Council of Regency, during its existence in 1846–9, sought to repair and improve previous indigenous institutions rather than to introduce novelty; to preserve what order remained, while governing on the lines of a benevolent Indian ruler. Remedies were applied to crying evils—an idle and irregularly paid army; general official dishonesty; the absence of machinery for administering justice. Economy was enforced; provisional summary settlements of land-revenue were made by British officers;[1] regular salaries were paid to Indian officials in place of undefined perquisites; taxation was lightened and simplified and a budget framed. The administration of justice was entrusted to respectable persons; while the penal code, reduced to writing, was rendered more efficient and more humane. Heinous offences were tried by the council itself and appeals from subordinate authorities were entertained. European officers were deputed to visit outlying districts, while in the framing of rules and regulations influential and intelligent persons were consulted. The development of resources received attention, and plans for the repair of old and the construction of new public works were prepared. But the process of restoration and improvement was rudely interrupted by the second Sikh War.

Annexation afforded a clearer and a wider field for administrative effort, of which full advantage was taken by the selected body of exceptionally able officers, civil and military, whom Lord Dalhousie deputed to the new province, and of whom many had been trained in the best tradition of the North-Western Provinces. They included Henry and John Lawrence, John Nicholson, Robert Montgomery, Herbert Edwardes, Robert Napier, Richard Temple, Donald Macleod, and many others subsequently famous. It should never be forgotten that the Panjab was from the first organised as a British province on a basis of long administrative experience gained in Bengal and the North-Western Provinces during the previous half-century; an experience which included serious errors to be avoided as well as notable successes to be repeated.

Immediately after annexation a Board of Administration consisting of three members was constituted. Under the governor-general it exercised plenary authority in all departments of government.[2] The province was divided into seven, increased in 1850 to eight divisions, each under a commissioner, and into twenty-four districts, each under a deputy-commissioner; the districts themselves being further subdivided into smaller areas, termed *tahsils*, each in charge of an Indian civil officer, designated *tahsildar*. The non-regulation type of administration, at once simple, vigorous, and efficient, was adopted. Land-revenue organisation was one of the first objects of attention. A regular settlement was begun immediately after annexation, and was gradually completed district by district, though many years elapsed before this

[1] *Panjab Sett. Manual*, p. 22; Baden Powell, *op. cit.* II, 541.
[2] *Adm. Rep. Panjab*, 1849–51, sect. III; 1882–3, pp. 30–3; 1911–12, pp. 18–20.

could be accomplished in the western frontier districts. In the meantime revenue was assessed and collected under short-term and provisional summary settlements. A similar course was followed in the cis-Satlej districts recently attached to the province. The demands imposed in these summary settlements,[1] especially in the last-mentioned tract, based as they were on the revenue accounts of the previous régime, were comparatively heavy, but, thanks to the experience gained in other provinces, the Panjab escaped those harsh methods of revenue farming and collection which had been so mischievous elsewhere. The subsequent regular settlement was carried out on the principles which had been previously adopted in the North-Western Provinces, but subject to certain modifications due to local conditions. In the Panjab the village communities, often tribal in their constitution and usually of the so-called zamindari type, were generally more vigorous and better preserved than in the North-Western Provinces. It was therefore possible as a rule to accord to their members the status and rights of peasant proprietors, and to make a joint settlement with them in place of former revenue farmers, or usurping officials, or semi-feudal grantees, as in other provinces.[2] Communities analogous to the ryotwari type, where they existed, were treated by the same method. Previous political and social conditions had discouraged the growth of great landlords with a seignorial status over village communities. Where it happened to exist, it was converted, not into proprietary right, but into a right to receive merely a fixed quit-rent. The policy thus adopted has resulted in the Panjab being a country mainly of peasant proprietors. In the regular settlement the right of the state was asserted over the immense areas of waste land which then lay unoccupied in the trans-Satlej Panjab and which have since become the scene of extensive colonisation. A similar course was followed in the large forest areas in the hills.[3]

Tenant-right received attention, though it was not until some years later that definite principles were laid down after lengthy controversy. In the Panjab this right was not so much a relic of a previous quasi-proprietary position as the result of two facts; first, that Sikh rulers made little practical distinction between different grades of status, so that members as well as non-members of the village community had often to bear jointly the same burdens; secondly, that established custom recognised some permanence of tenure in favour of cultivators who, or whose ancestors, though not included in the circle of the community, had assisted in founding the village and in clearing waste land.[4] In the first regular settlement officers were given judicial powers for the determination of rights, and in such work they exercised

[1] *Panjab Sett. Manual*, p. 24; Baden Powell, *op. cit.* II, 543.
[2] *Panjab Sett. Manual*, pp. 58 *sqq.*; Baden Powell, *op. cit.* II, 609 *sqq.*; *Adm. Rep. Panjab*, 1849–51, sect. VII, pt I.
[3] *Panjab Sett. Manual*, p. 93; Baden Powell, *op. cit.* II, 545 *sqq.*
[4] *Panjab Sett. Manual*, p. 100; Baden Powell, *op. cit.* II, 703–5.

a fairly wide equitable discretion, especially in questions of tenant-right, to which, following the practice of the North-Western Provinces, they commonly applied the twelve-years' rule. The assessments of land-revenue were based on general considerations similar to those previously recognised in the North-Western Provinces, but supplemented by close local investigation.[1] The task was rendered more difficult by the entire absence of economic money rents, then quite unknown in the Panjab. Moderation in assessment was impressed on all officials from the first, and it has been a salient feature of Panjab administration ever since. Except in the western districts of the province, the regular settlements were completed either before or shortly after the Mutiny.

Strong measures were taken for the maintenance of law and order and for the suppression of such crimes as thagi, which prevailed to a limited extent, dacoity and robbery.[2] Civil police, seven thousand strong, were distributed over the province, on the general lines of the system of the North-Western Provinces, for the detection and prosecution of criminals and for watch-and-ward in villages. In his control of them the deputy-commissioner was assisted by the *tahsildars*. The civil police were aided by a strong force of military police, some eight thousand strong including mounted men, under four European officers with Indian subordinates. The force furnished guards, patrolled the country, and helped in the prevention of crime and in the apprehension of offenders. Local watchmen were also entertained and paid by the village communities. Jails were erected in every district. The province from the Satlej to the Indus was disarmed, some 120,000 weapons of all kinds being surrendered; and possession or sale of arms was prohibited except in the trans-Indus area.[3] A similar measure was applied later to the cis-Satlej districts and to the Delhi territory. The criminal code was based on that in force in the Bengal Presidency, with needful local modifications.[4] In 1855 a civil code was issued which, while not a legal enactment, included much of the custom and usage current in the province, thus serving as a useful guide to judicial officers;[5] and though the Bengal Regulations were never in force, it was understood that their spirit should be followed wherever it was applicable. The administration of the districts now included in the North-West Frontier Province is dealt with elsewhere; it largely increased the responsibilities of the new government.

One of its principal duties was to develop the resources and especially the communications of the province.[6] A Public Works

[1] *Panjab Sett. Manual*, pp. 25–8; Baden Powell, *op. cit.* II, 568–72.
[2] *Adm. Rep. Panjab*, 1849–51, sect. V; 1851–3, pp. 41–8; 1882–3, p. 32; *H. of C. Papers*, 1857–8, XLIII, 75.
[3] *Adm. Rep. Panjab*, 1849–51, p. 56; 1882–3, p. 32; *H. of C. Papers*, 1849, XLI, 75.
[4] Whitley Stokes, *op. cit.* I, 2; *Adm. Rep. Panjab*, 1849–51, p. 63.
[5] *Adm. Rep. Panjab*, 1851–3, pp. 88, 89.
[6] *Adm. Rep. Panjab*, 1849–51, sect. VIII.

Department, including a branch devoted to irrigation, was formed, the staff consisting mainly of military officers. A similar step was soon taken in the North-Western Provinces. At annexation roads of any kind were practically non-existent: but their construction in all directions was now systematically undertaken with reference to the routes of external and internal trade. Few of them were metalled, though most of them were lined with fine avenues of trees. Of metalled roads the most important was the main artery between Lahore and Peshawar, known as the Grand Trunk Road, the last link in a long chain of similar communications between Calcutta and Northern India. The development of canal irrigation was an object of special solicitude.[1] From early times water from the numerous rivers of the Panjab had been utilised for agriculture by means of simple channels, partly natural, partly artificial, which, starting at a level higher than the low-water level of the stream, could flow only in the flood season. Without head-weirs of the modern type to ensure a perennial supply, and liable to be blocked by deposits of silt, these crude means had nevertheless served to irrigate considerable areas.[2] Efforts were made soon after annexation to extend and improve these "inundation" canals, and a good deal was thus accomplished. But the most important achievement of the early years was the construction of a perennial canal from the Ravi to irrigate the Bari Doab, the tract of country lying between that river and the rivers Satlej and Beas. Now known as the Upper Bari Doab Canal, it was begun in 1851 and opened in 1859. In later years it was greatly improved and extended, forming the first member of that unique system of irrigation for which the province is now famous.

Such were some of the activities of the young administration. Other objects of its attention can only be mentioned—the erection of public buildings, schools and hospitals, the reform of the local currency, the suppression of female infanticide, the institution of a rudimentary municipal system.[3] In 1853, on the abolition of the board, John (later Lord) Lawrence was appointed chief commissioner as head of the local administration. Under him were a judicial commissioner and a financial commissioner, heads respectively of the judicial and revenue departments; the former being also head of the police, supervising education, and controlling local and municipal funds; an odd assortment of duties, but characteristic of that strenuous period. The catastrophe of the Mutiny for a time arrested further progress. In that great crisis the province, except for a few limited areas, did not waver in its loyalty to its new rulers; while the recruitment of some 70,000[4] Panjabi and frontier tribesmen under the British standards bore

[1] *Imp. Gaz.* III, 327.
[2] *Triennial Review*, pp. 33, 43; Kaye, *op. cit.* p. 300.
[3] *Adm. Rep. Panjab*, 1882–3, p. 33.
[4] *Adm. Rep. Panjab*, 1856–8, p. 43; Sir C. Aitchison, *Lawrence*, Oxford, 1892, p. 99.

eloquent testimony to the high quality of the administrative results which had been achieved.

Development in the areas latest acquired, the Nagpur state and Oudh, will be dealt with more conveniently in another chapter. Here it is sufficient to notice that as a result of the third Maratha War the former was virtually ruled from 1818 to 1830 by the Resident at Nagpur, Sir R. Jenkins, during the minority of the raja. His administration was broadly on the lines followed later in the Panjab by the Lahore regency from 1846 to 1849—the utilisation of native institutions and agency under British supervision, which was mainly directed to the removal of abuses.[1] Little change was made in the revenue system except that triennial were substituted for the previous annual settlements and that tenants received protection. At the end of the minority the raja maintained Sir R. Jenkins's methods until his death in 1853. Oudh immediately after its annexation in 1856 was placed under a chief commissioner as a non-regulation province, and a summary settlement of land-revenue was made.[2] Under the previous rule revenue farmers or managers, who were often also influential local chiefs, had commonly acquired, under the designation of *talukdars*, a seignorial or landlord status over village communities, and were therefore in a position to set up a plausible claim to proprietary right. In many cases it thus became a question whether a settlement should be made with them or with the subordinate communities.[3] Lord Dalhousie, following the practice of the North-Western Provinces and of the Panjab, decided in favour of the latter, with the result that the *talukdars* were practically ousted from many of their estates, and their consequent resentment ranged many of them against the British Government in the great struggle of the Mutiny.

[1] R. Jenkins, *Report on the Territories of the Raja of Nagpur*, Calcutta, 1827, p. 299; *Adm. Rep. Cent. Provs.* 1882–3, p. 14; 1911–12, p. 11.
[2] *Adm. Rep. N.-W. Provs.* 1882–3, p. 34.
[3] Baden Powell, *op. cit.* II, 198 *sqq.*; *Adm. Rep. Unit. Provs.* 1911–12, p. 18.

CHAPTER VI

EDUCATION AND MISSIONS TO 1858

WHEN Pitt's act of 1784 extended the control of the Bengal Government over the minor presidencies of Madras and Bombay to all points relating to peace as well as to war, it committed the general direction of domestic policy in British India to men who were liable to be impressed particularly by conditions in Bengal.[1] Yet the middle and upper classes of that province have always differed considerably from the same classes in Upper and Western India. They contain no martial element, and only a small minority of Muhammadans descended from Central Asian stocks. While the rural masses differ little intellectually from those in neighbouring provinces, the leading Hindu castes, Brahmans, Kayesthas (writers), and Vaidyas (physicians), have always been remarkable for exceptional literary and clerical ability. They have been quick to grasp opportunities and to assimilate new ideas. But when Warren Hastings took charge of Bengal in 1772, these and all other classes of society had been long depressed by constant wars and tyrannical or chaotic administration. Learning of all kinds had slunk away into the background. Hastings, however, had entered the service of the East India Company

> with the advantages of a regular classical education, and, with a mind strongly impressed with the pleasures of literature. The common dialects of Bengal, after his arrival in that country, soon became familiar to him; and at a period when the use and importance of the Persian language were scarcely suspected, and when the want of that grammatical and philological assistance which has facilitated the labours of succeeding students rendered the attainment of it a task of peculiar difficulty, he acquired a proficiency in it.[2]

When appointed governor of Bengal, he lost no time in causing a manual of Hindu law to be prepared in Sanskrit by Brahman pundits and translated both into English and into Persian, the language of the law courts established by the Moghul rulers of the province. Approached in 1781 by some Calcutta Muhammadans with a request for the permanent establishment of a "Madrasa" (college) where young Muslims might acquire knowledge which would fit them for "the numerous offices of the British Government",[3] then largely monopolised by Hindus, he responded favourably, purchasing a site out of his own pocket, laying the foundation stone and advising the directors to assign "the rents of one or more villages" in the neigh-

[1] It was not, for instance, until 1859 that a Bombay civil servant (Sir Bartle Frere) was appointed to the governor-general's council (Martineau, *Life of Frere*, I, 295–6).

[2] Shore, quoted *ap.* Jones, *Collected Works*, II, 19.

[3] Sharp, *Selections*, I, 8.

bourhood as an endowment for the new institution. The subjects of instruction were to be the Muhammadan law and such other sciences as were taught in Muhammadan schools. The directors accepted Hastings's recommendations, and reimbursed him for the expense which he had incurred. The college became known as "the Muhammadan Madrasa" and was the first state-aided educational institution in Bengal. Hardly had it been founded when the bench of the Calcutta Supreme Court received a notable recruit in the person of Sir William Jones,[1] jurist and scholar, the first of the great Orientalists, of those ardent enthusiasts who have done so much to spread abroad in Europe appreciation of Asiatic culture and learning. Jones has placed on record the "inexpressible pleasure" which he felt on approaching the shores of India;[2] and although his time was short, for he died at Calcutta in 1794, he not only translated the laws of Manu and other famous Sanskrit works into English, but left so deep an impression on his Brahman friends that some could not restrain their tears when they spoke of "the wonderful progress which he had made in the sciences which they professed".[3] With the strong support of Hastings,[4] he founded the Bengal Asiatic Society which has since numbered among its members the great Sanskrit scholar Colebrooke, a civil servant who rose to be a member of the governor-general's council, and Horace Hayman Wilson, another famous Orientalist, who lived to complete Mill's history of British India and to be librarian at the East India House for more than twenty years.[5] In 1792 Jonathan Duncan, Resident at Benares, asked and obtained permission to establish a college in the holy city for the preservation and cultivation of the laws, literature and religion of the Hindus,[6] stating that although learning had always been cultivated at Benares "in numerous private seminaries", no public institution of the kind proposed had ever existed. The "permanency of a college" would tend to recover and collect gradually books still to be met (though in a very dispersed and imperfect state) of "the most ancient and valuable general learning and tradition now existing perhaps on any part of the globe". It would preserve and disseminate a knowledge of the Hindu law and become "a nursery of the future doctors and expounders thereof to assist European judges" in administering "its genuine letter and spirit to the body of the people".

The British Government was sympathetic towards attempts to revive Indian learning, but entertained no idea of introducing any system of education. No state system then existed in England; and even Burke, the Company's most formidable critic, did not consider

[1] Hickey, *Memoirs*, III, 154–5. [2] Duff, *Indian Missions*, p. 196.
[3] See the article on Jones in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, X, 1064–5, and Jones, *op. cit.* II, 307.
[4] Jones, *op. cit.* II, 19–28.
[5] Foster, *The East India House*, p. 149. Cf. *Memorials of Old Haileybury College*, pp. 208–22.
[6] Sharp, *op. cit.* p. 10. See also *History of the Benares Sanskrit College*, pp. 1–2.

that either in letters, religion, commerce, or agriculture, had India need to learn from England.[1]

Among the Company's civil servants, however, there was one who thought differently. While serving in the commercial branch from 1773 to 1790 and spending years among the people of an up-country district of Bengal, Charles Grant became profoundly concerned at a spectacle which presented certain distressing features, and, in consultation with two friends, prepared proposals for establishing a Protestant mission in Bengal and Bihar which he forwarded to William Wilberforce and other Evangelical leaders at home. Retiring from India with a fortune honestly earned,[2] he sat down to write a treatise entitled "Observations on the state of society among the Asiatic subjects of Great Britain, particularly with respect to morals, and on the means of improving it". Soon after his return he had come into contact with Wilberforce; and when in 1793 the Company's charter came before parliament for renewal, that great philanthropist endeavoured to procure the insertion of clauses empowering the court of directors to send to and maintain in British India "schoolmasters and persons approved by the Archbishop of Canterbury or the Bishop of London 'for the religious and moral improvement of the native inhabitants'". The directors, however, objected that the governments of the three presidencies could not possibly be expected to establish missionary departments. The Indian people must be left to follow their own systems of faith and morals. The House of Commons agreed; and Wilberforce temporarily abandoned his proposals, while Grant returned to his treatise.[3] He was elected to the court of directors, and in 1797 laid it before that body, asking for its reception as "a business paper". In powerful and trenchant language, animated, as a Muhammadan historian has pointed out,[4] by the purest desire of bringing about a "happier" state of things, he gave his impressions of social and moral conditions among Hindus and Muhammadans in Bengal. The evils which he enumerated, the position of women, many of whom were doomed "to joyless confinement during life and a violent premature death", the "perpetual abasement and unlimited subjection" in which the lower orders of Hindus were kept by the Brahmanical system and religion, were the results of dense and widespread ignorance among the people, and could be removed only by education, first of all by education in English, a key which would open to the people "a world of new ideas". First would come knowledge of the Christian religion which would instil new views of duty. Every branch

[1] See his speech on Fox's East India Bill. In another passage, however, he charges his countrymen with having erected neither churches, hospitals, palaces nor schools in India.

[2] Ross, *Cornwallis Correspondence*, I, 306, 377, 475.

[3] It is contained in *Parl. Papers, East India*, vol. X, fourth part, 1812–13, pp. 5–112, and was reprinted by parliament twenty years later. See *Reports, Committees, E.I.C.* 1831–2 (4), vol. VIII.

[4] Mahmud, *History*, p. 8. On page 3 the historian describes it as "a most valuable essay on the moral, intellectual and political conditions of India at that time".

of natural philosophy might follow in time, above all the principles of mechanics and their application to agriculture and the useful arts. Invention was torpid. The people needed mental quickening. Custom was their strongest law. The path which the first passenger had marked over the soft soil was trodden so undeviatingly in all its curves by every succeeding passenger, that when it was perfectly beaten, it had only the width of a single track. Even if the advantages to be derived from the spread of Christianity were progressive and partial, they would conduce toward the outward prosperity and internal peace of Hindu society. The change would correct "those sad disorders which have been described and for which no other remedy has been proposed, nor is in the nature of things to be found". Grant advised the establishment by government of free schools for teaching English in various parts of the province and the substitution of English for Persian in judicial proceedings, in the administration of the revenue and other business. He discussed political objections to his suggestions and ended with the assertion that the English language was the best channel for the spread of general enlightenment. By planting our language, our knowledge, our opinions and our religion in our Asiatic dominions we would put a great work beyond the risk of contingencies; we would *probably* wed the inhabitants of those territories to this country; but at any rate we would do an act of strict duty to them and a lasting service to mankind. If, however, English were not employed, the country languages might be used to spread abroad the truths of Christianity in which all "the other proposed meliorations" were involved.

Although no Orientalist himself, Grant greatly admired Jones's genius and depth of learning.[1] But his own experience of India was not that of a scholar and a judge at headquarters. He had lived for years among the masses in the heart of Bengal. While he was gradually building up influence in London, an even more remarkable man was preparing to take a hand in the affairs of that province.

In 1793 William Carey, ex-shoemaker and Baptist missionary, arrived at Calcutta, without a licence from the directors, resolved to preach Christianity in the native tongues at any cost. Throughout a considerable part of the eighteenth century Lutheran missionaries in Southern India had been looking after the schools established by the Company for the children of the Portuguese, Tamil and Eurasian Christians employed in their service. Free passages to India on the Company's ships had been given to these men. Schools for Indian boys established by Christian Swartz, a famous Lutheran missionary, were subsidised by the Madras Government with the approval of the directors.[2] Throughout his career Swartz had enjoyed their favour. Carey, however, his companion Thomas, and other Baptist missionaries who subsequently joined them, were compelled to find

[1] Morris, *Life of Grant*, p. 83. [2] Penny, *Church in Madras*, I, 613.

their way to Bengal in foreign ships, and began their work oppressed by grave financial difficulties and unsheltered by official authority, although Carey and Thomas owed their start to George Udny, a civil servant who eventually became member of the governor-general's council. The missionaries finally established themselves at Serampur, a Danish settlement sixteen miles north of Calcutta, set up schools for European and Indian boys, started a paper manufactory and a printing-press, and poured forth from the latter translations of the books of the Bible into various Indian languages. Carey was a linguistic genius and a diligent Orientalist as well as a great missionary. His noble character and single-minded piety won friends and favour in all quarters and deeply impressed Lord Wellesley, who appointed him Bengali lecturer in his new college for young civil servants. His chief coadjutors were Marshman, who had been master in a Baptist school, and Ward, an ex-printer of Hull. So persistent was the energy and so ardent was the spirit of these three men that in spite of many difficulties and set-backs, they not only gained converts and attracted pupils, but by their translations of the books of the Bible, which were widely diffused, they assisted in laying the foundations of Bengali prose literature.[1] Their whole enterprise, conducted with remarkable financial ability, produced large profits which went to the common cause.

Another pioneer in education was David Hare, a watchmaker who settled at Calcutta in 1800 and has been described by Lord Ronaldshay as "one of those persons disabled by temperament from accepting the dogma of religion but compelled by his heart to lead an essentially Christian life".[2] Hare was a rationalist, and in the words on his tombstone, which is still visited by Indians on the anniversary of his death,

> adopted for his own the country of his sojourn and cheerfully devoted the remainder of his life with unwearying zeal and benevolence to one pervading and darling object, in which he spared no personal trouble, money or influence, viz. the education and moral improvement of the natives of Bengal.

He studied Bengali, found it deficient for his purposes and conceived the idea of founding a school for the instruction of young Indians in Western literature and science.

In 1811, while Grant in England and Carey and Hare in Bengal were searching after new courses of education, Lord Minto and his colleagues, who included the great Sanskrit scholar Colebrooke, were attributing the evils of the time to the decay of the indigenous learning of the country. The government was already spending money on the maintenance of students of Sanskrit learning at Nuddea and on the support of the Hindu College at Benares. More money, they said, was

[1] Marshman, *Carey, Marshman and Ward*; Bishop Whitehead, *Indian Problems*, p. 144; and Thompson, *Rabindranath Tagore*, p. 6.
[2] *Heart of Aryavarta*, pp. 17–18.

required for each, and more colleges must be established for the encouragement of Sanskrit, Persian and Arabic literature. The Muhammadan Madrasa at Calcutta must be reformed. Some additional expense should be incurred with a view to a "restoration of learning". Minto had been personally generous to the Serampur Press,[1] and his government subscribed 10,000 rupees to assist the printing of the Scriptures in the Malay language; but such education as was going on in India was almost entirely independent of their patronage. In the background there were teachers and schools in no small number not only in Bengal but also in other provinces. Illuminating information on this subject is contained in the reports[2] of William Adam on vernacular education in Bengal and Bihar and may be summarised before we go farther, for conditions in the capital province were roughly similar to conditions elsewhere.[3]

Indigenous education was private or public, elementary or higher, administered at home to boys and exceedingly rarely to girls, or administered to boys alone in schools which, in spite of serious defects,[4] were maintained and managed by the people themselves. In Bengal and Bihar the rudiments of learning were taught in *patshalas* by schoolmasters who generally belonged to the Kayestha or writer caste. The pupils were generally Kayesthas or Brahmans but sometimes belonged to the trading or land-holding classes; they were seldom Muhammadans. The teachers, who were poorly remunerated by presents, fees or perquisites, sometimes employed manuscripts but never textbooks, reciting religious and mythological stories or rhymed arithmetical rules to pupils who learnt by rote and were kept in order by primitive methods of discipline which sometimes produced retaliation. The *patshalas* were not patronised by the well-to-do, who preferred to have their sons taught at home.

Scholastic or higher education was Persian, Arabic or Sanskrit. The Persian schools (*maktabs*) were attended both by Muhammadans and by such Hindus as were attracted by the advantages to be gained from acquaintance with the language of the law courts. Instruction was given in Persian literature and grammar, in penmanship and in arithmetic. Arabic schools were either "formal" Arabic, intended exclusively for instruction in the formal or ceremonial reading of the Koran, or "learned" Arabic. The learned schools (*madrasas*) were intimately connected with the Persian schools. The Arabic teacher taught Persian also to his pupils. The average duration of study was eleven or twelve years, and the students might be either boys or men. The courses, varying from one school to another, included rhetoric, logic, grammar, Muhammadan law, Euclid, branches of natural

[1] *Lord Minto in India*, pp. 71–2.
[2] Dated 1835–6–8. Copious extracts are quoted by Duff in an article on "Indigenous education in Bengal and Bihar", *Calcutta Review*, 1844. See also Adam, *Reports*, Long, 1868.
[3] For an account of indigenous education in the Panjab see Leitner's Report of 1883.
[4] Adam, *op. cit.* pp. 19–20.

philosophy and the perusal of treatises on metaphysics. There was no particular system of organisation or discipline. The teachers were remunerated by presents, fees and other means, at low rates. Printed books were not to be seen, but manuscripts were in constant use. In Bengal and Bihar there were no Urdu schools for Muslims corresponding to the Bengali and Hindu schools for the Hindus.

In the Sanskrit academies (*tôls*) the Hindu religion, philosophies, law and logic, were taught to pupils who were mostly Brahmans but sometimes belonged to the Vaidya or physician caste. Some *tôls* were endowed, but most were established by individual Brahmans who were known as *gurus* (teachers). A *guru* would proclaim himself ready to instruct in a particular branch of learning and would gather round him a band of disciples (*chelas*) whom he would teach in his own house, or a friend's house, or a school-house, or in the open air after the fashion of ancient India.[1] His remuneration would not be fees but gifts from admirers, or pupils or parents of pupils. The pupils had previously been taught at home to read, write and do small sums. There were larger *tôls* for the inculcation of particular branches of Sanskrit learning, either medical, philosophical, mythological, astrological, Tantric or Vedantic, where the courses of study occupied years.

Of the *gurus* Adam drew a vivid picture:[2]

> I saw men not only unpretending, but plain and simple in their manners, and though seldom, if ever, offensively coarse, yet reminding me of the very humblest classes of English and Scottish peasantry, living constantly half-naked, inhabiting huts which if we connect moral consequences with physical causes, might be supposed to have the effect of stunting the growth of their minds, or in which only the most contracted minds might be supposed to have room to dwell—and yet several of these men are adepts in the subtleties of the profoundest grammar of what is probably the most philosophical language in existence; not only practically skilled in all the niceties of its usage, but also in the principles of its structure; familiar with all the varieties and applications of their natural laws and literature, and indulging in the abstrusest and most interesting disquisitions in logical and ethical philosophy. They are in general shrewd, discriminating and mild in their demeanour.

There were no schools for girls; but land-holders sometimes instructed their daughters in writing and accounts with a view to rendering them less helpless in the event of early widowhood. It was difficult, however, to obtain from any land-holder an admission that his daughter was literate.

> "A feeling", writes Adam, "is alleged to exist in the majority of Hindu females, principally cherished by the women and not discouraged by the men, that a girl taught to write and read will soon after marriage become a widow, an event which is regarded as nearly the worst misfortune that can befall the sex, and the belief is

[1] "The study of Sanskrit grammar", Adam observes, "occupies about seven years, lexicology about two, literature about ten, logic about thirteen, and mythology about four." Trevelyan, *Education of the People of India*, p. 109.

[2] Adam, *op. cit.* p. 119. He says that "the Pundits are of all ages, from twenty-five to eighty-two".

> also generally entertained that intrigue is facilitated by a knowledge of letters on the part of females.... The Muhammadans participate in all the prejudices of Hindus against the instruction of their female offspring, besides that a large majority of them are in the very lowest grade of poverty, and are thus unable if they were willing to give education to their children."[1]

If, however, there was extremely little education of girls in either of the two great communities, the education of boys of particular classes was considered eminently desirable by the learned classes of both, and its mainly religious character was often emphasised by a preliminary ceremony or act of worship.[2] Except, however, for simple arithmetic and ability to read and write, it was directed to teaching Sanskrit to Hindus and Persian or Arabic to Muhammadans; the masses were for the most part, by general consent, consigned to ignorance, the prejudice against their instruction being "nearly as strong and as general in their own minds as in the minds of others".[3] There was no promise of progress; and a new school of Hindus was springing up in Calcutta who were longing to escape from time-honoured restraints and long-standing evils. The boldest of these was a Brahman named Ram Mohan Roy, who burst out with a scathing denunciation of the popular Hinduism of his day:

> I have never ceased to contemplate with the strongest feelings of regret the obstinate system of idolatry, inducing, for the sake of propitiating supposed deities, the violation of humane and social feelings. And this in various instances, but more especially in the dreadful acts of self-immolation and the immolation of the nearest relations, under the delusion of conforming to sacred religious rites.[4]

When in 1813 the East India Company's charter came once more before parliament for consideration, Minto's views regarding education were laid before the Commons. Wilberforce and Grant then sat in the House. Both belonged to the famous Clapham brotherhood; and Grant's influence was strong on the court of directors. Speaking at great length and quoting from Grant's *Observations*, but now discarding all notion of government missionary establishments, Wilberforce said that mission work must be left to "the spontaneous zeal of individual Christians controuled by the discretion of the government". There was no idea of proceeding by "methods of compulsion and authority". But mission work should not be substantially and in effect prevented. Parliament should "lay the ground for the promotion of education and the diffusion of useful knowledge". Christianity was the appropriate remedy for evils which he enumerated. The way for its reception should be made straight.[5] Moved largely by his forcible pleading, parliament declared that such measures ought to be adopted as might lead to "the introduction into India of useful knowledge and religious and moral improvements", and transferred the ultimate power of licensing persons desirous of proceeding to that

[1] Adam, *op. cit.* p. 132.
[2] *Calcutta Review*, 1867, XLV, 420.
[3] Adam, *op. cit.* p. 254.
[4] Quoted *ap.* Anderson and Subedar, p. 17.
[5] Hansard, 1813, XXVI, 832, 853, 1071, 1076.

country "for the purpose of accomplishing these benevolent designs" from the directors to the Board of Control, stipulating that the authority of the local governments respecting the intercourse of Europeans with the interior of the country should be preserved, and that the principles of the British Government on which the natives of India had always relied for the free exercise of their religion "must be inviolably maintained". At a late stage of the debates a clause was added which allowed the governor-general to direct that out of the territorial rents, revenue and profits of British India, after defraying the expenses of the military, civil and commercial establishments and meeting the interest of the debt, "a sum of not less than one lakh of rupees" should be set apart and applied to

> the revival and improvement of literature and the encouragement of the learned natives of India and for the introduction or promotion of a knowledge of the sciences among the inhabitants of the British territories in India.

The author of this clause was "Bobus" Smith who had been advocate-general in Calcutta.[1] His draft, slightly modified by the president of the Board of Control, passed through parliament without opposition. It is perfectly clear that by "the sciences" he meant Western sciences.[2] As the directors said, addressing the governor-general on 3 June, 1814, the clause presented two distinct propositions for consideration. They went on, however, to give vague and inconclusive instructions. Learned Hindus should be left to continue their custom of teaching in their homes and should be stimulated by honorary marks of distinction and pecuniary assistance. There were Sanskrit tracts on the virtues of plants and drugs which might prove useful to the European practitioner; and there were treatises on astronomy and mathematics which, although they might not add new light to European science, might become

> links of communication between the natives and the gentlemen in our service, who are attached to the Observatory and the department of engineers, and by such intercourse the natives might gradually be led to adopt modern improvements in those and other sciences.[3]

The self-supporting character of the indigenous schools attracted warm approbation, and the teachers were recommended to the "protection" of the government. Enquiries were made as to their present state. The governor-general was asked to submit for consideration any plan calculated to promote the object in view. But the instructions were hazy, and the governor-general's mind was more seriously occupied by the Nepalese, Pindari and Maratha wars. So beyond writing a minute in favour of improving indigenous education, and patronising a Calcutta textbook society to supply the wants of

[1] Cf. Hickey, *op. cit.* IV, 275.
[2] Hansard, XXVI, 1087–8, Bills Public (2), Sessions 24 November–22 July, 1812–13 (II), p. 1197; Howell, *Education in British India*, pp. 4–5; Mill and Wilson, *History of British India*, VII, 397.
[3] Sharp, *op. cit.* I, 24.

a growing circle of schools, Lord Hastings did little. The society owed its origin to a pamphlet published by Marshman, the Serampur missionary,[1] and was very liberally supported by the European community of Calcutta.

More missionaries, representing various societies, opened more schools. David Hare persuaded Sir Hyde East, Chief Justice, and other leading Europeans and Indians to establish a college for the tuition of sons of "respectable" Hindu parents in the English and Indian languages and in European and Asiatic science and literature. The college was first known as the Vidyalaya (home of learning), and afterwards as the Hindu College; finally it became "the Presidency College". Its teaching encouraged free thought in religion with results which were not altogether happy.[2] In establishing it Hare was assisted by Ram Mohan Roy, a Kulin Brahman, who has been called by a distinguished Bengali[3] "the first brilliant product of European influence in India". Born in 1772 of a well-to-do family, he was deeply read in Sanskrit and possessed some acquaintance with Persian and Arabic. In 1790 he published a pamphlet condemning the "idolatrous religion of the Hindus", which must, he urged, be restored to its original purity. He laid before his countrymen "genuine translations of parts of their scripture, which inculcated not only the enlightened worship of one God, but the purest principles of morality". In 1805 he entered the Company's service, and, assisted by John Digby, acquired a wide knowledge of English literature.[4] On retiring from government service in 1814, he settled in Calcutta and devoted himself to the cause of social, religious and educational reform. In 1818 he began a vigorous campaign against sati, and later, supported by others, he struck a shrewd blow in the cause of Western education. Before Lord Hastings's departure in 1823, grants had been given by the government to two societies formed to promote vernacular education and improve the indigenous schools;[5] and afterwards, a "Committee of Public Instruction" composed of civil servants,[6] with Horace Hayman Wilson, the Orientalist, as secretary, was appointed

[1] Howell, *op. cit.* p. 12; Mahmud, *op. cit.* p. 25; *Twelve Indian Statesmen*, p. 230; Marshman, *op. cit.* pp. 278–9.

[2] See the evidence of J. W. Sherer, 19 July, 1832, paras. 1915–2252, Minutes of Evidence before Select Committee, I, *Report Committees, E.I.C.* 1831–2 (5), vol. IX; also the *Heart of Aryavarta*, p. 46.

[3] Dutt, *Literature of Bengal*, pp. 137, 139, 147.

[4] Originally he had conceived a strong aversion to British rule in India but afterwards gave up "this prejudice" on the conviction that British rule would conduce "more speedily and surely to the amelioration of his countrymen". See Max Müller's quotation, *Biographical Essay*, p. 47.

[5] The School-book and School Societies. The latter was guided by a managing committee of sixteen Europeans and eight Indians. David Hare was secretary. It distributed books and examined and superintended certain schools.

[6] Howell, *op. cit.* p. 14. The committee were bidden to suggest such measures as it might appear expedient to adopt, with a view to "the better instruction of the people, and the introduction of useful knowledge, including the arts and sciences of Europe". See *History of the Benares Sanskrit College*, pp. 50–3.

Adam, Hastings's temporary successor, and entrusted with the disbursement of the greater part of the annual one lakh grant. Arrears were paid in; and the committee prepared to organise a Sanskrit College which the government had decided to open in Calcutta. A college on Western lines was being gradually established by the Serampur missionaries, under the patronage of the king of Denmark and the governor-general, "for the instruction of Asiatic, Christian and other youths in Western literature and European science", while "Bishop's College", another missionary institution, had been founded at Calcutta in 1820 by means of subscriptions raised in England.[1] In 1823 a college had been founded and endowed liberally at Agra by a certain pandit Gangadhar without any pecuniary assistance from the government. Progress was in the air; but hardly had the members of the new committee assembled when they were called on to consider a petition, addressed to Lord Amherst, by Ram Mohan Roy. Its most notable passages were these:

"When this seminary of learning" (the new Sanskrit College) "was proposed, we understood that the government in England had ordered a considerable sum of money to be annually devoted to the instruction of its Indian subjects. We were filled with sanguine hopes that this sum would be laid out in employing European gentlemen of talents and education to instruct the natives of India in mathematics, natural philosophy, chemistry, anatomy and other useful sciences which the nations of Europe have carried to a degree of perfection that has raised them above the inhabitants of other parts of the world. . . . We now find that the government are establishing a Sanskrit school under Hindoo pundits to impart such knowledge as is already current in India. . . . The pupils will here acquire what was known two thousand years ago, with the addition of vain and empty subtilties since produced by speculative men, such as is commonly taught in all parts of India. The Sanskrit language, so difficult that almost a lifetime is necessary for its perfect acquisition, is well known to have been for ages a lamentable check on the diffusion of knowledge; and the learning concealed under this almost impervious veil is far from sufficient to reward the labour of acquiring it. If it had been intended to keep the British nation in ignorance of real knowledge, the Baconian philosophy would not have been allowed to displace the system of the schoolmen, which was the best calculated to perpetuate ignorance. In the same manner the Sanskrit system of education would be the best calculated to keep this country in darkness, if such had been the policy of the British legislature. But as the improvement of the native population is the object of the government, it will consequently promote a more liberal and enlightened system of instruction, embracing mathematics, natural philosophy, chemistry and anatomy, with other useful sciences which may be accomplished with the sum proposed, by employing a few gentlemen of talents and learning educated in Europe, and providing a college furnished with the necessary books, instruments and other apparatus."[2]

It does not appear that this petition produced any immediate impression, but it certainly bore fruit later on.

There were other progressive Indians who thought with Ram Mohan Roy. Bishop Heber's journals and correspondence throw considerable light on currents of opinion at this time. In a letter dated Calcutta, October, 1823, he remarked on the friendly attitude of

[1] Whitehead, *op. cit.* pp. 166–7.

[2] Sharp, *op. cit.* pp. 99–101.

Hindus and Muhammadans towards mission schools, which, however, were very rarely attended by Muslim children. No objection was made to the use of the Bible as a class-book provided that the teachers did not urge their pupils to eat what would break their caste, or be baptised, or "curse their country's gods". Twenty schools had recently been established by Church of England missionaries. In December, 1823, he observed the increasing tendency "to imitate the English in everything". This had already led to important results and would lead to still more important results in future. Many wealthy Indians spoke English fluently and were tolerably read in English literature. In the Bengali papers, of which there were two or three,[1] politics were canvassed with a bias to Whiggism. Among the lower orders the same feeling was visible in a growing neglect of caste, and in an anxiety to learn and speak English, which, if properly encouraged, might in fifty years "make our language what Oordoo (Hindustani) is at present".[2] In 1824 Heber visited the Benares Sanskrit College, and after attending a lecture on astronomy wondered that such rubbish should be taught in a government college.[3]

The Committee of Public Instruction started with a credit of arrears of the government grant, but even so, suffered from narrowness of means. In the year 1824 the sum which could be spared for the Bengal Presidency was only £19,970. They decided to spend their money "on the best means of improving the education of the more respectable members of Indian society 'especially those who make letters their profession'". This they attempted to do by ignoring the indigenous schools and by printing in Sanskrit, Persian and Arabic, both original works and translations of such books as Hutton's *Mathematics*, Croker's *Land Surveying* and Bridge's *Algebra*. They further provided "literary endowments" for promising students of Indian classical literature, attached English classes to certain Orientalist colleges and started a few schools for teaching English. In fact they endeavoured to carry out the vague monitions of the directors, but soon found their path beset by eager applicants for the means of instruction in English. The situation has been described in these words by Charles Trevelyan, a young civil servant, one of their number who subsequently rose to high distinction:

> Upwards of 31,000 English books were sold by the school-book society in the course of two years while the committee did not dispose of Arabic and Sanskrit volumes enough in three years to pay the expense of keeping them for two months, to say nothing of the printing expenses. . . . Among other signs of the times a petition was presented to the committee by a number of young men who had been brought up at the Sanskrit college, pathetically representing that, notwithstanding the long and elaborate course of study which they had gone through, they had little prospect of bettering their condition; that the indifference with which they were generally

[1] The first Bengali newspaper—the *Samachar Darpan* (mirror of news)—was issued from the Serampur Press on 31 May, 1818 (Marshman, *op. cit.* pp. 280–1).

[2] Heber, *Narrative and Letters*, II, 306–7.

[3] *Idem*, I, 295–6.

recorded by their countrymen left them no hope of assistance from them, and that they therefore trusted that the government, which had made them what they were, would not abandon them to destitution and neglect. The English classes which had been tacked on to the Sanskrit and other oriental colleges had entirely failed in their object. The boys had not time to go through an English in addition to an oriental, course; and the study which was secondary was naturally neglected. The translations into Arabic, also, appeared to have made as little impression upon the few who knew that language, as upon the mass of the people who were entirely unacquainted with it.[1]

Faced with such representations, the committee split into halves, the Orientalist and older party and the English, or younger, party. The first wished to continue the policy of "letting the natives pursue their present course of instruction, and of endeavouring to engraft European science thereon". The second desired to spend no more money on bounties to students of the Indian classical languages or on printing Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian books, but to devote all available funds to conveying to Indians, through the medium of English, the literary and scientific information necessary for a liberal education. Although for some time the knowledge so conveyed would be confined to a limited circle, it would soon penetrate to the outer community through the channel of a new vernacular literature. This doctrine became famous as "the filtration theory". Its advocates took inadequate account of the rigidity of Indian caste and occupational distinctions. Neither party proposed to do anything for the indigenous schools, and both agreed that the vernaculars "contained neither the literary nor the scientific information necessary for a liberal education".[2] Bengal in fact stood at a parting of the ways.

We must now briefly review events in Bombay and Madras. In the early years of the nineteenth century these presidencies greatly expanded and were fortunate enough to obtain as their governors two remarkable men who devoted much attention to education. Both presidencies had their own indigenous schools which roughly resembled those of Bengal and Bihar. In Bombay, where indigenous schools were far rarer than in Bengal,[3] Mountstuart Elphinstone obtained the sanction of the directors to the payment on a reduced scale of the *Dakshina* allowances formerly distributed by order of the Peshwas to Brahmans of distinguished learning in the Hindu scriptures, selected after examinations held in the presence of the Poona court. The money was eventually devoted to the establishment of a Sanskrit College at Poona. Elphinstone was desirous of diffusing "a rational education which by removing prejudices and communicating British principles would pave the way for the employment of natives in the higher branches of the public service". He strongly deprecated any admixture of religion with state education. He aimed

[1] Trevelyan, *op. cit.* p. 10.
[2] Trevelyan, *op. cit.* p. 21.
[3] Elphinstone observed of these: "Reading is confined to Brahmans, Banyans, and such of the agricultural classes as have to do with accounts" (Adam, *op. cit.* p. 268).

at encouraging, improving, and increasing schools for vernacular education and at establishing schools for the purpose of teaching English to those disposed to pursue it as a classical language and "a means of acquiring knowledge of European discoveries". He contemplated the preparation of books on moral and physical sciences in the vernacular and "standard examinations" for public employment.

"If there be a wish", he wrote, "to contribute to the abolition of the horrors of self-immolation and of infanticide, and ultimately to the destruction of superstition, it is scarcely necessary to prove that the only means of success is the diffusion of knowledge."

Before he resigned office, an English school, an engineering institution, and a medical school were opened in Bombay, and an English class was added to the Sanskrit College at Poona. The famous Elphinstone College represents subscriptions contributed in honour of his name by "princes, chieftains and gentlemen connected with the West of India as an endowment for three professors of the English language and of European arts and sciences".[1] His successor, Sir John Malcolm, recorded a minute in 1828 which expressed anxiety for the diffusion of instruction which would open the road to wider employment of Indians in posts of greater trust and responsibility. But for this purpose, Malcolm considered, no knowledge of English was necessary. "The acquisition of that would occupy a period required for other studies and pursuits." It was, however, essential that aspiring Indians should have the advantage of translations from English of scientific works and of books which would enable them to understand English principles of administration.

In Madras Sir Thomas Munro started enquiries in 1823 which showed that among a population estimated to number 12,850,941 there was one school to every 1000; but only a very few females were taught in schools.

"The state of education has", he minuted, "been better in earlier times; but for the last century it does not appear to have undergone any other change than what arose from the number of schools diminishing in one place and increasing in another, in consequence of the shifting of the population from war or other causes. The great number of schools has been supposed to contribute to the keeping of education in a low state, because it does not give a sufficient number of scholars to secure the services of able teachers."

He commented on the poor quality and general ignorance of the teachers.[2] He was inclined to assist indigenous schools in certain cases, but not to interfere with them, and was anxious to establish a "normal" school in a central place for training teachers as well as two government schools in every district, one for Hindus and one for

[1] *Parl. Papers, E.I.C.* 1832, general, App. 1, p. 469.

[2] Sharp, *op. cit.* 1, 73–4. It is clear from a letter from Munro to Canning that he also contemplated the extension of a knowledge of English literature among the Hindus. Gleig, *Life of Munro*, II, 186.

Muhammadans. But he died in 1827; and his scheme did not commend itself to the directors, who had now become anxious to have at their disposal "a body of natives qualified by their habits and acquirements to take a larger share and occupy higher positions in the civil administration of their country than had hitherto been the practice". The Madras scheme dissolved; but in that presidency a colloquial knowledge of English was more commonly found than in Bengal. Several distinct languages were spoken there, and English had been largely adopted as a common medium of intercourse. The missionaries too were busy. Their activities in the whole educational field induced Charles Metcalfe to observe in 1834, when quitting the governor-general's council on promotion: "They seem destined by almighty Providence to be the chief instruments for improving and enlightening the inhabitants of this country through the means of education and moral instruction".[1]

In the year 1828 Lord William Cavendish Bentinck became governor-general. A Whig in politics, he was a courageous and zealous reformer. After careful investigation he summarily forbade sati against the advice not only of Horace Hayman Wilson, the most prominent Orientalist, but also of Ram Mohan Roy. Again despite Orientalist advice to the contrary, he established a new medical college for training Indian students entirely on Western lines.[2] He further meditated reforms in education, but decided first to obey the old orders of 1814 and obtain definite information about the indigenous schools. Unfortunately, however, he delayed action till January, 1835,[3] the very year of his departure; and in the meantime the differences between the two parties on the Committee of Public Instruction had come to a head. The English party had been supported in Calcutta by a forceful recruit in the person of Alexander Duff, a Scotch missionary who, arriving in India in 1829, had opened a secondary school, with the assistance of Ram Mohan Roy, and had already attracted numerous Hindu pupils. Duff urged vehemently that not only was Sanskrit unadaptable as a medium of modern education, but that, by an ordinance reckoned to be divine, three-fourths of the people, consisting of the mixed and lower classes, were forbidden the study of it.

"There are", he argued, "scarcely any European works translated into Sanskrit; and even if there were, every term in that sacred tongue is linked inseparably with some idea, or sentiment, or deduction of Hinduism which is a stupendous system of error;... whereas in the very act of acquiring English, the mind, in grasping the import of new terms, is perpetually brought into contact with new truths and ideas so that by the time that the language has been mastered, the student must be tenfold less the child of pantheism, idolatry and superstition than before."[4]

[1] Kaye, *Life of Metcalfe*, II, 229. Cf. Mahmud, *op. cit.* p. 39.
[2] Article, "Hindu Medicine and Medical Education", *Calcutta Review*, 1866, XLII, 106–25.
[3] Article by Duff on "Indigenous education in Bengal and Bihar," *Calcutta Review*, 1844. Cf. Adam, *op. cit.* pp. 10–13.
[4] Paton, *Life of Duff*, p. 66.

Unlike Carey, Duff was no Orientalist, but he took pains to learn Bengali and arranged that his pupils should study their mother-tongue.

These, then, were the issues which pressed for decision at Calcutta in the early 'thirties.

(*a*) Should anything be done for mass-education; or should it be left to unaided indigenous schools?

(*b*) Should all idea of grafting the modern learning of the West on the ancient learning of the East be abandoned as impracticable?

(*c*) Should the filtration theory be adopted and all available funds be devoted to advancing Western knowledge among the upper classes through the medium of English? No one at Calcutta argued that the Bengal vernaculars would serve as a medium, although the governments of Bombay and Madras were disposed to use their own very different vernaculars for the diffusion of general knowledge. The Calcutta Government, too, had recently substituted vernaculars for Persian in the law courts of the Bengal Presidency.[1]

The filtration theory and the virtual supersession of the classical languages by English were advocated by advanced Hindus in Calcutta, by the followers of Hare and Ram Mohan Roy, by Duff and his missionary supporters, and by "the English party" on the Committee of Public Instruction. It is important to notice that the strongest influences in bringing this "English party" into existence were the petition of Ram Mohan Roy and the practical experience of the committee. In this way a policy was shaped which contemplated the eventual use of the vernaculars for the diffusion of Western knowledge, but the immediate employment of English for this purpose, and of English alone. It commended itself to the directors who, from motives of economy as well as for reasons of policy, wished to see a substantial contingent of Western-educated Indians in the public services.[2] Their interest in indigenous schools had long since evaporated; and on 8 February, 1829, they had reminded the governor-general that the one lakh grant was to be placed at the disposal not of one alone, but of all three presidencies, and that it was only to be allotted "in the event of there being a surplus revenue after defraying all the expenses of government".[3]

Ram Mohan Roy had gone to England in 1830, where he was received with honour and gave evidence on Indian affairs before a select committee of the House of Commons; but, to the bitter loss of his country, he died at Bristol in 1833.[4] In the same year parliament,

[1] See Prinsep's Diary, *ap.* Sharp, *op. cit.* I, 133. It appears, however, from circular 220 of the nizamat adalat dated 27 January, 1837, that while the depositions of parties or witnesses were to be taken down in the languages in which they were delivered, Persian translations were to be annexed to the records if the latter were called for by the nizamat court (*Circular orders of the Calcutta Nizamat Adawlat*, 1846, p. 268).

[2] Dispatch, 29 September, 1830.

[3] Howell, *op. cit.* p. 20. Cf. Mahmud, *op. cit.* p. 47.

[4] See *The Last Days of Ram Mohan Roy*, especially pp. 90 and 94, also *Reports, Committees, E.I.C.* 1831–2 (4), VIII, 391.

after prolonged enquiry, decided when renewing the charter of the East India Company to dissociate that body altogether from trade, to add a "legal member" to the governor-general's council, and to declare that no native of India would in future be debarred from office or employment by reason of religion, place of birth, descent or colour.[1] On 10 December, 1834, the directors informed Bentinck's government that every effort must be made to enable natives of India to compete for the public service with fair chance of success, "whether by conferring on them the advantages of education or by diffusing on them the treasures of science, knowledge and moral culture".

In the autumn of 1834 Thomas Babington Macaulay, who had been appointed to the legal membership of the governor-general's council, arrived at Calcutta and was appointed president of the Committee of Public Instruction, which he found hopelessly divided between the Orientalist and the English parties. The Orientalists had lost a strong champion in H. H. Wilson, who had left India in January, 1833. Macaulay declined to take an active part in its proceedings until the government had passed judgment on the main issue in dispute; but on 2 February, 1835, he presented a lengthy minute to Bentinck in support of the English party. In some passages he poured scorn on Oriental literature, of which he knew nothing. In others, while asserting that he would strictly respect all existing interests, he proposed not only to stop the printing of Arabic and Sanskrit books, but to abolish the Muhammadan Madrasa which had been founded by Warren Hastings and the Calcutta Sanskrit College. No stipends, he urged, should in future be given to students at the Benares and Delhi colleges. The funds thus set free would be given to the Vidyalaya at Calcutta and to the establishment of English schools in the principal cities of Upper India. With the limited means available it was impossible to educate the body of the people. Endeavours should be made to form a class of persons "Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinion, in morals and in intellect". These would refine the vernaculars, enrich them with Western terms of science and render them by degrees fit vehicles for conveying knowledge to the great mass of the population.

Bentinck promptly noted his "entire" concurrence with Macaulay's views. In the previous month he had placed William Adam, editor of a popular Calcutta journal and ex-missionary, under the orders of the Committee of Public Instruction to conduct enquiries into the state of indigenous education in Bengal. In a minute dated 20 January, 1835,[2] he had observed, when appointing Adam, that a true estimate of the Indian mind and capacity could not be formed without the information which Adam was to collect. Adam, however, had barely begun when Macaulay's minute was laid before Bentinck's

[1] Cf. pp. 3 *sqq.*, *supra*.

[2] Adam, *op. cit.* pp. 10–13.

colleagues with the governor-general's note of concurrence and an adverse memorandum drawn up by H. T. Prinsep, a civil servant of twenty-six years' service, Persian secretary to the government and member of the Committee of Public Instruction.[1] But already the news had leaked out that the Sanskrit College and the Muhammadan Madrasa were to be abolished, and petitions against such proceedings, signed by thousands of Hindus and Muhammadans, had been presented. After a hot debate in council between Macaulay and Prinsep, it was decided on 7 March, 1835, that

> the great object of the British Government ought to be the promotion of European literature and science among the natives of India; and that all the funds appropriated to education would best be employed on English education alone.

But no college or school of Indian learning, which enjoyed any popularity, would be abolished. Existing professors and students at such institutions as were under the committee's superintendence were to go on receiving their stipends. No more students, however, were to be supported during the period of their education and no money should be employed on printing Oriental works. All funds thus released should be employed "in imparting to the native population a knowledge of English literature and science through the medium of the English language".

Prinsep's memorandum,[2] dated 15 February, 1835, was by Bentinck's order excluded from the record on the ground that its author was a secretary and not a member of council. But it survived and still gives the case for the Orientalists. The weightiest passages were those in which the author urged the veneration in which Sanskrit and Arabic were still held by Hindus and Muslims as communities. Bounties to students were, he contended, really scholarships, and in the Muhammadan Madrasa had been given for proficiency in English.

> "Undoubtedly", ran the memorandum, "there is a very widely spread anxiety at this time for the attainment of a certain proficiency in English. The sentiment is to be encouraged by all means as the source and forerunner of great moral improvement to those who feel its influence; but there is no single member of the Education Committee who will venture to assert that this disposition has yet shown itself extensively among the Mussalmans. It is the Hindus of Calcutta, the sirkars (accountants and commercial managers) and Kulin (Brahman) connections, and the descendants and relations of the sirkars of former days, those who have risen through their connexion with the English and with public offices, men who hold that a knowledge of English is a necessary *qualification*. These are the classes of persons to whom the study of English is as yet confined; and certainly we have no reason yet to believe that the Mussalmans in any part of India can be reconciled to the cultivation of it, much less give it a preference to the polite literature of their race or to what they look upon as such."

[1] Brother of the remarkable James Prinsep, F.R.S., sometime secretary of the Asiatic Society of Bengal (see James Prinsep, *Essays on Indian antiquities*, ed. by Edward Thomas, John Murray, 1858, I, iii).

[2] Sharp, *op. cit.* I, 117.

passage elicited the following marginal note from Macaulay: "There is no good English scheme for the Mussalmans; and one of our first duties is to establish one". No such scheme was, however, established. The Muhammadans were opposed to the whole project, looking upon the exclusive encouragement of English as a step toward religious conversion.[1]

In a minute dated 20 May, 1835, laid before the council after Bentinck's departure, Prinsep called the resolution of 7 March "a rash act". The natives should (he said) be left to choose their own courses of education, and all should equally be encouraged by the government, who should however arrange "to give them the direction to true science and good taste in literature which the superior lights of Europe enable us to bestow". Any deviation from this principle of free choice and equal encouragement could only do mischief by exciting feelings of distrust and perhaps irritation.

Macaulay remained president of the Committee of Public Instruction till 1838. His writings show how seriously he took his voluntary and unpaid duties, and how earnestly he tried to lead the young generation to a knowledge of the best English literature, which he relied on as a strong cultural and religious influence. Unlike Grant, he took no particular thought for science or agriculture. European knowledge would soon, he thought, be exhibited in the vernacular languages. As things were going, in thirty years there would not be a single idolater among the respectable classes of Bengal.[2] His committee began to establish Anglo-vernacular schools at the headquarters of various districts. These were first known as "zillah" (district) schools and afterwards as "high" schools. The courses of study therein were mainly literary, an arrangement which accorded with Macaulay's own taste and with the inclinations of people whose traditional systems of learning were chiefly literary and religious.

It is regrettable that such important issues as those involved in the decision of 7 March, 1835, had become "a watchword for violent discussion and personal feeling".[3] Had there been less heat in the whole contention, Macaulay would have been persuaded that he really had something to learn from the Orientalists, and that the whole past and present of the great religious and social systems, which he did not care to understand, forbade even the remotest possibility of their collapse within any measurable period of time. That in any case the new education would leave women untouched, that the Muhammadans were strongly averse to it, these and other obvious considerations were dismissed by him as negligible. It was unfortunate too that the results of Adam's enquiries were not available for Bentinck and his council. Had they been aware of the extent of self-supporting indigenous education, they might have cut the Gordian

[1] Mahmud, *op. cit.* p. 54. [2] Trevelyan, *Life and Letters*, p. 464.
[3] Lord Auckland, *ap.* Sharp, *op. cit.* I, 147.

knot in less trenchant a fashion. But their funds were extremely limited, and in view of the ideas prevalent both in parliament and in Leadenhall Street, they naturally made a strong effort to push the kind of education for which there was evidently a clamant local demand. Macaulay and his minute precipitated a decision which was hardly avoidable. Yet the views recorded by Bentinck in his minute of 20 January, 1835, show that, after writing it, he was completely carried away by Macaulay's vigorous eloquence.[1]

Duff was better informed than Macaulay, for he viewed the situation with some degree of Indian experience. He approved of the decision of 1835, but considered that the exclusion of religious teaching from the government schools would leave a void which the missionaries must labour to fill: modern knowledge was like the ocean seen to roll its waters from shore to shore. But if like the ocean it had its gentle breezes, might it not have its storms and quicksands too?[2] He returned to his work as a Christian educationist and achieved remarkable success. Believing his own creed to be true, he believed that it could be reconciled with everything else which is also true. With the power of a great personality he influenced the lives of many.[3]

In spite of Bentinck's very definite declaration and Macaulay's prompt action, in Bengal only was the teaching of English continuously preferred to all other educational objectives. Even there the pendulum swung back in some small degree. The decision to spend no more money on Oriental works was modified in 1838 and a grant of 500 rupees a month was allotted to the Asiatic Society of Bengal which enabled it to carry on the valuable *Bibliotheca Indica* series of Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian texts.[4] The directors hesitated to make English a medium of teaching; and had not the rage for learning English spread rapidly in Calcutta, the history of education in after years might have taken a somewhat different course.

In March, 1836, Lord Auckland became governor-general and was faced by an attempted renewal of the controversy of 1835. Before his arrival restrictions on the press had been removed by Metcalfe, and journalism had thus been greatly stimulated. Now Adam's reports began to come in and afforded food for much reflection. Accurate information regarding the indigenous systems was at last provided; there were no vernacular textbooks; the miserable condition of the schools was emphasised; the possibility of converting them into something better was insisted on. They should be left in the hands of the

[1] Adam, *op. cit.* p. 10. We may note that on 28 December, 1855, Max Müller was given an interview by Macaulay when the Professor, "primed with every possible argument in favour of Oriental studies, had to sit silent for an hour while the historian poured out his diametrically opposite views, and then dismissed his visitor who tried in vain to utter a single word. 'I went back to Oxford', he said, 'a sadder and a wiser man'". *Life of Max Müller*, edited by his wife, I, 162, Longmans, Green, 1902.

[2] Duff, *op. cit.* p. 265.

[3] See Paton, *op. cit.*

[4] *Centenary Review of Asiatic Society of Bengal* (1784–1883), p. 59.

people; but assisted in various ways. This should be the supreme objective. Western knowledge was much needed, but nowhere should English be a medium of instruction. At present a class of men was being produced who stood apart from both their fellow-countrymen and the British, and found inadequate scope for their attainments. The masses were left in ignorance; so industry languished; crime flourished; the support of the people for salutary measures could not be counted on. The press was now free; the civil and political rights of the people had been enlarged; but the government should, by a general system of instruction, timely established, teach the people "the proper use of the mighty instrument which had been placed in their hands and of the various franchises that had been and might be from time to time bestowed".[1] Auckland was impressed by Adam's arguments but saw that to accept them would mean delay and open up vistas of heavy expenditure; the filtration theory must now be fully tested. Money too was scarce. Only £24,000 was annually available for the whole Bengal Presidency. So the governor-general wrote a minute[2] of prodigious length, adhering to the filtration theory but emphasising the importance of providing a larger number of good vernacular class-books. Orientalist colleges must be kept in funds; but nothing could be done at present for the indigenous schools. In a dispatch of 20 January, 1841, the directors agreed with him; but abandoning to some extent the views of Macaulay and Bentinck, they stated that the diffusion of European knowledge need not necessarily be through English. Vernacular translations of English books would serve for the purpose.

In 1842 the Committee of Public Instruction was superseded by a Council of Education composed partly of Indian gentlemen. This body's activities were mainly limited to Calcutta. Outside the capital the government was responsible; and in April, 1843, the control and management of educational institutions in the Upper Bengal or the North-Western Provinces were made over to the lieutenant-governor, Sir G. Clerk, who in August attacked the accepted policy, laying stress on the difference between the habits and customs of the influential classes in the upper and the lower provinces. In the former the native gentry neither countenanced nor supported the government schools. In 1844 Lord Hardinge's government announced that candidates qualified by a knowledge of English would be preferred for the public service.[3] Examinations were instituted by the Council of Education and students who qualified therein were enrolled as fit for (although not necessarily entitled to) employment. The distinction

[1] Adam, *op. cit.* pp. 341–2. [2] Sharp, *op. cit.* I, 160.

[3] In 1830 the government of the Bengal Presidency had notified "that in the nomination of government vakils (agents) in the native courts and of agents with the Commissioners", familiarity with English would constitute a recommendation to preference unless on special grounds this rule was disregarded. It is, however, doubtful if it was ever acted on. *History of the Benares Sanskrit College*, p. 73.

was not appreciated, and those who were unsuccessful in obtaining such posts as they desired resented the disappointment. Western education, however, had been clearly declared a passport to government service, the most coveted of all professions.

Anglo-vernacular schools were established in outlying districts of Bengal, and in 1844 some vernacular village schools were started which ended in failure. The indigenous vernacular schools were left out in the cold; they neither improved in quality nor declined in number. From considered reluctance to infringe in any way on social custom and on long-standing ideas regarding the seclusion or subjection of women, the government stood aside from the efforts of the missionaries, of David Hare, and of a few private societies and individuals, to promote female education. The missionaries started day-schools for girls, boarding establishments for orphans and domestic instruction in the families of the middle and higher classes. The results were small; but the main credit of a great initiative rests with them.[1] From Leitner's Report it appears that there was far more indigenous female education in the Panjab than there was in the older provinces. A school for girls was in 1849 established and maintained in Calcutta by J. E. D. Bethune, member of the governor-general's council and president of the Council of Education, who spent his money freely on the undertaking.[2] Dalhousie considered that this generous example was likely to be followed by Indian gentlemen and that schools for girls could be promoted by district officers. The directors, however, threw cold water on this idea as they were unwilling to alarm conservative Indian opinion. After Bethune's untimely death, the expenses of his school were borne first by Dalhousie and afterwards by a fund raised by public subscription to carry on Bethune's work.

While Western education was acquiring increasing momentum among the Hindus of Bengal, it progressed very slowly in inland provinces where government servants were practically the only European residents. James Thomason, lieutenant-governor of the North-Western Provinces from 1843 to 1853, was anxious to promote rural education[3] "enlisting the persons whom the people may themselves select as teachers, and support for that purpose". Enquiries had disclosed the fact that in these provinces only 64,335 (50,026 Hindus and 14,309 Muhammadans) out of a population of 21,630,167 were in receipt of any education. Eventually a *halqabandi* (circle) school system was devised whereby villages were grouped in circles of five, the land-holders of each group undertaking to pay for a school by a voluntary cess of 1 per cent. on the land-revenue. This system was in 1852–3 introduced into eight districts and was afterwards

[1] Richey, *Selections from the Educational Records*, p. 34; Adam, *op. cit.* pp. 335–7.
[2] *Calcutta Review*, XXI, 513.
[3] Richey, *op. cit.* p. 61; also a memorandum by R. Burn, Census Superintendent North-Western Provinces and Oudh (unpublished).

extended as other districts came under land-revenue settlement. The scheme, as sanctioned by the directors, involved the levy of a cess of 1 per cent. on the rent, which was deducted before the revenue was calculated, so that payment was shared by the government and the land-holder. In Bombay the government ignored the filtration theory, and endeavoured primarily to promote education through the vernacular, admitting to education in English those who sought it and "had the capacity to acquire European learning".[1] Throughout the southern presidency missionary enterprise was busy. English, Scotch, Americans and Irish Presbyterians vied with each other in honourable rivalry.[2] In 1839 Lord Elphinstone, governor of Madras, advocated the establishment of a university open to students who possessed some knowledge of English. The institution came into existence as a school which in 1852 bore the title of the "Madras University High School". It was then the only state or state-controlled school or college in the presidency. But the gap left by the government had been filled by missionaries of various denominations, Jesuit fathers, Wesleyans and the English, Scottish and American Churches. The number of missionary schools in Madras exceeded those in all other presidencies put together.[3]

Kaye tells us that the state educational expenditure in 1853 amounted to about £70,000. For many years, as Dalhousie observed, the public finances had been "in a condition which clogged the action of the government".[4] In Bengal the government was maintaining thirty colleges and schools in which English was taught, but only thirty-three vernacular schools against Bombay's 233. Among the most successful government institutions were the Medical College started by Bentinck in Calcutta, and the Thomason Engineering College at Rurki in the North-Western Provinces. Throughout India the Hindu aristocracy held aloof from the new learning. Their literary tastes were satisfied by the poetry of their race; and they had no inclination to send their sons to schools where social contact with boys of a lower order would mean contamination. The Muhammadans, as a body, also stood outside. They had never felt disposed to do anything else. Proud of an imperial past, attached to their own classics,[5] they held that religious and secular instruction should go together. Their young men were freely employed in administrative posts, but despised clerical and office work.

As the time approached for another revision of the Company's charter, it became more and more apparent that uniformity and constancy of aim were lacking in the educational policies of the various provincial governments. The situation was reviewed by Dalhousie,

[1] Richey, p. 18.
[2] *Report of the Education Commission of* 1882, pp. 12–13.
[3] Madras Administrative Report, 1855–6; Richey, *op. cit.* p. 183. See also Satthianadhan, *History of Education in Madras*, pp. 38–9, and *Report of the Education Commission of* 1882, p. 10.
[4] Richey, *op. cit.* p. 113.
[5] *Report of the Education Commission of* 1882, p. 483.

who forwarded proposals to the directors. A parliamentary committee was appointed and examined a number of witnesses, including such veterans as Trevelyan and Duff. Sir Charles Wood, president of the Board of Control, after much deliberation, forwarded a scheme to India through the court of directors (dispatch 49 of 19 July, 1854) which imposed upon the government the task of "creating a properly articulated scheme of education, from the primary school to the university". As state schools and colleges were intended to benefit the general population, the instruction which they gave must obviously be "exclusively secular"; but

> every honest educational agency, whether religious or not, should be encouraged to the utmost, under the inspection and direction of a government department, and with the encouragement and assistance of the local officers of government, upon the value of which emphasis was laid.[1]

The filtration theory was unsatisfying. The indigenous schools were no longer to be left to themselves, but "made capable of imparting correct elementary knowledge to the great mass of people". The methods adopted in the North-Western Provinces for promoting rural education were commended for general imitation. A regular system of scholarships must be instituted to connect lower schools with higher, and higher schools with colleges. Voluntary effort must be supported by grants-in-aid from the state awarded with entire impartiality. Female education must be frankly and cordially supported. It might be anticipated that eventually state education would become education supported where necessary by state grants-in-aid.

Universities would be established at Calcutta[2] and Bombay and would be allowed at Madras or elsewhere provided a sufficient number of colleges were forthcoming. They would be examining bodies on the model of the London University, depending, so far as teaching was concerned, upon the various colleges, whether maintained by government or voluntary effort. But professorships should be instituted for instruction in such subjects as law and civil engineering. It would greatly encourage the cultivation of the vernaculars if chairs were also founded for promoting the study of these languages and perhaps also of Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian. The acquisition of degrees would bring highly educated young men to the notice of the government and facilitate selections for the public services.

The particular attention of the government should be given to the diffusion through the schools of useful and practical knowledge among the people generally. So far state energies had been too exclusively directed toward "providing a very high degree of education" for classes who were often able and willing to bear at least a considerable portion of the cost themselves. More could be done to

[1] *Calcutta University Commission Report*, 1, 40.

[2] A scheme for a university at Calcutta had been proposed in 1845 by the Council of Education, but had remained in abeyance.

prepare good vernacular class-books containing European information. Teaching of English, where there was a demand for it, should be combined with careful attention to the vernaculars, but English alone possessed a sufficiently supple and extended vocabulary for conveying the elements of Western sciences. This exhaustive dispatch concluded with the observation that no sudden or speedy results could be expected from the adoption of the wide measures prescribed. The outcome depended far more on the people themselves than on the government.

No time was lost in acting on these orders,[1] which, in Dalhousie's words, "set forth a scheme of education for all India far wider and more comprehensive than the supreme or any local government could have ventured to suggest". Departments of public instruction were organised; and in 1857 examining universities were established at Calcutta, Bombay and Madras. But work had hardly begun when the Mutiny intervened; and it is natural to enquire whether British educational policy had contributed to produce that great struggle. Kaye replies in the affirmative,[2] pointing out *inter alia* that the policy of the dispatch of 1854, relying partly on missionary aid, and aiming at penetrating even to the zenanas, was in fact a challenge to Brahmanism, and that the tendency of educational measures from 1835 onwards had been to curtail Muhammadan emoluments and Muhammadan dignity. Outram considered that the crusading, improving, spirit of the past twenty-five years was bound to cause a resounding clash.[3] It certainly gave the instigators of rebellion one of the principal texts from which they preached. But features in various outbreaks revealed unmistakably the full extent of the dangers which spring from unbounded and credulous ignorance. Lord Canning had received a disagreeable shock from the attitude of the Bengali press at the very crisis of the empire's fate;[4] but he never faltered in pursuing the educational policy laid down in 1854.

> Among many subjects of importance none can have a stronger claim on our attention than that of education. It is one of our most sacred duties to be the means, as far as in us lies, of conferring upon natives of India those vast moral and material blessings which flow from the diffusion of useful knowledge, and which India may, under Providence, derive from her connection with England.

So ran the preamble of the dispatch of 1854. The pioneers of this policy were Grant and Carey. Wilberforce lent his powerful aid; the unremembered Robert Smith suggested the clause which proved the starting-point for a great undertaking; Hare by his devoted labours earned the lasting gratitude of Bengali Hindus;[5] Ram Mohan Roy

[1] See *Calcutta Review*, 1860, xxxv, 401–26.
[2] *History of the Indian Mutiny*, I, 131–43.
[3] Lee-Warner, *Dalhousie*, II, 355.
[4] Donogh, *Law of Sedition in India*, p. 182; Kaye and Malleson, *History of the Mutiny*, III, 13.
[5] Banerjee, *A Nation in the Making*, pp. 1–2.

prepared the way for Bentinck and Macaulay. A Hindu movement in Calcutta, due largely to the persevering efforts of the missionaries, combined with the general trend of political thought in England, with the eloquent pen of Macaulay and with the inclinations of the governor-general to produce the decision of 1835 which was in the circumstances natural but broke violently with the past, took no account of the indigenous vernacular schools or of the importance of preserving as far as possible their self-supporting character, and encouraged tendencies which, as years went on, passed beyond control. The new policy was carried into effect in Bengal by a brilliant Whig politician who possessed no knowledge of the history of Indian thought and no understanding of the Indian mind. The years which followed 1835 were years of varying opinion, uneven direction, and scanty expenditure. Then a great governor-general found time to consider education and corresponded with a president of the Board of Control, who, convinced of the supreme importance of the subject, gave it elaborate attention, and pricked out a chart for future guidance. His chief desire was that England should do her duty by those many millions for whose welfare she had undertaken responsibility, that they should be less and less cramped and plagued by the evils which spring from ignorance and tyrannical superstitions, that while the ancient learning of India should still be held in honour, her peoples should no longer be penned behind those barriers of stationary thought which for long centuries had been so powerfully restrictive. But he saw clearly that whatever the government might attempt, the eventual issues lay with the people themselves.

CHAPTER VII

SOCIAL POLICY TO 1858

BY the charter of 1698 parliament provided for the maintenance of ministers and schoolmasters in all the Company's garrisons and superior factories. The ministers must learn Portuguese within one year of their arrival in India and must apply themselves to acquire knowledge of the native languages in order to be able "to instruct the gentoos that shall be servants or slaves of the Company or of their agents in the Protestant religion". In 1700 the directors communicated to their "commanders of ships and agents of factories" a form of prayer, sanctioned by the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London, which contained the supplication

> that we adorning the Gospel of our Lord and Saviour in all things, these Indian nations among whom we dwell, beholding our good works may be won over to love our most holy religion, and glorify thee, our Father which art in Heaven.[1]

Forty years before, when asking certain doctors of Oxford and Cambridge for assistance in procuring the services of a chaplain for their settlements, the directors had expressed a vague desire "to endeavour the advance and spreading of the Gospel in India";[2] but whatever might be the views of the day in Leadenhall Street, the governors and councils at Madras, Calcutta and Bombay were by no means inclined to missionary enterprise. The records of the India Office contain a bitter complaint written about 1702, by Benjamin Adams, chaplain of "the Bay" (of Bengal), emphasising the great discouragement and disadvantage under which the "missionary clergy" abroad were living, and the opposition which they met from their own chiefs.[3] The majority of the scanty staff of chaplains who were sent out were engaged for periods of three, five, or seven years; they were often incapacitated by illness; they often refrained from learning Portuguese, and in the ordinary course of their duties they had small occasion to learn thoroughly any Indian language. A more pressing care was the religious instruction of the "children of mixed parents" among their congregations. In Madras these would largely have been left to French or Portuguese Roman Catholic priests, had not other teachers come forward. For political and religious reasons the governor and council were glad to obtain assistance from the Lutheran missionaries of Tranquebar, Danish and German, who received generous financial support from the British Society for Promoting Christian

[1] Hyde, *Parochial Annals*, Appendix A, and Penny, *Church in Madras*, I, 125.
[2] Sainsbury, *Court Minutes*, 1655–9, p. 227.
[3] Hyde, *op. cit.* p. 75.

Knowledge. In gratitude for services, both in teaching the children of the Portuguese, Tamils and Eurasians employed by the Company's merchants and factors, and in ministering to the Company's soldiers, British, Swiss, Hanoverians and other Germans, these men received free passages to India from the directors, and their goods were conveyed free of charge. The most notable among them was the German Pietist, Christian Swartz, who was employed by Sir Thomas Rumbold on a secret mission of peace to Hydar Ali in 1779, and afterwards accepted a chaplaincy, continuing all his missionary activities.[1] A monument erected after his death in the fort church at Madras at the expense of the Company testifies that for fifty years he "went about doing good", and that in him "religion appeared not with a gloomy aspect or forbidding mien, but with a graceful form and placid dignity".

While German and Danish missionaries were thus honoured in the comparatively small presidency of Madras, the problems of managing vast territories peopled by multitudes of various religions were pressing heavily on the rulers of Bengal. By the regulations of 1793 the governor-general in council promised to "preserve the laws of the Shaster and the Koran, and to protect the natives of India in the free exercise of their religion". All rites and customs were to be tolerated; all endowments were left untouched; all religious liabilities created by former rulers were accepted as trusts. As we saw in our last chapter, when in 1793 the Company's charter came up for renewal, Wilberforce failed to persuade parliament to impose missionary responsibilities on the court of directors, and William Carey and his coadjutors made their way to India without licences from that body. Once at Serampur they could claim protection from the Danish flag. But they owed their subsequent success very largely to Lord Wellesley's favour, for he not only appointed Carey teacher of languages in the new college for young civil servants, but personally subscribed £800[2] to the building of a church at Serampur, subsidising too the translation of the Christian Scriptures into Indian languages, "to give the learned natives access to the sacred fountain of divine truth". He "thought that a Christian governor could not have done less, and knew that a British governor ought not to do more".[3]

In religion as in other matters Wellesley pursued a policy of his own; but he left India in 1805 and his successors were inclined to reverse this policy. The Serampur missionaries, too, had been greatly encouraged and conducted their operations with less discretion. Friction with the government began, and was intensified by the news of the mutiny at Vellore in 1806. There was no apparent connection between this event and any missionary activities,[4] but the Madras authorities stated that malicious reports had been current that it

[1] See v, 282, *supra*.
[2] Marshman, *Carey, Marshman and Ward*, p. 170.
[3] Hansard, xxv, 697–8.
[4] Mill and Wilson, *History of British India*, vii, 101.

was the wish of the British Government to convert the people of the country to Christianity by forcible means. From 1807 to 1813 mission work was an object of nervous apprehension to the government at Calcutta; and missionaries without licences from the directors were on various occasions deported from or refused permission to land in British India.[1] Meantime, however, Methodists and Evangelicals were vigorously stimulating religious enthusiasm in England. The "Particular Baptist Society" which supported Carey and his colleagues had received subscriptions from Christians of other denominations and a remarkable testimonial from the *Quarterly Review*;[2] Wilberforce and the Clapham sect had procured the stoppage of the slave-trade. The Church Missionary Society, the Bible Society, the London Missionary Society and other religious associations, new and old, were gathering increased support. Charles Grant's influence was powerful in Leadenhall Street. When Lord Minto's government sent home an account of its differences with the Serampur missionaries, it had been told that the directors were not averse to the introduction of Christianity, but to any imprudent or injudicious attempt to introduce it by methods which irritated other religious prejudices. It was enjoined to abstain from all unnecessary and ostentatious interference with the proceedings of the missionaries.

"On the other hand", wrote the court, "it will be your bounden duty vigilantly to guard the public tranquillity from interruption, and to impress upon the minds of all the inhabitants of India, that the British faith, upon which they rely for the free exercise of their religion, will be inviolably maintained."[3]

When the Company's charter came under revision in 1813 the tide in England was flowing in favour of the missionaries. It was urged that the real question was not whether the natives of India should continue to enjoy complete religious toleration, but whether that toleration should be extended to the teachers of Christianity. Quite apart from any doctrinal considerations, the spread of Christianity had always meant moral progress; and the existence of such customs as widow-burning and female infanticide showed that moral progress was urgently required in the interests of humanity. It had been said that the British empire in India was insecure and might easily be upset by religious agitation. Indeed it was—a column upon sand was but a feeble emblem of its insecurity. But even worldly policy demanded that India should be "trained up in civilisation and Christianity, like a child by its guardian, till such tutelage was no longer needed". At present

if England were dispossessed of its dominion in India nothing would be retained of all we could have taught but that improved discipline which the people would

[1] Stock, *History of the Church Missionary Society*, I, 99.
[2] "Baptist Missions", *Quarterly Review*, February, 1809, I, 225.
[3] Dispatch, 7 September, 1808; Kaye, *History of Christianity in India*, pp. 513–18; *Quarterly Review*, March, 1813, IX, 236.

exercise first to our destruction and then to their own. Not a trace of our language would remain; and for our religion the Hindoo historians would argue that we had none.

Such were the arguments on one side. With variations they were pushed so vehemently that petitions loaded the tables of the houses of parliament from religious bodies of all kinds.[1] On the other hand it was argued that in the matter of religion the natives of India were peculiarly sensitive. Evidence on this point, taken by a committee of the Commons so far back as 1781, had elicited the unanimous opinion that "any interference with the religion of the natives would eventually insure the total destruction of the British power". On no account should missionaries be employed or maintained by the government. They might go to India as they had gone heretofore or under new restrictions; they might preach, translate and teach at their own risk; but no sanction should be given by government to their proceedings, and no attempt should be made to tie the hands of government from restraining their activities.

As has been shown in the last chapter, Wilberforce had abated the demands of 1793, and now gained his main point, for not only were missionaries allowed to appeal to the Board of Control against refusals by the directors to allow them to proceed to India, but resolutions were incorporated in the new charter act which favoured the adoption of a policy of promoting religious and moral improvement. The Company's Anglican establishment was placed under the superintendence of a bishop and three archdeacons, for whose maintenance adequate provision was to be made from Indian territorial revenues. On 8 May, 1814, the first bishop of Calcutta was consecrated in Lambeth Palace privately in order to avoid offending Indian religious susceptibilities, which were in fact totally unruffled by this event.[2] Between the years 1813 and 1833 Christianity gained converts; missionaries of various denominations considerably increased and maintained friendly relations with the people and with the authorities. When the charter was again renewed in 1833, arrangements were made for the establishment of the episcopal sees of Madras and Bombay. Missionaries were enabled to proceed to India without licence from any authority, and rendered invaluable assistance to the government in educational enterprise. Under the scheme of 1854 their schools became eligible for grants-in-aid. While, moreover, the directors declared that education must be purely secular in state schools and colleges, they understood that bibles were placed in the libraries of these institutions, and had no desire to prevent any explanations which pupils might spontaneously ask from teachers on this subject provided that such information was given out of school hours.

[1] Mill and Wilson, *op. cit.* VII, 389–96, 401.
[2] Kaye, *British India*, pp. 646–7.

But in other respects relations were less harmonious. Complaints were made of the disabilities imposed on Indian converts to Christianity by the government's regulations and of official encouragement accorded to idolatrous ceremonies and practices.[1] The fact was that succeeding to the thrones of Indian rulers, the British Government had sanctioned by regulations certain usages repugnant to Christian prejudices. Converts to Christianity were legally subject to disinheritance; and native Christians, whether Protestants or the Roman Catholics who were very numerous in Southern India, suffered from civil disabilities and restrictions, while Hindu and Muhammadan religious usages, institutions and ceremonies were treated with profound official deference. Troops were turned out and salutes were fired when festivals occurred.[2] The British Government administered Hindu and Muhammadan religious endowments and levied pilgrim taxes in order to pay for keeping temples in order, for supporting priests and for providing guards on particular occasions; it repaired sacred buildings and managed landed estates the net proceeds from which went to ministers of temples and mosques. As meantime only scanty sums were allotted to the service of the religion which the rulers of the country themselves professed, the contrast gave point to the charge that these rulers neither had nor cared for any religion.

In the year 1832, however, with the object of affording relief to Christian converts, the government passed a law which protected all persons who should change their religion from consequent loss of property. This measure evoked Hindu protests, although the Muhammadans in the day of their power had not only protected but encouraged Muslim converts. The protests were disregarded; but the new law applied only to the Bengal Presidency; and in 1845 the bishop of Bombay represented that within his diocese native Christians were indeed protected from violence by the courts of justice, but derived no other benefit whatever from these institutions. Such grievances were finally disposed of by Lord Dalhousie's government in 1850, which passed an act rescinding all laws and usages throughout India which inflicted upon any person forfeiture of rights and property by reason of renunciation of or exclusion from the communion of any religion. The act evoked loud complaints from Hindus, not unnaturally, as under Hindu law inheritance of property was attended by religious and ceremonial obligations. But the new measure stood.

The hopes and enthusiasm which animated the Board of Control in 1833 stimulated general reform in India. Charles Grant, afterwards Lord Glenelg, was president, and on 21 February addressed the governor-general in council through the court of directors ordering

[1] E.g. Peggs, *India's Cries to British Humanity*, 1830.

[2] Tucker, *Memorials of Indian Government*, p. 358. See also Kaye, *History of Christianity in India*, chap. x; Lyall, *op. cit.* chap. x.

the abolition of the pilgrim tax in every province and the cessation of the practice of employing government servants in the collection, management or custody of religious funds or offerings. No public servant was to receive any sort of emolument from any such source. The police posted on duty at religious festivals with a view to the peace and security of pilgrims and worshippers must be paid out of general revenues.) Indians should be left to themselves in all matters relating to their temples, their worship, their festivals or their ceremonial observances. The dispatch called for further information and added:

> We are holding up a standard to which you are ultimately to conform your policy rather than laying down a rule to which you are instantly and without respect of circumstances to conform.... Such explanations should be given to the natives as shall satisfy them that so far from abandoning the principles of a just toleration, the British Government is resolved to apply them with more scrupulous accuracy than ever; and that this proceeding is in truth a recurrence to that state of real neutrality from which we ought never to have departed.[1]

The dispatch, which had been long in incubation, was received by the government of India without enthusiasm, and remained for some time a dead letter. But regulations which insisted on the firing of salutes, on official attendance and homage[2] at Hindu and Muhammadan festivals, were resented not only by chaplains and missionaries but by members of the Company's services; and a memorial which received 200 signatures from official and non-official Europeans was presented to the Madras Government through the bishop to be forwarded to higher authority. The memorialists petitioned that the instructions of 1833 should be carried out and were strongly supported by Bishop Corrie, who thus incurred the displeasure of the local government, but appealed to the governor-general. Strong feeling was aroused both in India and England; and eventually on the initiative of Sir John Cam Hobhouse, president of the Board of Control, a dispatch was addressed by the directors to the government of India dated 8 August, 1838, which insisted both that no more time should be lost in obeying the instructions of 1833 and that arrangements should be made

> for relieving all our servants, whether Christians, Muhammadans or Hindus, from the compulsory performance of acts which you may consider to be justly liable to objection on the ground of religious scruples.[3]

The government of India obeyed, and issued orders which put an end to the attendance of troops or military bands at native religious festivals or ceremonies and to all firing of salutes on such occasions. Public officers were, as far as possible, to abstain from all connection with the ceremonies of the Hindu and Muhammadan religions. But

[1] Kaye, *History of Christianity in India*, p. 418.
[2] *Idem*, p. 421 n.; Peggs, *op. cit.* pp. 259–60.
[3] *Parl. Papers*, 1839, xxxix, 189; Kaye, *op. cit.* pp. 428–9; also Tucker, *op. cit.* pp. 353–69.

the administration of religious endowments was interwoven with the revenue system of the country, and the tenants of landed estates which belonged to religious establishments had always been accustomed to look to the government as their working landlord and could not be summarily handed over to unreliable substitutes.[1] New agencies of a trustworthy nature were hard to find, and complaints were made that, to the grave injury of the Hindu and Muhammadan religions, obligations were being shuffled off which had always been considered binding.[2] It was not until the year 1863, when the government of India had been transferred to the crown, that an act was passed which relieved public servants from all duties which embraced the superintending of lands assigned for pious uses or the management in any form of religious establishments belonging to the Hindu or the Muhammadan religions. The cry of "religion in danger" which undoubtedly contributed to the outbreak of the Mutiny was partly produced by a feeling that the ancient faiths of the country were losing exclusive privileges. But it must be admitted that the Company's conciliatory policy had been carried to extreme lengths and called for modification.[3]

In tolerating all Indian rites and customs the British Government soon found itself confronted by difficult problems. One was not felt to be pressing. Slavery had long been an established institution not only in India but in our American colonies. Mr Moreland, in his valuable studies of economic conditions under the Moghul Empire, accepts it as

> a Hindu institution, though in Akbar's time at least it did not secure the approval of all Hindus, and the text-writers refine and distinguish according to their practice regarding its origin and incidents.[4]

The *Ain-i-Akbari* shows that slavery was also recognised by Muhammadan law. In the first year of Warren Hastings's rule in Bengal a regulation was passed which condemned the families of convicted dacoits (brigands) to be sold as slaves. The "Committee of Circuit", in proposing this legislation, observed:

> The ideas of slavery borrowed from our American colonies, will make every modification of it appear in the eyes of our countrymen in England a horrible evil. But it is far otherwise in this country; here slaves are treated as the children of the families to which they belong and often acquire a much happier state by their slavery than they could have hoped for by the enjoyment of liberty.[5]

But these hues are too roseate, for we find Sir William Jones remarking to a Calcutta jury in 1785:

> Hardly a man or woman exists in a corner of this populous town who hath not at least one slave child either purchased at a trifling price or saved for a life that

[1] *Parl. Papers*, 1841 (5), XVII, 741–51. [2] Lyall, *op. cit.* (ed. 1884), p. 282.
[3] See Macaulay's speech on the Gates of Somnauth, *Speeches on Politics and Literature* (Everyman's Library), especially pp. 204–5.
[4] Moreland, *India at the death of Akbar*, p. 91. Cf. also *From Akbar to Aurangzeb*.
[5] O'Malley, *History of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa*, p. 359. Cf. Peggs, *op. cit.* pp. 366–8.

seldom fails of being miserable. Many of you, I presume, have seen large boats filled with such children coming down the river for open sale at Calcutta. Nor can you be ignorant that most of them were stolen from their parents or bought for perhaps a measure of rice, in time of scarcity.[1]

The truth is that the treatment of slaves, domestic and agricultural, varied in different parts of the country;[2] in most provinces, however, it was common for very needy members of the humbler classes to sell themselves or their children into slavery in order to obtain a bare subsistence. But purchasers would often restore such children to their parents in better times. The abolition of the slave-trade by the British parliament in 1807 marked the beginning of a new era. In 1789 the government of Lord Cornwallis had forbidden by proclamation the collection of children and adults for the purpose of exporting them as slaves to different parts of India or elsewhere, a practice in which "many natives and some Europeans" had been involved.[3] In 1811 the importation of slaves from any other country into India was forbidden. Vigorous efforts were made to suppress the trade that had grown up.[4] In 1832 the purchase and sale of slaves brought from one district to another was made a penal offence. The charter act of 1833 required the governor-general in council to take steps for extinguishing slavery as soon as emancipation should be safe and practicable. India Act V of 1843 prohibited the legal recognition of slavery; and keeping of or trafficking in slaves became a criminal offence under the Indian Penal Code enacted in 1860.

The abolition of slavery came gradually, pushed on by humanitarian movements in England; but it appears that at no stage was emancipation opposed by any section of Indian society, although it was accompanied by no payment of compensation to slave-owners. We pass on to two remarkable customs of another kind which from the outset were strongly opposed to Western ideas of humanity and civilisation. One was sanctioned by use and wont among a powerful caste. It was from its nature elusive, practised in domestic privacy and therefore most difficult to stop. But it was not authorised by religion. The other was practised in public and was protected both by religious tradition and by priestly authority.

In the year 1802 Lord Wellesley's government, after requesting William Carey[5] to investigate the nature of such religious sanction as existed for throwing Hindu children, in fulfilment of vows, into the sea at Sagor Island to be drowned or devoured by sharks, decided to put a stop to the practice. Not only were children sacrificed in this

[1] O'Malley, *op. cit.* p. 359.

[2] *Parl. Papers*, 1831–2, IX, App. I, A, pp. 303–4, and 1834, XLIV, 171–211. Also Forbes, *Oriental Memoirs*, II, 227–9. Sir R. Burn writes: "The practice of taking a loan and becoming practically 'adscriptus glebae' continued quite lately in Oudh". Cf. *Report, Linlithgow Agricultural Commission*, pp. 433–5.

[3] Peggs, *op. cit.* p. 407 n.; Ross, *Cornwallis Correspondence*, I, 547.

[4] Peggs, *op. cit.* pp. 423, 429.

[5] Marshman, *op. cit.* p. 75.

manner at Sagor and other places for the supposed benefit of survivors; but old men and women voluntarily threw away their lives in this fashion, although the custom was little countenanced either by the religious orders or by the great body of people who, on the contrary, considered it a pious act to rescue and bring up a castaway child. By Regulation VI of 1802 child sacrifice of this kind was declared to be murder.[1]

But when a practice of killing female children was discovered to be widespread among varieties of Rajputs in different parts of the country, a far more troublesome and elusive problem presented itself. Jonathan Duncan, resident at Benares, when travelling on the frontier of the Jaunpur district in 1789, discovered that murders of this kind had long been systematically practised by a Rajput tribe called Rajkumars through the simple method of causing mothers to refuse nurture to some of their female children. The custom was freely admitted in conversation and though general was not universal as "paternal affection, or some other circumstances, had prevailed on the fathers of Rajkumar families to bring up one or more of their female issue"; but the instances where more than one daughter had been spared were very rare, and only one village furnished a complete exception to the general rule. The same practice prevailed, though to a less degree, among a smaller tribe, also found within the province of Benares, called Rajbanses. The motive of such crimes was desire to shun the disgrace which must ensue from failure to provide daughters with adequate marriage settlements. On 23 December, 1789, Duncan, writing that he had induced the Rajkumars to enter into a covenant whereby they undertook to renounce "this horrid practice", forwarded a translation of the covenant which stated that infanticide, although customary among the Rajkumars, was highly sinful according to the "Bretim Bywunt Puran" and was held in detestation by the British Government. The Rajkumars therefore agreed not to commit any longer such detestable acts. Those who committed them would be outcaste and would suffer the punishments prescribed by the above-mentioned Purana and the Shastras.[2]

Infanticide among the Rajkumars was declared to be murder by Bengal Regulation XXI of 1795. Regulation III of 1804 extended this declaration to the newly ceded provinces. But, in spite of covenants and regulations, on 30 April, 1816, Shakespear, acting police superintendent of "the Western Provinces", reported that Rajkumars were still killing their female infants "to nearly the same degree as formerly, though a greater degree of caution was preserved to prevent detection". In the meantime Duncan, who had become governor of Bombay, had learnt that the practice was very general among the

[1] *Parl. Papers*, 1824, XXIII, 137.

[2] *Parl. Papers*, 1824, XXIII, 7–8; *Calcutta Review*, 1844, I, 377; Kaye, *British India*, pp. 555–6; and Twining, *Travels in India*, p. 327.

Jhiarija (Jadeja)[1] Rajputs of Cutch and Kattiawar. The matter was carefully investigated by Colonel Walker, political resident at Baroda, who reported on 15 March, 1808, that throughout Cutch there might be six or eight houses wherein the masters of Jharija families brought up their daughters; otherwise female infanticide was general among Jharijas not only in Cutch but throughout the province of Gujarat. From the reports of natives best acquainted with the country the number of Jharija families inhabiting Cutch and Kattiawar was estimated at 125,000 and the number of female infants yearly destroyed at 20,000. Colonel Walker also reported that infanticide was practised among the Rahtor Rajputs of Jaipur and Jodhpur as well as by Jats and Mewats. The practice had never been interfered with by any previous government. From the Jharijas he succeeded in obtaining a covenant whereby, like the Rajkumars, these people pledged themselves to abandon such practices. Nine years later, however, it was ascertained that the pledge had not been observed. There could be no doubt that infanticide was still prevalent among the Jharijas of Gujarat. In one *taluka* not one female child was to be found among 400 families.[2]

In spite of constant and varied efforts and activities which are chronicled in the parliamentary papers of certain years, the prevention of female infanticide among tribes and classes addicted to this habit long baffled British officers and administrations, to the serious concern of the court of directors. The difficulty, both in British territory, and to a far greater degree in native states, was to bring specific instances to light without espionage, or encroachment on domestic privacy. In every case of infanticide the mother either refused nurture to the child or rubbed the nipples of her breast with opium.[3] The victim died in the home by order of the father, who was apprehensive of being compelled later on to choose between the disgrace of being unable to arrange her marriage and the ruinous expense of accomplishing it satisfactorily.[4]

"Although religion", says Tod, "nowhere authorizes this barbarity, the laws which regulate marriage among the Rajputs powerfully promote infanticide. Not only is intermarriage prohibited between families of the same clan (*campa*), but between those of the same tribe (*gota*).... Many virtuous and humane princes have endeavoured to mitigate an evil in the eradication of which every parental feeling would co-operate. Sumptuary edicts alone can control it, and the Rajputs were never sufficiently enamoured of despotism to permit it to rule within their private dwellings."[5]

Mountstuart Elphinstone, when governor of Bombay, minuted on 9 January, 1821, that as long as the practice was congenial to the general feeling of the classes concerned it could not be effectually

[1] *Imperial Gazetteer*, XV, 166. [2] *Parl. Papers*, 1824, XXIII, 108–9.
[3] Cf. Raikes, *Notes on the North-Western Provinces of India*, p. 12 n.
[4] Cf. *Census of India* 1901, I, 425. See, too, Raikes, *op. cit.* pp. 8–9.
[5] Tod, *Rajasthan* (ed. 1880), I, 547.

checked. Moreover we professed to have no concern with the civil government and internal police of native states. We might be sure, however, that a continuance of tranquillity and good order would gradually cause the discontinuance of a practice repugnant to natural instinct.

The policy, however, of the Company's governments was by no means one of *laissez-faire*. From time to time the subject engaged the particular attention of the directors. The parliamentary papers of 1843 show the vigorous nature of the preventive action taken in British territory.[1] In native states infanticide weakened before the energetic and constant endeavours of military political officers such as Wilkinson, Willoughby, Erskine, Jacob, Pottinger and Melville. The record of their labours moved Alexander Duff, who was no respecter of persons, to write in 1844:

> If ever political agents, members of council, governors, governors-general and courts of directors shall be arraigned at the bar of an impartial posterity, they may rest assured that their best exculpatory evidence will be found, not in the brilliant records of their civil diplomacy or military exploits, but in such humble, noiseless, and unpretending volumes which, like the parliamentary papers on infanticide, portray their strenuous and unwearied exertions in the sacred cause of humanity.[2]

Everywhere infanticide gradually yielded to the spread of Western ideas; but even in 1870 the central government felt themselves compelled to combat it by passing an act[3] which enabled the application of stringent rules for compulsory registration of births, and regular verification of the existence of female children for some years after birth, in places where such measures appeared desirable. We must now turn to another custom, the suppression of which should for all time redound to the credit of Lord William Bentinck. He struck the final blow, but there were others who prepared the way.

Brahmanical tradition teaches that when children of high-caste Hindus reach the age of eight to twelve, boys should go to a *guru* for education and girls should marry. The duty of the latter is wifehood and motherhood. Should a woman lose her husband, she is not permitted to remarry although a widower may remarry at any time. A widow, on the other hand, must lead a life of strict retirement. But throughout India, before the year 1829, an alternative was open to her. She might immolate herself on her husband's funeral pile and follow him into a new life. She would then be called a sati, a faithful wife, and would be honoured for her choice. The term sati or suttee has been transferred by Europeans from the widow to the custom of burning

[1] See report, 28 January, 1841, of the proceedings of Robert Montgomery, then district magistrate of Allahabad, *Hindu Infanticide, Accounts and papers*, 1843, p. 59. See also Raikes, *op. cit.* pp. 18–22.

[2] *Calcutta Review*, 1844, I, 435.

[3] Act VIII of 1870. Cf. Sir Michael O'Dwyer, *India as I knew it*, p. 102. Regulations under Act VIII of 1870 were abolished in the United Provinces early in the present century.

her with her husband's corpse, a practice which comes down from remote ages and was much in vogue under the Moghul Empire, although certain emperors and "subahdars" took pains to see that victims suffered only by their own free will.[1] Sati, however, was never a universal custom in any caste, although the detailed returns which were laid before parliament in the ten years which immediately preceded its abolition show that it was practised in some degree by lower as well as by higher castes.[2]

When in 1772 Bengal came directly under British government, Warren Hastings, who held in high respect all customs interwoven with religion even if "injudicious or fanciful",[3] directed a body of learned Brahmans gathered together from every part of the province to prepare from the Shastras an authoritative manual of Hindu law. Passages in this manual encourage sati; and other passages in Colebrooke's translation of the digest of Hindu law, which was compiled under the superintendence of Sir William Jones, declare that the sati enjoys delight with her husband for thirty-five million years and expiates the sins of three generations on the paternal and maternal side of her husband's family.

> No other effectual duty is known for virtuous women at any time after the deaths of their lords, except casting themselves into the same fire. If a woman in her successive transmigrations declines doing so, she should not be exempt from shrinking again to life in the body of some female animal.[4]

Such passages explain why in view of a clear promise to "preserve the laws of the Shaster and the Coran, and to protect the natives of India in the free exercise of their religion", the government of Bengal was slow to interfere with the celebration of a rite strongly opposed to every humanitarian principle. But the Supreme Court refused to tolerate it within the limits of their immediate jurisdiction; and inhabitants of Calcutta who wished to perform it were compelled to do so in the suburbs.[5] It was prohibited by the Danes at Serampur, by the Dutch at Chinsura, by the French at Chandernagore, but residents of these places could do as they pleased outside settlement boundaries. Sati was allowed in the Madras Presidency, but between the years 1770 and 1780, at any rate,[6] was not tolerated within the scattered settlements which at that time were presided over by the government of Bombay. It was practised by the Rajputs of Gujarat and by the Marathas but was discouraged by Baji Rao, the last of the Peshwas, who took upon himself the charge of supporting widows who yielded to dissuasion.

[1] Bernier, *Travels* (Constable and Smith), pp. 306–15; Foster, *Early Travels in India*, p. 119; Thompson, *Historical and Philosophical Enquiry*.
[2] Cf. *Census of India*, 1901, vol. I, paras. 703–9, vol. XVI, para. 111.
[3] Gleig, *Memoirs*, I, 403–4.
[4] Colebrooke, *Digest* (1801), II, 452.
[5] *Parl. Papers*, 1821, XVIII, 100.
[6] Forbes, *Oriental Memoirs*, I, 57, II, 26.

On the annexation of the Peshwa's dominions, Mountstuart Elphinstone, in reply to a representation from Pottinger, collector of Ahmadnagar,[1] that "the exercise of a very trifling degree of authority would put a stop to this perversion of reason and humanity", declined on 18 August, 1818, to sanction the smallest interposition of authority in a cause so clearly connected with the religious prejudices of the Hindus. Brahmans, however, might be employed to dissuade widows from sati, and when dissuasion was successful, subsistence allowances might be granted to the widows. A Bombay regulation even legalised sati, declaring that assistance at rites of self-immolation was not murder. But the centre of British administration in India was Calcutta; and the policy followed there must be clearly traced.

Sati in the capital presidency excited no particular protest until on 28 January, 1789, M. H. Brooke, collector of Shahabad, thus addressed Lord Cornwallis:

> Cases sometimes occur in which a collector, having no specific orders for the guidance of his conduct, is necessitated to act from his own sense of what is right. This assertion has this day been verified in an application from the relations and friends of a Hindu woman for my sanction for the horrid ceremony of burning her with her deceased husband. Being impressed with the belief that this savage custom has been prohibited in and about Calcutta, and considering the same reasons for its discontinuance would probably be valid throughout the whole extent of the Company's authority, I positively refused my assent. The rites and superstitions of the Hindu religion should be allowed with the most unqualified tolerance, but a practice at which human nature shudders I cannot permit without particular instructions. I beg therefore, my Lord, to be informed whether my conduct in this instance meets with your approbation.

Brooke doubted whether any promise of religious toleration could absolve the British Government from prohibiting a practice "at which humanity shuddered". But his main question was not answered. He was merely informed that while his action was approved, it must in future be confined to dissuasion and must not extend to coercive measures or to "any exertion of official powers". The public prohibition of sati would probably increase Hindu veneration for it. It was hoped that the practice would decay and disappear.

On 17 May, 1797, James Battray, magistrate of Midnapur, reported that he had succeeded in preventing the sati of a child-widow aged barely nine. But he feared that, sooner or later, it would be accomplished as her head had been filled with superstitious notions of the propriety of the act. He was told to do his best to dissuade her. Elphinstone's and Battray's letters show that on both occasions magistrates were approached formally, and that their decisions were obeyed. In spite of the Brahmans and the Shastras, there was, as is apparent from much other evidence, a wide inclination to ask for and accept the order of temporal authority. This vantage-ground was definitely abandoned by the governments of Lord Cornwallis and Sir John Shore.

[1] *Parl. Papers*, 1821, XVIII, 65.

In 1798 William Carey witnessed a sati in a Bengal district which he vividly described in his diary.[1]

We were near the village of Noya Serai. Being evening, we got out of the boat to walk when we saw a number of people assembled on the riverside. I asked them what they were met for, and they told me to burn the body of a dead man. I enquired if his wife would be burned with him; they answered Yes, and pointed to the woman. She was standing by the pile which was made of large billets of wood, about 2½ feet high, 4 long and 2 wide, and on the top of which lay the dead body of her husband. Her nearest relations stood by her, and near her was a small basket of sweetmeats. I asked them if this was the woman's choice, or if she were brought to it by any improper influence. They answered that it was perfectly voluntary. I talked till reasoning was of no use, and then began to exclaim with all my might against what they were doing, telling them that it was a shocking murder. They told me it was a great act of holiness, and added in a very surly manner, that if I did not like to see it I might go further off.... I told them that I would not go, that I was determined to stay and see the murder, and that I should certainly bear witness of it at the tribunal of God. I exhorted the woman not to throw away her life; to fear nothing, for no evil would follow her refusal to burn. But she in the most calm manner mounted the pile, and danced on it with her hands extended as if in the utmost tranquillity of spirit. Previous to her mounting the pile, the relation whose office it was to set fire to the pile led her six times round it.... As she went round she scattered the sweetmeat above-mentioned among the people, who picked it up and ate it as a very holy thing. This being ended, and she having mounted the pile, and danced as aforesaid (n.b. the dancing only appeared to be to show us her contempt for death, and to prove that her dying was voluntary), she lay down by the corpse, and put one arm under its neck and the other over it, when a quantity of dry cocoa leaves and other substances were heaped over them to a considerable height, and then ghee, or melted preserved butter, poured on the top. Two bamboos were then put over them and held fast down, and the fire put to the pile, which immediately blazed very fiercely.... No sooner was the fire kindled than all the people set up a great shout—"Harree Bol. Harree Bol". It was impossible to have heard the woman had she groaned or even cried aloud, on account of the mad noise of the people, and it was impossible for her to stir or struggle on account of the bamboos which were held down on her like the levers of a press. We made much objection to their way of using these bamboos, and insisted that it was using force to prevent the woman from getting up when the fire burned her. But they declared that it was only done to keep the pile from falling down. We could not bear to see more, but left them, exclaiming loudly against the murder, and full of horror at what we had seen.[2]

The Serampur missionaries, after investigations which covered a radius of ten miles from Calcutta, found that more than 300 satis had taken place within six months,[3] and Carey, after searching the Shastras, decided that the practice was encouraged rather than enjoined. He laid his findings before his friend Udny of the civil service, who was then a member of Wellesley's council. On 4 January, 1805, J. R. Elphinstone, magistrate of the Bihar (now Gaya) district, reported to government that he had prevented the sati of a girl belonging to the Baniya (grain merchant) caste at the private request of her friends. The victim had been found by the police-inspector, who arrived on the spot only just in time, in a state of stupefaction or intoxication. Elphinstone was not aware of any order to prevent

[1] Cf. Twining, *op. cit.* pp. 462–8.
[2] Walker, *Life of Carey*, pp. 245–6. Cf. Forbes, *Ras Mala*, II, 434.
[3] Marshman, *op. cit.* p. 99.

such barbarous proceedings and asked for instructions. By order of Lord Wellesley the letter was forwarded to the "Register" of the court of nizamat adalat, which was held generally responsible for the detection and prevention of crime within the presidency. The governor-general requested that body to ascertain whether this unnatural and inhuman custom could be abolished altogether. How far was it really founded on religion? Surely at any rate something could be done to prevent the drugging of victims and to rescue those who from immaturity of years or other circumstances could not be considered capable of judging for themselves. This letter is dated 5 February, 1805.[1] The judges of the nizamat adalat on 5 June, 1805,[2] forwarded the views of the pundits whom they were wont to consult on questions of Hindu law. The latter advised that a woman belonging to the four castes (Brahman, Khetri, Vaishya and Sudra) might, except in particular cases, burn herself with her husband's body and would by so doing contribute essentially to the future happiness of both. The exceptions were women in a state of pregnancy or menstruation, girls under the age of puberty, women with infant children who could not provide for their support by other persons. To drug or intoxicate a woman in order to induce her to burn herself against her wish was contrary to law and usage. In sending on these opinions the judges advised that while the custom could not be abolished generally without greatly offending "religious prejudices", it might be abolished immediately in some districts, where it had almost fallen into disuse,[3] and checked or prevented in others on lines indicated by the replies of the pundits. They recommended a policy of mingled abolition and compromise. It is possible that Wellesley would have declared for wholesale abolition,[4] but he made over charge of office on 31 July, 1805, and left India, taking with him his valiant and strenuous spirit.

For seven years after his departure the reply of the nizamat adalat was pigeon-holed in the government secretariat, although in 1807 Lord Minto observed that widow-burning was extremely prevalent, especially in the neighbourhood of Calcutta.[5] The sepoy mutiny at Vellore in 1806 had opposed a new obstacle to the adoption of any resolute policy by suggesting apprehension of danger from the army should sati be forbidden. Then on 3 August, 1812, Wauchope, magistrate of Bundelkhand, raised the old question once more in a letter to the register of the nizamat adalat, and asked for instructions. Forwarding this letter to the government the court requested orders on their communication of June, 1805. After three months of cogitation the governor-general in council replied in December that as

[1] *Parl. Papers*, 1821, XVIII, 24–6.
[2] *Idem*, p. 28.
[3] Peggs, *op. cit.* p. 54.
[4] Wilberforce inclined to this view. See Deanville, *Life of William Carey*, p. 247.
[5] *Lord Minto in India*, p. 96.

sati was encouraged by Hindu doctrine, it must be allowed in those cases in which it was countenanced by religion and prevented whenever it was not.[1] The court's original suggestion, that in some districts the sacrifice might be prevented immediately, was ignored. Magistrates and public officers were to prohibit compulsion, intoxication or drugging of victims. They must forbid the sacrifice of girls under the age of puberty and of pregnant females. The police must act on these principles, obtaining as early notice as possible in every case. In 1813 these rules were circulated, and in 1815 they were supplemented by instructions for the submission by district magistrates of annual reports and returns of satis. In 1817 further orders were issued prohibiting the burning of mothers who had infants at the breast or children under four years, or under seven unless responsible persons would take charge of the orphans. Brahman widows, in accordance with the Shastras, could only become satis on the funeral pyres of their husbands and not elsewhere. Relatives must invariably give notice to the police of impending satis, or would become liable to fine and imprisonment. Till then no such obligation had been imposed.

The rules of 1812, 1815 and 1817 were merely "circular orders" issued by the government to its officers through the nizamat adalat; they were thus devoid of legal sanction and conceded so much to the custom at which they were aimed as to produce the impression "that to a certain extent the practice of suttee was approved by the government".[2] Colebrooke, the Orientalist, was in 1812 one of Lord Minto's councillors, and afterwards justified these orders by stating that any attempt to repress the rite by legal enactment would have been resisted. Perseverance in carrying it out would have become a point of honour.[3] After-events, however, hardly support this excuse. As the fruits of timidity and irresolution became increasingly apparent, the government's attitude was severely criticised both in missionary publications and in reports from its own officers. The interest of religious and humanitarian societies in the United Kingdom was stimulated by missionary pamphlets; and in course of time the contents of official reports and returns penetrating to Westminster became generally known. In 1813 Wilberforce reminded the Commons that humanity consisted not in a squeamish ear, but in being forward and active in relief. For years, however, governments in India were allowed full discretion in dealing with sati. Expressing a lively faith in the regenerating influence of widening knowledge, they clung tenaciously to a threadbare and discredited policy. And while correspondence went on the toll of victims mounted in Bengal. The frequency of sati in the districts round Calcutta raised the figure for cases reported in the chief presidency far above the numbers in Madras and Bombay.

[1] *Parl. Papers*, 1821, XVIII, 29–30.
[2] Statement of the Directors to the Privy Council, 1832. Peggs, *op. cit.* pp. 57, 59–60.
[3] Colebrooke, *Life of Colebrooke*, p. 285.

It varied from 378 in 1815 to 839 in 1818, 654 in 1821, 557 in 1823, 639 in 1825, 517 in 1827 and 463 in 1828. On 3 December, 1824, the chief judge of the nizamat adalat at Calcutta observed that many women were burnt without the knowledge of police officers, "and in many instances the act was illegal from circumstances which deprived it of the restricted sanction of the Shaster".[1] In 1819 the adalat had observed that it is doubtful whether

> the measures publicly adopted with the humane view of diminishing the number of these sacrifices by pointing out the cases in which the Hindu law is considered to permit them have not been attended with a contrary effect to the one intended. A spirit of fanaticism may have been rather inflamed than repressed.[2]

In this view the government concurred and contemplated the possibility of cancelling the orders of 1812, but were subsequently cheered by the fact that in 1821 five widows were saved from the flames by the presence of the police and four were induced by persuasion to draw back at the last moment, whereof one only "was not affected by the instrumentality or assistance of the police". The particulars of the five rescues are significant. One widow, after ascending the pile and feeling the flames, was saved by the presence of the police. The second was rescued just before ascending the pile. The third, having left the pile, was saved by the police against the will of her relatives. The fourth came off the pile scorched and died two days afterwards. The fifth descended from the lighted pile and was saved by the police.[3] The year 1821 was in this respect unusually successful. In 1827, on the other hand, only one woman, a girl of sixteen, was rescued by police intervention.

The central government not only kept the directors in touch with their proceedings but regularly forwarded reports from numerous judges and executive officers, some of whom were content to wait for a change in the attitude of Hindus toward sati, while others criticised the accepted policy in scathing terms, strongly advocating complete prohibition as the only satisfactory expedient. One of the latter, who well deserves to be remembered, is Walter Ewer, superintendent of police, Lower Provinces, who on 18 November, 1818, addressed the judicial secretary to the government.[4] He began by urging that satis were very seldom voluntary, for few widows would think of sacrificing themselves unless overpowered by force or persuasion; very little of either was needed to overcome the physical or mental powers of the average victim. A widow who would turn with natural and instinctive horror from the first hint of sharing her husband's funeral pile, would be gradually brought to pronounce a reluctant consent "because distracted with grief at the event, without one friend to advise or protect her, she is little prepared to oppose the surrounding crowd of hungry Brahmans and interested relatives either by argument or force".

[1] *Parl. Papers*, 1825, XXIV, 147.
[2] *Idem*, 1821, XVIII, 242.
[3] *Idem*, 1824, XXIII, 43.
[4] *Idem*, 1821, XVIII, 229.

Accustomed to attach implicit belief to all the assertions of the former, she dared not, if she was able to make herself heard, deny that by becoming sati she would remain so many years in heaven, rescue her husband from hell, and purify the family of her father, mother and husband; while on the other hand, disgrace in this life, and continued transmigration into the body of a female animal, would be the certain consequences of refusal.

In this state of confusion, a few hours quickly pass and the widow is burnt before she has time even to think on the subject.[1] Should utter indifference for her husband and superior sense enable her to preserve her judgment, and to resist the arguments of those about her, it will avail her little,—the people will not on any account be disappointed of their show; and the entire population of a village will turn out to assist in dragging her to the banks of the river, and in keeping her down upon the pile. Under these circumstances nine out of ten widows are burnt to death.

Ewer then urged that the sacrifice was more frequently designed to secure the temporal welfare of the survivors than the spiritual benefit of the widow or her husband. The son had no longer to maintain his mother; the male relatives, as reversioners in default of male issue, came in for the estate which the widow would have held for life; the Brahmans were paid for their services, and were interested in maintaining their religion; the crowd attended the show with the savage merriment exhibited by an English crowd at a boxing match or a bull-bait. Sati was indeed recommended by the Shastras, but was not hinted at by Manu, or other high authorities which prescribed the duties of a widow. The recommendation, too, where found in the Shastras, was addressed to the widow and not to her relatives. It was no part of their duties to persuade or force her in the matter. The unhappy victims themselves were uneducated and unacquainted with the Shastras. What the government was really doing was authorising the sacrifice of widows by their relatives. The custom, too, might almost be called local. In the years 1815–17, 864 satis had been performed in five districts of Bengal—Burdwan, Hughli, the Jungle Mahals, Nuddea and the suburbs of Calcutta, while in the same period only 663 took place throughout the rest of the empire including the holy city of Benares, in which only forty-one sacrifices of that nature were performed, although its population was almost exclusively Hindu, and it was a place where every meritorious act was of double value.

Regarding standing orders Ewer wrote:

It appears to me that if the practice is allowed to exist at all, the less notice we take of it the better, because the apparent object of the interference of the police is to compel the people to observe the rules of their own Shasters (which of themselves they will not obey) by ascertaining particular circumstances of the condition of the widow.

The police enquiries, he added, opened the widest door to extortions. Even if such interference in some cases induced compliance with the

[1] Cf. Bernier, *op. cit.* pp. 313–15 (ed. Constable).

rôle of the Shastra, the official attendance of the *daroga* stamped every regular sati with the sanction of government; and authorising a practice was not the way to effect its gradual abolition. Whenever "illegal" satis had been prevented by the police, no feeling of dissatisfaction had been excited. He believed that the custom might be totally prohibited without exciting any serious or general dissatisfaction.

Ewer's views received a trenchant endorsement from Courtney Smith of the nizamat adalat, who on 2 August, 1821,[1] recorded in a judgment that the government, in modifying sati by their circular orders, had thrown the ideas of the Hindus on the subject into complete confusion. They knew not what was allowed and what was interdicted, and would only believe that we abhorred sati when we prohibited it *in toto* "by an absolute and peremptory law". They had no idea that we might not do so with perfect safety. In forwarding to government the returns of 1819–20 Smith urged that the toleration of sati was a reproach to British rule, and that its abolition would be attended by no danger. It could be abolished by a short regulation somewhat in the style of the regulation of 1802 against the sacrifice of children at Sagor.[2] To interfere with a vigorous hand for the protection of the weak against the strong was one of the most imperious and paramount duties of every civilised state, from which it could not shrink without a manifest diminution of its dignity and an essential degradation of its character among nations.

Similar protests came from other officers and from other parts of India. On 14 September, 1813, Lushington, a Madras magistrate, informed his government that except to a few necessitous Brahmans who "received a nefarious reward for presiding at this infernal rite", the prohibition of sati would give "universal satisfaction".

It is not surprising that, although such representations as these were accompanied by others of a soothing nature, the directors were ill at ease. On 17 June, 1823, they thus addressed the government of India:

> You are aware that the attention of parliament and the public has lately been called to the subject. It appears that the practice varies very much in different parts of India both as to the extent to which it prevails and the enthusiasm by which it is upheld.... It is upon intelligible grounds that you have adopted the rules which permit the sacrifice when clearly voluntary and conformable to the Hindu religion. But to us it appears very doubtful (and we are confirmed in this doubt by responsible authorities) whether the measures which have been taken in pursuance of this principle have not tended rather to increase than to diminish the practice. It is moreover with much reluctance that we can consent to make the British Government, by specific permission of the suttee, an ostensible party to the sacrifice; we are averse also to the practice of making British courts expounders and vindicators of the Hindu religion when it leads to acts which not less as legislators than as Christians we abominate.

[1] *Parl. Papers*, 1823, XVII, 67.
[2] *Idem*, p. 63.

They would not then press this reasoning, but the matter must be further considered. They would co-operate in any measures which "your superior means of estimating consequences may suggest".[1]

But the government over which Lord Amherst presided was "unwilling to abandon the hope that the abolition of suttee might at some future period be found safe and expedient". They based this hope on the fact that they had remarked already "that the more general dissemination of knowledge among the better informed Hindus themselves might be expected to prepare gradually the minds of the natives for such a measure".[2]

The allusion here is clearly to the campaign against sati led by the Brahman reformer Ram Mohan Roy, mentioned in the last chapter. When in 1818 some Hindus had petitioned against the orders which the government had issued restricting the practice of sati, Ram Mohan Roy had produced a counter-petition which contained these passages:

> Your petitioners are fully aware, from their own knowledge or from the authority of creditable eye-witnesses, that cases have frequently occurred when women have been induced by the persuasion of their next heirs, interested in their destruction, to burn themselves at the funeral pile of their husbands: that others who have been induced by fear to retract a resolution, rashly expressed in the first moments of grief, of burning with their deceased husbands have been forced down upon the pile and there bound with ropes and green bamboos until consumed with the flames; that some after flying from the flames have been carried back by their relatives and burnt to death. All these instances, your petitioners frankly admit, are murders according to every Shaster as well as to the commonsense of all nations.

Ram Mohan Roy, at grave personal risk, endeavoured to stop satis by tracts and other methods of dissuasion. He obtained support from some of his fellow-countrymen, but was bitterly opposed by the orthodox school under Raja Radha Kanta Deb.[3] So fierce were the feelings aroused that for a time the reformer went about in fear of his life and had to be protected by a guard.[4]

In July, 1828, Amherst was succeeded by Lord William Bentinck, a reformer by temperament,[5] who had been governor of Madras when the Vellore mutiny occurred and had now been instructed by the directors to consider definite measures for the immediate or gradual abolition of sati.[6] After careful enquiry, within a year of taking office, he decided to put an end to the practice in British territory without delay, against the advice not only of Horace Hayman Wilson, the leading Orientalist of the day, but also of Ram Mohan Roy. With some qualms and careful explanations he recorded his determination in an elaborate minute which he placed before his

[1] *Parl. Papers*, 1824, XXIII, 44–5. [2] *Idem*, 1825, XXIV, 153–4.
[3] Peggs, *op. cit.* p. 89.
[4] *Parl. Papers*, 1825, XXIV, 11; O'Malley, *op. cit.* pp. 342–3; Dutt, *Literature of Bengal*, pp. 143, 147.
[5] Cf. Kaye, *Life of Metcalfe*, II, 172–3.
[6] Statement of the directors to the Privy Council (unpublished).

Council. He had elicited the views of fifty-three officers, mostly military, of whom twenty-four were in favour of immediate abolition, and fifteen principal civil servants, of whom eight held the same view;[1] he had also received two reports of the nizamat adalat with the unanimous opinions of the judges in favour of abolition, and returns of satis in 1827–8 exhibiting some decline of numbers.

"If this diminution", he wrote, "could be ascribed to any change of opinion upon the question, or the progress of civilisation or education, the fact would be most satisfactory, and to disturb this sure though slow process of self-correction would be most impolitic and unwise. But I think it may be safely affirmed that though in Calcutta truth may be said to have made a considerable advance among the higher orders, yet in respect to the population at large no change whatever has taken place, and from these causes at least no hope of abandonment of the rite can be rationally entertained."

H. H. Wilson, then secretary of the Hindu college (Vidyalaya),

considers it a dangerous evasion of the real difficulties to attempt to prove that satis are not "essentially a part of the Hindu religion". I entirely agree with him. The question is not what the rite is but what it is supposed to be, and I have no doubt that the conscientious belief of every order of Hindus with few exceptions, regard it as sacred.

Bentinck went on to observe that both Wilson and Ram Mohan Roy considered that abolition would cause general distrust and dissatisfaction. They considered that the practice might be gradually suppressed by increasing checks. By far the greater number of satis, however, occurred among the unmartial inhabitants of Bengal and after enquiry he had concluded that abolition would cause no trouble in the army. He observed that the judges of the nizamat adalat were unanimously in favour of it, and laid before his council the draft of the necessary regulation, concluding with the following sentences:

The primary object of my heart is the benefit of the Hindus. I know nothing so important to the improvement of their future conditions as the establishment of a purer morality, whatever their belief, and a more just conception of the will of God. The first step to this better understanding will be the dissolution of religious belief and practice from blood and murder. I disown in these remarks or in this measure any view whatever to conversion to our own faith. I write and feel a legislator for the Hindu, and as, I believe, many enlightened Hindus think and feel. Descending from these higher considerations, it cannot be a dishonest ambition that the government of which I form a part should have the credit of an act which is to wash out a foul stain on British rule, and to stay a sacrifice of humanity and justice to a doubtful expediency; and finally I may be permitted to feel deeply anxious that our course shall be in accordance with the noble example set to us by the British Government at home, and that the adaptation, when practicable to the circumstances of this vast Indian population, of the same enlightened principles, may promote there as well as here the general prosperity, and may exalt the character of the nation.

Charles Metcalfe, the most prominent of the governor-general's councillors, while noting his concurrence, observed that he was not without apprehension that the measure might possibly be "used by

[1] Statement of the directors to the Privy Council.

the disaffected and designing to inflame the passions of the multitude and produce a religious excitement", the consequences of which, once set in action, could not quickly be foreseen. But if the measure were not made "an engine to produce insurrection" in the early period of its operation, it would not cause danger later on. His fears or doubts were as to the immediate future and were not sufficiently strong to dissuade him from joining heartily "in the suppression of the horrible custom by which so many lives are cruelly sacrificed".[1] On 4 December, 1829, sati was declared by Regulation XVII to be illegal in the Bengal Presidency and punishable by the criminal courts. Persons assisting a voluntary sacrifice would be deemed guilty of culpable homicide; but those convicted of using violence or compulsion or assisting in burning or burying a Hindu widow in a state of stupefaction or in circumstances impeding the exercise of her free will, would be liable to sentence of death. A similar regulation was passed in Madras on 2 February, 1830. In Bombay Sir John Malcolm's government repealed that clause in their regulations which declared "assistance at the rites of self-immolation not to be murder".[2]

On 19 December, 1829, a petition of remonstrance was presented to Bentinck signed by "several thousand persons, being zamindars, principal and other Hindoo inhabitants of Bengal, Bihar, Orissa etc." On 14 January, 1830, the petitioners were informed that their remedy, if any, lay in appeal to the Privy Council. They did appeal, asserting that the obnoxious regulation interfered with their "most antient and sacred rites and usages" and violated "the conscientious belief of an entire nation". Abuses, if any, which might have arisen could be effectually prevented by a proper attention to Hindu opinion. They "wholly" denied, however, that such abuses existed. The regulation infringed the sacred pledge to keep inviolate the religion, laws and usages of the Hindus which was manifest throughout the whole tenor of parliamentary legislation. In reply the directors summarised the history of the past and stated their own unanswerable case.[3] It was supported by petitions which Ram Mohan Roy had brought with him to England and had presented to parliament on behalf of his followers. The appeal was dismissed by the Privy Council in the presence of this true-hearted and courageous man; and no trouble whatever resulted in India. For years sati continued in the Panjab until the fall of the Sikh Empire. In the Rajput states it gave way gradually to British insistence combined with spread of the knowledge among Rajput ladies that such things were not done in British territory.[4] Sati has been performed in our own time;[5] and the circumstances which

[1] Kaye, *Life of Metcalfe*, II, 194.
[2] *Parl. Papers*, 1831–2, IX, 354.
[3] Unpublished papers preserved in the India Office.
[4] Article by E. J. Thompson, *Edinburgh Review*, April, 1927, pp. 274–86; and *Suttee* p. 106.
[5] O'Malley, *op. cit.* p. 346; Thompson, *Suttee*, chap. IX.

attended the case at Barh in the Patna district of Bihar in November, 1927, show clearly that the rite, from its sacrificial character and appeal to belief in metempsychosis,[1] still has power to thrill crowds of Hindus with reverence and sympathy. It has numbered among its victims women who have faced an agonising death with courageous self-devotion[2] in firm faith that they were answering the call of religion and honour, and in distaste for a life which offered no prospect of happiness. But it has also unquestionably brought about the murder, in circumstances of revolting cruelty, of many a helpless widow, of girls on the very threshold of life. Reviewing its history in British India from 1789 to 1829, observing the apparently small proportion of its victims to the general population even in Bengal, and the passive acceptance of abolition when at last abolition came, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that a wrong keynote was struck at the very beginning which reverberated dismally through after-years, that Brooke, Ewer, Courtney Smith and other subordinate officers were right, that governors and councillors were wrong, and that Bentinck put an end to years of degrading, lamentable and unnecessary compromise. At the same time we must remember that Bentinck himself, in his great minute, expressly exonerated his predecessors. "I should", he wrote, "have acted as they have done."

[1] Tod, *Rajasthan*, I, 635. Cf. *The Times*, 5 February, 1929.
[2] Lepel Griffin, *Ranjit Singh*, pp. 66–7; Kincaid and Parasnis, *History of the Maratha People*, II, 301–4.

CHAPTER VIII

THE COMPANY'S MARINE

THE history of the Company's Marine commences in 1613, when a squadron was formed at Surat to protect the East India Company's trade from the constant aggressions of the Portuguese and the pirates who infested the west coast of India. Included in this squadron were the *Dragon* and *Osiander*, commanded by Captain Best, who ultimately broke the marine predominance of the Portuguese at Swally in January, 1615. At that date the Company's naval forces comprised these two English ships and ten armed *grabs* or *gallivats*,[1] which may be held to have formed the original nucleus of the Bombay Marine. This small force gradually increased during the first half of the seventeenth century, and during that period was engaged in a practically continuous and on the whole successful struggle with the Company's adversaries in India. In 1669, after the transfer of Bombay to the Company, a further development took place; the construction of small armed craft at Bombay, for the protection of the Persian Gulf and Arabian Sea trade, was commenced, among them being two brigantines built by a descendant of the Elizabethan shipwright, Phineas Pett; and in 1686 the whole marine establishment was finally transferred from Surat to Bombay, the marine stores being housed in Bombay castle and the ships anchored in Bombay harbour. After this date the Company's sea-forces were officially styled the Bombay Marine; an officer was regularly appointed "Admiral" every year; while a supply of men for both upper and lower decks was maintained as far as possible by drafts from England. The Marine suffered to some extent from the lawlessness and insubordination which marked the end of the seventeenth and the early years of the eighteenth centuries. Two vessels, the *Revenge* and *Hunter*, played an active part in Keigwin's rebellion of 1683;[2] disease and financial embarrassment were responsible for reductions of the strength of the force; while desertion was so frequent that in 1724 it was decided to keep the pay of all seamen two months in arrears.

In 1716 the Marine comprised one ship of 32 guns, four *grabs* with 20 to 28 guns, and twenty smaller *grabs* and *gallivats*, carrying 5 to 12 guns apiece. This force made an unsuccessful attempt to seize Gheria (Vijayadrug), the stronghold of Angria, in 1717; and in the following year made a fruitless attack upon Kenery (Khanderi) island, under the command of Manuel de Castro, whom the president, Charles Boone, much to the annoyance of the English personnel, had

[1] Cf. *Hobson-Jobson*, s.vv.

[2] Strachey, *Keigwin's Rebellion*, pp. 38–9.

appointed Admiral of the Fleet for the occasion. Co-operation with the Portuguese seemed fated to end in disaster, for in 1722 a joint expedition by the Bombay Marine and a Portuguese land force against the fort of Alibag was badly defeated, owing largely to the mistakes and malingering of the Portuguese viceroy and his general and the poor quality of the Bombay troops. Commodore Mathews of the English Navy participated in this action with four English ships, which had been dispatched by the Home Government in 1721 to assist in clearing the Eastern seas of European pirates. A contemporary writer gives an amusing description of Mathews's choleric treatment of the Portuguese authorities after the failure of the expedition,[1] of which the only creditable feature was the bravery displayed by the officers and seamen of the Company's Marine. During the first three decades of the eighteenth century the antagonism of the Portuguese, the Marathas, and the Sidi of Janjira obliged the Bombay Council to improve the strength and status of the Marine; a pension scheme for the widows of officers and seamen was instituted; several new vessels were purchased; and the crews of the Company's trading vessels were freely borrowed for the manning of their warships. Consequently by 1735 the annual expenditure on the Marine had increased to nearly two lakhs of rupees, and the fleet comprised seven large warships and a variety of *gallivats* and smaller vessels.[2]

From the earliest years of the Company's possession of Bombay, a marine establishment ashore, distinct from the force afloat, was maintained under the direction of the Commodore of the Marine, and included, among other officials, a storekeeper, a paymaster and a purser marine. The last-named was concerned with supplies of all kinds to the ships and indented for their cost by a monthly bill on the paymaster, who had "the charge and direction of watering and ballasting the Company's vessels and of purchasing what timber and coir were wanted for their service". An important step was taken in 1735, when the Bombay Council decided to transfer their shipbuilding yard from Surat to Bombay, and brought thither with it Lavji Nasarvanji Wadia, the Parsi shipbuilder, who had been foreman of the Surat yard. His first duty was to select a site for a dockyard, the only dock available at that date being a mud basin, which filled and emptied with the tide. The first dock, constructed on the site chosen by Lavji, and known to-day as the Upper Old Bombay Dock, was eventually opened in 1754. A second dock, the Middle Old Bombay Dock, was completed in 1762; and a third, the Lower Old Bombay Dock, in 1765. For the next forty years these three docks were the boast of Bombay and the wonder of travellers like Grose (1750), Ives (1758) and Parsons (1775). Lavji Nasarvanji, who served as master-builder from 1735 to 1774 and was succeeded in office by his two

[1] Downing, *History of the Indian Wars* (ed. Foster), pp. 63–5.
[2] *Bombay City Gazetteer*, II, 277.

grandsons, made continual additions to the Company's fleet, and the reputation for strength and seaworthiness of the teakwood ships built by him and his grandsons was so widespread and so well deserved that the office of master-builder remained in the hands of the Wadia family until 1885, when the work of construction and repair was entrusted to an English chief constructor, trained in the royal dockyards, with a staff of European assistants. The most notable member of the family was Jamshedji Bomanji, who, between 1793 and 1821, built several line-of-battle ships and frigates for the Royal Navy, besides war vessels and other craft for the East India Company. During his tenure of office he witnessed the completion in 1807 of a fourth dock, the Upper Duncan Dock, and the construction in 1810 of an outer or repairing dock, the Lower Duncan Dock, both of which were named after Jonathan Duncan, who was governor of Bombay from 1795 to 1811.[1]

Meanwhile the Marine, which in 1740 comprised a hundred officers and about two thousand seamen, who were chiefly English but occasionally deserters of other European nations, had commenced to lay the foundation of its subsequent reputation. In December, 1738, Commodore Bagwell, in command of four cruisers, heavily defeated Sambhaji Angria's fleet at the mouth of the Rajapur river;[2] in 1739, after the fall of Bassein, Captain Inchbird of the Marine negotiated a treaty with the Marathas;[3] and in 1756 a fleet of ten ships, under the command of Commodore James, co-operated with a royal squadron under Vice-Admiral Watson and a military force under Clive in a second attack upon Angria's fort of Gheria. The operations on this occasion were wholly successful; the fort was captured on 13 February, 1756; and the piratical chief of the Konkan ceased from that date to figure in the politics of Western India.[4] On the outbreak of the Seven Years' War, Commodore James (who subsequently became governor of Greenwich Hospital) added to his reputation by capturing a French vessel in 1756 and carrying her as prize to Bombay, and by voyaging round the coast of India in the height of the south-west monsoon, with the object of proving that communication between the eastern and western coasts of India was possible at all seasons.[5] This feat of navigation, which enlarged the views of the authorities as to the potential value of the Marine, proved doubly advantageous to the English; for the commodore not only brought to Bengal the earliest news of the outbreak of war with France, but also lent the services of five hundred of his seamen to Watson and Clive, for their attack on Chandernagore in March,

[1] *Bombay City Gazetteer*, II, 283 and n.; Campbell, *Bombay Town and Island Historical Materials*, II, 194 *sqq.* Cf. Low, *Indian Navy*, I, 174–5.
[2] Low, *op. cit.* I, 107. Cf. Forrest, *Bombay Selections* (Home Series), II, 72–4.
[3] Low, *op. cit.* I, 114. [4] *Idem*, I, 132 *sqq.*
[5] Madras Public Dispatch to the Company, 6 June, and Public Consultations, 3 May, 1757.