hastings. It is a romance in which one particle of truth is made to counterbalance a thousand particles of invention. The true story of the Rohíla war was not available to the general public when Lord Macaulay wrote his essay. It was left to the industry of Mr. Forrest to unearth documents which show how fallacious a guide on all points connected with the Rohilkand war is the writer whose brilliant sentences have cast a glamour over the public mind. In the present day the British public has no excuse for pleading ignorance. In a work on the subject, compiled by one of the greatest of India Civil servants, who has himself exercised the office of Viceroy of India, Sir John Strachey has presented to the public a true history, based on official documents, of the origin, of the progress, and of the methods pursued throughout its course, of the Rohíla war.* In the presence of this authoritative work Macaulay's narrative tumbles to pieces. Not a shred of it remains. "Macaulay," writes Sir John in his preface, "obviously without independent inquiry, received as truth the baseless stories that had been recorded as history, and gave them fresh life in his glittering periods." Thanks to Sir John Strachey and Mr. Forrest the glitter of those periods has been fatally tarnished. The portion of the famous essay which recounts the Rohíla war has, then, been relegated for ever to the region of romance. With it falls one of the

* "Hastings and the Rohilla War," by Sir John Strachey, G.C.S.I. Clarendon Press. Oxford. 1892.

bases on which rested Lord Macaulay's four charges against Hastings—the charges of somewhat lax principles; of possessing a somewhat hard heart; of being deficient in respect for the rights of others; of having little sympathy for the sufferings of others.

The next of these imaginary bases is the treatment by Hastings of Nandkumár. If there be any meaning in language, it must be admitted that Lord Macaulay charges Hastings with having virtually compassed the death of Nandkumár. He attaches, it is true, to his judgment a saving clause; but the argument by which he seems to support the saving clause not only clenches the accusation, but affixes to the action of Hastings a deliberation which would increase the crime. It would be unfair if I were to refrain from quoting the very words:—

"While, therefore, we have not the least doubt that this memorable execution is to be attributed to Hastings, we doubt whether it can, with justice, be reckoned among his crimes. That his conduct was dictated by a profound policy is evident. He was in a minority in Council. It was possible that he might long be in a minority. He knew the native character well. He knew in what abundance accusations are certain to flow in against the most innocent inhabitant of India who is under the frown of power. There was not in the whole population of Bengal a place-holder, a place-hunter, a Government tenant, who did not think that he might better himself by sending up a deposition against the Governor-General. Under these circumstances the persecuted statesman resolved to teach the whole crew of accusers and witnesses that, though in a minority at the Council-board, he was still to be feared."

The argument is continued to the same effect; but the last paragraph of the quotation gives the purport of the whole. The charge resolves itself into this: that Hastings resolved, by hounding Nandkumár to death, to teach the whole crew of accusers and witnesses that though he was in a minority at the Council-board he was still to be feared. What is this but to say, as Macaulay does actually say, that it was Hastings to whom the execution of Nandkumár is to be attributed?

But here, too, there is abundant evidence to show that Macaulay had not thoroughly examined the papers which furnished the evidence upon which alone it is possible to form a just judgment. Fortunately many years subsequently

to the appearance of Lord Macaulay's essay, the late Sir James Fitzjames Stephen, who some five and twenty years ago filled in the Governor-General's Council the same office which Macaulay had occupied some thirty years previously, and who was a friend and admirer of his predecessor, took up the question, examined every document in connection with it; arrived at a conclusion different in all respects from that given to the world by Macaulay in his essay; and proved, beyond the possibility of contention, that the judgment of the great essayist had been formed from incomplete materials. The story, as told from the original documents examined by Sir James Stephen,* has been retold in this book. It proves beyond a doubt not only that Hastings had no part whatever in the charges brought against Nandkumár, and on which he was executed; but it proves further that it was in the power of the triumvirate (Clavering, Monson, and Francis) to save Nandkumár;—and they would not.

Thus disappears another of the fictions on which Macaulay based his charge against Hastings—that his principles were somewhat lax, his heart was somewhat hard, that he was deficient in respect for the rights of others, and deficient in sympathy for the sufferings of others.

As little substantial is the charge based on the conduct of Hastings with respect to Chét Singh. Chét Singh was nothing more than a zamindár, or landowner, who held his land directly of his liege lord, on condition of paying rent and performing the duties attached to its possession. He had held Banáras on that tenure from the Nawwáb-Wazír of Oudh; afterwards, on precisely the same terms, from the Company. Lord Macaulay states that "it had formerly been convenient to treat him as a sovereign prince; it was now convenient to treat him as a subject." It has been clearly established that Chét Singh was never treated as a sovereign prince. In 1775–76 he had acknowledged the overlordship of the British, and had been confirmed as chief of the zamindárí, subject to the payment of a fixed amount of tribute, and on agreeing to adopt such measures as might

* "The Story of Nuncomar and the Impeachment of Impey:" in two vols. Macmillan and Co.: 1885.

be necessary for the interest and security of the country and the preservation of peace. He was a vassal, with all the obligations of a vassal as they had existed since the time of Akbar. The title which he had assumed (as had his father before him) of Rájá was a title of courtesy, due to him as the chief of a very large zamindárí. But it was not a title of right. When the Court of Directors wrote of him in their despatch to Warren Hastings in that sense, the latter in a few pungent words pointed out to them their mistake.

It is difficult to see how Hastings could have acted otherwise than he did act with respect to this rebellious vassal. In those days when the Mughal Empire had broken up, and when everything seemed possible to a man who had money and ability; when services were bid for from all quarters; when the English were comparatively new-comers, who might disappear as quickly as they had come; it was not very clearly apparent to a man in the position of Chét Singh how far he might defy with safety the authority of his liege lord. He could at least venture to try it on. Chét Singh was a man who had good information. He had heard that Hastings was not supreme in his Council, and he had gone so far as to send an envoy to Clavering. Banáras was many miles from Calcutta, and the distance increased his confidence. He deliberately manœuvred so as to endeavour to induce in the mind of Hastings the belief that he was unable, from paucity of funds, to pay the amount he had been called upon to contribute, whilst there can be no doubt that, even at a very early period, he had sent emissaries into Oudh and elsewhere to ascertain the extent to which he could count upon help from outside. The conduct of that vassal had indeed reached a point of contumacy so marked that, considering it in the Council-chamber at Calcutta, Hastings and Wheler came to the conclusion that a very heavy fine would be requisite to bring him to his senses, and they had fixed that fine at half a million of money. The fine was never actually imposed, for events followed one another too quickly. But, surely, looking at the actual circumstances—at the war raging with the Maráthás; at the fact that a victory gained by Madhují Sindhiá over Camac would have brought that people within striking distance of

the Banáras zamindárí; that that zamindárí constituted the actual frontier of the British territories; that its vassal-ruler had refused to obey the orders of his liege lord, and had, there was ample reason to believe, entered into correspondence with the enemies of England; the great probability that Sindhiá would crush Camac;—there remains sufficient justification for the determination of Hastings to bring up this double-dealer with a sharp exercise of authority. Mr. Hastings, on the spot and before the event, was surely more competent to judge correctly on this point than was Mr. Pitt after the event in the House of Commons. Yet mark his behaviour. Far from inflicting the fine summarily, he journeys to Banáras, gives Chét Singh a list of the grievances he has against him, and requests him to submit, as soon as possible, full explanation of those matters that might be capable of explanation. Chét Singh despatches, not an explanation, but replies which evade explanation. Still Hastings is merciful. He forbids him to leave his palace until he, Hastings, shall have had an opportunity of inquiring further into the matter. What happens then? Chét Singh breaks his arrest, repairs to his palace across the Ganges, repulses the troops sent against him, levies an army, and poses as an open enemy.

Such, in brief, is the action of Hastings with respect to Chét Singh. There is surely nothing in that action which justifies the conclusion of Lord Macaulay that in the controversy with Chét Singh Hastings resorted to the plea which suited his immediate purpose without troubling himself about consistency; that in this case he was deficient in respect for the rights of others. The danger threatening the English interests in India was great; it would become so much greater as possibly to be fatal if the ruler of the frontier territory were allowed to act independently of the interests of his liege lord, and make alliances with the enemy in the field. But that was the danger threatening, and it was this danger that Hastings parried. This, the kernel of the story, Lord Macaulay has hidden from the reader in a cloud of verbiage, in which Chét Singh is made to pose as a martyr, and Hastings as an unprincipled tyrant.

There is one other matter connected with this case which

gives us an insight into the mode of reasoning adopted by Lord Macaulay when he would gibbet an opponent. I give it in his own words:—

"Chét Singh, in the hope of obtaining some indulgence, secretly offered the Governor-General a bribe of twenty thousand pounds. Hastings took the money, and his enemies have maintained that he took it intending to keep it. He certainly concealed the transaction for a time, both from the Council in Bengal and from the Directors at home. Public spirit, or the fear of detection, at last determined him to withstand the temptation. He paid over the bribe to the Company's treasury, and insisted that the Rájá should instantly comply with the demands of the English Government."

This is a very serious charge. If true it would prove Hastings to be a sordid huckster, utterly unworthy to represent Great Britain in India. Yet let the reader mark how plain a tale disposes of this calumny. There is about it, as related by Macaulay, just the amount of truth which removes it from the category of invention. The reader will find the true version in the pages noted below.* It may suffice here to repeat that the bribe was offered, and that Hastings refused it. But that, bent on rendering assistance to the Ráná of Gohad, and finding that his colleagues refused to permit him to render such assistance, on the ground that the finances were in such a state that they could not afford a fresh expedition, Hastings sent again for Chét Singh's messenger, accepted from him the bribe, paid the amount into the public treasury, and used it for public purposes. He took at the same time the opportunity to inform his agent in London of what he had done in the matter, giving him permission to make what use of it he might think proper, and adding his declaration, upon his honour, that he would never reclaim the money for himself; that he disclaimed all title to it; that he should not have taken it but for and on the occasion which induced him to receive it, or one similar to it; that is, but for the occasion of using it for the public service. When we reflect that it was this money that enabled Hastings to despatch Popham on the expedition which culminated in the storming of Gwáliár, and which completed the levies of Camac, we shall the more wonder at the misuse of the incident by Lord Macaulay.

* Pages 333–4.

Slight, therefore, is the ground afforded by his relations with Chét Singh to bring home to Hastings the charge that his principles were somewhat lax; his heart somewhat hard; his respect for the rights of others somewhat feeble; and that he was deficient in sympathy for the sufferings of others. Possibly, however, Lord Macaulay relied chiefly, especially for the proving of the last charge of all—his want of sympathy with the sufferings of others—on his treatment of the Begams of Oudh. On this matter there has been raised a superstructure of exaggeration which has entirely obliterated every vestige of the simple story on which these calumnies are based. The simple story, as told by Hastings in a letter to Laurance Sulivan, in February, 1782, is this:—

"The Begam was entrusted by the Nawwáb, Shujáu-d daulah, with the charge of all his treasures. At his death she kept them for herself, nor durst her son reclaim them though his undoubted right. With Bristow's help he obtained from her thirty lakhs, and gave her a written promise to take no more. We were made guarantees of this engagement. On the revolt of Chét Singh, she and the old Begam, Shujáu'd daulah's mother, raised troops, caused levies to be made for Chét Singh, excited all the zamindars of Gorákhpur and Báhraich to rebellion, cut off many parties of sipáhís, and the principal Amil [collector of revenues] and a favourite of the younger Begam openly opposed Captain Gordon, one of our officers stationed in the neighbourhood. Let this be an answer," continued Hastings, "to the men of virtue who may exclaim against our breach of faith and the inhumanity of declaring war against widows, princesses of high birth, and defenceless old women. These old women had very nigh effected our destruction."

And how were they treated? They were treated with the greatest respect and consideration. When the troops entered their palace-fortress not a man profaned the apartments reserved for them. For a short period they had to lose the attendance of the eunuchs who managed their properties; and these, under the influence of the deprivation of flesh-food for a time, were compelled to disgorge a portion of State property and pay it to the Nawwáb, to whom of right it belonged. The action, moreover, was not the action of Hastings, who was at distant Calcutta, and knew nothing of the proceedings, but the action of the Nawwáb. In late years the Begams admitted the leniency with which they had been treated. There is no greater myth than this story of the cruelty exercised by Hastings. The Court

of Directors, not inclined to judge the conduct of Hastings with favour, after considering all the circumstances of the Oudh transaction, wrote to the Bengal Government their full approval of his conduct. It is indeed difficult to see how any responsibility could have fallen on him, for he was in no sense responsible for the measures adopted by the son (Nawwáb) in his dealings with his mother and grandmother.

Thus, then, falls to the ground the last vestige of the series of imaginary misdeeds which induced the great essayist to qualify his otherwise just tribute to the character and virtues of Warren Hastings. In this volume I have endeavoured to present the man as he was, unbiased alike by the prejudice of those who were interested in representing him as one of the meanest and most shameless of mankind, and by the indiscriminate praise of his thoroughgoing admirers. Of his private life I have told but little—far too little—but his private life has never been assailed. It is universally admitted that it was without a flaw. Even the divorce which enabled him to marry the woman of his choice was conducted without scandal. Until the marriage took place the lady who was to become his wife occupied a separate house and was received at the best house in Calcutta. No cloud penetrated their married life. It was sunshine always, marred only when there came the inevitable separation which was caused by the necessity that she should seek relief in Europe from the noxious climate she had suffered so long. But even that separation brought into stronger relief the deep love, the heartfelt admiration which to the latest hour of his life Hastings felt for her who bore his name. When he rejoined her in England, he was still the lover; still the devoted, admiring companion of her daily life. Nothing pleased him more than to watch the admiration she everywhere excited. His devotion was absolute; and he had the daily, the hourly experience that his affection was returned.

Slight necessity, therefore, did there seem to me to devote more than a passing notice to the domestic life of my hero. In judging of his public life the first thing that strikes the critical examiner is that such a man should have made so many and such bitter enemies. But here again I find that in

the earlier part of his career, whilst Resident at Murshídábád, and afterwards whilst Member of Council under Vansittart, though he opposed the majority of the Council, he had but one personal altercation. For that altercation his colleague, found to be in the wrong, apologized. In the second period, during his first visit to London, his life was peaceful and happy. In the third period, when second in the Madras Council; and, a little later, when Governor of Bengal in succession to Cartier, he made many friends and no enemies. He bent a Council, composed of members who were not at first inclined to acknowledge his supremacy, absolutely to his will. The fidelity of Barwell, after the arrival of the triumvirate, may be traced to the ascendency which Hastings had gained, in virtue of his superior intelligence, over the men who, up to that time, had been his colleagues. They were proud to serve him, proud to render to his genius the homage which that genius, and that alone, extorted.

But with the arrival of the three councillors who, nominated by Parliament, had stored their minds with fancies, such as, that Hastings was corrupt; that their chief business would be to call him to account for past misdeeds; and that then the senior amongst them would step into his shoes; there supervened a far different order of affairs. I do not propose to re-enter into the discussion of the weary details of perpetual opposition, of daily insult, of never-ending slanders which it has been my painful task to describe. With such overwhelming odds against him, Hastings must have gone to the wall had he been the man his enemies had supposed him to be. But to the monstrous conspiracies against himself, against his honour, against his honesty, against all that a man values more than his life, he opposed a fearless heart, a clear conscience—evidence that proved alike his prescience and his loyalty. With these weapons, and these only, he met every attack with resolution, carrying the war, the moment the occasion offered, into the enemy's country. The fortuitous family quarrel which raised other enemies against his special enemy and which completed that enemy's ruin was a matter of which he had no cognizance until it had become public property. In it, though it worked for his triumph, he took no part; but it is a remarkable fact, which

the enemies of Hastings have allowed to slide, but which the researches of Sir James Stephen have brought to light, that the men who had hounded on Nandkumár to assail him, declined, in the dire extremity of that accuser of their common enemy, to take the action which would have saved him.

Throughout the long struggle that followed we witness the same display of courage, the same assertion of principles which he believed to be right, the same determination not to lay down his office so long as the slightest hope remained that he might be able to steer the good ship through the breakers. When an over-zealous agent in England, using the powers with which he believed himself to be invested, tendered, for him, the resignation of his office, no conduct could be bolder, more resolute, more far-sighted, than the conduct which Hastings pursued. Contrast his action with that of his colleagues. The information reached both at the same moment. The colleagues, believing that the executive power would be handed over by Hastings to their senior member as a matter of course, issued pompous orders, but did nothing to secure their position. Hastings, always practical, looking all round the matter, resolved, not having himself either resigned or authorized any one else to resign for him, to assert his legal position; to insist, should his colleagues dispute his view, to refer the question for decision to the highest legal authority in the land—to the Supreme Court. Meanwhile, that no trouble should ensue, he made fast the gates of the Fort, gave directions to his executive officers, and then issued his summonses for a Council. Naturally he triumphed. Against his prudence and caution bluster was powerless.

It was ever thus with his policy. The colleagues who would have taken his place had not, during their tenure of office, extending in the case of Francis over five years, been able to see one inch beyond their noses into the tangled field of Indian politics. They were not only opportunists; they were opportunists who dared not risk even a little to save all. But Hastings had a great foreign policy. Under his rule the British possessions in India had reached a point when it was certain that, if they did not further advance, they must recede. In the turmoil consequent upon the break-up of the Mughal Empire, England could not afford

to recede. In his heart Hastings hated the idea of war. Not only was he not a soldier, but to him war meant the imposition of taxes, the raising of money by some means, the postponing of civil reforms, the anxieties of the combat, the settlement of issues depending upon matters he could not always entirely control, fresh conflicts with his colleagues, and—for he had to find his generals—possible disaster. It is more than probable that, had he had his own way, he would not have entered upon the Maráthá war, the first great event of which was the convention of Wargáon. But the news of the commencement of hostilities by the Bombay Government and of that disaster reached him almost simultaneously. Mark his action. He was in a worse position even than if he had been absolutely alone. His colleagues, principally Francis, were shouting in his ear that the troops he had managed to collect and to order to march across central India, would inevitably meet the fate encountered by Burgoyne at Saratoga. All through that war those colleagues, so ready with their carping tongues, had Saratoga on the brain—and they could not hide their terror. Yet, in this crisis, Hastings, his judgment clear and cool, issued practically but one order. He directed the general he had chosen to "go forward," to cross the Narbadá, and re-establish the lost English military credit in western India. Goddard obeyed, and did restore matters in that part of India. Whilst he was thus carrying out his instructions, Hastings, with the prescience of a great strategist, was preparing to raise up a diversion in central India. Of his success in that strategy the splendid daring of Popham, and the great deeds of Camac and Muir, gave abundant evidence.

The same record applies to the Coast war. Hastings did not desire war with Haidar Alí, and that great warrior would have infinitely preferred to maintain peace with the English. But the English administrators at Madras behaved to Haidar in such a manner that he could not, with self-respect, draw back his hand. But although the Madras Government had compelled the war, they knew not how to carry it on. Immediately Hastings was overwhelmed with their tearful prayers for assistance. The situation was as critical as a situation could be. Madras was wanting in men, money, and

provisions. Where was Hastings to get them, he who had with difficulty furnished the men, money, and stores with which to meet the needs of the Maráthá war? Does his action in procuring them, in insisting that his frontier-vassal, the zamindár of rich Banáras, should contribute towards expenses so suddenly thrust upon him, lay him open to the charge of being "a son of Zeruiah"?* Had the comparison not been made I should have thought it impossible. After the defeat of Baillie and the retreat of Munro, Madras was in a position so perilous that it seemed impossible to prevent the line of coast from falling into the enemy's hands. But for Hastings that result would have followed. What did he do, this man who was impeached for adopting a course by which alone it was possible to carry out remedial measures? He sent to Madras his best general and his best troops; he organized flotillas, each boat laden with stores and provisions, each charged with orders to cruise along the coast and watch its opportunity; money, as he could get it, he despatched by the quickest methods. Not one rupee stuck to his hands on the way. He foresaw every need, even to the necessity of despatching the surplus populations of the large towns near the seat of war to distant places. He looked to every detail himself. In a word, he so organized, so arranged, so provided the service, was so prescient, so careful regarding every detail, that this war, which began in disaster, terminated in triumph.

No one has ever denied that this triumph was due to one man, and to one man only. The officers and men of the Coast army admitted it. To them Hastings was "the Saviour of India." The officers of the Bengal army proved by their addresses of congratulation on his acquittal, that neither the lapse of time nor his fall from high estate had obliterated from their recollections the splendid direction he had given to their energies. To use the very words of some of them, his memory was "dear to India." They had watched with admiration the spirited and manly struggle which he had maintained in support of his personal integrity, and of

* "For he was undoubtedly cast in the type, so constantly recurrent in political history, of the sons of Zeruiah, and he very nearly earned their historical reward" (Sir A. Lyall, p. 235).

the dignity of a Government, "the energies of which are to this moment felt by India to the remotest extremes of her vast empire." They knew—these soldiers who had felt the inspiring touch of his genius—how ably he had laid his plans, how clearly he had indicated the point at which the aim was to be directed, and how carefully and with what pains he had provided them with the means to secure the result aimed at. But for him, for his all-pervading prescience, success would have been impossible. No detail—I cannot too often call attention to a fact the neglect of which is the cause of so many failures—escaped him; no measure, however insignificant it might seem, if it could contribute to the general success, was neglected. In the pages of this volume I have endeavoured to record the deeds which gained for him the love and gratitude of those he governed, and of those who carried into execution his instructions. And how much did he not accomplish? Of the famine-stricken territories he had taken over from Mr. Cartier he had made a Presidency which more than paid its way, whose borders he had secured against every possible enemy; he had laid down a system of civil and judicial administration which, improving with the march of time, exists, in its principle, at the present day. He had saved western India from the full brunt of the Maráthá power; had brought on to his knees in central India the powerful chief of the house of Sindhiá; had made Haidar Alí repent that he had ever engaged in war with the British, and had given to Típu Sultán a lesson, which that bigoted prince forgot all too soon for his own security. He handed over to his successor a British India solid alike for defence and for attack; a British India which, with resources he had in some cases improvised and in others greatly improved, had shown itself capable, under his prudent direction, to make successful war simultaneously with the two powers, each of which aspired in its heart to be the ultimate successor to the Mughal; and in accomplishing these results, he had gained the respect, the affection, and the admiration of the officers, civil and military, who had carried out his orders. The reputation which he gained in India by his wise administration grows greater as the busy world of the present day pauses for a few moments

to contemplate what it was that he really did accomplish. And it can scarcely be otherwise than that when Great Britain shall realize, to an extent which as a nation she has not yet realized, not only what he accomplished, but how he accomplished it; how, despite timid counsels, spiteful opposition, ever-present malignity, secret undermining, he pushed bravely forward, till he finally asserted his own individuality in his country's triumph; her sons will not fail to recognize, in the face of the scurrilities of Burke, the distortions of Macaulay, and the calumnies and inaccuracies of Mill, that no nobler son ever devoted to his country's interests a life more pure, a prescience more profound, talents more commanding, than did the second founder of British India, the Right Honourable Warren Hastings.

INDEX.

A.

ADAMS, Major John, conducts the war with Mír Kasim to a successful conclusion, 78–9, and note to 78.

ADDINGTON, Mr., interview with, and opinion of, Mr. Hastings, 516–7.

ADDRESSES, from India, from all sorts and conditions of men, on his acquittal, 493–5.

ALÍ VARDÍ KHÁN, becomes Sabahdar of Bengal, 20; defeats the invading Maráthás, 21–2; gives permission to the English to dig a ditch round Calcutta, 21; again repels the Maráthás, 22; suppresses the revolt of Mustafá Khán, 22; celebrates the wedding of his grandson, Siráju'd daulah, 23; restores order in his Subahdárí, 23; cedes Katak to the Maráthás and dies, 24; good opinion entertained by, of the English, 25.

AMYATT, Mr., is despatched with Mr. Hay to interview Mír Kásim at Mungér, 75; conduct affecting, which precipitated hostilities, and caused the death of, 76–9.

ÁSAFU'D DAULAH succeeds his father as Nawwáb-Wazír of Oudh: character of, 188; is despoiled by his mother with the assent of Mr. Bristow and the triumvirate, 188–90; baneful effects on the authority of, by the policy of the triumvirate, 192–3; the hands of, are tied by the iniquitous policy of the triumvirate, 194–6; condition to which, is reduced by that policy, 246–7; further allusion to the consequences of that policy on, 375–6; proposes to visit Hastings at Chanár, 377; relieves the urgent necessities of Hastings, 378–9; makes a new treaty with the English, 380–1; obtains the sanction of Hastings to recover his patrimony, 384; obtains the repayment of about one-half of the money of which he had been despoiled by the Begams, 385–90.

AURANG, or silk factory, Hastings establishes an, near Kásimbazár, 28; his life at the, 128–9.

AURANGZEB, Mughal emperor, first opposes, then encourages, the settlement of the English in Bengal, 12–15; reasons why, encouraged them, 15 (note); sends Murshíd Kuli Khán to rule in Bengal, 17; death of, causes changes in Bengal, 17.

B.

BAHU BEGAM OF OUDH, the, withholds his patrimony from her son, on the death of his father, the Nawwáb-Wazír, 189; is supported by Mr. Bristow and the triumvirate, 190–1; is forced to disgorge, 386; contentment of, with Hastings, 387, 424 5.

BÁLÁKÍ DÁS, the representative of the estate of, sues Nandkumár (see that name and Gangávishn), 226.

BANÁRAS, interview between Hastings and Shujáu'd daulah at, 137–42; text of the treaty made between the two at, 191–2; summary of the treaty substituted for it by the triumvirate on the accession of Ásafu'd daulah, 193–6; terms on which the zamíndárí of, was held, 329-30; proceedings at, on the occasion of Mr. Hastings' visit, 362–70; comments on the outbreak at, 371–4.

BARKER, Colonel Sir Robert, is authorized by the Calcutta Government to accompany the troops of the Nawwáb-Wazír of Oudh to the frontier of Rohilkhand, 120–1; attests the defensive treaty between the Nawwáb-Wazír, the Emperor,

and the Rohílas, 123–4; receives instructions from Hastings to march with the Nawwáb-Wazír, 129; action of, on learning the treachery of Háfiz Rahmat, 131; forces the Maráthás to retreat, 132–3; brilliant and successful march of, 135–6; dreads lest the alliance with Oudh should increase too much the power of the Nawwáb-Wazír, 145.

BARWELL, Mr., appointed a member of the Governor-General's Council 169; arrival of, makes the Council complete, 177; supports Hastings against the triumvirate, 178, 187 190, 193–6, 208; suggests that the charges brought by Nandkumár against Hastings be referred to the Supreme Court, 217; social habits of, 261, 331; promises Hastings his support to remove Bristow, 266 talks of retiring, 328; tries to reconcile Francis and Hastings, and retires, 331–2.

BASSEIN, storming of, 300–1.

BEGAMS OF OUDH, The. See OUDH.

BENGAL, earlier history of, 9; how Sháh Jahán was moved to give the English permission to trade in, 10 11; how the English, French, Danes and Dutch obtain factories in, 11 12; difficulties experienced by the early English in, 12–16; administration of Job Charnock in the Englis parts of, 13–15; mild rule of Ibráhim Khán in, 16; under Azímu-sh-Shán 16–17; under Murshíd Kuli Khán 17–19; under Shujáu-din Khán, 19 under Sarfaráz Khán, 19–20; under Alí Vardí Khán, 20; is invaded by the Maráthás of Barár, 21; again 22; general view of the position of under Alí Vardí Khán, 25; factories and stations of the English in, in the year 1750, 26–7; emolument of the Company's servants in, 27 Siráju'd daulah becomes Subahdar of, 24; Mír Jáfar becomes Subahdar of, 34; Mír Kásim become Subahdar of, 46–9; Mír Jáfir take his place, 78–9; situation of, when Clive assumed the governorship i 1768, 92; events of Mr. Verelst' government of, 93–5; and of Mr. Cartier's, 95–7; state of, on the arrival of Mr. Hastings in Februar 97; Hastings stands forth as Diwan 98–9; summary of the frontie peoples of, 115; administration o review of, by Hastings, 441–3.

BEVERIDGE, Mr., article of, on Warren Hastings referred to, 31 (note), 101 (note), 260.

BHONSLÉ, Mudhají, Rájá of Barár, does not see his way to accept an active alliance with the British, 294; declines the part of mediator, 301; why, allied himself with Haidar Alí, 318; rejects Chét Singh's offers, 370.

BHUTÁN, visited by Mr. Bogle, 163.

BIJAIGARH, Popham takes, and distributes amongst his men the treasure found at, 368–9.

BOMBAY, affairs in, 247; the Government of, takes up the cause of the dispossessed ex-Peshwá, Raghunáth Ráo, 247–8; the impolitic action of, precipitates the first Maráthá war, 248; the Government of, censured by Mr. Hastings, 248-9; Hastings restores peace to, 249–52; the Governor of, again under instructions from the Court, promises his support to the ex-Peshwá, Raghunáth Ráo, 287; Hastings remits money to Mr. Hornby, Governor of, 291.

BOUGHTON, Dr., adventures of, at the Mughal Court, and their results, 10–11.

BRISTOW, Mr., is appointed by the triumvirate to succeed Middleton as Resident at Lakhnao, 179; throws himself with avidity into the cause of the Bahu Begam, 189–90; aids them to withhold from the new Nawwáb the greater part of his patrimony, 190; is removed by Hastings, 266; is restored, 407; misbehaves, 412; is removed, 419.

BRUCE, Captain, gallantry of, at the storming of Gwáliár, 304; influences Camac to victory, 306.

BURKE, Edmund, begins to attack Hastings in the House of Commons, 397; the opposition of, to Hastings degenerates into rancour, 398–9; is for the moment baffled by the Court of Proprietors, 400; brings forward a motion for the removal of Hastings from his office, 401; continued attacks of, 402; gives notice of a motion "respecting the conduct of a gentleman just returned from India," 445; deficiencies of 446; rancorous feeling of, towards Hastings, 447; opens his attack 449; incidents of his attack on Hastings leading to the impeachment, 450–62; conducts the trial of

463–84; the "gutter" language of, 475–6, and note; the violence of the language of, defeats the purpose of, 484; retires from Parliament, 487; answer of, to Mr. Nicholls, 488; sincerity of, 487–9; last gibe of, at Hastings, 491.
BURNEY, Miss, impression made by Hastings on the mind of, 445; opinion of the love of Hastings for his wife, 526.
BUSSY arrives in India, the shadow, in capacity, of his former self, 324; gives abundant evidence thereof, 327.

C.

CALCUTTA is formed by the merging together of the villages Chatánatí, Govindpur, and Kálígháta, 17, and note; is captured by Siráju'd daulah, 31; is recaptured by Clive, 34; governing Council of, under Vansittart, 45; bribes offered to and accepted by the members of, 46; disputes of the Council of, with Mír Kásim (65–78) culminate in war, 79; the Council of, reject the reforms proposed by Hastings in the matter of dealing with Mír Kásim, 72; the Council of, reject also Vansittart's reform, 73–4; the Council of, despatch Messrs. Amyatt and Hay to see Mír Kásim at Munger, 75; the Council of, under Mr. Cartier, authorize an alliance with the Nawwáb-Wazír of Oudh, 121.
CALLIAUD, Colonel, gallant and successful campaign of, against the Sháhzáda, 53–60.
CAMAC, Major Jacob, is placed in command of a reserve force of sipáhís, 294; character of, 304–5; joined by Bruce, enters Malwá, 305; retreats before Sindhiá, then turns and meets him, 305–6; is joined by Muir, 307.
CARICATURES on the great trial, 486.
CARNAC, Major, succeeds Calliaud in the war with Sháh Álam, 60–62; chivalrous conduct of, 61.
CARTIER, Mr., summary of the administration in Bengal of, 94–7; concludes an alliance with the Nawwáb-Wazír of Oudh, 121.
CHAMBERS, Mr. Justice, appointed Puisne Judge in Calcutta, 172; character and antecedents of, 199–200.
CHAMPION, Colonel, is summoned by his military superiors to enter Oudh with his brigade, 122; commands the force to act with the Nawwáb-Wazír; first reason of annoyance of, with Hastings, 148; action and misconduct of, 149–52; malignity of, 155–62; how the incident connected with, terminated, 161 note.
CHANDRANAGAR, first occupied by the French as a factory, 12.
CHARNOCK, Job, Governor of the Company's possessions in India, encounters and overcomes many difficulties, 13–15.
CHATÁNATÍ, the site of part of the present Calcutta, occupied and re-occupied by the English, 14–15; is merged into Calcutta, 17, and note.
CHÉT SINGH, terms on which, held the zamíndárí of Banáras of the British Government, 330; is angry at being called upon by Hastings to contribute to the imperial war expenses, 330–1; corresponds with other native chieftains, 331; attempts to avoid payment of the cesses ordered by the Government of India, 360–1; on learning that Hastings is about to visit him, humbles himself, 362; meets Hastings at Baksar, 363; receives at Banáras a string of questions from the Governor-General to which categorical replies are required, 363–4; sends replies which are regarded as insulting, 364; is placed under arrest, escapes, and repulses the English troops from Ramnágar, 364–6; marches against Hastings, is beaten in two battles, occupies his hill-fortress of Bijaigarh, and finally takes refuge in the dominions of Sindhiá, 367–70.
CHINSURÁ, first occupied by the Dutch as a factory, 12.
CHISWICK, Mr., becomes guardian of Warren Hastings, 6; resolves to equip him for the Indian Civil Service, 7; arranges accordingly, 8; letter from Hastings to, from Murshídábád, 35, and note.
CLAVERING, General, appointed a member of the Governor-General's Council, 169; character of, 169; grumbles without reason at his reception on landing in Calcutta, 173, and note (*see* the TRIUMVIRATE); action of, on learning that Macleane, acting for Hastings, had

resigned on his behalf, 276–80; takes a back seat, 280; dies, 281.
CLIVE, Colonel Robert, comes round to Bengal and recaptures Calcutta, 334; justifies his nomination of Nandkumár to certain duties, 38; but afterwards changes his opinion, 39; difficulties in the way of the administration of, 40; opinion of Mír Jáfar of, 41; selects Vansittart to succeed himself, 41-2; drives the Shahzáda from before Patná, 52; reference to second administration of, 92; action of, with respect to Nandkumár and Muhammad Rizá Khán, 99, 100.
COAST WAR, The, causes, incidents and consequences of, 310-27.
COCHRANE, Captain, gallantry of, 53-4.
COCKBURN, Colonel, connection of, with the catastrophe of Wargáon, 296-8.
CONSTITUTION FOR INDIA, The new, causes which led to the consideration of, 167-8; settled by Lord North's Regulating Act, 168-9; terms of, 168-9; appoints a Governor-General and four councillors who are named, 169; appoints a Chief Justice and four judges who are named, 172; is read before the new Council in Calcutta, 174-5.
COOTE, Sir Eyre, succeeds Clavering as Commander-in-Chief, 299; is directed by Hastings to inspect the frontier, 299; is sent by Hastings to the Karnátik to oppose Haidar Alí, 319; is hemmed in between the high land and the French squadron, 322; is saved by the stupidity of the French commander, 323; by the forethought of Hastings receives supplies, 323; fights Haidar at Perambákam, 323; fights Haidar before Arni, 326; has to quit Madras on account of his health, 326; returns only to die, 326.

D.

DAYLESFORD, early home of Hastings, 4-5; purchases it, 493; real cost of, to Hastings, 504; life at, 508–23.
D'ORVES, The Chevalier, commands the French squadron off the Koromandel Coast, 321–2; refuses to co-operate in the certain destruction of the British force, 322–3.
DRAKE, Mr., Governor of Calcutta, refuses the demand of the Subahdar to surrender an obnoxious servant, 29; condemns the surrender of Kásimbazár by Mr. Watts, 30.
DUCHEMIN is instructed by Bussy to join, and does join, Haidar Alí, 324; the stupidity of, loses Haidar a second chance, 325.
DUNDAS, Henry (afterwards Lord Melville), violent attack on Hastings made by, 399; brings in a Bill for the better government of India, 402; the share had in influencing Mr. Pitt against Hastings, 459; after-career of, 511; how time avenged Hastings on, 517–18.

E.

EGERTON, Colonel, connection of, with the catastrophe of Wargáon, 295–6.
ELLIOT, Mr., is despatched by Hastings to negotiate with the Bhonslé, 291; dies on the journey, 292.
ELLIS, Mr., is appointed English Agent at Patná, 63; uses all the means at his disposal to provoke Mír Kásim, 66–7; overbearing conduct of, 76; begins to arm, 76; forces the hand of Mír Kásim, and makes war inevitable, 77.

F.

FAIZU'LLAH KHÁN, Rohíla chief, provided for, 151.
FARRUKHSIYAR, successor of the Emperor Aurangzeb, grants many concessions to the English in Bengal, 18.
FORREST, Mr., reference to the work of (Letters, Despatches, and other State Papers in the Foreign Department of the Government of India, 1772–1785), Preface, 125, 153–4, and throughout the book.
FOWKE, the elder, a bitter opponent of Mr. Hastings, is included by the latter in a charge of conspiring with Nandkumár, and committed, with the younger Fowke, for trial, 221–2; (the younger) is removed from Banáras, 361; is restored by orders from England, 407–8.
FOX, Mr., hostile conduct of, with respect to Hastings, 399, 402, 456; reflections on the conduct of, with regard to the prosecution, 489.

FRANCIS, Mr. Philip, appointed member of the Governor-General's Council, 169; previous career of, 169–70; identification of, with "Junius," 170–1; grumbles without cause at his reception by Hastings, 173, and note (see the TRIUMVIRATE); is used by Nandkumár to strike his blow against Hastings, 204–6; spirit that animated, against Hastings, 244; social habits of, in Calcutta, 261, and note; loses the companionship of Colonel Monson, 262; action of, on learning that Macleane had resigned for Hastings, 276–80; loses by death General Clavering, 281; timid counsels of, has Saratoga on the brain, 293; regards the catastrophe of Wargáon as a matter for triumph, 328; on the mediation of Barwell comes to terms with Hastings, 331; but breaks them, 332-3; negotiations between, and Hastings, 323–6; is denounced by Hastings as "void of truth and honour," 336; challenges him, fights him, and is badly wounded, 337 (note), 338–9; declines private intercourse with Hastings, 339; resolves to quit India, 342; quits it, 349; before he left had opposed the nomination of Sir E. Impey to be judge of the Chief Civil Court, 355; incites Burke to oppose it in Parliament, 356; spurs him on to the end, 463–84; but for, there would have been no proceedings against Hastings, 487; part taken by, in the prosecution, 489.

G.

GANGÁVISHN sues Nandkumár for money due to an estate of which he is the executor, 226; consequence of the action of, 226–240.

GODDARD, Lieut.-Colonel, is ordered by Hastings to replace Leslie, character of, 293; marches to Surat, 295; is made Brigadier-General, 299; military action of, 300–2; forced to retreat, reaches Panwel and Kalián, 302.

GOHAD, The Ráná of, is aided by Hastings against Madhují Sindhiá, 303.

GURUDÁS, son of Nandkumár, is nominated by Hastings to be diwán to the guardian for the Nawwáb-Nazim, 102; reflections on the appointment of, 103–4.

GWÁLIÁR, fortress of, description of, [illegible]; is stormed by Captain Popham,

HÁFIZ RAHMAT, a prominent Rohíla chief, is defeated by the Maráthás, 122; hesitates between an alliance with the Maráthás, and one with the English and the Nawwáb-Wazír, 130–1; double duplicity of, 132–3; after the retreat of the Maráthás, promises to pay the money due to the Nawwáb-Wazír, 133; rebellion and death of, 149–50.

HAIDAR ALÍ, Ruler of Maisur, earlier wars of, with the English at Madras, 85–91; how, was goaded into his last war with the English, 310; is offended by the action of the Madras Government on the breaking out of the war with France, 313; dissembles his displeasure, 314; does not confide his policy to the German missionary sent to him as an envoy, 314–5; opens his mind to the Madras Government, 315; seizes, but ultimately releases, the English passengers of a Danish ship cast upon his coast, 316; receives very coolly an English envoy sent to him with a gun that will not shoot and a saddle on which no one can ride, 316–7; arranges with his allies and then invades the Karnátik, 317; great initial successes of, 319–20; has a splendid chance of finishing the campaign but is baffled by the stupidity of his French ally, 321–3; fights Coote unsuccessfully, 323; sends a force under Típu to surprise Braithwaite, 324; is joined by a French force under Duchemin, 324; whom, is compelled, from his timidity, to leave behind, 325; dash of, and engagement of with Coote before Arni, 326; dies, 326.

HAMILTON, Dr., obtains considerable concessions for the English from the Emperor Farrukhsiyar, 18.

HARTLEY, Captain, the one man who kept his head at Wargáon, 297; brilliant conduct of, at Bassein, 300–1.

HASTINGS, WARREN, monument to, in Westminster Abbey, 2; family of, 3; birth of, 4; is sent to Westminster school, 5; prowess at, 6; opinion of the head-master of, 6; is destined for India, 7; leaves Westminster, 7; sails for Calcutta, 8; arrives there, 26; employment of, during the last five and a half years of Alí Vardí's rule, 26; special duties of, at the outset, 27; is sent to establish an *aurang* or silk factory near Kásimbazár, 28; life of, and acquaintances made there by, 28–9; is taken prisoner by order of the Subahdar and brought into Murshídábád, 31; by the influence of his friends, is released, 31; proceeds to join the English at Faltá, 32; had opened a correspondence with Mr. Drake from Murshídábád, 32; and seen Holwell, but had found the correspondence too risky, 33; becomes engaged to Mrs. Campbell and marries her, 33–4; accompanies Clive in his march to and recapture of Calcutta, 34; proceeds then with his wife to Murshídábád, 35; his life there, 35–6; loses his wife and sends his boy to England, 36–7; becomes Resident at Murshídábád, 37; letter of, to Clive, on the subject of that appointment, 37; is dissatisfied because a portion of his duties is transferred to Nandkumár, 38; forms a poor opinion of Nandkumár, 39; rectifies errors in the titles of the lands transferred to the English, 40; similarity of views between, and Clive regarding the future of Bengal, 42; renders justice to the Subahdar, 42–3; horror conceived by, towards the Subahdar, when he believes him an accomplice in the murder of his relatives, 43, and note; selects a successor to Míran, 44; approves of the change made by the nomination of Mír Kásim, 46–8; accepts a seat in Council and proceeds to Calcutta, 64; joins with Vansittart in remonstrating against the tyranny exercised by their colleagues towards Mír Kásim, 66; is despatched to Mungér to meet Mír Kásim, 67; forms a strong opinion as to the oppression exercised by the English, 67–8; reports to this effect to his colleagues, 68–9; proposes remedies for the existing evils, 70; on Mír Kásim's suggestion slightly modifies them, 71–2; the remedies of, are rejected by the Calcutta Council, 72; is supported by Mr. Vansittart, 72; is totally opposed to the war, 80; altercation of, with Mr. Batson, 80; returns to England and learns of the death of his only son, 81; financial considerations compel, to return to India, 82; sails for Madras, 82; becomes intimate with Baroness Imhoff, 82–3; reforms the customs duties at Madras, 85; notes the past and present foreign policy of Madras, 85–91; is nominated Governor of Bengal, 91; arrives in Calcutta; situation in which, found the three provinces, 97; stands forth as diwan, 98–9; settles the position of the Nawwáb-Nazim, 99–100; is ordered by the court to bring to trial Muhammad Riza and Shitáb Rái, 101; appoints Maní Begam to be guardian of the Nawwáb-Nazim, and Gurudas, son of Nandkumár, to be her diwan; reflections thereon, 102–4; devotes himself to the reforms of the revenue and judicial departments, 104–8; of the police, 108–9; to the suppression of highway robbery, 109; presides at the trial of Muhammad Rizá and Shitáb Rái, 110–1; opinions of, on the trial and the acquittal, 111–2; summary of the reforms effected by, 113–4; frontier policy of, 115; position of his frontier as it presented itself to, 119–20; receives copies of the treaties between Oudh, Rohilkhand, and the Emperor attested by Sir R. Barker, 124; impression made upon him by the text thereof, 124–5; view of the general position taken by, 124–5; promises to assist the Nawwáb-Wazír to defend his territories, 127; orders English troops to occupy Allahábád, 127; on hearing the invasion of the Maráthás, concludes a treaty with Háfiz Rahmat, 129; considers the proposals, made under the circumstances of the breach of faith of the Rohílas, of the Nawwáb-Wazír, 134–5; and replies, 135; has an interview with the Nawwáb-Wazír at Banáras, 137; nature of the discussion between the two, and conclusion, 138–42; reviews the political situation and carries his Council

with him, 143-5; ultimately reports to the Court of Directors the exact position, 146; hears from the Nawwáb-Wazír that he is ready for the Rohilkhand enterprise, 148; entrusts the command of the British troops to Colonel Champion, 148; has to contend all along with the malignity of that officer, 148-60; despatches Col. Macleane to settle the disorders caused by Champion, 160; directs an expedition to Kuch-Bihár, Bhután, and the territories of the Teshu Lláma, 162-4; summary of two years' work of, 164; justification of the Rohilkhand policy of, 165; tact of, in dealing with men, 165-6; how, stood on the threshold of another phase of his career, 166; writes courteous letters of welcome to the three new councillors, 172-3; learns that they consider his reception of them below their dignity, 175, and note; deprecates their proceeding to business till the arrival of Mr. Barwell, 176; prepares and sets before the triumvirate a memorandum detailing his antecedent policy, which they condemn, 177; is further persecuted, 178-80; summary of the political position as created by, 180-4; protests against the doctrine of the triumvirate that the death of Shujáu'd daulah abrogates all treaties existing between him and the British, 186-7; protests against the spoliation of the new Nawwáb of Oudh by his mother, sanctioned by the triumvirate, 191; witnesses the iniquitous policy of the triumvirate with regard to Oudh without being able to prevent it, 193-6; is attacked at the Council-table by Francis, prompted by Nandkumár, 204-6; hastily pens a minute in reply, 206-8; dissolves the Council and retires, 208; reflections on the circumstance as it concerned, 209-10; opinion recorded by, as to the charges against him, 213-6; authorizes his friends in England, if his conduct with respect to the Rohíla war or the treaty of Banáras be disapproved, to tender his resignation, 216; resolves to carry the war into Nandkumár's country, if he can bring against him a charge of conspiracy, 217; the opportunity is suddenly offered to, of the spontaneous revelations of Kamálu'd din, 219-20; charges Nandkumár with conspiracy, 220; action of, with respect to testing the veracity of Kamálu'd din, 222-3; futile attempts made by Macaulay and others to prove that, instigated the forgery suit against Nandkumár, 229-31; failure of all attempts to connect, with the charge against Nandkumár, 240-1; enjoys the comparative lull which ensued on the morrow of the death of Nandkumár, 242; devotes himself to the rent and settlement questions, 243; and to the institution of criminal courts, 244; is opposed by the triumvirate, 244-6; condemns the conduct of the Bombay Government in bringing about the first Maráthá war, 248-9; sends Colonel Upton to make peace with honour, 249; concludes, by his instrumentality, the treaty of Purandhar, 249-52; deals with the Madras difficulties, 252-3; disputes of the Government of, with the Supreme Court, 253-9; talent of political organization possessed by, 260; health and mode of life of, 260-1; loses by death the assistance of Colonel Monson, 262; turns his attention to the condition of Oudh, 266; removes Bristow and sends back Middleton as Resident, 266; position of, with respect to the power given to Macleane, 267; replaces the younger Fowke by Thomas Graham at Banáras, and effects other personal changes, 267; foreign policy of, 268-71; learns that Col. Macleane has resigned, on his behalf, the office of Governor-General, 272-6; resolves to regard the action of Macleane as unauthorized, 276-7; meets the case by standing on his rights and referring to the Supreme Court, which decides in his favour, 276-80; letters of, to Lord North and Lawrence Sulivan on the subject, 281; on the death of Clavering, two months later, becomes absolutely supreme, 281; result of action of, in England, 282; marriage of, 283; in view of hostilities at Puná, places a force under Colonel Leslie on the Jamná, near Kalpí, 288; difficulties of, at this conjuncture, 288-9; a bird's-eye view of, as he sat in his study, 289-90; directs Leslie to march on

Bombay, 291; remits money to Bombay, 291; the hopes entertained by, regarding an intimate alliance with the ruler of Barár, baffled by the death of his envoy, Elliot, 292; is forced to replace Leslie by Goddard, 293; places him under the Bombay Government, 294; proposes an active alliance with the Bhonslé, who however does not quite see his way to accept it, 294; orders Goddard "to go forward," 299; the conduct of, on learning of the catastrophe of Wargáon "a lesson for all time," 299; resolves to effect a diversion by attacking Sindhiá in his own territories, 303; success of the campaign ordered by, under Popham, Camac, and Muir, 303–7; by the success of his arms and negotiations imposes peace on Madhují Sindhiá, 307; and on the Peshwá and the Maráthá chiefs, 307–8; learns, almost simultaneously, of the outbreak of the Coast war, of the surrender of Colonel Baillie's force and of other troubles, 318; despatches Sir Eyre Coote with all available troops to Madras, 319; does his utmost in other respects, 319; how, acted in Council on hearing of the catastrophe of Wargáon, 328; in his necessity to raise funds for the war resolves to make his vassals contribute, 329; on the mediation of Barwell, comes to terms with Francis and Wheler, 331; discovers that Francis is breaking the conditions, 332–3; and endeavours to bring him back into the straight path, 333–4, in vain, 335; places the matter in the hands of Sir J. Day, 335–6; writes Francis a letter telling him he has found him "void of truth and honour," 336–7; is challenged, and fights a duel with him, 337–9; takes advantage of Francis's absence to send Popham to storm Gwáliár, 339; upon the shoulders of, falls the weight of the Coast war, 340; has to suspend the Governor of Madras, 341; war administration of, 341–2; regards the departure of Francis as the close of one phase of his administration, 342–4; what Madras thought of the war administration of, 344; principles of the war administration of, 345–9; closes the two wars, 349–50; view of, of the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court, 351; difference of opinion with Impey, 351–3; is settled by the nomination of Impey by, to be judge of the Chief Civil Court, 354; desire of, to serve Impey, 357; resolves, in accord with his colleague, Wheler, to punish the recalcitrance of Chét Singh by a heavy fine, 362; proceedings of, on his way to and at Banáras, 362–7; disappointment of, at the retention by Popham of the booty, 368–9; gains of, by the result of Chét Singh's outbreak, 369; measures taken by, for the replacement of Chét Singh and the pacification of Banáras, 370; the punishment awarded by, to Chét Singh proved India's safety, 374; impecunious position of, at Banáras, 377; receives Ásafu'd daulah at Chanár, and accepts money from him for the services of the State, 378–9; money comes to, from other quarters, 379; makes a new treaty with the Nawwáb of Oudh, 380–1; action of, with respect to the Begams, 381–3; is strengthened in his views by the opinion of Sir Elijah Impey, 383–4; authorizes Middleton to aid the Nawwáb-Wazír in the recovery of the patrimony of which he had been unjustly deprived, 384; action of, with respect to the Begams of Oudh, fully justified, 384–90; general foreign policy of, 391–3; opinion of, of his new colleagues, Macpherson and Stables, 394–5; difficulties of, with his new colleagues, 395–7; opposition in Parliament to, 397–404; deputes Major Palmer to Lakhnao to stir up Middleton, 405; sends Middleton categorical instructions, 406; sends Palmer to Faiz'ullah Khán, and replaces Middleton by Bristow, under instructions from England, 407; reply of, to the criticisms of the Court of Directors on his removal of Chét Singh, and on their orders to restore Bristow and Fowke, 408–11; difficulties of, with his colleagues and Lord Macartney, 412–3; splendid results of the salt administration of, 413–4; has to send Mrs. Hastings to England, 414–17; takes measures to prevent a threatened famine, 417; proceeds to Lakhnao, arranging matters at Banáras on the way, 420–2; adjusts

matters with the Nawwáb-Wazír and the Begams, 422–5; espouses, but without result, the cause of Prince Jawán Bakht, 425–7; after settling Oudh, returns to Calcutta, 427–32; receives a copy of Pitt's India Bill, is greatly disappointed, 432–6; quits India, 436–9; early days of, appearance of, and impressions made by, in England, 440–5; review of, of the administration of Bengal, 441–3; gives a copy to Dundas, 444; reception of, in London, 344–5; courts no one, but stands calmly ready for every emergency, 447–9; how, met Burke's attack, 453; appears at the bar of the House and reads his defence, 454; coolness and self-reliance of, 455; supplies Pitt with a paper on the zamíndárí tenure, 455; the impeachment of, is practically decided by Mr. Pitt, 456–60; maintains his calmness and serenity, 460; is formally impeached, 462; trial and acquittal of, 463–84; "impromptu" of, on an expression in a speech of Grey's, 490; the diamond story in connection with, 490–1; the imperturbable calmness of, illustrated, 491–2; realizes that there are Nandkumárs and Chét Singhs in England, 492; receives addresses from India from all sorts and conditions of men on his acquittal, 493–5; replies of, 496–7; letter of, to General Morgan, 497–8; proof that he was a man of men, 499; treatment of, by the Prime Minister, the Board of Control, and the Court of Directors, regarding the costs of the trial, 500–5; interview of, with the Prince of Wales, 506–7; indifference of, for honours; seeks only to remove the stain against his name in the journals of the House, 507; life of, at Daylesford, 508; "impromptu" on seeing a pleasing portrait of himself, 509; how, converted Marquess Wellesley, 509–10; sees his enemies, in turn, disappear, 511; occupations of, 511–2; correspondence with the Court about his debt, 513–6; interview with Mr. Addington, 516–7; how time avenged, on Dundas, 517–8; enjoys the society of the children of his old friends, 519–20; opinion of, of Napoleon's campaign of 1807, 520; witnesses the marriage of his nephew to his wife's niece, 520–1; is summoned to give evidence at the bar of the House of Commons; great homage paid to, 521–2; is made a member of the Privy Council and is presented by the Prince of Wales to the sovereigns lately released from the yoke of Napoleon, 522–3; receives the degree of D.C.L. at Oxford, 524; presides at a dinner to the Duke of Wellington, 525; illness and death of, 526–7; vindication of, 528–47.

HASTINGS, Mrs., general testimony to the worth of, 283–4; letters of Hastings to, on occasion of the duel, 339–40; proceeds to England, 414–17; golden opinions won by, 441; life of, at Daylesford, 508–23; is left sole executrix on the death of her husband, whom she survives twenty years, 527; erects a monument to his memory in Westminster Abbey, 527. See also BARONESS IMHOFF.

HAY, Mr., is despatched by the Calcutta Council as an envoy to Mír Kásim, 75; is detained as a hostage at Mungér, 77.

HOLWELL, Mr., made prisoner at Calcutta is sent to Murshídábád, and sees something of Hastings there, 33; temporarily succeeds Clive in Bengal, 42.

HORNBY, Mr., Governor of Bombay. See BOMBAY.

HYDE, Mr. Justice, appointed to the Supreme Court of Calcutta, 172; character and antecedents of, 200; is sent for to the magistrate's court to assist Lemaistre in dealing with the charge against Nandkumár, and concurs in committing him for trial, 229.

I.

IMHOFF, BARON, a fellow-passenger of Hastings to Madras, 83; is divorced from his wife, 85.

IMHOFF, BARONESS, *née* CHAPUSET, travels in the ship in which Hastings journeyed to Madras, 82; previous history of, 83; description of, 83; shows kindness to Hastings in his illness, 84; causes the dissolution of her marriage with Baron Imhoff, 283; reassumes her maiden

name, and marries Hastings, 283. See MRS. HASTINGS.

IMPEY, Sir Elijah, appointed Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Calcutta, 172; character and antecedents of, 198–9; grants to a sufficient extent the prayer made on behalf of Nandkumár for his treatment in gaol, 232–3 and 234; "behaved," on the trial of Nandkumár, "with absolute fairness and as much indulgence as was compatible with his duty," 236; disputes of, as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court with the Government, 253–9; cause of difference of opinion between, and Hastings, 352–4; is appointed judge of the Chief Civil Court, 354; effects of that nomination on the career of, 356–7; examines, at the suggestion of Hastings, the case regarding the Begams of Oudh, and advises Hastings thereon, 383–4.

J.

JÁFAR, MÍR, intrigues against Alí Vardí Khán, is removed from his command but restored, 23; is appointed by Clive to be Subahdar of the three provinces, 36; is believed by Hastings to have been an accomplice in the murder of his relations, 43, and note; is compelled to resign his position to Mír Kásim, 46–9; is restored to the Subáhdárí, 79.

JUNIUS, was he Philip Francis? 170–1.

K.

KARNÁTIK, Muhammad Alí, Nawwáb of the, character of, 310–1; intrigues of, 311–2; prevents any possible understanding between the English and Haidar Alí, 312–3.

KÁSIM, MÍR, son-in-law of Mír Jáfar, is selected presumptive successor to his father-in-law, 44; negotiates with the Calcutta Council and bribes them all round, 45; becomes Subahdar of the three provinces, 46–9; is nominated to that office by the Emperor in person, 62; rise of differences between, and the Calcutta Council, 64–8; removes Ram Narayan from the commissionership of Patná, 65; comes to an agreement regarding trading licences with Mr. Hastings, which the Council rejects, 71–2; also with Mr. Vansittart, which shares the same fate, 73–4; driven to despair, he establishes free-trade throughout his territories, 74; is goaded into hostilities, 76–78; result of the war with, 78–79.

KATAK, is ceded to the Maráthás by Alí Vardí Khán, 23–4.

KATWÁ, Alí Vardí Khán defeats the Maráthás at, 22.

KNOX, Captain, splendid relief of Patná by, and subsequent gallant conduct of, 58–60, and note to 60.

KUCH-BIHÁR, Hastings details Boyle to visit, 162–3.

L.

LAW, Monsieur, part taken by, in the war between Sháh Álam and the English, 56–61; gallantry of, and the French officers, 60–1.

LAWSON, Sir Charles, monograph of, on Warren Hastings, referred to, 4 (note), 6 (note), 84–85 (note), 416, 487, 489, 502–3, 509, 518, 521, 525, 527.

LEMAISTRE, Mr. Justice, appointed judge of the new Supreme Court of Calcutta, 172; character and antecedents of, 200; hears the charge of Gangávishn *versus* Nandkumár as magistrate, 229; sends for Hyde and commits Nandkumár for trial, 229.

LESLIE, Colonel, next in command to Champion, gives a very curt reply to a question put to him by Clavering, 184; unsuccessful as a commander, 291–3; dies of fever, 294.

LYALL, Sir Alfred, references to the work of, on Warren Hastings, Preface, 84, 240, 260, 371–4, 426, 428, 441, 443, 453, 459, 473, 502, 545, and note.

M.

MACARTNEY, Lord, antecedents and character of, 392; is controlled by Hastings in the concluding of the peace with Típu Sultán, 393; strained relations of, with Hastings, 412–13.

MACAULAY, Lord, incorrect estimate of Sir Elijah Impey, 198–9; futile attempt made by, to fix on Hastings the responsibility of the trial of Nandkumár for forgery, 229–32; vindication of the memory of Hastings against the calumnies of, 527–41.

MACLEANE, Colonel, is sent by Hastings to the army to remedy the disorders caused by Champion, 160; remedies them, 161 (and note); receives authority from Hastings under certain circumstances to resign on his behalf, 216; circumstances which induced, to believe that the time was approaching when to act on those powers, 263–5; circumstances which confirmed that impression of, 272–4; sends in the resignation of Hastings, 274–5; explains his action and the reasons of it to Hastings, 275.

MACPHERSON, Mr. John, succeeds Barwell; character and antecedents of, 393–4.

MADHUJÍ SINDHIÁ, gradual rise of, after Pánípat, 118; is baffled by Goddard, 300; wonder of, at the storming of Gwáliár by Popham, 304; pursues Camac, but the latter turns and rends him, 305–6; comes to terms with the British and persuades the chiefs of his confederacy to do the same, 307–8.

MADRAS, general view of the foreign policy of Madras from 1744 to 1771, 85–91; disorganization in the Presidency of, 252; suspension of the Governor of, and result, 253; action of the Government of, on the breaking out of the war with France, 310–3; send a missionary to Haidar Alí, as an envoy, who returns as wise as he was when he set out, 314–5; breaking out, and duration of the war in, 316–27.

MANÍ BEGAM, is nominated by Hastings to act for the Nawwáb-Nazim during his minority, 102; reflections on the nomination, 103.

MARÁTHÁS, The (of Barár), invade Bengal, 20; are driven out by Alí Vardí Khán, 21; again, 22; invade Orísa and seize and retain Katak, 23; sketch of the doings of the (of western and central India), after Pánípat, 117–8; threaten Rohilkhand with invasion, 120; invade, and completely defeat the Rohílas, 122; tempt the Nawwáb-Wazír with magnificent offers, 122; which he ultimately refuses, 122–3; gain Zábitá Khán, and threaten to conquer northern India, 127; effect on the, of the deaths of the Peshwás, Mádhu Ráo and Narayan Ráo, 128; had meanwhile invaded Rohilkhand, 128; evacuate it, before the English and Oudh troops, 132–3; collect about Rámghat, 135; but are surprised by Barker, 136; are recalled to Puná and quit Hindustán, 136; outbreak and progress of the first war of, with the English, 247–51; the second war of, with the English, 285–309.

MATTHEWS, Ensign, the arrival of, in Patná, frightens the Sháhzáda into a retreat, 52.

MIDDLETON, Mr. Nathaniel, Resident at Lakhnao, 148; services of, 156–9; the triumvirate recall, from Lakhnao, 178; is restored by Hastings, 266; shows a certain slackness in recovering the arrears due by the Nawwáb of Oudh, 384–5; transmits the arrears to Calcutta, 406; and is removed, 407.

MÍRAN, son of Mír Jáfar, murders a number of his relatives, 43, and note; is struck by lightning and killed, 44; antecedent doings of, 52–9.

MIRÁNPUR-KATRÁ, battle of, and misunderstandings caused by, 149–50, 155–6.

MONSON, Colonel, appointed a member of the Governor-General's Council, 169; character of, 169; grumbles without reason at his reception in Calcutta, 173, and note (see THE TRIUMVIRATE); death of, 262.

MUHAMMAD RIZÁ KKÁN, appointed by the Calcutta Council to be Naib-Subah of Bengal, 99–100; opinion of Lord Clive of, 100; is tried by order of the Court of Directors and is acquitted, 110–1; is appointed to be Naib-Subah of Bengal, 246.

MUIR, Colonel, joins Camac, and forces an accommodation on Madhují Sindhiá, 307.

N.

NANDKUMÁR is invested by Clive with full powers for the collection of rents in Bardwán, Nadyá, and Hugli, 38;

the opinion of Lord Clive of, 100; influences the Court of Directors to bring to trial, Muhammad Rízá Khán and Shitáb Rái, 101 (see also note); disappointment of, at the acquittal of Muhammad Rízá, 197; realizes, on noting the intense opposition of the triumvirate to Hastings, that he can wreak vengeance on that gentleman, 202; stealthy action of, to gain the triumvirate, 202–4; strikes his blow by using Francis as his tool, 204; is charged before the judges with conspiracy against Hastings, and is committed for trial, 221–4; is suddenly arrested for forgery, 226; circumstances of the case of Gangávishn *versus*, 226–9; is committed for trial, but allowed certain privileges as a Brahman, 229, 234; trial of, 235; is convicted and sentenced to be hanged, 236; is hanged, 239; scene at the execution of, 240; the death of, produces a momentary lull in the administrative jangling in Calcutta, 242.

NICHOLLS, Dr., head-master of Westminster, high opinion of, of Warren Hastings, 6.

NICHOLLS, Mr., opinion formed by, of Hastings on his arrival in England, 441–2; question put by, to Mr. Burke, and reply, 487–8.

NIZÁM, The, reasons why, entered into an alliance with Haidar Alí against the English, 317–38.

NORTH, Lord, persistent hostility of, towards Hastings, 272, 397; resigns, further adjusts matters to the satisfaction of the, 424–5.

P.

PALMER, Major, is deputed by Hastings to Lakhnao to stir up Middleton, 405.

PATNÁ, a famous city of Bihár, is administered for the Subadhar of Bengal by Rám Narayan, 51 (see RÁM NARAYAN); Mr. Ellis is appointed Agent at, 63.

PITT, William, becomes Chancellor of the Exchequer, 401; becomes Prime Minister, 404; requests Hastings to furnish him with, and receives, a paper on the zamíndárí tenure, 455; sudden change of front of, with respect to Hastings, presumed causes of, 456–60; the sudden change of front of, decides the impeachment of Hastings, 461; declines to recommend the Crown to defray the costs of the prosecution of Hastings, 503; the class of men of whom, made peers, 505–6.

POPHAM, Captain, instructed to lend a hand to the Ráná of Gohad, storms the virgin fortress of Gwáliár, 303–4; meets Hastings at Baksar, 365; pursues Chét Singh from one fortress to another, 367; compels the surrender of the fortress of Bijaigarh, 368; divides the spoil amongst his troops, 368–9.

PUNÁ, intrigues at, for power, 285; state of factions at, 285; intrigue with Gangá Baí and ultimate triumph of Náná Farnavís at, 286, 287 and note, 288; failure of our British attempt on, 295–8; of another, 301–2.

PURANDHAR, Colonel Upton, under Hastings, negotiates the treaty of, which concludes the first Maráthá war, 249–51.

O.

OUDH (*vide* SHUJÁU'D DAULAH and ÁSAFU'D DAULAH), terms of the treaty made by Hastings with, 380–3.

OUDH, The Begams of, withhold on the death of the Nawwáb-Wazír, his patrimony from the son and successor, 188–90; that son obtains authority from Hastings to make them disgorge, 383–5; the palace of, at Faizábád, is invested by the Nawwáb's troops, 386; are not intruded upon, but eventually surrender one-half of the amount demanded, 386; contentment of, with Hastings, 386–7; the action of Hastings with regard to the, fully justified, 387–90; Hastings

R.

RAGHUNÁTH RÁO, uncle of the Peshwá, Narayan Ráo, is supposed to have accomplished the murder of his nephew, 128; becomes Peshwá, 128; is dispossessed by the birth of an heir to Narayan Ráo, 247; still clings to his position and enlists the Bombay authorities on his

behalf, 248; induces them to espouse his cause, 287–8; accompanies Egerton's force on its march to Puná, 295; behaviour of, 297; dies, 309.
RAGHUJI BHONSLÉ, Rájá of Barar, invades Bengal, but retreats, 22.
RÁM NARAYAN, governor of Patná, debates whether he shall side with his master or the Sháhzádá, 51; resolves, after visiting the latter's camp, to decide for the former, 52; and repulses the attacks of the Sháhzádá, 52; again has to defend Patná, 53; fights a battle and is driven back into the city, 53–4; is relieved by Knox, 58; is removed by Mír Kásim from his office, 65.
REGULATING ACT, The. *See* CONSTITUTION FOR INDIA, THE NEW.
ROHÍLAS, The, first reference to, 115; position secured to, by Ahmad Sháh Abdálí after Pánípat, 117; story of the origin and rise of, 118–9; are invaded, and defeated, by the Maráthás, 122; enter into a mutually defensive alliance with the Emperor and Oudh, 123 (see HÁFIZ RAHMAT); the difference between, and the Nawwáb-Wazír comes to a head, 136; campaign of the English and Oudh troops against, 148–53; fate of, 151–2.
ROSEBERY, Lord, the explanation of, regarding Mr. Pitt's sudden change of front towards Hastings, fails to explain, 458–9.

S.

SALBAI, treaty of, conditions imposed by Hastings of the, 307–8.
SCHWARTZ, a German missionary, is sent by the Madras Government as envoy to Haidar Alí, but returns with a brain as vacant as it was when he set out, 314–5.
SCOTT, Major, the supporter of Hastings in Parliament, exposes the true meaning of the opposition of Francis, 400–62.
SCRAFTON, Mr., letter of, to Hastings regarding some changes made in the scope of his duties as Resident, 38.
SHÁH ÁLAM, heir to the king of Delhí, invades Bihár, 50; Clive resolves to oppose, 51; assaults Patná, but, frightened by the apparition of one Englishman, beats a retreat, 52; again invades Bihár and besieges Patná, 53; has an initial success, 53–4; becomes titular Emperor, 53; is beaten in a pitched battle by Calliaud, 54; campaign of, against the English commanders, 54; beaten and humiliated, confers the Subáhdárí of the three provinces on Mír Kásim, 62; negotiates for the recovery of his ancestral throne, 116; enters Dehlí, 117.
SHÁH JAHÁN, Emperor of India, how, was induced to grant the English permission to trade in Bengal, 10–11.
SHÁHZÁDÁ, The. See SHÁH ÁLAM.
SHAISTA KHÁN, nominated by Aurangzeb, Governor of Bengal, 12; position of, with respect to the English, 12–15.
SHELBURNE, Lord, misrepresents the action of Hastings in the matter of the Maráthá war, 403.
SHERIDAN, Mr. R. B., makes a great speech against Hastings, 462; motives which animated, 462 (note), 489–90.
SHITÁB RÁÍ, renders good service in the campaign against the Sháhzádá, 57–9; is ordered by Mír Kásim to quit his territories, 65; is tried by order of the Court of Directors and acquitted, 110–11; death of, 111.
SHUJÁU'D DAULAH, Nawwáb-Wazír of Oudh, fears entertained by, of a Maráthá invasion, 120; views of, as explained to Sir Robert Barker, 120–1; is sorely tempted by the Maráthá offers, 122; but ultimately enters into a mutually defensive alliance with the Emperor and Rohílas, 123; is alarmed by the sudden treachery of Zábitá, 126; is reassured by the promise of Hastings to assist him, 127; action of, on learning the treachery of Háfiz Rahmat, 131–2; makes a substantial offer to Hastings, 132; compels the Maráthás to retreat, 132–3; the difference between, and the Rohílas come to a head, 136 interview of, with Hastings, discussions, and conclusions, 137–43; results of his inner cogitations, 145–6; captures all the towns in the Dúáb, 146–7; makes a secret engagement with the Emperor, 147; informs Hastings he is ready for the Rohilkhand business, 147;

conquers Rohilkhand, 148–52; alleged cruelties of, 153–4; charges of Champion against, disposed of, 155; political relation of, as ruler of Oudh, to the English in 1774–75, 180–3; is indignant at the recall of Middleton by the triumvirate, 185–6; death of, 186, and note.

SIRÁJU'D DAULAH, succeeds to the Subáhdárí of Bengal, Bihár, and Orísa, 24; demands the extradition of one of his servants from Mr. Drake, chief administrator of Calcutta, 29; invests Kásimbazár, 29; and forces its surrender, 31; is beaten by Clive at Plassey, 34.

SRIRAMPUR, first occupied by the Danes as a factory, 12.

STABLES, Mr., joins the Council of the Government of India, 393; character of, 394; opinion of Hastings of, 394–5.

STANLEY, Mr., successful mission of, to the Subahdar's court, 16–17.

STEPHEN, Sir James, Preface; comments of, on the charges brought by Nandkumár against Hastings, 212–3; on the case of Gangávishn *versus* Nandkumár, 227–8; on Macaulay's charge against Hastings in the Nandkumár forgery case, 229–30; on the trial of Nandkumár, 236, and note; shows how Francis, Clavering, and Monson could have saved Nandkumár had they chosen, 237–9; judgment of, on receiving Macaulay's attacks on Impey regarding his acceptance of the office of judge of the Chief Civil Court, 357, 536.

STEPHENS, MORSE, remarks of. *See* note to page 372.

STRACHEY, Sir John, reference to the work of, Preface, 125 (note), 142 (note), 153, 161 (note), 522, 534.

SUPREME COURT, the, the Judges of, 198–200; effect on the public mind of the establishment of, 200–1; trial of Nandkumár by, 225–40; dispute between, and the Government, 253–60; views of Hastings regarding the jurisdiction of, 351.

T.

TESHU LLÁMÁ, Mr. Bogle visits, with the sanction of Hastings, the territories of the, 163–4.

TÍPU SÁHIB, destroys Baillie's force, 320; surprises Braithwaite on the Kolrun, 324; makes peace with the English, 326.

TRIUMVIRATE, The (of Clavering, Monson, and Francis), begin at once their hostile manœuvres against Hastings, 175; insist on an inquiry into the past conduct of Hastings, 176–7; condemn the past policy of Hastiugs, 177; resolve to recall Middleton from Lakhnao, 178; take up the cause of the Rohílas, 178; display their ignorance of Indian geography, 179; after much cogitation, appoint Bristow to be Resident at Lakhnao, 179–80; summary of the political situation created by Hastings which, had to face, 180–4; count on Champion as an ally, 184; tempt Colonel Leslie, but receive a very curt reply, 184; fail to unearth a single fact telling against Hastings, 185; take advantage of the death of Shujáu'd daulah to declare all treaties made with him to be abrogated, 186–7; support Mr. Bristow, despite the protests of Hastings and Barwell, in his helping the Bahu Begam of Oudh in the spoliation of her son, the Nawwáb-Wazír, 190–1; baneful effects of the foreign policy of, on that prince, 193; force a new and onerous treaty on Ásafu'd daulah, 194; iniquitous character of the policy of, 195–6; support Nandkumár's attack on Hastings, 203–8; action of, on the departure from the council-chamber of Hastings, 208–9; further proceedings of, 210–12; pursue their course of endeavouring to incriminate Hastings, 218; adopt the cause of Nandkumár as their own, 224–5; pay him a formal visit, 225; vainly endeavour to prove that Hastings was implicated in the case of Gangávishn *versus* Nandkumár, 229–30; rage of the, at the commitment of Nandkumár, 233; fury of, on the conviction of, and sentence on, Nandkumár, 236–7; practically abandon their ally, 237–9; oppose Hastings on the extension of criminal courts, 244–5; appoint Muhammad Rízá to be Náib Subah, 246; social habits of some of the, 261; the death of Colonel Monson breaks up the, 262.

TROTTER, Captain, references to the life of Warren Hastings by, Preface, 112, 171, 387, 390, 437.

UPTON, Colonel, is despatched by Hastings to Puná to treat with the Maráthás, 249; arrives at Purandhar, and concludes the treaty so called, 250–1.

V.

VANSITTART, Mr., appointed to succeed Clive in Bengal, 41; arrival of, and colleagues of, 45–6; is bribed by Mír Kásim, 46; proceeds to Murshídábád to dethrone Mír Jáfar, 47; conditions imposed by, 47–8; acts with Hastings in council to curb the rough methods of their colleagues, 66–9; supports Hastings's scheme of reform for coming to an arrangement with Mír Kásim, 72; visits Mír Kásim and signs an agreement with him, 73–4; which the Council rejects, 74; is drowned on his way to India, 96.

VERELST, Mr., summary of the administration of Bengal of, 93-5.

W.

WALES, The Prince of, attends the great trial, 463–4; interview of, with Hastings in 1806, 506–7; calls Hastings to the Privy Council and presents him to the sovereigns recently released from the yoke of Napoleon, with the remark that he was "the most injured of men," 522.

WARGÁON, story of the catastrophe of, 295–8.

WATTS, Mr., is in charge of the Kásimbazár factory when it is invested by the Subahdar, 30; surrenders it, 31.

WHELER, Mr., replaces Colonel Monson in the Governor-General's Council and joins, 284; allies himself with Francis, 284; with Francis urges Hastings, but in vain, to recall the force ordered to Bombay, 293; works well with Hastings after the departure of Francis, 362; agrees with Hastings to impose a fine on Chét Singh, 362; occasional vacillations of, 395–6; the services of, acknowledged by Hastings, 411; dies, 432.

WHITEHILL, Mr., is suspended from his office of Governor by Mr. Hastings, 341; some of the misdoings of, 341.

Z.

ZÁBITÁ KHAN, a Rohíla nobleman, becomes chief minister of the titular Emperor, 120; is insulted by the Maráthás, 122; signs, on behalf of the Emperor, a defensive treaty with the Rohílas and the Nawwáb-Wazír of Oudh, 123–4; suddenly turns round and joins the Maráthás, 126.

ZERUIAH, was Hastings "undoubtedly cast in the type of the sons of"? Preface, 527-47.

THE END.

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Ablett (Wm.) . . 5
——— (T. R.) . . 6
About (E.) . . . 22
Adams (H., *M.I.C.E*) . 20
Affalo (F. G.) . . 21
Aitchison (G., *A.R.A.*). 9
Alexander (Mrs.) . . 13
Allen (Grant) . . 13
Anderson (A. A.) . . 12
Anderson (Capt. L.) . 12
Angel (H.) . . . 6
Armstrong (W.) . 6, 7, 9
Aveling (E.) . . . 20
Bailey (Capt. H.) . . 21
Bailey (J. B.) . . 9
Baker(W.L.,*A.M.I.C.E.*) 20
Barfield (T. C.) . . 6
Barrie (J. M.) . . 13
Beatty - Kingston (W.) 9, 14, 19
Bell (Jas., *Ph.D.*). . 20
Benson (W.) . . . 6
Beutley (H. C.) . . 16
Bianci (G. H.) . . 8
Billington (M. F.). . 23
Birdwood (Sir G. C. M., *C.S.I.*) . . . 6
Blackie (J. S., *F.R.S.E.*) 12, 14
Blatherwick (C.) . . 14
Blennard (A.) . . 12
Bloomfield, Lady . 9
Bonvalot (G.) . . 23
Bos (Dr. J. R.) . 5, 19
Boulger (D. C.) . .
Boyle (F.) . . 5, 12
Bowne (E. S.) . . 9
Brackenbury (Col. C. B.) 9, 14, 17
Bradley (Thos.) . . 6
Bridgman (F. A.) . . 23
Brock (Dr. J. H. E.) . 20
Bromley-Davenport (W.) 21
Buckland (F.) . 19, 21
Buckman (F. F.) . . 14
Buffen (F. F.) . 9, 19
Burchell (R.) . . 6
Burgess (E.) . . 21
Burton (Lady I.) . 9
Butler (A. J.) . . 14
Caffyn (Mannington) . 13
Carlyle (Thomas) 9, 14, 16, 17, 18, 25, 26
Carstensen (A. R.) . 23
Chamberlain (The Rt. Hon. J.) . . . 16
Charlotte Elizabeth (Princess) . . 9
Charnay (D.) . . 23
Chaucer (Geoffrey) . 16
Chipiez (Charles) . . 7
Church (Prof. A. H.) 5, 6, 20
Collier (Hon. M.) . 12
Collins (Wilkie) . . 12
Cook (Clarence) . .
Cooper-King (Lt.-Col.) 9, 17
Couperus (Louis) . . 13
Courtney (W. L.) . 17, 22
Craik (G. L.) . 16, 17, 19
Crawfurd (O.) . 19, 21, 23
Cripps (W. J.) . . 6
Curzon (Louis H.) . 21
Daly (J. B.) . . . 14
Das (D. N.) . . . 24
Daubourg (E.) . . 6
Davidson (E. A.) . .
Dawson (W. H.) . . 14
Dey (Wm.) . . . 21
De Ainslie (General) . 17
De Bowet (Mdme.) . 24
De Champeaux (A.) . 6
De Falloux (Count) . 10
De Koninck (L. L.) . 21
De Lesseps (Ferdinand) . 10
Delille (E.) . . . 27
De Mandat - Grancey (Baron E.) . . . 14
De Windt (H.) . 14, 24
D'Haussonville (Vicomte)10
D'Orleans (Prince H.) . 24
Dickens (Charles) 12, 14, 18, 24, 27–32
Dickens (Mary A.) . . 13
Dietz (E.) . . . 21
Dilke (Lady) . . 6
Dinarte (Sylvio) . . 12
Dixon (Charles) . . 19
Douglas (J.) . . 20
D'Oyle (L. C.) . . 14
Drayson (Major - Gen. A. W.) . 10, 17, 20
Duckill (H.J.) . . 11
Ducoudray (G.) . 14, 15
Dyce (Wm.) . . 6
Earl (Mrs.) . . . 11
Edwards (Mrs. S.) . 12, 13
Elliot (Mrs. F. M.) . 15
Ellis(Col.A.B.) 12, 15, 17, 20
Engel (Carl) . . 6, 19
Escott (T. H. S.) . . 15
Fane (Violet) . 13, 17
Farr (Wm.) . . . 18
Field (Henry M.) . . 24
Fiske (J.) . . . 10
Fitzgerald (Percy) 10, 15, 19
Fleming (Geo., *F.R.C.S.*) 5, 18
Forster (John) . . 10
Forsyth (Captain) 21, 24
Fortnum (C. D. E.) . 6
Foster (A. J.) . . 24
Fouqué (De la M.) . 12
Francatelli (C. E.). 11
Franks (A. W.) . . 6
Gallenger (A.) . . 15
Gardner (J. S.) . . 6
Garnier (E.) . . 6
Gasnault (P.) . . 6
Gillmore (P.) . . 22
Gingell (J. R.) . . 23
Gleichen (Count) . 17, 24
Gordon (General) . 10, 17
Gorst (Sir J. E.) . . 15
Gower (A. R.) . . 20
Greater Britain (Author of) . 14, 15, 17
Greswell (Wm.) . . 15
Greville-Nugent (Hon. Mrs.) . . . 24
Griffin (Sir Lepel) . . 15
Griffiths (Major A.) 10, 17
Grimble (A.) . . 22
Gundry (R. S.) . . 15
Hall (Sidney) . . 18
Hardy (Thos.) . . 13
Harper (C. G.) . 6, 24
Harrison (John) . . 7
Hartington (E.) . . 12
Hatton (R. G.) . . 7
Hawkins (F.) . . 19
Hawthorn (Julian) . 13
Hay (Rev. J.) . . 10
Henry (Mrs. Re) . . 12
Henslow (Prof.) . . 5
Hildebrand (Hans) . 7
Hill (Miss G.) . . 5
Holbein . . . 7
Holmes (G. C. V.) . 20
Hope (Andrée) . 12, 15
Houssaye (A.) . 10, 19
Hovelacque (A.) . . 22
Hozier (H. M.) . 10, 17
Hudson (W. H.) . . 19
Hueffer (F.) . . 19
Hughes (W. R.) . . 24
Hunt (Mrs. Alfred) . 12
Huntly (Marquis of) 22, 24
Hutchinson (Rev. H. N.) 20
Jackson (F. G.) . . 7
James (H. A.) . . 7
Jeaffreson (J. C.) . . 15
Jeans (W. T.) . . 10
Jokai (Maurus) . 12, 13
Jopling (Louise) . . 7
Junker (Wm.) . . 24
Kelly (J. F.) . . 10
Kempt (R.) . . 10
Kennard (E.) . . 22
Kennard (H. M.) . . 22
Kent (Chas.) . . 18
L—— (Major) . . 11
Lacordaire (Père) . . 22
Lainé (J. M.) . . 20
Laing (S.) . . . 22
Lamennais (F.) . . 23
Landor (W. S.) . . 17
Lanin (E. B.) . . 15
Laveleye (E. de) . . 23
Le Conte (J.) . . 23
Lee (F.) . . 10, 17
Lefevre (A.) . . 23
Le Roux (H.) . . 19
Leroy-Beaulieu (A.) . 23
Leslie (R. C.) 10, 20, 24
Letourneau (Dr. C.) . 23
Lilly (W. S.) . . 23
Lineham (Mrs. R. S.) . 7
—— (W. J.) . . 21
Linton (Mrs. Lynn) . 13
Little (Rev. H. W.) . 10
——— (Rev. Canon Knox) 14
Lloyd (W. W.) . . 17
Long (J.) . . . 5
Low (Wm.) . . . 11
M'Dermott (P. L.) . 15
Macdonald (A. F.) . 15
McCoan (J. C.) . . 15
Malleson (Col. G. B.) 10, 1
Mallet (R.) . . .
Mallock (W. H.) . . 12
Marceau (Sergent) . 10
Marmery . . . 23
Maskell (A.) . . .
(W.) . . . 7
Maspero (G.) . . 7
Meredith (Geo.) . 13
Mills (John) . . 21
Mitre (General Don B.). 15
Molesworth (W. N.) . 15
Moltke (Count von) . 15
Moorhead (W. K.) . 12
Morley (Rt. Hon. John) 11
Muntz (E.) . . 7, 11
Murray (Andrew) . . 20
—— (H.) . . . 13
Necker (Madame) . .
Nelson (W.) . . 21
Nesbitt (A.) . . 7
Newey (H. F.) . . 7
Newton (E. T., *F.G.S.*) 20
Norman (C. B.) . . 15
North (Barker) . . 21
Norris (W. E.) . . 23
O'Byrne (R.) . 16, 18
O'Grady (Standish) . 16
Oliver (D.) . . . 5
—— (E. E.) . . . 24
Oxenham (Rev. H. N.). 11
Papus . . . 18
Pasha (Sur. Gen. C. T.) 21
Paterson (A.) . . 13
Payn (James) . . 13
Payton (E. W.) . . 24
Pelagius . . . 22
Perrot (Georges) . 7, 8
Philips (F. C.) . . 13
Pierce (G. A.) . . 18
Pilling (Wm.) . . 15
Pitt-Taylor (F.) . . 16
Pollen (J. H.) . . 8
Pollok (Col.) . 22, 24
Poole (Stanley Lane) . 8
Poynter (E. J.) . . 8
Pratt (Robert) . . 8
Purcell (T. A.) . . 24
Pushkin (A. S.) . . 13
Rae (W. Fraser) . . 18
Ramsden (Lady G.) . 18
Rankin (T. T.) . . 21
Reade (Mrs. R. H.) . 13
Redgrave (E.) . . 8
—— (R.) . . . 8
—— (S.) . . . 8
Reid (Sir T. Wemyss) . 11
Renan (E.) . 11, 16, 23
Riano (Juan E.) . . 8
Ribton-Turner (C. J.) . 16
Roberts (Morley) . . 13
Robinson (J. F.) . . 5
—— (J. C.) . . . 8
Robson (Geo.) . . 21
R. O. C. . . . 11
Rochfort (Louisa) . . 11
Rock (Very Rev. Canon) 8
Roland (A.) . . . 5
Roosevelt (B.) . . 11
Ross (Miss J.) . . 11
Russan (A.) . . . 12
Russell (W. Clark) . 13
Russell (Col. F.) . 11, 18
Ryan (C.) . . . 8
Schadow (Dr. E.). . 8
Schauermann (F. L.) . 8
Scott (John). . . 16
Seeman (O.) . . . 8
Seton-Karr (H. W.) . 22
Sexton (A. H.) . 16, 21
Shepherd (Major) . 5
Shirreff (E.) . . 11, 18
Shore (A.) . . . 17
Simkin (R.) . . . 18
Simmonds (T. L.). . 21
Simpson (M. C. M.) . 10
Sinnett (A. P.) . 13, 23
Smith (Major R. M.) . 8
"Snaffle" . . . 22
Spalding (Lt.-Col.) 11, 18
Spencer (Herbert) . 23
Statham (H. H.) . 8, 19
Steele (Anna C.) . . 13
Stoddard (C. A.) . . 24
Stokes (M.) . . . 8
Story (W. W.) . . 16
Sutcliffe (J.) . . 8
Sweetland (H. S.) . 13
Symonds (J. A.) . . 17
Tait (J. S.) . . . 14
Tanner (Prof.) . . 5
Taylor (E. R.) . . 8
Temple (Sir R.) . . 17
Thomson (D. C.) . 8
Thrupp (G. A.) . . 18
Topinard (Dr. P.). . 23
Tovey (Lt.-Col.) . . 18
Traherne (Major) . 20, 22
Trollope (A.) . . 13
Troup (J. R.) . . 24
Underhill (G. F.) 13, 14, 15
Veron (E.) . . . 23
Verschoyle (Rev. J.) . 14
Walford (Major) . 11, 18
—— (Mrs. L. B.) . . 13
Walker (Mrs.) . . 24
Walker (General Sir C. P. B.) . . 11, 18
Wall (A.) . . . 13
Wallis (G.) . . . 8
Ward (James) . . 9
Ward (R.) . . . 13
Watson (John) . . 22
Wegg-Prosser (F. R.) . 16
Westall (Wm.) . . 13
White (Walter) . . 24
Wicken (H. F.) . . 11
Wiel (Hon. Mrs.) . 9
Wolverton (Lord) . . 22
Woodgate (W. B.) . 23
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Worsaae (J. J. A.) . 9
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