



AS - 002091

CSL

FOR CONSULTATION INDIA

4

BY

H. H. DODWELL,

*Professor of History in the School of
Oriental Studies, University of
London*

*Joint Editor of Cambridge
History of India*

34/12

[Handwritten mark]

Brick

PART I

(TO 1857)

✓



ARROWSMITH



CSL

FIRST PUBLISHED IN 1936

C

54

954

Doc - J

954
Doc 4/3/4
pt 1

pt 2

18974

LIBRARY

Division

Acc. No

Date of Acqng.

No.

Class

of Transfer

Checked

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY
ARROWSMITH LTD., 11 QUAY STREET, BRISTOL



CSL

EDITORIAL PREFACE

MANKIND has been making history very rapidly in the last thirty years. Since the World War, particularly, social developments and political revolutions have been so numerous as to be almost bewildering. The intelligent public, naturally, has a great interest in these things, as it has also an imperative need to be reliably informed about them.

It is always difficult for the public to obtain an accurate bird's-eye view of the individual States which make up the world. The existing standard histories are long, and for the most part deal with events and movements which already belong almost to the remote past. On the other hand, many admirable books dealing with current developments are apt to ignore, or to treat too scantily, the previous development, which may have been continuous for a thousand years.

The object of the present series is to present, in a reasonably moderate compass, the complete story of the development of the States of the world, from their origin to the present day. While, however, due attention is given to origins and to the continuity of the life of each people and of each State, it is recognized that the interest of the public is, quite reasonably, in the present epoch and in the last thirty or forty years. These volumes, therefore, emphasize recent history, but always in relation to the historic tradition and development of the past. The books are each written by an authority, among the younger historians for the most part, who is or has been in intimate touch with the subject or with the people with which he deals. The general editor is not responsible for particular views or opinions that they may put forward.

R. B. MOWAT.



CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
EDITORIAL PREFACE	v
INTRODUCTION	ix
CHRONOLOGY	xi
BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE	xii
I. THE HINDU HERITAGE	i
II. THE MUSLIM HERITAGE	21
III. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF BRITISH INDIA	51
IV. THE COMPANY'S POLICY	91

MAPS :

GENERAL MAP OF INDIA, SHOWING
GEOGRAPHICAL FEATURES Front end paper

INDIA, SHOWING BRITISH TERRITORIES
IN 1802 AND 1858 Back end paper



INTRODUCTION

My object in writing the following pages has been to show the existing position of the Indian state against its historical background. The state is everywhere the political aspect of an entity which in other ways expresses itself in literary, religious, and economic forms. I have deliberately sought to deal with the latter aspects of Indian life only in so far as reference to them was essential to explain political developments. From this point of view the claims of early Indian history are comparatively slight. The main political legacies of the Hindu period were an autocratic form of government, and a peculiar social organization which has complicated alike the problem of defence against external attack and the problem of transforming an autocracy into a democracy. The main political legacies of the Muslim period were the development and extension of the degree in which the autocratic government rested upon military force and the cleavage of the population into separate sections politically hostile, even though capable of dwelling quietly together under a strong and determined government. These matters are dealt with in the first two chapters of the present volume.

The remainder of the volume is concerned with the establishment and extension of European political dominion in India. It will be seen that this followed as a direct consequence of two series of events. One was the achievements of Western science as applied to seafaring and the conduct of war by land and sea. The other was the break-up of the Indian state system, the decay of internal order, and the disappearance of political



INTRODUCTION

CSL

cohesion. The first made possible the rise of European dominion, the second induced European traders to acquire territory and establish a political organization within which their threatened trade might be conducted safely. This is the subject of the third chapter, while the fourth seeks to show how this led on to the introduction of Western ideas in the administrative and educational spheres of life, and generated that fierce reaction against Western influences which we know as the Indian Mutiny.

The second volume is specially concerned with the consequences which flowed from the defeat of this desperate effort of ancient India to reassert itself. Rail and telegraph, canal and steamship, forced the country into an ever more intimate contact with the West. Education, the press, and political organizations developed and diffused new political ideas and conceptions of government. Experiments were made in order to bring the old autocratic government into greater harmony with the new attitude of an increasing number of Indians. Unceasing thought and constant effort were directed to the accomplishment of that most delicate of all political transactions—the substitution of popular for despotic rule without the turmoil, suffering and loss inevitably caused by any sudden break in political continuity. In short, the second volume seeks to explain the steps by which a military and dependent empire moved, slowly and painfully, amidst doubts on the one side and heart-burnings on the other, towards the status of a self-governing dominion.

H. H. D.



CHRONOLOGY

- B.C.
- 2000 (*circa*). Beginning of the Aryan Invasions of India.
563. The Buddha born.
- 326-5. Alexander the Great's Invasion of India.
- 321-184. The Mauryan Empire.
- A.D.
- 40-150. The Kushan Invasions and Empire.
- 320-499. The Gupta Empire.
- 500 (*circa*). The Hun Invasions.
1001. The Muslim Invasions begin.
1175. The Sultanate of Delhi established.
1398. The Invasion of Timur.
1498. The Portuguese reach India.
1526. The Invasion of Babur and the establishment of the Mughal Empire.
1600. The Foundation of the English East India Company.
- 1650-80. Sivaji's career and the foundation of Maratha power.
1739. Nadir Shah's Invasion and the fall of the Mughal Empire.
1744. Beginning of the Anglo-French struggle for India.
1757. The Battle of Plassey.
- 1772-85. The Administration of Warren Hastings.
1818. Final Overthrow of the Marathas and the establishment of the English Company as the paramount power in India.
1857. Outbreak of the Indian Mutiny.



BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

THE following books are suggested to readers who wish to pursue further the subjects dealt with in this and the following volume.

- General. *The Cambridge Shorter History of India.*
- Early India. Smith, V. A., *The Early History of India.*
O'Malley, L. S. S., *Indian Caste Customs.*
- Muslim India. Ishwari Prasad, *Medieval India.*
Moreland, W. H., *India at the death of Akbar.*
— *India from Akbar to Aurangzeb.*
- The Portuguese. Whiteway, R. S., *Rise of the Portuguese Power in India.*
- The Dutch. Lannoy, C. de, and Linder, H. van der,
L'expansion coloniale des peuples européens : Néerlande et Danemark.
- The French. Dodwell, H. H., *Dupleix and Clive.*
- The British. Lyall, Sir A., *Warren Hastings.*
Aspinall, A., *Cornwallis in Bengal.*
Owen, S. J., *Selections from the Despatches of the Marquess Wellesley.*
Hickey, William, *Memoirs.*
Mayhew, Arthur, *Education in India.*
Lee-Warner, Sir W., *The Native States of India.*
Kaye, J. W., and Malleeson, G. B., *The Sepoy War.*
Davies, C. C., *North-West Frontier.*
Masani, R. P., *Local Self-Government in Bombay.*
Ronaldshay, Lord, *The Heart of Aryavarta.*
Montagu, E. S., *An Indian Diary.*
Hartogg, Lady, *Living India.*

Detailed bibliographies will be found in the various volumes of *The Cambridge History of India.*



INDIA

PART I

CHAPTER I

THE HINDU HERITAGE

INDIA has ever been a romantic puzzle to the West, the home of adventures like those of the Arabian Nights, the abode of magic and magicians, the region to which, even in these days of waning faith, men turn for confirmation of their hope that after all the spiritual can dominate the material. The finest Indian minds have been convinced that man is an empty shadow and disquieteth himself in vain. Their normal outlook is transcendental. The world which matters is not the material universe which we study and analyse so eagerly, but the spiritual, lying behind and beyond what can be seen or touched. Its influence, though unseen, is constant. It envelops every aspect of life, and success depends on enlisting the aid of the appropriate powers by the use of the appropriate formulas and the performance of the appropriate actions. Hence the endless prayers which must be recited without error, the elaborate ritual which must be performed without a slip, accompanying every stage of Hindu life from generation to extinction.

Hindu civilization is the last great civilization of this kind to survive. Its roots go back into that ancient world which came into being in Sumer and Egypt; and the orthodox Brahman of to-day would probably find far more in common with a priest of Ur or Memphis than with the modern educated European. His mythology would differ, but the functions and nature of the gods, and



The proper methods of invoking and indeed of compelling their support, would display a strong family resemblance. What therefore peculiarly distinguishes India from the rest of the existing world is the strong survival of direct inheritance from the remote past.

Indian society, therefore, merits something of that awe with which we instinctively regard the very old. It is unique in its massive permanence. But it owes its duration rather to circumstance than to its own inherent qualities. There is probably no good reason why Hinduism should not have perished, like so many other ancient civilizations, under the stress of conquest, save that it has been protected by the extent of its territory and the multitude of its followers. In this, as in many other respects, the development of India has been controlled by its geographical conditions. It is so vast a region that none of its innumerable conquerors has been able to modify its way of life or change its mode of thought. It is infinitely absorbent, like the ocean. At all events until the coming of the Muslims, fierce and warlike tribes again and again invaded its northern plains, overthrew its princes, captured and laid waste its cities, set up new states and built new capitals of their own, and then vanished into that great tide of humanity, leaving to their descendants nothing but a swiftly diluted strain of alien blood and a few shreds of alien custom that were soon transformed into something cognate with their overmastering surroundings.

If the bulk of India was so great as to swallow and absorb influx after influx of invaders, the nature of its physical conditions was such as to encourage a swift advance from primitive to civilized life, but to stay all further efforts at the practical mastery of natural forces. The broad plains stretching along its great northern river, the Ganges, newly formed as the geologist reckons newness, infinitely fertile and abundantly watered, were marked out as the scene of early, swift development.



Agriculture was so easy as to spring up of itself. The soil only needed to be scratched and seed scattered on the surface. The seasons were so strongly marked and so regular in their return that early cultivators were led on almost without thought to observe and profit by the cycle. Their heavy crops meant a rapid multiplication of men, the early growth of cities along the river-banks, and corresponding development of the human arts. But this advance was dependent altogether on the working of nature. Disaster when it came was not of the kind that early man could reckon with or prepare against. When in that soft, rockless soil the river changed its course, when the rains failed to fall in their season and the water-courses dried up, when earthquakes ruined wide cultivated areas, there was no possible remedy. Such conditions breed a strong early development, but render difficult and unlikely the more elaborate stages which the human race may attain amidst more exigent surroundings.

So it also was with Indian seafaring. There, too, the early steps were easy, the later ones difficult if not impossible. The Indian seas are subject to the same irresistible cycle as the land. The south-west wind sets in in mid-May and blows strongly for at least three months. It then veers northward. Later in the year, from mid-October, it blows strongly from the north-east. The result was that sea-voyages were easier in Indian waters than in any other region of similar extent. There was a season when it was easy to sail to Malacca, and another when it was easy to return; there was a time to sail to the Persian Gulf or the Red Sea, and a time to sail back again. Indian seafaring, like Indian agriculture, was therefore an early development. But while the variable, fickle winds of our European shores encouraged men to experiment in sailing at all seasons of the year, the strong and regular winds of the Indian Ocean precluded further experiment, and so precluded further



his ministers or advisers of the rulers. But though they refrained from writing the chronicles of their time, they composed text-books of political practice and treatises on law. One example of the first, several of the latter, survive. The text-book of politics, ascribed to a minister of the founder of the Mauryan dynasty, but in its extant form apparently a later revision of some early text, is a book not of theory but of advice. It tells us nothing of the theory of the state, but abounds in suggestions as to the best ways of overcoming an enemy, of dealing with one's neighbours, of breaking up a league. It is the Indian parallel of Machiavelli's *Prince*. The law texts, too, are peculiar. They must be accepted, not as statements of what the law was at any given time, but as statements of what learned and pious Brahmans thought it ought to be. It is impossible to say to what extent these texts ever coincided with practice. An orthodox and pious king, in a case of difficulty or where prevailing custom was uncertain, probably followed one of them; but he lay under no obligation to do so, and his subjects must have regarded established custom as far more imperative than any of the law-writers.

It would be a waste of time to sketch the rise and fall of the multitude of states which appeared in India from the time of Alexander the Great down to the end of the first millennium of the Christian era. A brief description of them is, however, necessary. They fall into two main classes. One was essentially tribal in origin and organization, commanding the allegiance of all possessing the common blood of the tribe. This was in general a loose federation of the heads of clans, and depended for its power, not on any close-knit organization, but on racial pride and the consciousness of common brotherhood. Something of the same kind survives to this day, though in a narrow area and with restricted power, in the tribal organizations of the north-west frontier. Two of these early tribal states or state-groups were particularly



—one at the beginning, the other at the end, of the period just indicated. The earlier was that of the Lichchavis, the tribe in which the Buddha was born, and which retained the veneration of contemporaries long after it had ceased to wield political authority. The later was that of the Rajputs. Descended, as it would seem, from invaders of Scythian blood who entered India after the fall of the native Gupta empire, they were speedily adopted wholesale into the Hindu social system, but retained an intense pride of blood which still distinguishes their descendants. The clans into which they divided cherished a closely-graduated order of precedence frequently leading to violent internal struggles between clan and clan. These effectively prevented the formation of a Rajput empire, which would otherwise have been assured by their dashing bravery. Their organization was based on a close connection between land-holding and military service, and the Rajput noble in many ways resembled a feudal baron. Throughout their history Rajput kings have always had to reckon with these nobles whose privileges, unlike those of the average large Indian land-holder, were real and solid, supported by clan-custom and the military power of the clansmen.

The other type of state was founded on a mercenary army and lacked the peculiar limitations which a clan or tribal system imposed on a king's power. The size of these military states varied greatly, but whatever their size, their continuance always depended on their powers of aggression. No king likely to hand on his power to his descendants was ever content with the territories which he held. Conquests would mean larger revenues and greater armies and increased security. The political history of these states was therefore one of ceaseless war. The autumnal feast of Dasara, falling when the summer rains and summer heats were over, when the land was dry, when armies could march without fear of



development. Here again man was faced by elements which he could not dream of controlling, but which were generally calculable and therefore productive of an abnormally early, but yet limited, development.

Geographical control is clearly at work, also, on the political side of Indian activities. At the dawn of history we find all the human elements out of which the Greeks and Romans of our own classical antiquity fashioned their republics—tribes governed by the heads of families or heads of clans, little city-states, guilds of many kinds clearly exercising wide powers of self-government, villages with elected authorities, organized to manage their own affairs. Why was it that all these germs, out of which strong, self-governing institutions might have grown, gradually perished and made way for an almost purely autocratic polity? One reason, perhaps the strongest, lies in Indian geography. Free institutions are only possible either in tiny areas where the whole body of citizens can be gathered together or in regions where communications have been so far developed as to permit the practice of representative government. In early days the first is the only possibility; and while the Greeks, in the minute compartments into which their country is divided, could develop the democratic city-state, at all events until the empire of Macedon arose close beside them, the far-stretching plains of India denied to tribes and cities the protection afforded by the islands, the peninsulas, the mountains of Greece. As soon as a conqueror arose, whether from within or from without, he met no natural bounds to the expansion of his dominions. His armies could march on and on; his power could extend over great regions; tribal governments and city-states could offer no successful resistance to his might; and the typical Indian state thus came to be based, not on free political institutions, but on military power. India was made by nature to be the home of empires, transient as all military dominion



may be, but, when shattered by internal dissension or foreign invasion, always tending to be replaced by another of a like nature.

The political history of early India thus came to be the ceaseless formation and disintegration of large states despotically governed. Some of these were of great extent with good and regular administration. The Mauryan empire of the fourth and third centuries before Christ, the Gupta empire of the fourth and fifth centuries of the present era, not only extended over all northern India, but were for prolonged periods, as far as can be judged, well governed, exciting the wonder and admiration of strangers from the west. But it is not here that the real history of India lies. Empire after empire, dynasty after dynasty, rose and fell, leaving no trace of political progress, and indeed leaving no materials out of which history in the modern sense of the word can be constructed. Even the chronological skeleton has not yet been completed, after a century of close study and archæological research. The heroes and kings are shadows of legend. Of some we have images stamped upon the coins that they issued; of others inscriptions recording pious grants of lands or commemorating great victories over their neighbours; of one a series of moral edicts inculcating on his subjects the Buddhist way of life. But no contemporary tells us whether the images were good likenesses, whether the pious grants were made out of benevolence of heart or in atonement for crime, whether the edicts were observed or neglected.

From a western standpoint nothing is odder than the almost complete lack of history or chronicle in the surviving literature. Indeed the metrical chronicle of Kashmir is the sole example of this kind of work. While the monks of European cloisters busily recorded what they saw and heard, the Brahmans of India evidently deemed the history of their kings unworthy of record or comment, and yet they must have played a great part



being bogged, and when warriors could wear their armour without fainting under the heat of the sun, was the consecrated time for entering on campaign; and the active monarch would then set out, year after year, without intermission. Dynasties which could produce a succession of able generals naturally came to rule over a great extent of territory. But their conquests did not necessarily mean the disappearance of the families whom they overthrew. The larger their dominions the greater the incentive, in those days of slow communication and therefore of defective organization, to leave a defeated ruler in power as tributary, and so out of the military state there emerged what may be called the imperial state, ruled by an emperor whose superiority was acknowledged by a multitude of inferior kings. Such a state acknowledged no limit to its authority. Its character was continental, not tribal, or religious, or linguistic.

An emperor—*chakravartin* as he was called in Sanskrit—would justify his claim to that title by performing the great horse-sacrifice. The horse was the sacred animal of the Sanskrit-speaking peoples who invaded India about 2000 B.C., and the horse-sacrifice was perhaps the last survival of that Aryan cult. A claimant to the rank of emperor would release a chosen horse, which would be left to roam wherever he would for a year, followed by an armed escort to protect him from insult. All those territories in which the horse was allowed to roam at will were reckoned to have acknowledged the emperor's supremacy. Any attempt to seize or injure the horse was an act of defiance. When the year's wandering was over the horse was led back, to become the central figure of long and elaborate ceremonies, designed to secure the fertility and success of the ruling house, and culminating in the sacrifice of the horse itself. This curious custom shows the unlimited claims which a successful dynasty was expected to put forward. Dominion was, or ought to be, universal.



The organization of such states was variable and indefinite. Territory not ruled by subordinate kings would be divided into provinces, each governed by an official who would represent the sovereign in all his various functions—commanding the troops, levying revenue, administering justice. At the capital, which might have a special organization of its own, the sovereign would reside, at all events in the non-campaigning season, and there also would be his chief agents and ministers, who would form a council of state. But since the ministers were appointed and dismissed by the act of the sovereign, the functions of the council were advisory only, except when the ruler was himself a nonentity. No doubt the position varied with the personal character of the ruler. But in fact there could be no formal limitation of his power.

Nor could any limitation arise, as it arose so often in the West, through finance. In India, as in many other eastern countries, the sovereign shared the produce of the land with the cultivator. His representatives might stand on every threshing-floor to divide the produce; and none but the king had any formal right to declare how it should be divided. Custom was the normal standard; but state-needs vary so greatly and so often that in such a matter custom could seldom harden into a rule which the king would not lightly disregard. The limit which could not prudently be passed was the demand which just would not induce the peasant to forsake the land and seek shelter under some less oppressive governor. A good king was moderate in his levies; a bad one took all he thought he safely could. This land revenue, taken mostly in kind and used for the maintenance of the king's court and his armies, was the main source of the state income; but it was far from being the only source. Surviving lists of taxes suggest that almost every form of human activity was laid under contribution. The weaver paid a fee for his loom and



the trader for his shop. Taxes were levied on marriages. Merchandise passing along the roads paid toll at numerous customs-posts, while many individual articles were the subject of monopolies. Coined money was probably scarce and used only in the larger transactions; the accumulated capital was small; and the only great accumulations of wealth were to be found in the king's treasury. In short, there is good reason for supposing that taxation and the distribution of wealth were essentially mediæval.

What circumscribed the ruler's powers in these military and imperial states was neither the privileges of the nobles nor the strength of the council nor yet the rights of the people. Within their limited scope such rulers were virtually uncontrolled save by moral and religious considerations. But we must remember that their scope was small, and that many things were determined either by custom or by public opinion. These imperial states were primarily concerned with their own maintenance and extension. Armies and taxation formed their chief preoccupation. Then came the detection and punishment of political crime. The great official who hatched plots against the king's life, the private citizen who harboured the king's enemies, would be liable to exemplary punishment. Armies of spies were employed, both men and women, to seek out and bring to light such misdeeds. But the subject who paid his taxes and was not suspected of plotting against the king was left to manage the rest of his affairs in accordance with the rules and customs of society.

It is true that the exercise of the state-powers was in theory limited by law. But in Indian conception law was an abstract ideal, to be determined by the meditation of sages, without any necessary relation with the customs of the people. The Brahmans would say that the king's duty was to uphold and enforce the law; and every good and orthodox king would agree with them and, so far as



circumstances allowed, follow their advice. But the surviving evidence is too slight to show how far and how often this was the case. It must usually have been much more expedient to obey established custom than the dictates of the law-books.

In short, the political achievement of ancient India was not extraordinary. Many names of great conquerors and warriors survive. Indian kings and ministers devised means by which extensive empires might be governed in peace and good order. But no great law-givers (as distinct from theorists) emerge, no great political organizer. What survives of early Indian political history confirms and emphasizes the conclusion to be drawn from the historical and political insignificance of Sanskrit literature. Hindu genius did not run along political lines. The Brahmans did not compile the histories of their kings because they did not reckon them important. And they were not.

The social history of the Hindu world stands on a totally different footing, and presents a totally different aspect of Hindu constructive capacity. The solidity of the Hindu social system contrasts remarkably with the flimsiness of the political organization. The Hindu state is the sport of circumstance; Hindu society has survived all that the external world could do against it. If the imperial state of the Mauryas or the Guptas suggests that Indians had small talent for framing durable institutions, the caste-system suggests a precisely opposite conclusion.

Western observers have usually thought that the caste-system represents an undue and improper rigidity of social structure. But its history suggests that such defect has been an occasional and temporary, rather than a permanent and essential feature. Many theories have been put forward to account for the origin of this unique organization of society. Race, occupation, Aryan custom, have all been argued by one writer or another to



have formed its principal foundation. But elaborate or exclusive explanations are probably misleading, and the development can be reasonably ascribed to normal human reaction to somewhat peculiar circumstances. At the dawn of Indian history no caste is discernible. Society was composed of classes—the soldier-class and the priest-class at the top, with a miscellaneous class below them. Any valiant man of his hands could enter the first, any wise and learned man the second, and those who were at once brave and wise could pass from one of the superior classes to the other.

This condition was soon complicated by the entrance of many foreign races into India. The fertility and consequent wealth of northern India inevitably attracted strange tribes from the warlike, predatory regions of Central Asia; while geography determined that they should all enter by one main route, and, having entered, should all expand along one well-defined pathway. The long coastline of India never formed an approach for invaders until the coming of European influences at the close of the fifteenth century. In Hindu times all possible invaders were landmen, and approached India on horseback, not on ship-board. They were compelled to traverse one or other of the passes on the north-west—the Kurram and the Khyber being the chief. They then found themselves in the Panjab. A southern movement would only lead them down the Indus to the sea-coast—the route followed by Alexander the Great, and he followed it only because his men were wearying for home and refused to pursue the natural way into the heart of India. The natural, easy route lay south-east across the upper courses of the Panjab streams into the Jumna-Ganges valley, the richest and most prosperous region of the whole country. From this there was small temptation to diverge. Along the north ran the wall of the Himalayas. To the south at first lay the barren hills of the Indian desert, and then a zone of densely-wooded



and hilly country stretching right across the peninsula. The point where Patna now stands marks the natural eastern limit of an advance. The current of expansion would then turn back westwards, along the northern slope of the central barrier, till it reached the region now known as Malwa and Gujarat, which was protected by the desert from the north. There a route opened southward into the Deccan, and the current of movement would pass south-eastwards down the valley of the Godavari across the Deccan into the Carnatic.

The influence of invasions was thus concentrated, and their path canalized, by nature. There was no diffusion, as might have happened had invaders landed at scores of different points along the coast. They tended to settle in mass; and when new invaders followed, the old ones either were pushed on or allowed the former to advance through them into new lands. Invaders therefore did not scatter, but clustered together, usually forming a superior class in the territory they occupied, while they retained and doubtless protected a considerable number of the original inhabitants, who tilled the fields for the support both of themselves and of their new masters.

These two classes were sharply contrasted in colour. The newcomers from Central Asia were fair; the original inhabitants dark. The very word used to describe these social divisions was the Sanskrit word which means "colour." Thus naturally arose that pride in whiteness of skin which persists in India still, and it is due, not to the colour-sense of modern Europeans, but to the colour-sense of those Aryan-speaking men from whose tongue all northern Indians draw their current speech. These early social classes were therefore distinguished not only by occupation but also by race and the evident physical marks of race. The invaders, in their sense of superiority, kept aloof as much as possible from physical intermingling with the inferior peoples they had conquered. This feeling was strengthened by the fact that geographical



influences tended to keep the newcomers in compact bodies. So the social distinction of occupation was reinforced by an unusually strong disinclination to intermarriage. The basis of caste had emerged. For a long time this new idea remained floating in the air. New classes arose as society developed, but the new classes were occupational only, and as yet were not regarded as exclusive social units. The Brahman—the priest and teacher—for example, might be recruited from any class; and ethnological evidence points strongly to the view that the Brahman in every region was drawn from the general body of inhabitants. At first the ruling class—the Kshatriyas—was undoubtedly superior to the Brahman, but early Sanskrit literature has frequent references to Kshatriyas becoming Brahmans and *vice versa*. The Vaisyas, the trading and professional class, also developed, somewhat inferior to the ruling and priestly classes, but immeasurably superior to the vast lower class of peasants and cultivators. We do not know by what process or at what point of time these four social classes assumed the character of castes. But colour distinction and pride of race must constantly have been working in that direction, and the tendency as time passed was strengthened and consolidated by Brahman speculation.

The first stage probably lay in securing the Brahman's social pre-eminence. The original faith of the early Sanskrit-speaking invaders seems to have been a simple nature-worship, conducted mainly by the head of the household. But this was soon modified, and indeed transformed, probably by the influence of the original cults of the country. The early Vedic deities vanished and were replaced by others whom we suppose to have been long worshipped in India. Along with the change of gods went a change of ritual, derived probably from the same source. The simple sacrifices which could be performed by the head of the family gave way to elaborate, highly



ritualistic ceremonial, which could be performed only by trained men, for no one else knew the right order in which every act must be done or the formulas by which every act must be accompanied. This change evidently coincided with the appearance of the priestly class as such, and as soon as it was accomplished the social superiority of the Brahman came within sight. Without his help the king and warrior could not expect success in rule or combat, for he alone could say when the divine forces would be favourable, and he alone could perform the sacrifices which would compel the assistance of the gods. With that superiority would go an increasing respect for the theories which he might formulate.

On the social side those theories, backed by myth and legend, strongly favoured the growth of caste out of the social classes already formed. The ruling class was disinclined to wed outside its own blood ; its social inferiors were naturally disposed to follow the example of the "best people" in order to raise their own status. If the Kshatriyas should not marry outside their own class, neither should the Brahmins. The limitation of marriage within the class group thus became first a habit and then a dogma. Later it spread to the trading and professional class. As soon as this occurred the lowest stratum, the Sudras, were left with none but themselves with whom marriage was a matter of propriety.

These restraints on marriage form the social basis of a caste system, and where they exist caste has been established. But they do not form the only characteristic of caste. Another universal phenomenon is the dislike of eating in company with persons whose habits differ widely from one's own. As regards marriage-rules Hindu society in this early period did not differ greatly from Roman society, with its prohibition of inter-marriage between the patrician and the plebeian. But to this was added the prohibition of eating together. In a hot country, where a neglect of personal cleanliness becomes



immediately noticeable and where a scrupulous cleanliness in preparing food is essential, the conditions existed in which this second prohibition would grow up swiftly and strongly. Beginning no doubt in an aristocratic dislike of dirt and ill-odours, it was speedily developed into a dogma. Human beings do, in fact, first form customs and then evolve theories to justify them. So it was with the Hindus. As in the case of inter-marriage, so also in the case of inter-eating. The former, by reason of a well-developed colour-sense, was declared to be a wrongful act. The latter, based on purely practical considerations, was reinforced by a whole theory of spiritual pollution. Brahman metaphysics transformed physical dirtiness, with its consequent malodours and disease, into a spiritual contagion which made men incapable of spiritual functions, rendering both invocations and sacrifices useless and even harmful. A natural consequence of this theory was the idea that the higher castes not only could not sit at meat with the lower, but also could not eat food prepared by them, could not drink water drawn by them, could not come into physical contact with them, could not even suffer their approach within certain carefully graduated distances proportioned to their estimated capacity of pollution.

The first consequence of these views was the classification of human groups into polluting and unpolluting. The three superior castes, Brahman, Kshatriya and Vaisya, were reckoned clean, though not equally clean. The remainder were unclean, though variously unclean. Thus began a new tendency for society further to subdivide itself. It can be traced in all the major groups. In so great a country as India men belonging to the same class would in different regions develop different customs, or a party would abandon their original home and settle in some other part, or a new sect would arise paying special devotion to some new aspect of the gods. So sub-castes sprang up within the



original castes. The Kshatriyas of one state would not acknowledge the Kshatriyas of another as their equals; a group of emigrants probably would not maintain their purity of blood; a new sect would certainly claim superiority over more conservative followers of the gods, and even though that superiority might not be conceded, their claim would tend to restrict intercourse with their fellow-men.

Among the Sudras two main influences were working in this direction—blood and occupation. Tribal unity was a strong dissevering factor, and where one tribe was surrounded by others conscious of tribal quarrels and following various tribal customs, all the elements existed out of which a group of distinct castes would develop. And probably occupation was at a somewhat later time an equally powerful influence. Some occupations are certain to be despised. In India the barber, the washerman, above all the leather-worker who flays dead animals and handles their skins with processes which proclaim their offensiveness far and wide, were universally despised, and so were driven into forming social groups, which gradually hardened into castes. In a like manner, though for different reasons, the skilled craftsmen did the same. In their case probably the dominant motive was the desire to preserve trade-secrets. The carpenter, goldsmith or weaver would not care to teach his mystery to any but his own immediate relations, and for the same reason would prefer to marry his children to the people of his own craft.

Thus Hindu society, in that long period which runs from the Aryan invasion to the coming of the Muslims, came gradually to be composed of a great number of self-contained units. None approved of marriages contracted by a member with anyone outside. The unpolluting castes, the "twice-born" as they were called, added to this a strict observance of the people with whom they ate and of those whom they allowed to



approach them or prepare their food. Socially it is peculiar, not in the ideas which underlie the system, for those are to be found wherever circumstances encourage their development, but in the extent to which they were carried, and in the systematic way in which the idea of pollution was applied from top to bottom. Many other peoples have known caste, but only the Hindus have had a caste system.

I have dwelt on this topic at some length, because socially and therefore politically the caste organization and the ideas underlying it form the major inheritance of the modern Hindu world. Nothing in Hindu history is more striking than the contrast between the degrees of organization exhibited by the Hindu state and Hindu society. In fact it is clear that many of the defects of the first were compensated by the second, although it is no less certain that the caste system was a source of great political weakness. Indeed behind the whole development lay a profound belief that the mode in which men lived was of incomparably greater importance than the way in which they were governed.

The political importance of the caste system lay in the extent to which it supplemented the defective organization of the state. The maintenance of caste implied an effective organization of its own. How did Hindu society ensure that its elaborate rules were obeyed? Some men are always defiant of control, and how were their eccentricities prevented from breaking up this system? Every caste and every local caste-group was organized for its own protection. Custom varied, but normally each would have its committee of elders, who would decide questions laid before them in accordance with the established custom of the caste. Against their decision rebellion was extremely difficult. If an individual refused to obey the ruling of the caste-committee, he would be outcasted; he could neither eat nor drink nor sit with his fellow-castemen; the local barber would



to shave him; the washerman would not wash his clothes. He would be thus marked out for derision, contempt, and a complete exclusion from the society to which he was accustomed. His only remedy would be either to comply with the sentence of the caste-committee or to seek refuge in some distant place where he would be a stranger having no group with which he could claim unquestioned communion. Such a power was virtually irresistible. And the matters which might be referred to such caste-committees were numberless. Hinduism, like all other early religions, embraces every aspect of life; and the caste-committees were intended to see that every man observed the rules of his religion. Thus below the despotic organization of the state there lay a widespread social organization which ruled and guided the lives of men in accordance with popular opinion.

In this way the caste-system went far to make good the limitations and defects of the Indian state-system. But from another aspect its influence was politically baneful. As the system developed, the idea of *dharma*—the moral duties confided to each caste—developed also, and these moral duties extended beyond the modern scope of morals. They embraced not merely the personal and social functions of the individual, but his economic and political functions, rendering the latter also matters of religious obligation and limitation. Thus it was the moral duty of the warrior-caste to fight and govern, of the priest to study, meditate, and sacrifice, of the trader to trade and of the agriculturist to till the ground; and in these positive obligations lay implicit the limitation that the caste-man ought not to perform the political or economic functions of a caste other than his own. On the economic side these limitations have been brought out by scores of disputes which have arisen when men have tried to invade the privileges of others. Early British administrators were constantly besieged by petitioners complaining, not merely that some other



group was borrowing ceremonial appropriated to its
betters, but also that other men were seeking to exercise
the complainants' economic functions. Oil-sellers would
not suffer crushers of oil-seed to sell oil. Washermen
would not permit others than their own caste-men to
wash and bleach cloth. From our present point of view,
however, the political effect of this elaborate division of
labour is even more important. It implied that the
only groups which possessed and ought to exercise
political duties were the warriors and their priestly
advisers. Other men were called upon only to pay the
state-revenues and obey the state-commands. Nobody
desired them to fight for or defend the state. They were
not reckoned to possess fighting capacity. They were
passive subjects. Consequently, save perhaps where, as
among the Rajputs, the state had a tribal basis, its power
lay not in its total population but in the numbers of a
particular class. Only men of a particular blood ought
to fight, consequently were practised in war, consequently
were capable of effective rebellion. In fact, similar
conditions to those which enabled mediæval English
kings to conquer and rule great provinces of France
permitted Indian kings to invade and despoil their
neighbours with never a thought of popular opposition.
It was not the people's business to defend the state under
which they lived.



CHAPTER II

THE MUSLIM HERITAGE

INVASIONS have been the dominating influence of Indian history. The earliest recorded entrance of a foreign race—the invasion of the Aryan-speaking men at the dawn of Indian civilization—was the most important because it begat that famous Sanskritic culture which seems to have sprung from the reactions of the vigorous invaders to the ideas of a much older and perhaps more cultured people. The successive groups of invaders who followed the Aryans in the course of the next two thousand years or so, strengthened the growth of that remarkable social system which we have just been considering, and added new and virile strains to Indian blood; but they contributed little to a culture which had already taken shape. These new groups were absorbed into it with relatively little disturbance. Foreign conquerors might create new empires and overthrow old ones; but the social and religious life of the country continued to flow on in its accustomed course.

But towards the end of the first millennium of the Christian era the passes of the north-western hills admitted new conquerors, unlike any who had preceded them. They were unlike the Central Asian tribesmen who had found their way into India, for they carried with them a fiercely militant faith, and stubbornly refused to be absorbed into the Hindu world. They were unlike their Aryan predecessors, for they would not blend with Hinduism to produce a new culture. They were by creed and custom so different that they clave India into two distinct, irreconcilable worlds.



India had ever known a great variety of religions. Buddhism and Hinduism had long struggled for supremacy, but both were of Indian origin, the offspring of the same complex mental qualities; and gradually the followers of the Buddha had come to adopt Hindu ideas, so that, while Buddhism survived as a distinct religion in the foreign regions into which it was carried by Indian missionaries, in India it virtually perished. Hinduism itself, for the common man a system of ritual covering every aspect of life and for the initiated a metaphysic into which all ideas could be absorbed, was essentially catholic in the literal meaning of the word. It was a religion void of creed and dogma. Its gods formed no exclusive group. Its pantheon stood ever open for the admission of new deities, who could always be naturalized as an aspect of one of the established gods. To this Islam offered the fiercest contrast. It was resolutely monotheist. "There is no god but God," was the very essence of its faith. Every good Muslim was bound to regard the Hindu, bowing himself before an unlimited multitude of deities, with the same horror with which Muhammad himself and his first followers had regarded the pagan rule against which they had rebelled and which they had victoriously overthrown. The Hindu, nurtured in a mystic world in which the symbol and the thing symbolized were ultimately one, filled his temples with representations of divine power. The Muslim clung closely to the Mosaic command, "Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image." Hindu philosophers, subtly conscious that disputes between the rival schools were mere wars of words, would listen to any theory of the universe that could be propounded to them. The Muslim was sure, more than sure, that truth was one and indivisible, revealed to the Prophet, and that whatever conflicted with his teaching was unalterably false. Even popular practices were equally opposed and hostile. All Hindus regarded (and



storage regard) the cow as a sacred animal. Its very excrements were purifying. To kill it was the worst of all sins, to eat its flesh the greatest of all pollutions. The Muslim, however, ate and enjoyed beef. Muslims have come to hold almost a monopoly of the butcher's trade in India. Above all, at their great festival of Bukr Id, they delighted (as they still delight) to choose kine as the animals to be sacrificed and eaten ceremonially, and they would lead them through the streets as a testimony at once of their piety and of their scorn of the heathen idolaters around them.

The entrance of Islam into India was therefore a new phenomenon. Earlier invaders had permitted their ancestral beliefs and deities gradually to be merged in Hinduism. Muslims could not without altogether breaking their communion with fellow-Muslims elsewhere. And here again was a great force strengthening the natural hostility between the followers of the rival religions. Earlier invaders had not been members of a great and militant church. Their settlement in India had been followed by the abandonment of relations with those of their race elsewhere. But the Muslims in India were constantly receiving new immigrants from neighbouring and orthodox Muslim lands. They were constantly looking for support and recognition from the Caliph of the Faithful. That alone (they seem to have felt) would consecrate and justify their power. They were driven, therefore, scrupulously to maintain their reputation for orthodoxy; and even when some among them began to be contaminated by their idolatrous surroundings, there always existed a numerous section which boasted its strict adherence to the sacred law. Foreign influences thus counteracted that absorbent power which Hinduism had till then always displayed.

The advent of Islam marks a momentous change in India, for it broke the unity of Indian civilization. In another way, too, its influence is deeply marked. It



begins a great series of Indian chronicles. Whereas Hindu history is a matter of archæology, scrappy and almost incoherent, Muslim history possesses a wealth of documents which render it, if not complete, at least intelligible. We still lack that wealth of administrative papers which enables one to follow the working and policy of a modern state from day to day with great certainty, and which is casting new and unexpected light on the mediæval western world. But the Muslim chronicles are far superior to our own mediæval chronicles. They were written for the most part, not by monks, but by men of affairs, often by contemporaries who had seen and taken part in the events which they recount. In certain respects, indeed, they are seriously lacking. We know what the Muslims did and thought; but we do not know (except through Muslim accounts) what Hindus were doing and thinking. Again, their pages are filled with wars, with court intrigues, with murders and massacres; but of the life of the people we know hardly more than in the previous period. But when all allowance has been made for these inevitable limitations, the Muslim period is one of vivid, living men, whereas the Hindu period is one of shadows.

The Muslim invasions of India illustrate strikingly how powerful a control was exercised over such events by geographical conditions. They begin with the Muslim conquest of Sind by the governor of Basra in 711. The Muslims found no difficulty in establishing themselves there; but once there they made no further expansion. As invaders who turned southward necessarily found, progress was barred by deserts. The conquest of Sind was therefore a mere episode. But towards the close of the tenth century a considerable Muslim power arose on the north-west frontier at Ghazni. No successful invasions of India have been made except by powers which were either established in, or could control, the region which we now call Afghanistan. Mahmud of



Ghazni began a series of inroads into India, inspired by a hatred of the infidel and a love of plunder. Under him Ghazni became one of the famous capitals of the Muslim world, and the Panjab became a Muslim province. A century later the rulers of Ghor overthrew the Ghazni state, and under Muhammad of Ghor expansion became a more settled, serious policy. Their generals advanced far into India, and established the first Indo-Muslim empire. Their main capital was Delhi, a spot marked out by nature as the capital of northern India. It lies on the water-way into the central Gangetic plains. No invader from the north-west can pass it by. No defender of the Ganges valley can suffer an enemy to pass beyond it. It has therefore been the scene of constant battle. The legendary war of the old Sanskrit epic, the *Mahabharata*, was fought there. The decisive actions of the Muslim inroads were fought there, alike in the Hindu success of 1190 and in the Hindu failure of 1192. The first rolled back the tide of invasion, the second admitted it into the heart of the country. Again and again in later centuries the same blood-soaked soil was to be the region in which the judgment of the sword decided the political destiny of India, even down to the middle of the nineteenth century, when the recapture of Delhi from the mutineers marked a decisive stage in the suppression of the Mutiny.

Delhi formed therefore the natural centre of the new Muslim power. From 1200 to 1525 a series of Muslim dynasties ruled from that centre great tracts of Indian territory. The sultanate of Delhi, so called to distinguish it from the Mughal empire which succeeded it, in many ways resembled the imperial states of the Hindu period. The sultan did not necessarily exterminate the ruling families of the earlier time. As his power extended, he was more and more inclined, like the Hindu *chakravartin*, to allow chiefs to retain their position on condition that they acknowledged his supremacy, aided him in war,



nd. paid him tribute. Again, this Muslim state was a military state, depending for its maintenance upon military power and, so far as its subjects were concerned, demanding little beyond the regular payment of the revenues. It is likely that the general organization of government and methods of administration were but slightly changed. The chief ministers would belong to the new dominant faith; but the subordinate agents, the local collectors of revenue, the village headmen and the like, would almost always be unchanged. The new-comers were ignorant of Indian custom, and could not, even had they desired to, take over the detail of tax-gathering and government, and in general they met with the same acquiescence in their demands as had been accorded to the earlier Hindu states. Here the political weakness inherent in the caste-system was most apparent. It was not the duty of the common man to resist invaders, and resistance ceased when the Hindu rulers had been overthrown or subdued, and when the military castes had been defeated or taken into service. The Brahmans were as ready to advise and serve the new ruler as the old; and they, as always, formed the great body of administrative officials.

On the surface, therefore, the main changes were only the appearance of a new ruling and fighting group in the political and social system. But for its numbers and the various influences already mentioned, it might, like its predecessors, have been absorbed into the social system and become a sub-caste of the fighting and ruling class. Instead of that, however, the Muslims remained distinct, thus permanently establishing new and heterogeneous elements in the culture of the country. For instance, they brought with them new languages—their sacred language, Arabic, and their current form of speech, Persian. The latter was widely used in administration, and therefore learnt and used by Hindu functionaries, just as at a later time Brahman officials learnt and used English. Amid



these foreign surroundings, however, and on the lips of these foreign speakers, Persian acquired a new accent, and its vocabulary came to include Indian words, so that something not far removed from an Indian dialect of Persian came into being, regarded with contempt by Persians themselves as provincial and corrupt. Later still emerged a hybrid tongue, called characteristically Urdu—the language of the camp—which became the common speech of Indian Muslims, while a more Sanskritized variety of it—Hindustani—became a *lingua franca* for Northern India, where Muslim influences were strongest. Thus the language of the conquerors played something of the same part as had formerly been played by the language of the Aryan-speaking invaders at the dawn of Indian history.

With the Muslims came also a new law—the law of Islam. In its civil and religious aspects this made no difference and was obviously inapplicable to the conquered races. The criminal law, however, was enforced on all alike, and its provisions ensured that the political superiority of the Muslim should be clearly recognized. A Muslim accused of crime could be properly convicted only on the evidence of two True Believers. Infidel evidence, while it might be valid against an accused infidel, was technically valueless against the Muslim. More important still were the social and religious influences of the new-comers. Muslim society is essentially equalitarian. It offered thus as vigorous a contrast to the caste-system of the Hindus as Islam itself did to Hinduism. And Islam was perhaps the most vigorously missionary faith that the world has ever seen. Backed by all the prestige of political predominance, and by all the attractions which the promise of social equality can offer to the socially depressed, its advocates made considerable progress during the period of unquestioned Muslim supremacy in India. Perhaps the most remarkable conversion, at all events in mass, was the



acceptance of Islam by the inhabitants of the eastern region of Bengal; but numerous converts were also made in the middle Ganges valley, in the area of which Delhi was the natural centre.

Of the attitude of the Muslim Government to its Hindu subjects strongly conflicting views have been held. The Muslim chronicles of the period are all vehemently orthodox in tone. Their authors delight in enumerating the multitudes of infidels whom the victorious Muslims sent to hell. Surviving Muslim architecture often tells the same story. In many early mosques the steps leading up to the entrance are cut from monoliths on which Hindu craftsmen had carved figures of their gods, and thus the Faithful daily trampled under foot the symbols of that idolatry by which they were surrounded. The famous Mosque of the Might of Islam, at Delhi, was largely built from the defaced fragments of Hindu temples. The early conquerors were then not only deeply conscious of their triumphant power, but also zealous in marking their hatred and contempt of Hinduism. But while the nature of the two religions was such as to perpetuate a latent hostility, growing familiarity with at all events the external manifestations of Hindu worship was certain to tone down the shocked horror with which it had been at first regarded. The Hindus were too numerous to be exterminated by even the most blood-thirsty of conquerors; the economic need of them to act as clerks and accountants, to spin and weave clothing, to till the fields, to make the luxuries needed to adorn palaces, softened the ferocity of many Muslims; while the fact that immigrant Muslims, especially those of the highest classes, were town-dwellers and scarcely saw the country except when they moved through it at the head of armed hosts, minimized their contact with practices which they regarded with abhorrence. Moreover, Islam itself, in Mesopotamia and elsewhere, had already encountered problems similar



to those confronting Muslims in India. It was permissible for infidels to live under the protection of Islam so long as they were faithful subjects and paid the infidel poll-tax, the *jaziya*. On those terms they might be allowed to live and possess property. But none the less they were to be inferiors. The collectors of the poll-tax were to exhort them to change their ways, to rebuke their hardness of heart, to vilify the errors to which they clung. If on such terms they still elected to pursue damnation, that was the infidels' own concern and further punishment would be inflicted on them by the One True God.

Thus, despite the constant latent hostility, a *modus vivendi* grew up, Hindus being left to go their way, unless they chose to listen to the preaching of Muslim missionaries; but this contemptuous toleration was ever apt to be disturbed by casual circumstance or the personal character of the ruler. If a sultan thought his Hindu subjects were plotting against his power, or was inspired by more than ordinary zeal for the propagation of his creed, all Hindus were sure to suffer.

With the passing of time Muslim power expanded beyond the limits of the Ganges valley, turning back on itself along that zigzag line which, as has already been observed, geographical conditions had marked out as the inevitable course of invasions from the land-side of India. Muslims conquered Malwa and Gujarat; they then passed southward into the Western Deccan, and spread south-eastwards along the valleys of the Godavari and Krishna. At first these new conquests were controlled from Delhi. But difficulties of communication constantly tended to separate the new provinces from the Delhi sultanate. Only when a sovereign of unusual capacity ruled the State was there any unity of control and direction. So in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries there emerged a series of new Muslim states in Malwa and the Deccan—Muslim indeed, but less characteristically and vigorously Muslim than the Delhi sultanate.



This development curiously parallels the expansion of Aryan influences some two thousand years earlier. The Aryans, like the Muslims, established themselves firmly in the Panjab and the Gangetic plains, and on the first backward turn of the zigzag as far as the Malwa plateau. But as the two movements turned eastwards again, passing the Vindhya hills and penetrating into the Deccan, both evidently lost their initial purity and much of their initial power. Sanskritic influences on popular speech penetrate indeed into the Maratha country, lying just beyond the last angle of the zigzag, but there linguistic forces were evenly balanced, and the Marathi language is an amalgam of Sanskrit and the Dravidian tongues. Beyond it the speech of the people is Dravidian. So also with the Muslim movement. Marathi is the last language, if we follow the zigzag of advance, to show marked influences of Persian; while the Muslims who established themselves in the south were evidently subjected to far more powerful Hindu influences than ever they had been in the north. For one thing they formed a less solid block than they did in the north, where they were more constantly recruited by new immigrants from Persia and Turkestan. The southern Muslims therefore intermarried more frequently, and so admitted larger Hindu influences into their homes and into the up-bringing of their children than happened with their northern brethren. An accidental circumstance sharpened the cleavage which thus developed between the northern and the Deccani Muslims. It chanced that most of the families which established themselves over these southern sultanates belonged to the Shiah sect of Islam, while the Delhi sultanate was almost always governed by members of the Sunni sect. The southern states were therefore distinguished from the northern by sectarian differences, by the greater degree in which they submitted to Hindu influences, and by the frequency with which Hindus were admitted to high office under them. It



It is almost certain that the lot of their Hindu subjects was freer from depressing influences than was the case at Delhi.

In these Deccani sultanates we first find political differences emerging between the Muslim immigrants and the Deccani-born Muslims. The two came to form distinct factions, each seeking predominance at court, and their struggles constituted a violently disruptive influence. The Foreigners, as the former were usually called, were weaker in numbers, but abler, more vigorous, and more orthodox, while sectarian sympathies usually secured for them the support of the ruling princes. But these internal conflicts greatly weakened the southern Muslim states, and probably contributed to the relatively tolerant attitude of Islam within their borders. At the same time they certainly aided the tendency of these states to split up.

It is needless to recount the rise and fall of these southern dynasties. The major aspect of their history consists, not in their perpetually changing alliances and wars, but in their persistent attacks upon the great state of Vijayanagar, the last stronghold of Hindu political power, which (in the south) long survived the establishment of Islam in the north. Vijayanagar was an imperial state built up upon the need of checking the Muslim advance, and from the fourteenth century, when it was formed on the ruins of various preceding Hindu kingdoms, down to the middle of the sixteenth century, when it was finally overthrown, it stood forward as the champion of Hinduism. The Krishna formed the dividing line between Muslim and Hindu power, and for most of the period the struggle alternated, now on one side, now on the other, of the river. But at last the Hindu kingdom was overthrown by a confederacy of Muslim princes. Thus the comparatively Hinduized character of the southern sultanates by no means connoted Hindu-Muslim peace.

While these developments were proceeding in southern India the sultanate of Delhi had been decaying. The



rise of Mongol and then of Turkish power in Central Asia had led to renewed pressure on the north-west frontier of India. Sultan after sultan was obliged to employ his wealth and power in seeking to exclude the new invaders. When the Mongols and Turks adopted Islam, this pressure, so far from relaxing, tended to increase. For the new Muslims, in all the new-found zeal of converts, reckoned that the sultans of Delhi had neglected their religion in suffering multitudes of heathen to dwell around them. At the close of the fourteenth century Timur, Amir of Samarkand, resolved to teach them a lesson. At the end of 1398 he entered India. No recorded invasion led to such bloody consequences. Inspired, like many of the earlier Muslim invaders, by religious zeal rather than political ambition, he and his followers displayed an extraordinary ferocity. With no intention of establishing themselves in India, they felt no need to be on any other terms with its inhabitants than those of mutual hatred. Their route was marked by indiscriminate slaughter. When they arrived before Delhi, they found themselves encumbered with a multitude of captives whom they had been using for the performance of menial tasks. To free himself from the need of sparing guards to set over the prisoners, Timur ordered them all to be slain, and the order was carried out. Delhi itself was the scene of pillage and plunder for over a week, and the invaders then marched away, departing by way of Meerut, where every Hindu inhabitant is said to have been put to the sword.

This dreadful inroad brought the great days of the sultanate of Delhi to an end. For some fifty years northern India was divided up among a group of Muslim rulers. In the middle of the fifteenth century an Afghan tribe, the Lodis, established their pre-eminence over the land. But their power was never great or well-secured, and collapsed, hardly more than two generations after its inception, before a new, less fearful, but more



...durable group of invaders coming, as always, from the north-western passes.

In 1526 the famous Babur overthrew the Lodi sultan at Panipat, in that decisive area north of Delhi which held the political fate of India. The new invaders were Turks, who by an odd chance have always passed by the name of Mughals, *i.e.* Mongols, which they were not. Their leader was descended from the two greatest conquerors of the middle ages—Chingiz Khan and Timur. His family had been driven out of Samarkand, and he had made several endeavours to reconquer that ancestral kingdom; but, failing again and again, he settled at Kabul, where he built up a military power. The conditions had thus been established in which a new conquest of India became probable—a divided and enfeebled state at Delhi, an organized power established on the western side of the Sulaiman mountains. Babur at Kabul occupied the same position of advantage as had been enjoyed by Mahmud of Ghazni and Muhammad of Ghor.

Babur's autobiography, thanks to the character of its author, is a peculiarly charming work. A singularly gallant soldier, a lover of open air and sport, fond of poetry and flowers, by no means cruel as men went in those days, and anything but a fanatical Muslim, he was born to lead and dominate others. The Lodis could not stand for a moment before the skill and vigour of the new invader, and in a short time he became master of the greater part of upper India. His son, Humayun, an erratic creature, quickly lost what his father had gained; but at the close of his life succeeded in recovering many of the Mughal conquests. In 1556 he died, and then his son, Akbar, ascended the throne, and Akbar was the greatest man who ever governed India. He organized the Mughal empire, which his grandfather had founded, and the Mughal empire, distinguished in its early stages by new aims and a special character, is clearly the second phase of Muslim dominion in India.



The Delhi sultanate had always been a military state; its army had varied from the mercenaries of the earlier rulers to the tribal hosts of some of the later dynasties; but it had never risen to the conception of governing the country on behalf of all its peoples alike. The Mughal empire, however, at first exhibits a marked tendency to depart from the tradition of Muslim rule in India. The Mughals in general had lost much of that unreasoning zeal which characterizes the convert; while the Mughal imperial family in its earlier generations exhibited in its policy a notable disregard for orthodox convention. To some extent at all events this was due to inherited tendencies. For something like two centuries the family was always producing men who were not of the common breed, who would judge and think for themselves, in defiance of authority, while displaying mystical leanings which set them more in sympathy with the Hindu world than had been the case with any other Muslim ruling family. The tragedy of the imperial house lay in the fact that in one case only did these men wield the imperial power; and one can trace the growing weight of orthodox principles deflecting Mughal policy, from generation to generation, until it altogether loses the direction imparted to it by its earlier rulers. Until the close of the sixteenth century one might have hoped that the Mughals had been sent to obliterate the fundamental cleavage wrought in India by the establishment of Islam. But the next century was to show the impossibility of fulfilling such a dream, at all events by means of the agencies then operating.

Akbar's reign, very nearly coinciding with that of Queen Elizabeth in this country, and including the first contacts between India and England, seems on the surface to have been entirely military. The emperor was, in fact, constantly at war—suppressing rebellions or conquering new provinces. By the time of his death all northern India and Kabul acknowledged his authority,



and were welded into an empire. This represented a new feature. Never since the earliest Indian empire—that of the Mauryas—had the master of northern India ruled as well over the region beyond the north-west passes. So long as this condition prevailed, India was secure from overland invasions. Almost all earlier rulers had had to stand on guard in the Panjab, using up their resources in men and treasure to protect their dominions from invasion; the Great Mughals were free from that necessity. For two hundred years, therefore, India lay under no external peril; and so the possibility of a political union of India came into being. Akbar and his immediate successors were free, as no earlier Muslim rulers had been, to expand and consolidate their rule.

The organization of the new empire was Akbar's second great concern. Babur, the chivalrous knight errant, had been no organizer. Humayun, his erratic son, had been fully occupied, first with losing and then with re-establishing his throne. But Akbar, in the intervals of his campaigns, devoted his keen and active mind to the framing of a regular administration. The foundation of his state was necessarily military, and the army his first consideration. Here his main reform lay in doing his utmost to ensure that the army should be his own army, paid out of his own treasury. The system into which Indian rulers always tended to fall was one by which large numbers of the nominal army were maintained by nobles out of the grants of land-revenue made to them. The result had always been that the nobles neglected their duty, did not maintain their contingents, and employed their grants in enriching themselves and their families. By seeking to get rid of these military revenue-grants, by paying the commanders directly from the treasury, and by a regular system of inspection and control, Akbar made his army a more efficient weapon than had been known in India



for many centuries. At the same time he sought to revise the assessment and collection of the land-revenue. His aim was to institute a general system of cash payments based on the actual measurement of the fields and estimates of the out-turn of the crops. Here he was less successful than in the organization of his army. He had the aid of one excellent revenue minister, Todar Mal, but his policy had to be executed by a horde of subordinates, trained in a corrupt school and unwilling to make the mental and moral efforts needed to shake themselves out of traditional methods. A careful survey seems to have been made in the districts in the centre of Akbar's empire; but in the outlying regions the old customs still prevailed.

However, the greatness of Akbar's character is displayed rather by his dreams than by his achievements. A vigorous and gallant soldier, he was certainly no better than his grandfather; a lover of order, he owed much to the attempts and plans of other men. But as a king, he displayed a faculty for piercing into the very heart of a situation and seeking to remedy radical defects. If his remedies failed, his failure may well be reckoned more heroic than all his victories.

His greatness, as I see it, lay in regarding himself as king and protector of all his subjects, Muslim and Hindu alike, and in believing that the cleavage made by the establishment of Muslim rule must be brought to an end. Some of the sultans of Delhi had thought so too; but to them the only possible solution had seemed to be the extermination of Hinduism. Such a task had been beyond their power. To Akbar the solution lay, not in extermination but in union.

Such a choice came more easily to the Timurid family from which he sprang than to the earlier Muslim rulers. It inherited a notable lack of orthodoxy, drawn perhaps from the Mongol blood which flowed in its veins. It was given, for instance, to strong drink, in defiance of



the Prophet's prohibition. Babur, after mishaps attributed by his followers to divine anger, had publicly broken his drinking-cups and poured out on the earth the liquor which he was carrying with him. Akbar certainly inherited the vigour of mind which makes a man restless under the orders of traditional authority. He had been brought up as a strict Muslim of the Sunni sect ; but on occasion he saw, or thought he saw, visions, and from early days was inspired by a strong intellectual curiosity. He loved to listen to theological discussions ; and perhaps the mutual invective of Sunni and Shia may have led him to question the divine authority which each claimed for contradictory statements. Islam came to have but a slender hold upon him.

The close relations which he cultivated with the leading Hindu military chiefs gives the clue to his policy. The Rajputs, after the Muslim conquest, had retired westwards from the Delhi country into the difficult region now called Rajputana, where they could preserve much of their traditional independence. Having secured their recognition of his political supremacy, Akbar employed their leaders constantly, giving them high military commands, and himself marrying Rajput princesses. Although the ladies thus honoured were required to adopt the Muslim faith, their conversion can hardly have been more than formal, and with them a whole romantic world of Hindu legend and belief found its way into the imperial harim and formed part of the inheritance of many Mughal princes. The palace-fort which Akbar built for himself at Agra still testifies to the favour with which he regarded Hindu craftsmen and their art.

Another almost equally important point lay in his effort to emancipate Indian Muslims from external influences. One of the reasons why the Muslim invasion had differed so greatly from earlier invasions was that Indian Muslims had remained in close dependence on



external centres of Muslim organization. The sultans of Delhi had generally recognized the authority of the caliph; and even when the caliphate of Baghdad had fallen before Mongol invaders, and had been succeeded by the shadowy, almost fictitious caliphate of the Fatimites in Egypt, the caliph's sanction had still been sought for the succession and authority of Indian sultans. From the outset the Mughal sovereigns had regarded supreme power as an ancestral right. This at first had borne a secular rather than a religious character. But Akbar required his Muslim subjects to acknowledge him as caliph, as the Shadow of God upon earth, and to recognize him as invested with plenary authority to interpret the sacred law of Islam. In other words, he was trying to cut Indian Muslims adrift from foreign influences, and so to aid their adaptation to Indian conditions.

A further step in the same direction lay in what at first sight seem his curious efforts to set up a new faith. His intellectual curiosity has already been mentioned. At first this was limited to exploring the views of the various Muslim sects. But presently he passed on to investigate a wider field. He gathered together teachers of every religion known to him. Brahmans, Jains, Parsis, were all welcomed by him. He even summoned from Goa, where the Portuguese had been established ever since 1510, a group of Jesuit missionaries. To none of the rival systems would he give himself unreservedly, but out of them he framed an odd, eclectic creed. By the new faith (as by the old) he was to be acknowledged as sole temporal and spiritual head.

The promulgation of this new religion was accompanied by regulations designed to abolish many of the characteristic practices of Islam. He forbade the building and repair of mosques, the great fast of Ramzan, and even the pilgrimage to Mecca. He required his subjects to prostrate themselves before him, thus offering him



that the true Muslim should offer to God alone. He ordered them to shave their beards, thus depriving them of one of their distinguishing marks, for the Hindu shaves his face. Ornaments of gold and robes of silk were to be worn at prayer. Cattle were not to be slaughtered. The sun was to be adored. Men were to greet each other with the phrase *Allahu Akbar*, meaning "God is great," but capable also of meaning "Akbar is God."

All this has been described by many historians as "the outcome of ridiculous vanity, a monstrous growth of unrestrained autocracy." But I think the critics may have ignored or misapprehended Akbar's true aim. He was too great a man, his mind was too truthful and sincere, to have mistaken the motives which induced a number of his subjects to adopt the imperial creed. Perhaps he cared little whether the "Divine Faith," as he called his experiment in religion-making, succeeded or failed. It seems to me far less inconsistent with his known character to interpret his religious policy, not as the off-spring of megalomania, but as a deliberate attempt to isolate Indian Muslims, to make them suspect of their co-religionists elsewhere, to lead them into heretical practices, to promote their fusion with the Indian world into which they had intruded, so that some day Indian culture would once more be a united whole and the emperor would cease to be the enemy of one class or the other of his subjects. I think that is Akbar's great claim to remembrance and admiration.

Unfortunately for India his attempt failed. His policy led inevitably to an embittered hostility on the part of his Muslim subjects as a whole; and although he could beat down their attempts at rebellion, he could not destroy the influence of Islam or reconcile the irreconcilable. From his death onwards the history of the Mughal empire is the history of reviving orthodoxy.



His son and successor, Jahangir, was a bad Muslim, a heavy drinker, who owed his succession to his comparative orthodoxy, since his son and chief rival, Prince Khurram, was looked on as the heir of Akbar's heretical ideas. Jahangir was succeeded by his son Shah Jahan, under whom orthodox influences once more began to reassert themselves. His reign was a time of extraordinary magnificence. He built the Delhi palace and the Taj Mahal. The splendour of his court, the greatness of his wealth, the multitude of his subjects, have been made familiar to us by the accounts of the Europeans who in increasing numbers began to frequent India. But he is the emperor who definitely reverses religious policy, and begins once more to render the Hindu's life unpleasant. As he grows old and weak the real crisis of the empire develops. Of his numerous sons two stand out in strong contrast. One was Dara Shikoh, the eldest, a mystic like Akbar, but lacking his practical qualities, a friend of Hindus, a student and translator of Hindu philosophy, and even author of a tract designed to prove that the differences between Hindu and Muslim were matters only of language and expression ; the other was Aurangzib, a rigid Muslim, faithful in the observance of prayer and rite, and ambitious to restore the glory of Islam in India. After a war in which all Shah Jahan's sons bore a part, Aurangzib was victorious. He slew or imprisoned all his brothers, shut up his father in the fort at Agra, and proclaimed himself emperor almost at the time when Charles II was restored by Monk. Charles II was the great supporter of the English East India Company ; Aurangzib was the destroyer of the Mughal Empire.

Already in the days of Shah Jahan it had given signs of growing enfeeblement. On the political side one great feature of the empire had lain in its possession of the territory depending on Kabul. But in the reign of Shah Jahan the Persians had succeeded in capturing



the fortress of Kandahar. Expedition after expedition had been sent to recover it; one after another of the princes had been placed in command; but the Mughal efforts had failed. Kandahar became a Persian province. This loss showed that the military efficiency which had marked the earlier Mughals was passing away, while their security on the side of the western hills was weakening.

This was doubly significant at the moment when Islamic orthodoxy achieved control over the empire with the personal triumph of Aurangzib over Dara Shikoh. In the forty years of Aurangzib's reign element after element of weakness appeared. In the first place were the imperial efforts to establish Mughal authority over the Shia states of the Deccan. These were but the natural tendencies ever exhibited by the Indian empires of the past, which began to wane as soon as they ceased to expand. Akbar himself had begun to press southwards. By the middle of the seventeenth century only two of the Deccani sultanates survived. These were Bijapur and Golconda. After a long series of campaigns Aurangzib succeeded in overthrowing both, and rendering the Mughal empire more extensive than any earlier Muslim dominion. In this he had all the satisfaction not only of victorious war but also of extinguishing rulers whom he regarded as heretical and suppressing states where the infidel Hindu had enjoyed improper liberty. But the effort to conquer the south strained Mughal resources and weakened Mughal power, just as similar efforts in the past had always done to the empires of northern India. The administration of the northern provinces was neglected; the revenues were over-spent; the almost fabulous hoards which earlier emperors had accumulated in their palace-fortresses were encroached on; while on the empire was laid the heavy burden of maintaining its authority and government in provinces at once more distant and more difficult of access than



any in the north. The old barrier of the Vindhya and Satpuras, which had ever checked the spread of invasion and over which foreign influences at their greatest had only been able to trickle in feeble currents, still stood, and the Mughals, like all their predecessors, found the effort to bestride them beyond their strength.

But even this was as nothing compared with the widening cleavage between the Muslim and Hindu subjects of the empire. Aurangzib set up once more the infidel poll-tax which had been discontinued by his predecessors. He sought to persuade Hindus to enter Islam. Pressure was put on all Hindu servants of the state, from village-headmen upwards, to acknowledge the emperor's creed. Temples were destroyed and mosques built on their ruins.

The consequences were a series of rebellions in which one group after another of Hindus was involved. Tribal risings occurred among the Jats, an agricultural race occupying a wide tract of north-west India. In one revolt, by an unhappy irony, the tomb of Akbar was plundered and his remains cast out upon the fields. Sectarian risings took place in the Panjab. More important and significant, the Rajput chiefs, who had been loyal servants of Akbar, of Jahangir, and of Shah Jahan, were alienated. Aurangzib attempted to establish his direct authority over one of the Rajput states, and a war followed in which the Hindu temples were systematically destroyed.

These events in northern India were symptomatic rather than decisive. But Aurangzib's campaigns south of the Vindhya provoked a movement comparable with the rise of the Vijayanagar empire in the face of the earlier Muslim attacks on the south. At the western corner of that zigzag path which all early invaders of India followed lay the country of the Marathas. It comprises first a narrow coastal strip on the west, then a mountain area, full of flat-topped hills easily



strengthened into fortresses, and then again, sloping eastwards, wide open plains of fertile country. It was the area which all powerful racial and cultural influences from the north reached, but never flooded; a central region, culturally if not geographically, where old and new influences have commonly reached equipoise. The Marathi-speaking folk were divided into two main classes—the peasants and the soldiers. The latter enjoyed a considerable reputation as light cavalry, and were frequently employed by the Deccani sultans. One of these Maratha leaders, Shahji, rose to high rank in the Bijapur service. His son, the famous Sivaji, was brought up in the Maratha country, while his father was conducting raids and managing territories in the south. Sivaji is a man hard to judge. He exhibits great qualities, unfailing resource, high military skill, intense religious devotion, in conjunction with an artfulness which sorts oddly with his other qualities. The difficulty is increased by the tone of the Marathi writings describing his career. They show all the enthusiasm which a national hero evokes among his own people, but which clearly requires moderation. The chief defect which may be ascribed to him is a want of good faith verging upon treachery. But probably all who achieve political greatness commit acts which can only be palliated by remembering the important services which they and they alone of their generation can render to their country.

Sivaji began his political career by overthrowing or murdering certain neighbouring chiefs. He was then involved in war with Bijapur, and succeeded in slaying the Muslim general sent against him at an interview which both agreed to attend unarmed. But the essence of the Maratha's achievement lay in his relations with Aurangzib. The Mughal conquests in the Deccan placed the emperor, at least nominally, in control of the Maratha country; and while Akbar would have conciliated and employed the astute and ambitious Hindu chief,



Aurangzib slighted and exasperated him. Sivaji was never able to meet the Mughals in the field; but his hilly country with its numerous forts was a region in which heavy cavalry could not operate, while his skill in ambush, in cutting off convoys and surprising stragglers, and his enterprise in carrying out unexpected attacks at unguarded points, made him an adversary whom the Mughals could not overcome. Aurangzib had provoked not only the Hindus, but a great Hindu leader, into rebellion.

So a new Maratha state came into being, and, both before and after Sivaji's death in 1680, repeated attempts to suppress it failed, even though Sivaji left behind him no leader to be compared with himself; and when the emperor died in 1707 he was still labouring to subdue the Marathas. So far from the conquest of Bijapur and Golconda having increased his power, it had only increased his difficulties. With his death the greatness of the empire ends. The family itself was degenerate, and produced no more princes who combined character and vigour. The court became the scene of endless personal intrigue. The administration, no longer controlled from the centre, fell into a confusion all the greater for the elaborate and cumbrous checks which had been originally devised to prevent corruption. Early in the eighteenth century king-makers emerge, nobles who set up and overthrew at their pleasure emperors still ironically styled Lords of the World. The old story of internal decay was being repeated while dangers were gathering thickly round the empire itself, both within India and without.

Within India was the rise and expansion of the Maratha power, which is one of the three outstanding developments of the period from 1707 to 1761. Though none of Sivaji's descendants were extraordinary men, a dynasty of ministers, the Brahman Peshwas, sprang up under their authority and rendered the Marathas the



chief power in India. Such a change ought to have portended better days. But it did nothing of the kind. The Maratha method was to extort agreements, sometimes from helpless emperors, sometimes from governors of provinces, granting a share of the revenues with none of the responsibilities of government, while the ruling Peshwa moved his armies hither and thither, plundering the regions in which tribute was not paid. Gradually, however, a group of new Maratha states emerged from this confusion. One chief established himself at Nagpur, whence he governed wide territories stretching up to the boundaries of Bihar and Bengal. Others established themselves in Gujarat and Malwa. These chiefs remained for the moment subordinate to the Peshwa himself, who directed their movements and controlled their policy. But this northern expansion of Maratha power was as fatal to political unity as the southern expansion of the Muslims had been. For the moment, however, this was not apparent. What was clear was that the Muslim movement, restored to energy by the establishment of the Mughal empire, was waning.

The extraordinary thing, from a modern standpoint, was that the Marathas made no efforts to place themselves at the head of a general Hindu revival. Other Hindu princes, such as the Rajputs, had good cause to fear their advance. Hindu cultivators, whether in Bengal or in the Carnatic, fled in terror from their line of march; both Bengali and Telugu ballads survive from the period bearing witness to the tortures and rapes suffered by Hindu villagers who fell into Maratha hands. Hinduism was perhaps too vague a force, and its social system too deeply seamed by divisions, to encourage any joint movement. The essence of Maratha expansion was disruptive.

While then the Marathas were seeking to force their way into Northern India, and while the Delhi empire was falling into irreparable decay, India was once more

dividing itself, in its accustomed fashion, into a multitude of new states. Every chief who could muster a body of followers dreamt of setting up as conqueror. Governors of Mughal provinces became hereditary princes and ruled in their own power. Few indeed of the states existing in 1800 had existed a century before. In difficult or remote territory, such as Rajputana or Travancore, a small number of old Hindu states maintained a precarious existence. But power had passed into the hands of conquering adventurers; law, whether municipal or international, had vanished; and princes' policy and conduct were ruled by considerations of profit and advantage.

The rise of the Marathas and the decay of the empire would in any case have involved India in these conditions of tragic anarchy. But the development was hastened and intensified by external forces. The most immediate of these was the reappearance of threatening powers on the western borderlands of India. Persian power itself had decayed in the second half of the seventeenth century, but in the eighteenth a great adventurer of the old Central Asian type, Nadir Shah, set up a wide personal empire of which Persia was the centre. His dominions included Kandahar, and so once more political conditions favoured a renewal of invasions of India by the long-trodden pathways of the Khyber and Kurram. In 1738 Nadir attacked and conquered Kabul. In the next year he advanced through the Panjab and marched on Delhi. The Mughal emperor, as the lord of Delhi had so often done before, took up a position to the northward of the city. In this crisis he had gathered together an army said to number 200,000 men, but ill-led, undisciplined, un-warlike. So little trust did the emperor place in himself and in his host that he decided to admit the invader to his capital on condition that he himself should not be deposed. Trouble then arose with the turbulent but unsoldierly inhabitants. Tumults broke out. An



officer was shot by Nadir Shah's side as he was seeking to ascertain the cause and extent of the trouble. Nadir at once retired into the Raushan-ud-daula Mosque (which still stands in the main street of Delhi), and thence ordered a general massacre. From early morning till nightfall the city of Shah Jahan underwent the same appalling, indiscriminate retribution as had befallen the earlier city at the hands of the Mongols. When Nadir Shah, at the piteous request of the emperor, called off his men, the greater part of the city lay in ruins, and with it all the pride and magnificence of the Mughal empire.

Nadir Shah had promised to leave the emperor his empire. He kept his word, but he carried away with him what still remained of its accumulated wealth, above all the Peacock Throne, set with jewels valued at twenty million rupees; and although he retired into his own dominions, the way to India still lay open. When Nadir Shah was murdered, and his empire consequently fell to pieces, Ahmad Shah Durani established himself at Kabul, and founded the modern kingdom of Afghanistan. His territories, or rather the territories which he claimed, included not only what we now call Afghanistan, but also the Indus provinces, the Panjab and Sind. While, therefore, the Marathas were attempting, as has already been noted, to establish themselves in the north, and thus to supersede the authority of the empire, they found that they had to meet not only the defenceless empire, but the virile troops of the Duranis. In 1760 a great Maratha army moved northwards, and occupied Delhi without difficulty. But they were at once challenged by Ahmad Shah, who advanced to repel them. The campaign showed how much the Maratha armies had decayed since the days when they held Aurangzib at bay. They had been hardy, frugal horsemen, with no baggage, no encumbrances. But in 1760 they had already attempted to adopt the European tactics. They



had artillery ill-found and ill-served, and infantry poorly drilled and disciplined. Their forces were no longer purely Maratha. Moreover, a bare half-century of prosperity had made their leaders so luxurious that their camp-equipage resembled that of the degenerate Mughal nobles. When they met Ahmad Shah at Panipat, in January, 1761, they entrenched their camp, while their active enemy scoured the country round and cut off supplies. When at last they resolved to fight, they were utterly defeated. Their leaders were slain, and their army put to the sword.

This great battle did not end Maratha power or crush Maratha ambition. But it ended the great phase of Maratha activity. Within twenty years, as events were to demonstrate, they had lost their unity of direction, and their policy fell under the control of a group of leaders, each inspired by special interests and personal ambition. The battle of Panipat may fairly be regarded as closing the period during which the Maratha people, under the leadership of the Poona Peshwas, almost established a Hindu empire.

It will be noted that in this attempt they were foiled, not by European activities but by Muslim arms. In fact, the battle of Panipat was the last great effort of Islam in India, and with it paradoxically enough the period of Muslim dominion may be said to end. For over five centuries Islam had been politically supreme in the country. But its achievement cannot be reckoned great. It had established large if short-lived political units. Its courts had been the scenes of extraordinary magnificence. "Would you seek Paradise?" ran an inscription in Shah Jahan's palace at Delhi. "It is here, it is here, it is here." It had governed by the sword, and fell when the fortune of war turned against it. None of its rulers succeeded in carrying into effect that synthesis of Muslim and Hindu which Akbar attempted and of which Dara Shikoh dreamed. Its



great permanent effect was the division of the Indian peoples under irreconcilable religious systems.

It is true that in many ways Islam has influenced the people of India. The emphasis which it has ever laid on monotheism encouraged more than one leader, more than one sect, of Hinduism to develop the pantheistic unity which has ever lain latent behind its countless deities. But in a political sense the main consequence of Muslim rule was the strengthening of the social barriers which the Hindus had built up among themselves. Muslim dominion let loose a flood of influences hostile to Hinduism—all the weight of political authority, of official influence, of missionary endeavour. Depressed castes inevitably were inclined to turn towards a social system which promised the castemen a position of social respect here in this life, instead of in some future incarnation. For their own protection, therefore, the caste-organizations tightened themselves up, emphasizing their restrictions, and limiting intercourse as far as possible. Hindus of good family who could afford to do so adopted the Muslim veil for their women lest Muslims should seek them in marriage or concubinage. Divisions deepened instead of closing up, and the five centuries of Muslim rule undoubtedly left the Hindus less conscious of any common interests than they had been before, and less capable of common action in any field wider than that of village life or of a local caste-group.

The contact between a cloudy metaphysic on the one side and a fiercely dogmatic creed on the other was sterile. Each despised what the other had to offer. Nor on the side of practical pursuits had either anything to teach. In war their tactics were the shock-effects of mounted troops. In governments their methods, if not their ideas, were indistinguishable. In learning, in the crafts, in their knowledge of the processes of nature, neither had that clear, unquestionable advantage which will force its way even into prejudiced minds.



INDIA

CSL

Something more subtle than the sword, more irresistible than dogma, was required if India was to come back into real, effective contact with the outer world, and shake off the political attitude, the social practices, the false conceptions of natural forces, which it had inherited from the remote past.



CHAPTER III

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF BRITISH INDIA

NOT thirty years before Babur founded the Mughal empire there began a series of events destined to transform Indian conditions and problems. In 1497 Vasco da Gama made his way round the Cape of Good Hope to Calicut on the Malabar coast. None but a great leader could have overcome the difficulties and dangers of that long route by the Cape of Storms ; and his heroic enterprise marks the emergence of a world of new influences. The new-comers established themselves as swiftly and surely as any of the older invaders of India. Within twenty years of their coming they held the keys of the Indian Ocean. From Mozambique, Ormuz, and Malacca, to their headquarters at Goa on the western shore of India, their power spread so that no vessel could safely sail to or from the Indian ports unless it held a Portuguese permit. The period of this eastern empire of the Portuguese afloat corresponds with the first century of Mughal rule ashore.

In some ways these Portuguese invaders of the Indian world may not unfairly be compared with the Muslims. Like the latter, the Portuguese ever looked outside India for their standards of belief and government. They were ardent champions of their faith. Wherever they settled, the continuance of heathendom or Islam was sure to be powerfully discouraged. At Goa Hindus found the early tolerance they had enjoyed gradually vanishing : no Christian might keep a heathen servant or be shaved by a heathen barber ; orphan children were brought up



as Christians; the lands belonging by ancient custom to the village temples were taken away and devoted to maintaining Christian worship. Like the Muslims, too, the Portuguese received converts into an equality with themselves, giving them on occasion high military rank and investing them with Portuguese orders of chivalry. When they died, they might be buried with great pomp in the cathedral church of Goa. So, like the Muslims, the Portuguese left behind them ineffaceable traces of their settlements. Portuguese became the tongue of Goa, like Persian at Delhi. As Persian passed into Urdu so Portuguese degenerated into an Indo-Portuguese dialect. As a considerable Muslim population still marks every city that was a Muslim capital, so a Roman Catholic population attests the rule of the Portuguese. Similar consequences also followed the similarity of policy. Co-operation between Portuguese and Hindu was almost as uneasy as between Muslim and Hindu. Wealthy Hindu merchants and bankers deserted Goa because they were not suffered to dwell at peace.

But the differences between Portuguese and Muslim were incomparably deeper and greater than their similarities. The Portuguese were few. The entire population of Portugal was not reckoned over two millions, whereas the Muslims could draw upon great numbers of their kin in Persia and Central Asia. Consequently from the outset the Portuguese could never seek to establish a territorial dominion, as the Muslims did. They clung to the coasts, and never penetrated, nor sought to penetrate, inland. The Malabar coast, the region of India on which they fastened, was cut off from the hinterland by the great wall of the Western Ghats. In the second place they came by sea. Their movement was not limited and canalized, as was that of overland invaders. They were free to range and spread their power. It was, indeed, this fact which enabled them to achieve results wholly disproportioned to their



numbers. In the third place, while they shared with Islam an intense missionary zeal, they were inspired also by strong economic motives. They came to trade as well as to fight for their faith. It was, indeed, this two-fold motive which had set them in the fifteenth century painfully making their way down the western coast of Africa in search of a sea-route to the Indies. The advance of the Turks in Asia Minor, their campaigns against the Byzantine empire, their capture of Constantinople, and their growing power in the Mediterranean, had at once alarmed Christendom, and rendered the spices—pepper, cloves and cinnamon—which it used largely in flavouring its insipid winter diet, both scarce and costly. The Portuguese, whose kingdom had arisen in one long crusade against the Moors, and whose country jutted out into the Atlantic, were thus marked out by history and position to undertake a quest which Western science had just conceived. They hoped, in reaching India by sea, to take the Turks in rear and so save Christendom; they hoped also to direct the spice-trade by this new route into their own harbours, and take the place of Genoese and Venetians who had grown rich in the Middle Ages by supplying Western Europe with spices. The first of these two motives had gradually declined. At first they had, indeed, waged ruthless war on all Muslims. One of Vasco da Gama's most shocking exploits had been his pitiless destruction of a fleet of Muslim traders which he found off Calicut, massacring or mutilating those who fell into his hands. The Muslims had sought to retaliate. First the Mamelukes and then the Turks had fitted out expeditions at Suez in the hope of expelling this intruding enemy. But the Egyptian and Turkish galleys had not proved a match for the Portuguese vessels, and the Portuguese had finally been left in uncontested supremacy of Indian waters. At the same time economic motives gradually superseded crusading zeal in Portuguese minds. Indeed,



the whole quality of the men they sent out to India degenerated swiftly in the course of the sixteenth century. At first India had offered a career to their very best. Albuquerque, a hero comparable with Clive without Clive's eagerness for gain, is one of Portugal's greatest sons, and he organized the Portuguese dominion in the East. But speedily Portuguese recruits of all ranks came forward because they sought an easy path to wealth. No doubt here also a parallel with Islam can be traced. But there remains this important difference—that trade was the basis of the Portuguese dominion.

There still remains one further point, the importance of which far exceeds all the rest. Through Portugal India first came into contact with the fruits of Western science. Human progress in the mastery of natural forces has been a spasmodic business. Particularly in its earlier stages, in the application of fire, for instance, to food or metals, it was probably a matter of chance. But it is also clear that its speed has varied directly with the practice of an ever-growing exactness in observation and record. The process is far from peculiar to any one age or country. It is illustrated just as much by the early development of Indian agriculture and the early development of Indian seafaring as by the latest discoveries of contemporary times. But while the east was for long centuries far in advance of Europe in its knowledge of natural forces, while in fact it took the first steps long before our ancestors did, general conditions, as I have already pointed out, hindered any further advance. In fact, the whole world, in this respect, seems to have stood still for almost two millennia, and at the end of that time was still as much disposed to seek control of natural forces by mystical or magical means as it had been at the beginning. From this stagnation the spirit of man was delivered by the Renaissance, and the first fruits of the Renaissance was the exploration of the world.



The development of transport and communications has always been the most important of all changes that can be brought about by human agency. To-day we are viewing with perplexity the numberless changes that are being wrought in all human relations, social and international, by the invention of the motor car and the aeroplane. An equally momentous change was wrought between 1400 and 1500 by the invention and trying-out of the ocean-going vessel. That was the great achievement of the Portuguese. The problem was two-fold. In the first place shipyards had to learn how to build vessels big enough to accommodate large crews and their stores of provisions and water, and strong enough to resist the gales and waves of the open seas. Either of these, by itself, was easy enough. Indian shipwrights had long done the first, European shipwrights the second. The Portuguese shipyards solved the double problem for the first time in human history. In the second place captains had to learn how to navigate. They had to be provided with charts, with the means of knowing with some better certainty than was provided by the astrolabe, where they were upon the surface of the earth. This aspect was attacked by the Portuguese prince rightly called Henry the Navigator, though he never sailed a ship. He set up an observatory and school at Sagres. There for years he collected geographical data, preparing charts and studying the improvement of nautical instruments. To this school of navigation, to the growing skill and technique of Portuguese craftsmen who produced the caravel and carack, and to the inspiring eagerness and science of Prince Henry himself, must be ascribed the ultimate success which bore da Gama to the coasts of India. It was a victory of science, the first fruits of the modern scientific method; and its accomplishment is the great contribution of the Portuguese nation to human history. They found out how to sail through strange and stormy seas, in spite of fickle,



variable breezes, while eastern mariners were still content only to put out to sea when they were assured of a long period of favourable winds.

But the Portuguese did not merely re-establish the ancient contact between East and West. They carried with them something new—a power at sea which at that time no other people could resist. The Atlantic gales had compelled them to build stouter vessels than man had ever built before. These new ships could therefore mount and use heavy cannon with no danger of opening their seams with the recoil of their own fire. It was not merely the ocean-going ship that the Portuguese had produced but also the man-of-war.

In these days, when the horrors of modern warfare have made all of us more attached to peace than our ancestors were, it seems almost indecent to dwell upon the development of naval and military technique. Yet we much deceive ourselves if we fancy war to be a negligible agent of change. Much of the world's history, some of the most important culture-trends, have resulted from the establishment of a military superiority of one people over another. War has always been a dynamic factor of the first importance in India as elsewhere. Without their command of the seas, the Portuguese could not have established themselves in the east; their men-of-war enabled a handful of men to dominate the Indian seas and maintain securely their position in defiance if need be of every Indian state.

The importance of the Portuguese, but not the growth of European influence, ceased with the end of the sixteenth century. The rise of the Dutch is the next phenomenon to be noted. With their tremendous efforts of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the Portuguese seem to have exhausted themselves. But where they left off other nations began—notably the English and the Dutch. While no more improvements in the design of



vessels and the navigation of the seas came from the Portuguese, both the other nations, the Dutch leading, began themselves to improve and invent, producing more seaworthy ships, more skilled pilots, superior methods and weapons for fighting at sea. The overthrow of the Portuguese maritime empire in the east depended altogether on this development of naval technique, in which the Portuguese were left behind. The Dutch had become in the sixteenth century the chief distributors of eastern produce, which they bought in Portugal and sold in all the markets of northern Europe. In 1580 Philip II of Spain became king of Portugal as well. The Dutch were at war with Spain. They could no longer frequent the Portuguese harbours. They were obliged either to give up the commerce on which much of their prosperity rested or to obtain elsewhere the goods they had been accustomed to purchase at Lisbon. Naturally they resolved to follow the Portuguese methods, and obtain eastern spices from the regions where they grew. Long and bitter wars followed this decision, lasting for the first sixty years of the seventeenth century, and only interrupted by temporary truces; and by 1663 all the chief Portuguese fortresses, with the exception of Macao in the Far East and of Goa with a few dependencies in western India, had passed out of Portuguese hands. Their dominion over the Indian waters had vanished.

In this change the Dutch had been the chief, but not the sole, agents. At times the English had shared in the struggle, twice defeating Portuguese squadrons which endeavoured to prevent their trading at Surat, and, in concert with a Persian force, wresting Ormuz from them. But the Dutch were far stronger, wealthier, and better organized than the English in the east, and to the Dutch fell the lion's share of the Portuguese monopoly. In the seventeenth century they were evidently the heirs of the Portuguese. But their objects differed vastly. From the



first the Dutch were traders; they fought to establish and protect their trade. They could not hope for, and did not seek, that complete control which the Portuguese had exercised; but they hoped to obtain similar results by somewhat different methods. The Portuguese had controlled the sea-ways; the Dutch sought to control areas of production. By good luck, as they saw it, the spices which formed their material object were grown in narrowly restricted areas, above all in islands—cloves in Amboyna and nowhere else; cinnamon in Ceylon and nowhere else; nutmegs in diverse islands of the archipelago; pepper in the archipelago and on the Malabar coast of India. Their first object therefore was to possess, or at least to dominate, the archipelago. There they founded their capital, Batavia, and there until the early nineteenth century they succeeded in maintaining a complete and jealous ascendancy. In Ceylon, too, they occupied the coasts, expelling the Portuguese garrisons, and securing the cinnamon trade. Pepper, indeed, they could not monopolize, but they seized all the Portuguese forts on the Malabar coast, and so controlled a large share of the production. They thus came to concentrate their power and political interests in the archipelago, rather than in India, and in truth were mainly concerned with India as an essential part of their trade circle. Their commerce was organized with great skill, and their extensions into Continental and Far Eastern Asia served specific trade purposes. From Japan they drew copper and gold; from India cotton piece-goods; from the archipelago spices. With spices they bought copper and gold; with these and spices they bought cotton piece-goods; with their piece-goods they bought spices. They were able thus to finance their trade without those great exports of the precious metals from Europe which the Portuguese had drawn from South America, but which English traders had to buy from European markets.



Needless to say, so efficient a trade was not controlled, as the Portuguese trade had been, by a government or government officials. Dutch affairs were managed by the United East India Company, which was essentially a body of merchants, to whose care the state entrusted a great branch of national interests. Unlike the Portuguese also, Dutch aims were from the first essentially economic. For religious propaganda they cared little or nothing, and their easy compliance with native ceremonial, whether court or religious, was a subject of some scandal in Europe. Nor did they aim at setting up a military power. Their strength lay upon the seas, from which they could watch and control the numerous little islands of their domain. Yet they found they could not dispense with considerable military forces. The great island of Java, especially, on which they had built their capital, was perpetually involving them in disputes with chiefs and princes out of reach of naval power. As their political interests extended they became a military power as well, and for one short moment in the eighteenth century were led to take a hand in the game of Indian empire.

For the century that lies between 1650 and 1750 the Dutch were the most powerful, the wealthiest, the best-managed of all the European nations established in the east. But they had little direct influence over the course of affairs in India. Indirectly, however, in at least two ways their power made itself felt in Indian affairs. The position which they built up in the archipelago excluded all possible rivals from that tempting but secondary area. Whatever European nation might seek to develop Eastern trade could pursue that policy in India but nowhere else. But for that the English would assuredly have concentrated, as the Dutch themselves did, on the spice islands. As it was, the English and the French alike were compelled to settle and extend their interests on the Indian coasts. The Dutch, therefore, unwittingly set the stage for the great Indian struggle of the eighteenth



century. Moreover, they served as a pattern for the English. For at least a hundred years "the wise Dutch" were held up as a model of prudent management and skilful organization. Like them the English formed a great East India Company, whose servants managed not only the company's trade but also its political and diplomatic relations. It was empowered to strike coin, build fortresses, levy, maintain and discipline troops and make war and peace with any non-Christian prince, and all this three generations before any man had divined the English destiny in India.

The establishment of English power in India includes two well-marked stages. The first runs from the formation of the East India Company in 1600 to the outbreak of the War of the Austrian Succession in 1744. It is a period thickly beset with troubles and anxieties, but, taken as a whole, one of peaceful and expanding trade. The second, which runs from 1744 to 1818, is one of constant warfare, of territorial expansion, of political organization. In the course of those seventy-four years there emerges a new empire, like, and yet profoundly differing from, those which had preceded it. These two periods, despite their contrasting characters, are intimately linked together.

The English went to India purely in search of profitable trade. No crusading purpose and no dreams of maritime dominion lay behind their adventure, nor even had they, like the Dutch, the hopes of humbling a bitter national enemy. They would fight if the Portuguese attempted to prevent their entrance into Indian ports, but they had no special desire to root out Portuguese power. For a short time they co-operated (unwillingly) with the Dutch, and at Ormuz they gave way to Persian demands and drove the Portuguese from that outpost. But these were exceptional incidents, and formed no part of their real design. They opened factories at Masulipatam, the



class Golconda port, and at Surat, the chief port in the Mughal empire. These after a while were exchanged for Madras and Bombay. Madras was a small place, within the territory of an independent Hindu chief who was persuaded to hand over Madras and its administration in return for an annual quit rent. This was in 1639, when the Deccani sultanates were busily conquering the remains of the great Vijayanagar empire. At Madras, since war had rendered the country insecure, the English built a little fort called Fort St. George. Under its shelter and under the English government of the Company's servants there grew up a large and wealthy city. In three generations it was reckoned the richest town in all the south, with an active trade up the Bay to Bengal, across to Burma, Sumatra and Manilla, and round Cape Comorin to the Persian Gulf. This wealth was Indian, not English, although the Company's governors were often wealthy men. One of them, Governor Pitt, left a fortune and founded a family which Englishmen have two good reasons to remember. But the governors' wealth was very seldom got by squeeze. When it was, there were loud and instant complaints. The only explanation for the growth of Madras is that in those days Indians preferred government by the English Company's servants to government by any of the neighbouring states.

The development of Bombay shows the same tendency. Bombay, forming part of the dowry of Queen Catharine of Braganza, was speedily transferred by King Charles II to the management of the East India Company. It was at that time a small place, of no special importance. But shortly afterwards the rise of the Maratha power under Sivaji, and the long war between the Marathas and Aurangzib, made Bombay a city of refuge. Surat was twice plundered; Bombay, slender as were its defences, remained untouched. Like Madras, it became populous and wealthy, and superseded Surat, not only as the headquarters of the English in Western India, but



also, as the chief port with the best shipyards in India. In this latter development the Parsis played a large part. Many of them settled at Bombay, where they learnt the craft of ship-building, so that already the improved technique of Europe was beginning to establish itself in the East.

These were the first English settlements in India, and managed the Company's business in Western and Southern India. Before the end of the seventeenth century a third English settlement was founded—in Bengal. There the English had set up a factory under the authority of the local governor, just as they had done at Masulipatam and Surat. There, as elsewhere, the decay of administration, the corruption of officials, and the periodic demands made upon the English, induced them to desire a settlement which should be free of these troubles. After a foolish and ill-managed war—the only war in which they were involved in this period with Indian states—Job Charnock founded Calcutta on the eastern bank of the Hugli, guarded on the one side by the river, on the other by swamps. Here the Company ruled, but not independently as at Madras or Bombay; in Calcutta it was only the local representative of the governor of Bengal and so of the Mughal emperor. But Bengal, then as always, was the province of disorder and rebellion. So that Calcutta also became a centre of quiet, regular government, in contrast to the disorderly condition of the countryside.

It is a striking fact that in this first period of the English connection with India the three places in which they set up their chief management and in which the government was in their hands all attracted a multitude of Indians and attained a striking degree of wealth and prosperity. For this there were four main causes. The first was the ever-increasing disorganization into which India was falling. Life and fortune were insecure in Indian states. They were threatened by invasion from



and the severity of the tax-gatherer within the Company's chief settlements offered an asylum to which Indians were glad to escape. The second undoubtedly was the active trade which characterized Madras, Bombay and Calcutta. No great Indian banking-house but maintained its agents, and supplied them with large funds, at these swelling centres of commerce. No great Indian merchant but was glad to act for the Company or the Company's servants. No trader outside but ruefully compared his lot with his more fortunate brethren who lived within sight and under the protection of the English flag. The third reason why Indians flocked into the English settlements was the fact that there alone would they find a regular administration of justice. They might—I think they did—find in the courts of English justice a procedure which seemed to them indecent—as, for example, the taking of oaths, a thing more abominable to the respectable Hindu than to our own Quakers—and an inclination to believe the evidence of an Englishman against an Indian. But the methods of justice were regular, and in almost all respects took full account of Indian usages. A Muslim found guilty of putting to death one of his slaves would be duly sentenced to be hanged, but would be allowed to petition the Crown for pardon. As for preferring the evidence of a member of the ruling class, that was a matter to which all Indians were well accustomed and passed as a thing of course, while the courts themselves were freer from the taint of corruption than any other formal courts existing in the country. But what perhaps specially endeared the English settlements to Indians was their easy tolerance of all manner of religions. The English merchants, like the Dutch, were no propagandists. Those dwelling under their authority were free to worship any gods they pleased in whatever mode they liked, provided that they did not go out of their way to offend other men.

It would be ridiculous to suppose that either Hindus



4
Muslims loved Englishmen as such. But they found them honest and profitable to trade with, and both strong and quiet to live under. When in 1749 Madras was restored to the English after a three-years' occupation by the French, the chief Indian inhabitants, who had deserted it, came back as gladly, an Indian tells us, as if each one had inherited a fortune. Between common interests in trade on the one hand and the sober, quiet government on the other, mutual relations of respect and trust certainly grew up.

In the course of this early factory period a large and profitable trade had grown up between India and England—important enough to fight for should it be threatened. In the ten years from 1744 to 1754 this trade was seriously threatened, and the war led on to momentous events. The French had established Indian factories in the reign of Louis XIV, and had made their headquarters at Pondicherry, some hundred miles south of Madras, and at Mauritius, lying in the Indian Ocean almost half-way between the Cape of Good Hope and Cape Comorin. Although this French enterprise was entrusted to the care of a chartered company, in all other matters it differed deeply from the eastern adventures of the Dutch and the English. Those had been essentially economic, founded and managed by merchants for the conduct of trade. The French company from first to last was more political than economic. The moving spirit in its creation had been the French statesman, Colbert, who viewed it as part of his scheme for raising France to the position of a great naval as well as military power. When it was launched, the merchants of France took small interest in it. Great pressure from the court was needed to induce men to subscribe even part of the capital required, and the subscribers were much more often men of the robe or the sword desiring favours from the king than merchants seeking a profitable trade. A great part



of the capital had to be provided by the king, and consequently the ministry had from the first a large measure of control. Soon after the company was formed, on the eve of an expected war with Holland, a considerable squadron of royal ships was sent to India, in order to conquer from the Dutch a number of eligible settlements. The company soon languished. Indeed, in a commercial sense it was never well established, and even in the years of its greatest prosperity its sole current capital consisted of temporary loans. For a prolonged period it just paid its way by selling licences to a group of St. Malo merchants to ship goods to India. But its political importance was great. It had formed a link in Colbert's chain of projects. It was swept up into Law's great boom of credit inflation; and though it emerged from that great crisis with the income arising from the Tobacco Monopoly as almost its sole source of revenue, it remained under the wing of the Ministry, and its affairs depended more on the wishes of the King's superintendent than on the policy of the directors. As in France, so in India, when its agents were men of outstanding qualities, they turned to political rather than economic means of promoting French interests. François Martin, deservedly remembered as the founder of Pondicherry, writes to his superiors in Paris urging on them the advantages of lending armed help, in concert with the sultan of Bijapur, to a pretender to the Golconda sultanate. In fact, he sketches out a plan parallel in its main outlines with that which his great successor, Dupleix, was to put into operation in the eighteenth century. While the English were solely concerned with their trade and the quiet management of their settlements, Frenchmen were already planning the overthrow and establishment of Indian thrones.

In 1742 Dupleix became governor of Pondicherry. He was a man of active mind, which was sharpened, not dulled, by life in tropical heat. He had spent



most of his Indian service at Chandernagore, in Bengal, where he had lived on friendly terms with the English. He had followed their example in devoting his major activities to commerce. When the Anglo-French war broke out in 1744 he at once proposed a treaty of neutrality to the English at Madras. The proposal was civilly declined. A little earlier, when war had seemed likely, the French had sent a number of men-of-war into Eastern waters, and though they had been recalled, the significance of this had not escaped either the English company or the English ministry. As soon as war was declared an English naval squadron was at once despatched, with orders to cruise upon French trade. This squadron inflicted considerable losses on the French in general and Dupleix in particular. The war thus spread to India. But English affairs were ill-managed. Madras was lost, and could not be recovered till the peace of 1748 stipulated for its rendition, while small French forces secured two notable victories over large Indian armies.

These events precipitated a revolution in the attitude of the European nations in India. Dupleix, whom the war had left with considerable military forces, began to interfere in Indian politics and to support claimants to various southern provinces, encouraged by the military superiority which his people had already exhibited. He won more resounding victories, overthrew the Nawab of the Carnatic and the Nizam of Hyderabad, established others in their places, and for a short time was the dictator of southern India. But he had attempted to secure personal control of the districts surrounding the two main English settlements. This threat to English trade could not be ignored. Madras lent soldiers to the Indian princes engaged in resisting Dupleix, and in this struggle, in which on both sides hardly more than twelve or fifteen hundred Europeans were ever engaged, the decisive influence of western tactics and discipline showed



itself so clearly that no one could mistake it. Even the Marathas attempted to strengthen themselves by adopting the new methods. Western science in creating the ocean-going ship had brought Europeans to India; western science in improving the weapons of war and inventing a new system of tactics had made quite small bodies of trained European troops able to meet and repulse the large but unwieldy armies of India. Consequently whatever European nation could command the sea-route to India could also establish its dominion in India itself.

Nor was it by accident that this fact emerged into consciousness in the middle of the eighteenth century. It was evoked by the confusion into which India had fallen. Central authority had vanished. Supremacy was being contested by marauding armies of Marathas from within and marauding armies of Afghans from without. Everyone who could was raising his own army and fighting for his own hand. Otherwise there would have been no tottering thrones for Dupleix to attack, no pretenders for him to support. The whole development was bound together by the chain of necessity.

The situation in 1751 was this. At Poona was centred the only strong state in India. Bestriding the Khyber Pass was Ahmad Shah Durani. At Pondicherry Dupleix, with at most 2,000 French troops at his command, controlled the princes of Arcot and Hyderabad. At Madras, Bombay and Calcutta the English, with certainly no more men than the French, were standing jealously on guard over their trade. Within the next ten years each pair had fought their quarrels out. The Marathas were beaten at Panipat; the French were compelled to surrender Pondicherry to Sir Eyre Coote. Of the two conflicts the second was incomparably the more important, for it is unlikely that a victory of the Marathas at Panipat could have staved off a European dominion in India, while the struggle between the English and the



French was to determine the question whether India would be ruled from London or from Paris. This depended altogether on the relative sea power of the two nations. Had the French fleets proved superior, not even the genius and resolution of Clive could have saved the situation. Calcutta to-day would have been what Chandernagore now is.

This question was decided finally in the wars of the second half of the eighteenth century. In the Seven Years' War the French fleet was at last driven to seek refuge at Mauritius, and so the fate of Pondicherry was sealed. In the war of the American Revolution the French in India had all the advantage of the genius of Suffren, perhaps the greatest naval officer the French have ever produced. This was, indeed, the war of modern times in which Great Britain has gone nearest to defeat. But by a desperate effort she still held her own, and the end of it left the French no stronger in India than they had been in 1763. When war broke out again in 1793 British supremacy at sea was never in question. Those who have looked, as they may do in the Nelson Collection at Monmouth, at the canvas through which the breezes of Trafalgar blew, cannot but feel how national triumph may be touched by human tragedy. The naval decision determined the fate of French India, just as the naval decision a hundred and fifty years before had determined the fate of Goa.

The importance of the great French effort, like that of the great Portuguese attempt, lay in its significance. The Portuguese proved that the Indian seas might be commanded from Europe. But the mainland lay still untouched, for European military equipment did not as yet permit small numbers of Europeans to meet and scatter Indian armies in the open field. The French took this second step, and proved that Indian courts could be controlled and directed from a European settlement. Thus military and political dominion was superimposed



on naval and commercial relations, and Dupleix stands beside Albuquerque as a great pioneer of European influence in India.

From the time of Dupleix's achievements, covered by the years 1749 to 1754, events moved on with resistless momentum. The balance of the underlying forces at work was never seriously disturbed, and of itself delivered the dominion of India to the predominant sea-power. Beside these great forces the vigour and talent of individuals, their personal aims and ambitions, sink into relative insignificance. There can be few more striking instances of that overmastering control which we call Fate. Just consider how the ambitions and follies of others, far more than their own ambitions and talents, led the English on from step to step. First of all we find the general decay of the Indian state system, the disorders, the intrigues, the constant wars, plunderings and oppression, which made trade difficult for the European and made life wretched for the Indian. Dupleix develops his plans and threatens the extinction of English trade in the Carnatic. The English concentrate their forces at the threatened point. Their obstinate resistance upsets the French plans. Disappointed with his failure to fulfil his promises, the French Government recall Dupleix from India and make an Anglo-French truce at the moment when at Madras there is a larger naval and military force than there has ever been before, and when the other settlements, especially Calcutta, are drained of men. Then in 1756 the Nawab of Bengal, agitated by occurrences in the south and alarmed by preparations to defend Calcutta in case it should be attacked by the French, attacks it and captures it with ease. But he does this while a precarious peace still exists between Frenchmen and Englishmen, and when, therefore, he cannot call upon the French for help. The English at Madras send Clive with 2,000 men, English and Sepoys, to avenge the injury. Within seven short



months of his arrival Calcutta has been recovered, the Nawab of Bengal has been slain, and a new nawab set up who owes his position and his continuance in power wholly to English help. Owing to the ambitions of Dupleix and the ill-timed hostility of Siraj-ud-daula, the English have become masters, though not yet rulers, of Bengal.

These consequences were inevitable. But they would not have been achieved with such swift surety had not the leader of the English been a man of extraordinary gifts. Robert Clive, "the heaven-sent general," was a man with Rhodes's vision and far more than Rhodes's opportunities. In his day India was ten times more distant from London than was Cape Town in the nineties. Moreover, war was then a natural, not an exceptional, instrument of policy, and Clive had a genius for fighting. He knew nothing of physical or moral fear. He could make up his mind in an instant and strike with all his force the instant that he had made up his mind. Usually his blow landed while his adversary was still wondering how to counter the threat. Moreover, this quality of instant decision was allied with the capacity to judge human character and appraise political situations aright. He was, therefore, an enemy to be feared, a friend to be trusted, a man who cut his way through all barriers, who seemed able to command success alike in the field and in the council-room. Such a man would have made his mark anywhere. In India he was a miracle. His unfailing success dazzled the eyes of every opponent even before swords were crossed.

The empire which Clive founded was to be of a type new to India. The English were not, like the Portuguese, to cling about the coasts of India, but to strike deep inland; their power, nevertheless, was to rest upon the seas. For such a power Bengal offered greater advantages than any other region of India. It was to a sea-power what the Panjab was to land-invaders. There and there alone



old waterways, navigable by ocean-going ships, lead up into fertile country. Calcutta, distant as she is from the open seas, still remains one of the great ports of the world. She could always be reached by English ships with men, money, munitions, and so formed an ideal base for a power depending on sea communications. Moreover, waterways linked her up with the country lying north-east and north-west. If invaders from the sea were to establish their power over the plains of the Ganges valley, which has always been the heart of India, Bengal alone offered an easy approach. Thus, in 1757, the two outstanding aspects of European technical advance—naval and military—enabled the English to plant themselves in the very region from which the dominion of India might most readily be established.

Two other aspects of this development must be mentioned. I have already pointed out how in the past the barrier of the Vindhyas had checked and limited communications between upper India and the Deccan, hindering empires founded on the one side of it or on the other from effectively extending their power over the whole of India. But the force of this barrier was hardly felt by an empire based upon the sea. It could operate from either end, from the east or the west, and with equal ease could strike southwards or northwards, or in both directions simultaneously. The rising British empire thus enjoyed a great advantage over all its predecessors in India. In fact, for the first time in history conditions permitted all India to be brought under one authority.

The second aspect is the point of similarity between the Muslim and the British empires. Both looked outside India for moral and political guidance. Both depended on a public opinion unconnected with India. Both maintained themselves by the aid of a constant stream of immigration from without. Akbar, indeed, made a tremendous effort to cut Indian Muslims adrift from Islam.



But we have seen how he failed. So far Muslim and Englishman lived in India under not dissimilar conditions. But even here most important differences are to be noted. The Muslim immigrant was a settler, the Englishman seldom was. The Muslim, moving by overland routes, set up sovereignties politically independent; the Englishman, moving by sea and ever needing the naval protection of his own country, conquered territories not for himself but for King George III. While then the Indian Muslims, born in India and often of Hindu mothers, became a power in the state, the Indian English remained an inferior class, with no political influence whatever; and while Indian Muslims were free to adopt Indian methods of administration, English governors were constantly pressed to conform to the political and administrative ideas of London. This new empire, of which Robert Clive laid the foundations, was therefore destined to be at once wider in extent and more obstinately foreign in character than any that had preceded it.

This destiny was not at first apparent. Men upon whom Fate thrusts the necessity of bringing about far-reaching changes, seldom dream how their descendants will judge their work. To Clive his achievement appeared a great victory for English trade, a great contribution to the wealth and therefore to the power of his country; but he certainly never regarded himself as the apostle of Western influence and science. He sought nothing more, in an administrative and moral way, than to leave India where it was. This conception was peculiarly short-sighted and involved complete impossibilities. But men of the eighteenth century were ever inclined to reckon problems in terms of power and wealth, and gave little time to the consideration of complex moral interactions. Both Clive and his great successor, Warren Hastings, viewed the dominion which had arisen in India as an Indian dominion, to be maintained and governed in



Indian ways. In the next chapter I shall deal at length with the administrative ideas which developed. Here we are concerned with the maintenance and extension of the new empire. In this respect Hastings's work was one of conservation only. He was no fighter for the sake of fighting, though to him war was a natural and proper instrument of policy. During his administration, from 1772 to 1785, the situation was governed by three main problems: the constant hostility of the French, the renewed efforts of the Marathas to dominate northern India, and the sometimes contradictory and often ill-judged conduct of the minor presidencies of Bombay and Madras, not yet fully subjected to the authority of the presidency of Bengal. These factors combined in 1780 to place Hastings in a position of extraordinary peril. The American War laid such a strain on English naval power as short-sighted management had never anticipated. For a moment command of American waters passed from English hands, leading to the disastrous collapse at Yorktown. In the East, too, a French commander of genius, the great Suffren, for a moment established a superiority over the stubborn but uninspired fighter, Sir Edward Hughes. Bombay and the home authorities between them involved Hastings in a war with the Marathas, while Madras picked a quarrel with the Nizam and made an enemy of Hyder Ali of Mysore. From our present standpoint Hastings's great achievement lay in making head against this multiplicity of dangers. He had to use every instrument within his reach to the greatest possible advantage. He never enjoyed the full personal authority with which his successors were invested. He had to win over his council to support of his policy by persuasion, by assenting to jobs, in one extreme case by fighting a duel with his bitter enemy and opponent, Philip Francis. He had alternately to soothe and bribe his able, irascible and greedy commander-in-chief, Sir Eyre Coote. He had to persuade or overawe



the minor councils at Madras and Bombay. He had to find money for campaigns carried on in Western and Southern India, a thousand miles and more distant from Calcutta. What perhaps made even greater demands upon him was the fact that he could rely only upon himself. While all men were discouraged by the news of failure and defeat in America, while London was sending him orders to make peace at once on any terms, while generals and governments were seeking to lay the blame of their failures anywhere but on themselves, while the admiral was sending his own agents to the Marathas, and while any ship might bring news from England that the Governor-General had been recalled, Hastings had to find in his own great heart the unshaken determination which alone could inspire and encourage his people to persevere, and to remember that the only way to secure an honourable peace was to make the continuance of war terrible to the enemy.

His success left the English position in India unimpaired, and he handed over to his successors an inheritance stronger but hardly more extensive than he had received. The thirty-three years which followed his resignation in 1785, however, were to witness a rapid change. From 1787 the government of British India was conducted almost wholly by men who had not spent their lives in India, but were nominated by the king's ministry and belonged to the English governing class. They carried out with them the ideas of policy current in London, and regarded the territories they ruled as an English dependency rather than as an Indian state. Almost all were speedily involved in war—sometimes owing to Indian conditions, sometimes as the result of the policy they adopted. But all their wars had this in common, that the opposing states were left weaker than they had been before.

Of these men two demand special mention, for between them they established the East India Company as the



paramount power in India. They were Lord Wellesley and Lord Hastings. Wellesley was Governor-General from 1797 to 1806. Appointed at a moment when the struggle with Revolutionary France was bitter, he looked upon it as his first duty to secure the Company's position from attack by the French or by any of their possible allies among the Indian princes. On his arrival he found numerous indications of French influence. Tipu Sultan in Mysore professed himself a friend and ally of France, had sent embassies both to the late king and the new republic, and had just sent to the French governor of Mauritius a request for as many French officers and men as he could spare. At Hyderabad the Nizam had in his pay a large body of sepoy raised and drilled by French officers. Sindia, the leading Maratha chief, also maintained brigades under the same suspect control. Wellesley therefore bent all the energies of his vigorous, clear-sighted mind to the elimination of this possible source of danger, which he thought all the more menacing when he learnt of Napoleon's expedition to Egypt. Southern India first engaged his attention. He persuaded the Nizam, who had long been overmatched by his Maratha neighbours on the west, to dismiss his French-trained troops, and to place the management of his foreign relations under the control of the English Governor-General, in return for the establishment at his capital of a body of the Company's forces and a virtual guarantee of his dominions against Maratha encroachments. Tipu Sultan was offered a treaty on similar terms. The Mysore ruler had little to fear from his Indian neighbours, and rejected the offer, at the same time demanding help from the French at the earliest possible moment. On learning of these steps Wellesley resolved to overthrow Tipu before such help could reach him. His instructions to the officer whom he placed in command show plainly the importance which he attached to the destruction of Tipu's power.



The army was to march direct upon Tipu's capital. If Tipu came against it, it was to give battle—and march on. If Tipu offered terms, the commander might receive and discuss them, but he was nevertheless to march on. Nothing was to check the English advance until Seringapatam had fallen into their hands. Wellesley reckoned that no French help could arrive before June, 1799. On 3rd May Seringapatam was stormed and Tipu slain defending it. These events led directly to the reconstitution of the Mysore state under a Hindu ruler, and indirectly to the assumption of the Carnatic and the formation of the modern Presidency of Madras.

The Maratha states offered a more difficult problem. The Peshwa, who for three-quarters of a century had directed Maratha policy from Poona, was no longer the unquestioned master of the Maratha chiefs. In fact, the extension of Maratha power into Northern India had generated the same sort of separatist tendencies as had appeared in earlier days when the Muslims established themselves in the Deccan. Of the northern Maratha chiefs two were specially important—the heads of the Sindia and Holkar families. Each aspired, not indeed to set himself up in place of the Peshwa, but to secure a dominance over Poona, and in 1800 the two were involved in a bitter struggle to achieve this end. Sindia was supporting, Holkar attacking, the reigning Peshwa. In 1802 Holkar succeeded in defeating Sindia before Poona, and the Peshwa sought asylum in English territory near Bombay. Maratha quarrels had thus placed the unfortunate Peshwa in a position in which any help was welcome, no matter at how heavy a cost. He was for the moment much worse off than the Nizam had been. Wellesley had already offered him English help on the same terms as those on which he had given it to Hyderabad. The offer had at first been refused, but now, when it was again offered, it was reluctantly accepted, and the Peshwa signed the Treaty of Bassein.



Sindia and Holkar thus saw the prize for which they had been fighting carried off by a third party. But strongly as they resented it, they were too suspicious of one another to combine. Sindia secured the aid of another Maratha chief, who ruled over extensive but ill-managed territories from Nagpur, and war followed their refusal (on Wellesley's demand) to disperse their armies. This war was as short and as brilliantly successful as the earlier war with Tipu Sultan. Arthur Wellesley, the governor-general's brother, and Lord Lake won victory after victory, until Sindia made peace. Then Holkar, who had sulkily looked on at his rival's overthrow, resolved to show what he could do. He inflicted a sharp check on the English forces at the opening of this new campaign, but was soon in turn routed, and chased northwards across the Sutlej into the territories of Ranjit Singh, the Sikh ruler. At this moment, when a permanent settlement such as Wellesley desired was within his reach, he was recalled. His policy had always been regarded with distrust by the directors of the Company. His wars deranged the financial arrangements by which they had hoped to monopolize the trade between not England only, but also Europe and the East. Wellesley was therefore recalled, and under instructions from London a peace was hurriedly made which abandoned the main object underlying his policy. His central purpose had always been the establishment of the Company as the predominant power in India. He desired above everything to impose a series of treaties on the principal states of India, to bring them into subordinate alliance, thus preventing the French from ever again playing a great part in Indian affairs, and bringing to an end those constant wars which had been the main obstacle to the expansion of Anglo-Indian trade.

The abandonment of this policy on the eve of its completion was a misfortune, for it subjected India to another twelve years of political confusion. The Marathas



had commonly used their power in raids of plunder. While the Peshwas had exercised control, those raids had had at least the excuse of political motive. But in the latter part of the eighteenth century there had arisen independent chiefs, who gathered bands of marauders under their standard, maintained them by expeditions of plunder solely for the sake of plunder, and were harboured by the Maratha princes on account of the military assistance which such independent chiefs could give. In fact, the political degeneration of India was still proceeding. For ten years after Wellesley's departure the activities of these marauders—Pindaris they were called—continued and developed. Every autumn, when the Indian campaigning season began, they would set out. Readers of the *Story of a Thug* must have a vivid memory of the ferocity they displayed in quest of booty. Men would be half-stifled in bags of hot ashes, or tied up in sacks with venomous reptiles, to compel them to confess where their supposed and probably non-existent treasure might be hid. Young and attractive women would be raped. These statements rest on more solid evidence than the story-teller's narrative. One of the most poignant official reports on record details how the dwellers in a village in the Northern Circars, when the Pindaris drew near, shut themselves and their wives and children up in their huts and set them on fire, preferring thus to die rather than to fall into the enemy's power. This humble imitation of the Rajputs' famous immolations of their women and themselves attests the supreme horror with which the Pindaris were regarded.

The harvest of plunder once reaped was slow of replacement; and these professional marauders were compelled constantly to widen the circle of their raids. When they began to penetrate into the Company's territories, the Company's governor-general in India and the directors in London at last agreed that this menace must be ended, and their tardy agreement led to



a final Maratha war and the establishment of the East India Company as the paramount power in India.

In 1813 political chance had selected Lord Moira, better known under his later title of Lord Hastings, as Governor-General and Commander-in-Chief. At that time he was known to the world principally as a bosom friend of the Prince Regent—indeed, was he not to stand unconscious godfather to the second son of the first Sir Pitt Crawley, Bart. ?—but his qualities were infinitely more serious than could be supposed from this early connection. Lord Hastings was at once a capable soldier and a statesman of clear though limited foresight. Like Wellesley, he saw that the Company must become the foremost and indeed the dominant political power in India. Unlike Wellesley, however, he did not admit that political predominance must carry with it ultimate political responsibility. He endeavoured to pursue a middle course, and although he had not set his aim so high, he in fact achieved almost all that Wellesley had aimed at accomplishing.

His first object was the destruction of the Pindari bands; his second, the avoidance of any general war with the Maratha chiefs. Two of these, the Gaikwar of Baroda and the Peshwa, were already bound to the Company by subsidiary treaties. A third, the Holkar state of Indore, was unlikely to move, for it was under the divided control of a council of regency. There remained Sindia and Nagpur. In the latter state, important as stretching across the peninsula and thus capable of barring Pindari movements to the south-east or of opening to them a wide liberty of movement, Hastings was helped by circumstances to establish a political control. The rajah was weak-minded, if not actually imbecile. The government was being conducted by a reputedly astute relative, Appa Sahib, who was afraid that some palace intrigue would induce the rajah to adopt an heir other than himself. He therefore readily



agreed with Hastings to enter into a subsidiary treaty in return for the Company's recognition of him as heir to the Nagpur state. Sindia offered a more difficult problem, and although he agreed in principle with the policy of destroying the Pindaris, it was most uncertain how far he would or could act in accordance with his declarations. In order, therefore, to make matters sure, Hastings proceeded to mass on his frontiers such a force as to make armed opposition clearly dangerous.

These projects, like Wellesley's treaty with the Peshwa, created great excitement at all the Maratha capitals. They involved a further intrusion of the Company's authority into Maratha affairs, and messengers were sent hurrying to and fro from durbar to durbar to sound the intentions of the various chiefs and test the possibility of united Maratha action against the English. Most if not all of the princes were agreed that the destruction of the Pindaris would be fatal to their own reputation and power. But their interests were so divided, and their individual liability to attack so great, that now as in 1803 no common plan could be devised, no common action resolved on. Maratha unity had vanished. Although the Marathas made one more effort to avoid their approaching subordination, their attempt was unconcerted, weak, and fruitless. Towards the close of 1817 the Peshwa sacked the Residency at Poona; Appa Sahib attacked the Resident and his escort at Nagpur; and Holkar's army made ready for war. But these three efforts were individually crushed. Sindia was pinned by Hastings' disposal of his troops so that he could march to the help of none of his fellow-princes. The Peshwa was first defeated and then chased through the territory which his family had governed for a century till he surrendered to his pursuers. Appa Sahib was driven from Nagpur. Holkar's army was beaten at Mahidpur. Maratha power was visibly at an end. The Company



was unquestionably the predominant state in India, strong not merely in its military force, in its wide territories, in its large revenues, but also in the lack of confidence which prevented the Indian chiefs from uniting against it. Divide and rule, said the Roman. But the English in India found the division ready-made to their hand.

The year 1818, in which these changes were reduced to treaty-terms, marks therefore the emergence of a new Indian empire. Large territorial rearrangements were made. The Peshwa's territories were annexed, and the modern Presidency of Bombay thus came into being. A considerable slice was lopped off the northern side of Nagpur. Holkar was required to cede lands to a Pindari chief who had been prudent enough to make his peace with the English before it was too late. But even more important than these accessions of territory and the extension of the Company's government was the political position which the Company had come to occupy. Instead of being allied with merely a few Indian rulers, there was in 1818 no important chief who had not entered into treaty relations with the English.

These treaties form a queer and often perplexing group of documents. Drafted by men quite unpractised in the diplomatic usages of Europe, they are frequently marked by ambiguities and even by inconsistencies of phrase. Executed as they often were in English and Persian or English and Marathi, they seldom if ever declare which version shall be deemed authoritative, and this becomes the more embarrassing when the precise political terms of the West are rendered into the vague and ill-defined phrases which most nearly correspond in Eastern languages. As a whole, too, they are extraordinarily diverse, varying in accordance with the special circumstances of the princes with whom they were made and the special conditions of the period at which they were framed. They range, indeed, from documents



which authorize the interference of the Company's government in every department of affairs, domestic and foreign, to agreements which merely stipulate general amity.

Diverse as they were, however, in the region bounded by the Indus and the Sutlej, the Himalayas, and the sea, they established the Company as the supreme political arbiter. Within that area no major prince could pursue a quarrel with his neighbours except through the governor-general and council. The petty wars by which the peasant and trader had been incessantly harried for over a century had been brought to an end. The first condition for the political reintegration of India had been established. Lord Hastings was the man who completed that first stage in the political redemption of the country.

The expansion of the Company's territories was as yet far from complete. The years that followed from 1818 to 1856 witnessed further great annexations. But these fell almost wholly into the few years at the end of the period, and nearly all belong to the government of Lord Dalhousie. For close on thirty years the settlement which Hastings reached remained virtually unchanged, and war became the exception, not the rule. Within the region in which the Company's predominance was established in 1818 a few trifling military operations took place. The people of Mysore rebelled against their rajah, and Lord William Bentinck, after repressing the revolt, took direct charge of the government of the state, without, however, annexing it. The Rajah of Coorg involved himself in troubles, defied the governor-general, and was deprived of his territory. The durbar of Sindia's state in 1843, during a minority, provoked Ellenborough into open war, and was compelled to submit to terms which included the limitation of the State army. But in comparison with the wars of earlier days these were insignificant episodes, save that they



demonstrated the irresistible superiority of the Company's

In this later period, indeed, the extensions of the Company's territory fall into two distinct classes—those which came to the Company in consequence of the policy adopted towards the Native States, and those which were produced by the operation of external policy and the desire to make the Indian Empire more easily defensible against external attack.

The former in a sense flowed directly from the position of the East India Company in India itself. Wherever a strong, regularly-governed state arises amidst a number of smaller powers, the latter are always likely to be absorbed by their great neighbour. Even where the great state harbours no designs of expansion, irritating events will from time to time lead it to intervene in the interests of its trade or in the general interests of good government. All the great Indian empires had grown by the gradual absorption of the lesser states. The history of the East India Company was no exception to this rule. But in its case, although the political outcome was much the same, its expansion was produced under the influence of very different ideas. It was the missionary of western ideals and methods of government. Its governors-general looked down on the traditional (and often primitive or barbaric) methods of Indian princes with something of the same dislike and disdain with which the Muslim observed the ceremonial of heathen and idolatrous peoples. When, therefore, as from time to time happened, a prince died without leaving behind him a direct heir of his body, or when the organization of a state gave clear evidence of gross or calamitous mismanagement, then the question would occur whether it were not the duty of the Company to undertake the government, in order to bring to the inhabitants the blessings of western methods and a knowledge of western ideas. To many of that generation, the generation in which the Evangelical Movement still



ran strongly, no doubt was felt of what the Company's government ought to do.

It is needless to plunge into the detail of the various cases which arose, or to discuss what has been called the Doctrine of Lapse. But a number of small chieftainships were brought to an end, and two major states formally annexed. One of these was the state of Nagpur. It still comprised a wide area with a great population. Twice the British government had found itself at war with its rulers, twice the state had lain at the Company's disposal; it was therefore looked upon as a creation of the Company's. When in Dalhousie's time the rajah died without a son, it was resolved that it should no longer be continued, but should be added to the Company's provinces. Thus what we now call the Central Provinces came into existence. The principal reasons for regarding its annexation as desirable were that the state linked up the Presidencies of Bengal and Bombay, and that the network of railroads then in course of being planned would necessarily include a line passing directly through it.

The other considerable state annexed during this period was the kingdom of Oudh. The considerations which led to its extinction were of a wholly different nature. It had long been lamentably misgoverned. Colonel Sleeman, a man of long familiarity with Indian life and of sympathetic attitude towards Indian customs, was specially sent to inspect and report on the state of the kingdom, and was emphatic in his description of its miserable condition. The King of Oudh had repeatedly been called on to introduce reforms. He had regularly promised to do so, and equally regularly failed to carry out his promises. The state was therefore annexed in 1856.

This steady extension of power must certainly have agitated the Indian princes. No one could tell when the process would stop, and to all appearances it would end



only when the last leaf of the artichoke had been devoured. It is certain, too, that the extinction of some of the minor chiefships and also of the kingdom of Oudh provoked bitter resentment among those whose personal interests were involved. But it is easy to exaggerate the importance of these feelings. The people as a whole cannot be thought to have shared them or resented the extension of the Company's authority. That was still the business of the caste-people whose *dharma* imposed on them the duties of government and war.

While within its circumscribed area the affairs of the Company were moving smoothly and quietly enough, a great and indeed a fundamental change had taken place in the sphere of external policy. In the eighteenth century the command of the sea-route by the Cape of Good Hope had been the chief determining factor. The Anglo-French struggle had been decided, in reality, not by defeats such as that of Lally at Wandiwash, but by the repeated victories at sea of the English fleets, culminating in the most decisive battle of its period, the victory of Trafalgar. But even before that tremendous triumph, there had already been set in motion a current of affairs which was destined to make the Mediterranean once more the highway of the world, and to limit the importance of the Cape route to the East. Napoleon's attack on Egypt had been the first formal announcement of the coming change, which was actuated by the strong desire of European enemies of Great Britain to loosen the strangle-hold given her by her control of the seas. That attack had involved the English Government in India in a new direction of policy. Wellesley had not only pressed his attack on the main French ally in India, Tipu Sultan, to a decisive conclusion, but he had sent Indian troops to the Red Sea to hasten the destruction of the French army in Egypt. English admirals had turned their attention to the question of commanding the southern exit



of the Red Sea, and almost within a generation the Governor-General had secured not only the Red Sea by the occupation of Aden, but the Persian Gulf as well by the treaties he made with the principal Arab chiefs.

But although the maritime approaches to India were thus safeguarded, there still remained the land-routes by which Indian empires in the past had repeatedly been overthrown. The Khyber and the Kurram Passes became once more avenues of danger, and Afghanistan and Persia regions from which the safety of India might be threatened. The maritime danger had mainly been the danger of French attack; the overland danger was danger from Russia, which in the nineteenth century seemed likely to spread her power over all Asia.

The nature of Russian intentions has been bitterly discussed and the reality of Russian designs against India seriously questioned. The facts, however, are now clear enough. Seeing that British and Russian policy in Europe was normally antagonistic, and seeing too that Russia possessed no means by which she could put direct pressure on the British government, her statesmen conceived the plan of extending Russian power and influence in Central Asia until she should be within striking distance of India, not necessarily in order to launch a military attack, but in order to be able, at times of European crisis, to influence British policy by threatening, or by deliberately refraining from threatening, India. The design was well-conceived and steadily put into execution. During the period at present in question it was exhibited by a constant pressure upon Persia, until Russian influence was well-established at Teheran; and this influence was then used to direct Persian attacks upon Afghanistan.

This policy was the more embarrassing to English statesmen because at that time, in the 'thirties of the



nineteenth century, direct political control did not extend beyond the Sutlej. On the lower Indus were established a group of chieftains, the amirs of Sind, whose political relations with Kabul and Teheran were much closer than with Calcutta; while in the Panjab ruled one of those remarkable men whom a turbulent people throw up from time to time to dragoon them into order and obedience. This was Ranjit Singh, who had beaten the Sikh groups into union and had formed them into a vigorous fighting people with a strong sense of religious unity, standing for what in the West would have become a national sentiment. He had recognized the political and military virtues of the Company's government in India, and lived in constant amity with it. But he had no successor possessed of qualities like his own, and his death was certain to be followed by a weak, unstable rule.

Clearly no wise man would have sought to intervene in Central Asian affairs, despite the alarm produced by the extension of Russian influence, so long as he did not enjoy full control of the valley of the Indus. Unfortunately in 1838 the governor-general, Lord Auckland, allowed himself to be pressed, by influence from London, into action ill-calculated and indeed disastrous. Since he could not secure the agreements which he desired from the amir of Kabul, he embarked on a plan to overthrow the amir and set up in his stead a man who had once governed the Afghans but had been driven out by them. This episode is known as the First Afghan War. Foredoomed to failure from the first, a brilliant beginning only rendered the subsequent disasters more shocking. And their consequences spread far. The Sepoys from the first hated the campaign. They could not endure the bitter cold and deep snows of an Afghan winter. Their miseries and the crowning disaster into which they were led shook the faith which Indian soldiers had felt from the time of Clive in English leadership. The campaign left the Sind amirs with a great grievance. They had



agreed to open the navigation of the Indus, provided the river was not used for the transport of munitions. But the exigencies of war led Auckland completely to disregard this agreement and to march his troops through Sind as though it were English territory. Lastly Ranjit Singh died in 1839, while the war was still in progress. On his death the real power of the state passed to the Sikh army which he had formed and trained. The Sikh soldiers, always jealous of the eastern men who filled the ranks of the Company's Bengal Army, remembered that they themselves had beaten the Afghans and argued that they could therefore beat the Company's men. The Afghan war thus left a situation appreciably worse than that which had preceded it.

Men had already begun to speak of a Sikh war as a certainty in the near future ; and this opinion was fully shared by Auckland's successor, Ellenborough. When he had made the best of a bad job by extricating the British troops and prisoners from Afghanistan, he took advantage of the provocative attitude of the Sind amirs to annex Sind. Politically the advance was wise. It placed the Company by the southern route of the Bolan Pass within reach of Afghanistan, the region from which Russian influence must at all costs be excluded ; and in the event of a Sikh war it gave the Company a secure position on the right flank of the Sikh line of defence. But of all the Company's acquisitions this was the one to be viewed with the greatest disapproval. At the same time much of the blame heaped upon Ellenborough was due rather to Auckland, who had contrived to leave behind for his successor to clear up a position of extreme difficulty.

Then came the promised Sikh wars. As so often happens, each side regarded the other as adopting a threatening attitude. The Sikh army was certainly beyond the control of the Lahore government, and it is hard to blame the English for strengthening their forces along the Sikh frontier ; while this movement was



interpreted by the Sikhs themselves as displaying an intention to attack. Two very stubborn contests followed. The Sikhs were ill-led. But they were splendid soldiers, and were inspired by a consciousness of unity such as was to be found in no other Indian army that the Company's troops ever had to meet. After the first war, Hardinge, the governor-general, did his utmost to re-establish a Sikh government. The task was entrusted to Henry Lawrence, than whom no Company's servant ever showed more understanding of or sympathy with Indians of all classes. But the effort was hopeless. It broke down because Lawrence could not find Sikhs patriotic enough to forsake private advantage and seek the welfare of their country alone. The second war was therefore followed by the annexation of the Panjab, and thus fears of Russian designs carried the Company's authority across the Indus to the great mountains which stand between India and Afghanistan.

Thus war, inspired ultimately by fears of foreign interference, led to annexations on the north-west of India. At the same time the Company's territories spread into the region lying to the south-eastwards of India. The kingdom of Burma, while owing its religion, Buddhism, and its law to India, had never had close political relations with that country. The land frontiers had never been defined. The Burmese king cherished the traditional theory of universal rule, and could see no reason why a neighbour, of whose power he was grievously ignorant, should be allowed to govern lands into which his discontented subjects had retired. Hence arose the first Burmese war in 1826; trade disputes and the ill-treatment of British merchants at Rangoon led to a second war in 1852; and these two enterprises established the Company's power in the provinces of Aracan, Pegu and Tenasserim, on the eastern shore of the Bay of Bengal.

Within a century of Plassey the English Company had



INDIA

CSL

thus built up an empire more extensive than any which had gone before, dominant over the princes who had accepted its alliance, and, being based upon the sea, able to overcome with ease the great barrier which had always in the past divided India into the distinct political worlds of Hindustan and the Deccan.



CHAPTER IV

THE COMPANY'S POLICY

THE Company's empire had thus come into being, not by any mere absence of mind, still less by any deliberate and long-prepared plan, but from an obstinate resolve to hold and strengthen what circumstances had thrust into English hands. But the acquisition of empire was among the least of the Company's achievements. What is of far greater moment is the method of government devised to hold this singular empire in being, and the ideas and purposes inspiring the policy declared by the governors-general and carried into operation by a host of Englishmen, holding all sorts of inferior offices, and long forgotten, but almost all deserving well both of their own and of their adopted country.

Manifest difficulties have lain in the way of forming and guiding the Anglo-Indian government. There was never a time when men did not feel that they had set out on a difficult experiment, the issue of which could not be foreseen. Throughout the past no less than to-day the only real guidance has come from faith in certain principles. It may well prove that the principles were mistaken and the faith delusive; but even though the Indian empire of to-day vanishes, it will remain of enduring human interest, for in it the idea of trusteeship for another people was born and in it the application of that idea was first attempted.

Two distinct and indeed opposite tendencies can be traced in the development of Anglo-Indian polity.



The first was inspired by a desire to make it as Indian as possible, the second by a desire to make it as English as might be. The former is most apparent in the earlier days of the Company's government, but gradually gives ground and is at last almost wholly superseded by the latter. At first, indeed, when the great province of Bengal, as large and as populous as France, fell into Clive's hands, not piecemeal but in one enormous mass, the Company's servants had no choice but to preserve the existing organization as far as they could do so and to introduce no changes that could be avoided. How was a small group of foreigners, soldiers or traders by profession, to collect the taxes and conduct the details of administration amidst millions of strangers whose language they scarcely knew, and whose customs were strange and inexplicable? The first, the obvious, perhaps the only practicable expedient was to leave the existing officials at their posts, acting in the name of the former Indian master of the province. This was the plan of the "dual government," as it has been called, lasting from 1757 to 1772, when the Company's government at Calcutta controlled the only effective military force in Bengal, but left the nawab and his ministers to continue their administration. The plan inevitably worked ill. English control depended on the maintenance of the army; the army must be regularly paid; regular military pay demanded regular finance; and the nawab's finances were anything but regular. Various minor expedients were attempted. The Calcutta Council assumed authority to choose the nawab's chief minister. A few months later Clive obtained for the Company the office of diwan or financial minister, leaving to the nawab the duty of maintaining public order. But this made little difference, for Clive at once appointed as deputy diwan the same man as had already been nominated chief minister.

In 1772, however, a great departure was made. Bengal had recently been afflicted by a severe famine,



and rumour accused the Company's deputy and the Company's servants themselves of having sought profit out of the sufferings of the people. The directors of the Company resolved, therefore, to bring the current methods of indirect control to an end, and to execute the duties of diwan through their own servants. They therefore instructed the governor whom they had just appointed to Bengal to carry out this most important decision.

The Governor was Warren Hastings. If Clive founded the empire itself, Hastings laid the foundations of its administrative system. For thirteen years all the leisure and energy that could be spared from the preservation of the Company's power was devoted to inquiry and experiment in matters of administration. Here, as in the conduct of external policy, he was hindered and distracted by insufficient powers, by the opposition of his councillors, and by great difficulties of finance. The greatest tragedy of Anglo-Indian history assuredly lies in the fact that the one man of supreme genius sent from England to India was doomed to spend his years of government not in positive achievement, but rather in minimizing the consequences of other men's follies and misdeeds. Nor, indeed, were his administrative ideas destined to be adopted in Bengal. He desired above all else to revive and reform the ancient methods of rule. With a keener insight and deeper knowledge of the Indian world than was possessed by any other man of his generation, he might assuredly have set up an administrative machinery adapted to the needs and conditions of Bengal, controlled by Englishmen, but not composed exclusively of Englishmen in all its higher branches. In fact, he planned to establish not an English but an Indian government.

But already hasty and ill-considered legislation in London had marked the coming of a new and revolutionary set of influences. The Company's civil and military



servants, reaching India while still no more than boys, spending prolonged periods in India without any return to England, and, outside the Presidency towns or large military stations, versed of necessity in Indian rather than English society, acquired much familiarity with Indian customs and imbibed many Indian ideas. Jonathan Duncan, who served in Bengal in Hastings's time, and later became governor of Bombay, was a patron of Sanskrit and became known as "the Brahmanized Englishman." Colonel Kirkpatrick (father of Carlyle's Kitty Kirkpatrick), long Resident at Hyderabad, married a Muslim lady of rank, dyed his moustache vermilion in Pathan fashion, spoke Persian like a gentleman, and in manners and costume could hardly be distinguished from a Muslim noble. Such men could, like Hastings himself, move with ease in Indian society, viewed the East India Company as an Eastern power, and aimed at rendering it a native, not a foreign, government. But in England such views were suspect. Already in 1773 the Regulating Act had nominated three out of the five councillors at Calcutta from men whose training and experience were mainly those of the West. The same Act had established the Supreme Court, composed of four professional English lawyers, who carried with them to that Eastern city the complicated and unreformed system of law by which justice was administered in Westminster Hall. In 1784 another Act set up a board, on which the cabinet was prominently represented, to guide and control the conduct of the Company's directors in England and the Company's government in India. Two years later the practice was introduced of appointing as Governor-General a man whose experience was exclusively Western, and at the same time the Governor-General was invested with the authority, denied to Hastings, of overruling his council. In the following year began the impeachment of Warren Hastings, whose worst crime in Burke's eyes was that he claimed, not the



constitutional authority of England, but the despotic power which every Indian prince had exercised for two thousand years. With these changes a new spirit was infused into the Company's administration. The experiments of Warren Hastings were abandoned for the experiments of Cornwallis.

Lord Cornwallis was appointed Governor-General and Commander-in-Chief in 1786, and he brought out with him authority to overrule a majority of his council if he deemed it necessary. But even this did not define the whole difference between his position and that of his predecessors. He was a peer, and as such was certain to receive a more respectful hearing than a man of lesser social status. But what was even more important was that he was a nominee of the ministry and, therefore, assured of the political support of his party. From his day onwards the Governor-General possessed those despotic powers which Burke had so bitterly abhorred. It was not a little paradoxical that such a result should have followed on the exercise of English constitutional authority. But the paradox is explained by the fact that the English Parliament was willing to entrust extraordinary powers only to those whose characters and qualities were well known.

The first fruits of this new mode of government and of the new influences involved in it are well worth consideration. Cornwallis was in all respects an admirable man. Unostentatious, sincere, honest, benevolent, with a fine sense of his responsibilities and a hatred of shams and jobs, he set to work to make a new administration in Bengal—at that time the sole extensive territory under English rule. He brought to his task English experience and English ideals, and at once disliked the normal basis of Indian government. He found that the standard of conduct was the ruler's will and that the operation of government depended on executive officials. He could



never reconcile himself to such exotic methods. He was accustomed to a government which embodied the rule of law. The executive official in England was virtually unknown, and a police force can scarcely be said to have existed. A man with a grievance, whether against a fellow-citizen or against the state, should go to the appropriate court of law and plead his rights. Even local government was largely in the hands of men who exercised power because they were justices of the peace. Cornwallis found in Bengal the chief officials of the government engrossed in annual assessments of the amounts to be levied on the lands of the provinces and otherwise occupied with fiscal questions, while the men charged with administering justice were relatively young, inexperienced, and ill-paid. If the government wished a new measure to be put in force, the custom was to send orders to that effect to the collector in each district, instead of passing a law and leaving its enforcement to the judges and the police.

After long deliberation Cornwallis resolved to revolutionize the system, and in 1793 sweeping changes were made, designed above all else to make the mode of government English. The first thing to be done was to relieve the principal officials from their fiscal duties. That was not possible so long as the system of annual assessments was maintained. Therefore the land revenue was fixed and declared to be unalterable. By this Permanent Settlement fiscal duties were reduced to a mere matter of collection, and junior officials were made collectors in the various districts of the province, while the senior men were made judges. The courts, both civil and criminal, were reorganized. An elaborate procedure was laid down for them by law, so as to secure regularity of justice, and a considerable number of laws were made. At the same time a new police force was organized, and Cornwallis reckoned that his work was done.



He probably never realized the extent or degree of the changes which he had introduced; he certainly never realized many of the consequences which were to follow from them. The most serious was the effect of these reforms on the land-tenures of the country. In land-tenure as in so much else India was medieval. Land was still not a saleable commodity, except in the immediate neighbourhood of cities. It would be a rare thing indeed to find a piece of land over which a single individual could claim exclusive rights. The government claimed an undefined share, fixable at its own pleasure, of the annual produce, and all other claims were subordinate to that. And indeed Indian custom viewed the question of land tenures not as a matter of rights over the land itself but as rights to share in what the land produced. Those rights were often subdivided with great complexity. In Bengal there were two main classes of people who could claim them. One was a class of peasant cultivators who enjoyed rights of cultivation; the other a class standing midway between the cultivators and the government, entitled to a share in the produce in consideration of their collecting and delivering to the government the government's share. This situation was a source of great perplexity to the Company's servants engaged in revenue business, and it was the more perplexing because the intermediate class, the zamindars as they were called, constantly and successfully obstructed the collectors' efforts to investigate the agrarian conditions of Bengal, from the fear that, if the real amount of the zamindars' share was known, it would lead to increased demands from the government. Cornwallis seems to have regarded this indefinite system of land-rights as most injurious. When he fixed the revenue, he fixed in fact only the amounts to be demanded from the zamindars, and both he and his successors were strongly disposed to regard them as landlords in the English sense unless other rights could be proved against



98
them in a court of law. The broad result of the Permanent Settlement was to transform the rights of the zamindar from a right to share in the produce to a right in the fee simple of the land, while the government renounced its rights to increased revenue should the value of the produce of the province increase.

Nor was this the only objection which may be brought against the Permanent Settlement. Years afterwards, when famine threatened, it was found that the Bengal collectors could not tell what was the cultivable area of the districts, what crops were grown, whether the district imported or exported foodstuffs, or how many ploughs and cattle it possessed. This was the inevitable consequence of Cornwallis's decision to make the Permanent Settlement and abandon the laborious and difficult methods of investigation which Warren Hastings had initiated. The Company's servants were thus doomed never to make close contact with the villagers of their districts. Bengal in consequence has remained the province in British India in which the administration has been least in touch with the people at large.

The judicial reforms also worked ill. The elaborate procedure demanded the help of the professional lawyer and made justice too costly for the poor to seek it. The new laws could not in those days by any possible means be brought to the knowledge of the populace. Round the courts grew up a horde of professional witnesses, ready to swear to any story. A English judge of the next generation declared that the appearance of a witness in an Indian court of justice afforded strong presumption against the goodness of his character. The ignorance amidst which the Permanent Settlement had been framed left open thousands of cases of disputed boundaries, and the liberty of appeal was extensive; so that within a few years the courts fell into such arrears of business that a suit might easily come to its conclusion



THE COMPANY'S POLICY

99
SL

only in the lifetime of the original suitors' grandchildren. The courts, Metcalfe assures us, were spoken of with disgust, ridicule or fear. A single anecdote will illustrate the kind of fraud that was practised. One part of the procedure consisted in the parties agreeing to a series of questions which were put to all the witnesses of a suit and their answers taken down in writing. The current practice was for the answers to these interrogatories, as the agreed questions were called, to be taken down by subordinate court officials in the judge's presence, but while he might be dealing with a special case. An Indian judge one day noticed one of his officials writing very busily while the witness never seemed to open his mouth. The judge called up the witness, questioned him, and found he knew nothing whatever about the matter at issue.

The police arrangements turned out worse than either the revenue or judicial reforms. The country was divided into circles, each with a head-officer called the daroga, with a number of constables under him. The office of daroga was the most profitable and most eagerly desired of all offices open to Indians in Bengal. The darogas were placed under the authority of the district judge, who was also a magistrate. They were therefore immune from inspection, for the judge was tied to his court at headquarters not only by the need of disposing of the cases brought before him but also by orders never to quit headquarters without special leave. They were therefore free to practise whatever extortions they could.

The reforms of Cornwallis were thus full of defects. But the principal fault lay less in the reforms themselves than in the time and manner in which they were introduced. No permanent settlement of the revenue should have been attempted until a thorough knowledge by survey had been obtained of the economic resources of the country. No sudden attempt should have been



made to transform the basis of government from personal administration to the rule of laws and law-courts. No new corps of police should have been set up until an adequate inspecting agency could be established. Most of the changes, and perhaps all of them, were in themselves good. The blunder lay in forcing them on the country without sufficient preparation.

I have said that the English dominion was the most obstinately foreign ever set up in India. Cornwallis and the system which he established in Bengal afford a striking illustration of this truth. Nor was it exemplified only in the revolutionary principles which he introduced. An English system of government must needs be conducted by Englishmen, and the new régime was therefore based on the rigid exclusion of Indians from every office of importance. Every judge, every registrar, every collector, every assistant, all the members of the superintending boards established at Calcutta, were English. The most profitable offices which could be held by Indians were the darogaships of police; the highest offices in dignity were subordinate judgeships. In the same year in which the new system was introduced, the English Parliament laid down by law the principle that all civil offices carrying a pay of £800 a year and upwards, save the governor-generalship and the governorships of the subordinate presidencies, must be held by covenanted servants of the East India Company, and in fact those servants were invariably English. Cornwallis's practice was thus confirmed by law, and later Governors-General found themselves obliged to follow his example in the exclusion of Indians from offices of any importance.

Objectionable and unfair as this appears in modern eyes, it was much less so at the close of the eighteenth century. There was the great difficulty of finding Indians who could be trusted to discharge the duties of high office, for the traditions of Indian administration were



evil and corrupt. Those whose knowledge and experience might have qualified them for more than subordinate employment were almost always disqualified by the venal attitude of their class. It is noteworthy that the most famous Hindu of the period in the Company's service, a man of high moral ideas and strong character, made enough as a subordinate revenue official to retire after a comparatively short service. Cornwallis had to choose between the speedy establishment of a high standard of public duty and the slow, painful and disappointing process of seeking to wean men from their favourite faults. It is, however, curious to note that the first-fruits of establishing English ideas in the Bengal government led to the adoption of the characteristically Indian system of caste. For more than half a century Englishmen in India constituted a ruling caste.

In the other presidencies of Madras and Bombay conditions effectively prevented the repetition of some of Cornwallis's worst mistakes. Indeed, the difficulties which stood in the way of establishing contact in Bengal between the villager and the administrator did not exist in the south and west. Those difficulties had arisen mainly from the existence in Bengal of the intermediate class, the zamindars, who considered their material interests to be threatened by every approach of the collector to the villages. In Madras and Bombay the normal land tenures were not complicated by zamindari claims. Both were regions of small cultivators, organized in village-communities under village-headmen who exercised their functions by government appointment, who represented the government in their villages, and who were responsible to the local revenue authorities. An endeavour was, indeed, made in Madras to set up there not only the Bengal system of administration but also the Bengal system of land tenures. The attempt broke down completely, however, and the collectors were compelled by force



of circumstances to deal directly with the small holders themselves. This meant a much more laborious mode of work than was pursued in Bengal. But it carried with it ample compensations. The ryotwari system (as this assessment of small individual holdings was called) required that the collector should have under him a body of revenue subordinates usually called tahsildars, the Persian equivalent of the English word collector, or in the Maratha country, mamlatdars. These men were responsible for the collection of the revenue in the subdivisions of a district, and under them again in each village was the head-man. The collector thus had under his orders a chain of local representatives, and could obtain whenever needed full local information touching the crops, the extent of cultivation, the general condition of the region for which he was responsible. Nor was that all. The business of assessment and of hearing complaints against assessments carried him from time to time into every village of his district. Unlike the collector in Bengal, he would spend much of his time on tour, riding slowly from village to village, falling into conversation with the men he met upon the road, seeing the state of the country with his own eyes, and in the evenings round his camp-fire discussing the affairs of the neighbouring village with the village elders. The difference between his knowledge and that of a brother-collector in Bengal was measureless. To him aspects of Indian life and character presented themselves which hardly ever appeared before the judge's bench. He could scarcely help seeing the life of rural India as a whole. The judge spent his time unravelling (if he could) false evidence, and deciding which of two parties pleading before him was a rogue. The ryotwari system might be more toilsome and expensive to administer; but Jos Sedley could not have held a Madras collectorate for a month. It took more from the people by way of revenue, but it took less if to the



government revenue in Bengal be added the exactions of the Bengal zamindars. Perhaps the best evidence for the superiority of the Madras and Bombay administration over that of Bengal lies in the fact that the Bengal servants of the Company declared that a ryotwari administration was impossible. They could not even imagine how such a mass of business could be transacted.

Agrarian conditions prevented this mode of administration ever replacing the zamindari system of Bengal. But in another respect improvements first introduced into Madras and Bombay were allowed to improve the defective system of 1793. Mainly owing to the arguments of Thomas Munro, whose name is inseparably connected with the Madras revenue system, the control of the police in that presidency was taken away from the district judges and entrusted to the collectors. The advantages of the change are evident. The collector, constantly on the move, could supervise the conduct of the police much more closely than a judge ever could. Moreover, the reports of his revenue subordinates were always at hand as a means of checking the reports of the police. The plan was adopted in Bombay, and then at last was introduced into Bengal, and to that extent experience elsewhere was suffered to modify the sacrosanct Cornwallis scheme.

The other important development in the manner of administering Indian territories marked in many respects a strong reaction from the ideas which had inspired the system of Bengal. It would be untrue to say that the influence of western ideas had weakened in the second quarter of the nineteenth century. In many respects it had increased in power. But its direction had changed. The defects of the Cornwallis system had by then become so evident that it was no longer thought expedient to apply typically English methods of government to the



profoundly different conditions of India, and the increased knowledge which a new generation of administrators had painfully acquired led them to the view that it might be well to change as little as possible the system by which newly-acquired provinces had been ruled, and in the first place, at all events, to attempt no more than to set up an honest and upright government of the pattern to which the inhabitants were well accustomed. This new policy, which was exhibited in the early arrangements for the administration of Sind, of the Central Provinces, of the Panjab, and of Oudh, aimed at maintaining the normal framework of government, but infusing into it a new spirit of honesty and zeal by appointing trustworthy instead of corrupt district officials. This new method became known as the Non-Regulation System.

This odd name, nonsensical or meaningless as it appears at first sight, was when rightly understood neither the one nor the other. It did not mean a mode of governing without rules; it did mean a system which was not based, as Cornwallis had based the Bengal administration, on "regulations," *i.e.*, in Anglo-Indian parlance, laws and law-courts, and which was not founded on the separation of powers, keeping the functions of the judge and executive official jealously distinct, but upon their intimate union, in accordance with the long-settled practice of Indian states. At the head of each district was an official—not the collector, as in the older British provinces, but the deputy-commissioner—who represented the government in all its aspects, settling and collecting the revenue, keeping public order, punishing misconduct, and determining the disputes which might arise in his district.

This was, therefore, a highly personal mode of rule, and it would be good or bad in proportion as the deputy-commissioner was capable, honest, and understanding. It worked well while it lasted, in part because, if you wish to get the best out of a man, you must trust him to the



CSL

limit of his capacity; in part because under such a system the slack or incapable speedily revealed their incompetence and could be removed; in part because the men chosen were good, often extraordinarily good, and the establishment of British authority meant, therefore, the replacement of a corrupt despotism by one that was honest and benevolent, without the introduction of those mechanical, hard and fast rules which Indians found difficult indeed to understand or value. Where this system had been at work for an appreciable period of time, especially in Sind and the Panjab, the events of the Mutiny proved it to have been not only efficient but also popular.

Such was the agency through which the Company's government dealt with the provinces under its control. But a brief sketch must be added of the service from which these local agents were drawn—the Company's covenanted servants, the ancestors of the modern Indian Civil Service. They were all nominees of one or other of the directors of the Company, and so in practice they were usually kinsmen of directors or of their intimate friends. They derived their description from the fact that, being designed to hold positions of trust, they were required to enter into covenants imposing penalties for any breach of their duties and to provide the guarantee of two sureties resident in England. At first they were chosen for their knowledge of trade and especially of the Eastern trade. But gradually the practice arose of appointing only lads of whom not more would be expected than writing a good hand and possessing an elementary knowledge of accounts. Spasmodic efforts were made to induce them to learn the languages of the country. But as long as the Company remained predominantly a trading corporation these efforts produced no very notable results. For a long time the Company's servants were mainly interested in the Company's and their own private trade.



They still retained that character at the time when the Company's political career began to open before it, and were for a while grievously demoralized by the opportunities of easy money which that development offered to them. But even so they always included many men of fine and honest character. Warren Hastings himself belonged to the generation which was exposed to the fiercest temptation. Thomas Saunders and Josias Du Pré, both governors of Madras, Charles Grant and John Shore, both Bengal servants destined to be eager supporters of the Evangelical Movement, were others who may be mentioned. The main difficulty lay in transforming them from merchants into administrators, and that reform was carried out by Cornwallis, who thoroughly reorganized the conditions of service. However, nothing as yet had been done to provide them with the kind of training that was desirable. It was reserved for Wellesley to take the first steps in this direction. "Duty, policy, and honour," he wrote in 1800, "require that [India] should not be administered as a temporary and precarious acquisition, as an empire conquered by prosperous adventure and extended by fortunate accident. . . . It must be considered as a sacred trust, and a permanent possession." The Company's servants were called on to do the work of statesmen and diplomatists, and should receive an appropriate training. The College of Fort William was therefore established, to receive all the covenanted servants for the first two years of their time in India, to continue and extend their general education and to instruct them in the languages, laws and religions of the country. The reform was of such evident advantage that the personal dislike which the directors felt for Wellesley's financial and external policy could not be allowed to burke it; and ultimately many of the functions which the College of Fort William was designed to fulfil were transferred to a new college set up in England at Haileybury, where the



directors could control the curriculum and cost, and attend in person to distribute the prizes. Wellesley's policy, however, indicates clearly the way in which things were moving.

The Company's servants were never a picked body of men as the Indian Civil Service was at its best. The brilliant men were far fewer: the bad bargains far more numerous. Taken as a whole, they were an average sample of the upper middle-class with the advantage of a better and more prolonged education. The family reasons which determined the selection carried with them, too, advantages of their own. A boy was better qualified to serve in India if his father had served there before him; and if on his arrival he would be met, not only by the English, but also by the Indian friends of his family, it formed an influence which tended to minimize the strangeness of the foreign rule, and to bridge over the gulf between Indian and Englishman. Conditions of service in the ryotwari and non-regulation provinces tended in the same direction. They bred a familiarity, not with codes and orders of government, but with the people themselves.

While the forms of Indian administration were thus swaying between the conflicting influences of governors-general fresh from Europe and Company's servants long familiar with India, the general policy of the Company's government and the objects which it kept before its eyes were far less liable to change. The generation of Englishmen which passed the Reform Bill and adopted the Factory Acts was composed of ardent reformers, completely confident that they surpassed all their human predecessors in the paths of civilization and religion. They were missionary-minded. Only common folk like Tony Weller, or *poco curantes* like Lord Melbourne, could mock at their zeal. It flowed out in all directions. Their religion, their politics, their political economy, their social



views were inspired by such common-sense principles as seemed to them incapable of honest denial. The world only needed to be made like themselves. The period was therefore one of active, incessant Indian reform.

In the eighteenth century it had been a settled principle of English government in no way to meddle with the religious and social customs of the country. The entrance of missionaries, above all of Protestant and Dissenting missionaries with their troublesome and earnest denunciations of idolatry and their seeming readiness to earn the martyr's crown, was steadily discouraged. Even practices abhorrent to English minds, such as suttee, were tolerated. The government recognized the religion of the country by collecting taxes from the pilgrims thronging to the great festivals of Juggernaut. Its district collectors acted as trustees of the temple lands lying within their jurisdiction. Sepoys would be sent to keep order along the path of religious processions, and salutes would be fired to mark the emergence of a god from his temple.

This attitude was shocking to the fundamentalism of that and the following period. The May meetings, which in those days represented the religious equivalent of the London season, invariably included bitter attacks on the anti-Christian conduct of the East India Company and its servants, and advantage was taken of the existence of a Danish settlement at Serampore, on the Hugli, to establish a Protestant mission and college there, beyond the control of the Company's impious government at Calcutta. In 1813 Wilberforce so far prevailed in the House of Commons as to secure a limitation of the Company's power to refuse Europeans admission into its territories, and from that time onwards missionary enterprise displayed great activity in India.

This change had its political effects. Thereafter missionary bodies were more constantly and extensively,



if not more accurately, informed about Indian conditions ; and the government became exposed to criticism which could not be brushed aside as easily as the attacks formerly made upon it by the unorganized, unofficial Englishmen who had been permitted to settle and trade. In some respects this change was beneficial. The fact is illustrated by the part which the missionaries played in getting rid of suttee.

The custom of burning widows on their husbands' pyres was one of those survivals from a past of infinite antiquity which Hinduism was well calculated to preserve. The root-idea of the practice was the same as that which in Egypt and Sumer, in China and in Scythia, had provided dead rulers with all that they could be imagined to need in the world of the dead. When the dead man was a prince the immolation was appallingly extensive. When Ranjit Singh's corpse was burnt four queens and seven slave-girls were burnt alive. In Rajputana no rajah could be decently burnt unless a number of women shared the flames with his dead body. The psychology lying behind such bloody practices is avowedly primitive. But until its renewed contact with the West, in the nineteenth century, produced an extensive, though possibly superficial change, Indian psychology was still primitive, and what the "best people" such as the Rajputs did was an ideal to be followed if possible by all that part of the Hindu world which wished to rank high in social estimation.

The English had shut their eyes as closely as they could to this primitive custom. Now and again we read of some young Englishman and his friends rescuing a widow from the flames. Job Charnock, the founder of Calcutta, is said to have married such a one. But, until the eighteenth century ended, the English Government stood fast by their principle that religious and social customs should be left alone. The entrance of missionaries and the spread of mission activity, however,



INDIA

CSL

transformed the popular English attitude. The missionaries made no effort to conceal the horror with which they regarded the ceremony. They enquired into the alleged religious basis of the custom, and found that orthodox pundits were not too convinced of the authenticity of the texts enjoining it. They enquired into the circumstances of individual sacrifices, and found that the limitations which the Hindu law-books themselves imposed had often been ignored. They wrote pamphlets which were broadcast in England, painting in the strongest language the horrors which on occasion were to be witnessed—of women drugged into acquiescence or forced back shrieking into the flames from which they endeavoured to escape. In this there was an element of exaggeration. Voluntary suttees, in a land where few placed the same value on human life as was common among western peoples and where the life of a widow was too often unhappy and shameful, were not uncommon. Readers of Colonel Sleeman's *Rambles and Recollections* will remember the old lady who importuned him till he at last assented to her burning herself. But however admirable may be such instances of constancy and resolution, the practice is far too open to abuse to be tolerated by a modern state, and no sane man but must sympathize with the missionaries' efforts to secure its prohibition. They completely won over English opinion. Under their pressure the directors of the Company called for reports on what had been done in the matter; and at last Bentinck prohibited the practice in 1829. A large body of Bengali Brahmans appealed to the Privy Council on the score that the Company's government had solemnly declared that it would protect Hindus in all their rights. But their application was rejected, and men who persuaded, cajoled or intimidated unwanted women into becoming suttees were liable to the same penalty as if they had procured a murder.



In this matter the Protestant missionary had taken a prominent and splendid part, and he would no doubt have done the like with regard to thuggee had it fallen similarly within his purview. Thuggee, however, practised though it might be under the protection of a great Hindu goddess, stood in a different category. It was not in any sense of the word a social or religious obligation, although it was consecrated with religious ceremonies. It was rather one of those primitive social oddities which Hindu society was capable of harbouring and which neither Hindu society nor any earlier Indian state had been able to root out and destroy. The thugs were professional murderers, who regarded their victims as sacrifices to the goddess Bowanni, and their plunder as the bounty of their protectress. Their favourite, and indeed almost invariable weapon, was the handkerchief, with which they displayed extraordinary dexterity in strangling. They worked in carefully-organized groups. Some travelled ahead to learn what travellers were on the road and whether they were worth attention. Others were appointed grave-diggers, to prepare graves close to but out of sight of the place selected for the assassination. A strangler and an assistant would be told off to each victim, and a clean sweep was always made of the whole party attacked so that no evidence should survive.

These gangs of thugs were exceedingly old. But till the time of Lord William Bentinck nothing had been done for their suppression. The English scarcely seem to have heard of their existence till the early years of the nineteenth century, when their attention was called to the large number of sepoy who went home on leave and vanished, neither reaching their relations nor rejoining their regiment. Englishmen seem to have been avoided as victims, perhaps because of their habit of carrying pistols on their persons when travelling. But a host of Indians perished—men travelling to seek service



with some new master, pilgrims going to some famous shrine, merchants accompanied by a store of goods, bankers' servants escorting remittances of treasure. In the first quarter of the century it is likely that the number of bands and the number of murdered increased largely. The dispersal of the Pindaris, the prevention of war, the reduction in the numbers of armed men retained for military service, almost certainly left a large number of reckless men without employment, and many of them probably took to the roads.

Their suppression was matter of great difficulty. Their custom of leaving behind them none but the dead made anything but circumstantial evidence hard to get. Travel in any case was so unsafe that if a man died on a journey no one felt the least surprise; and even if his family suspected that he might have been murdered, no one was disposed to travel on what would almost certainly be a bootless errand. Bankers who lost their money took the same attitude. No one therefore came forward with public complaints.

In these circumstances Bentinck decided to apply special laws and a special procedure to this crime. Membership of a thug gang was made a crime. The law demanding the evidence of two eye-witnesses was relaxed. The law requiring that all witnesses should attend at the court of trial was abrogated. A special Thuggee Department was formed, with Colonel Sleeman at its head, with authority to deal with thuggee no matter whether committed in British India or a native state, and with power to call upon the local authorities within or without British India to place persons suspected of thuggee in arrest. Sleeman carried out his task with great vigour and intelligence. A number of thugs were captured. Under promise of life, some of them turned informers, and detailed the careers of crime which they had followed. Their evidence was carefully checked. Murdered bodies were exhumed. Their identity was



established. Evidence was secured of the passage of bands from one town to another. Other members of known gangs were captured ; previously unknown gangs were brought to light ; and in a comparatively short space of time thuggee ceased to exist.

Other cognate customs were also attacked. At Sagor Island, for example, where the holy water of the Ganges flows into the sea, children were frequently drowned in fulfilment of a vow. The practice was prohibited under pain of death. Again there was an ancient custom of enforcing payment of a debt by seating oneself at the debtor's door and refusing to eat until the debt had been paid. Nothing could be done about this, except to make the recovery of debt by legal process an easier and more habitual measure. But other forms of the same idea—invoking the anger of the gods on the fraudulent debtor's head—stood in a different class. One of these consisted in hiring an aged Brahman to submit to being burnt alive if the debtor obstinately refused payment, thus laying upon him the tremendous and inexpiable guilt of causing a Brahman's death. This was declared illegal. Steps were taken also, though with less effect, to end the custom of female infanticide. This was prevalent among the Rajput clans. The Rajputs deemed it indecent to marry a Rajput girl to any husband not of superior status. Only comparatively wealthy families could thus afford to bring up girls. A girl infant would be exposed, or the mother would refuse to feed it, or would anoint her breasts with bitter drugs so that the child itself would refuse to feed. Evidence in these cases was never procurable ; and public opinion in the tribes following the custom was always strongly in support of the guilty parties. Jonathan Duncan has the credit of being the first to endeavour "to check infanticide. He induced certain clans to enter into agreements to abandon the custom. But since no method had then been devised



by which the observance of such promises could be ascertained, his efforts can only be regarded as an amiable gesture.

As knowledge of India grew and deepened the Company's servants found yet more fearsome usages among the tribes living in seclusion amidst hills and jungles and following ways of life which had been old when Hinduism itself was young—the tribes of Khonds, for instance, living on the borders of the Bengal and Madras Presidencies. They were accustomed annually to ensure the fertility of their fields by burying in them shreds of a human sacrifice chosen from a class recruited mainly by kidnapping. When this custom became known, in the course of military operations in the Khond hills, an officer was stationed among them, and persuaded them by degrees to substitute a buffalo for their human victim.

In these and many other ways the Company's government displayed the growing influence of the missionary spirit, and stood forward as the champions of a more humane and rational attitude towards human life. However, their efforts along these lines only touched the fringes of that ancient system by which the Hindu castes were governed, and did little to modify the fundamental ideas on which that system rested. The introduction of western education was a different thing. It formed, indeed, by far the most important consequence of the establishment of the Company's power in India.

This too was largely due to missionary zeal. Company's servants like Warren Hastings and Jonathan Duncan had sought to revive education in India, but they had desired the revival of the old Hindu and Muslim cultures through Sanskrit and Persian. Their attitude persisted far into the nineteenth century. When in 1813 an English statute authorized the East India Company to



spend annually some £10,000 on the promotion of useful learning, the money was devoted to the maintenance of Sanskrit and Persian scholars and to the translation of useful text-books into those languages.

The missionaries had, however, already begun to pursue another method. They had found a strong demand among the Bengali caste-people who had literate traditions, especially among the Brahman and writer castes, for English. To begin with, this demand merely repeated an earlier phenomenon. Under Muslim rule the same castes had frequently learnt Persian, in order to qualify themselves for employment in the government offices. Now they needed English for the same purpose. But speedily a further development followed. Almost all that was valuable in Muslim literature and thought had already been adopted by Sanskrit writers and embodied in one form or another in Sanskrit works. The acquisition of Persian had not opened a new world of thought to the Brahmans of India. But the acquisition of English did. Consequently what began as a mere matter of vocational training developed into something much larger and much more influential.

In seeking to meet this demand by setting up schools in which English might be learnt, the missionaries aimed at two things. They hoped to extend their own influence and to undermine Hinduism. Here they were partly right, partly wrong. Hinduism has two great aspects. It is a system of ritual and a system of metaphysic. The acquisition of English certainly afforded a great impetus to growing scepticism as to the efficacy of sacrifices and ceremonial, the value of omens, the importance of lucky and unlucky days, and the truth of the orthodox theory of the castes. In regard to these and kindred matters missionary educationalists had on their side common sense and practical human experience. But it must be doubted whether their teaching had the faintest effect on the metaphysics of the Brahman schools. The English



genius does not habitually run to metaphysics. The missionaries commonly lacked the intellectual training needed to spin those fine webs of logic which to the metaphysician are stronger than the most cogent arguments of experience. Further, the Brahman metaphysician was relatively rare. He lived secluded in temple and monastery, and he was safeguarded not only by physical seclusion but also by an impregnable intellectual pride. We must therefore conceive these European influences as affecting the Brahman of the street, not the Brahman of the schools.

On the former the effect was great. On the religious side the early generation of students willingly, triumphantly, cast off the hoary superstitions in which they had grown up. But here the results were mainly negative. Their abandonment of Hindu practices by no means meant that they were likely to adopt that aspect of Christianity expounded by the Protestant missionary of 1830. Taught to question the validity of their own sacred books and to regard as fables the stories of their own gods, they questioned also the validity of the Bible and the truth of its narrative. In other directions, however, the fruits of English education were positive, especially on the social and political sides. The English institutions of which the students read made a deep impression. Here was a new world of human relations, the like of which they had never imagined.

At first the number of those who could explore this unknown land was small. The missionary college at Serampore and a school at Calcutta founded and watched over by the atheist watch-maker, David Hare, were the only places where English was effectively taught. But in 1834 Macaulay arrived to take his seat on the Calcutta Council as the legal adviser to the governor-general, Lord William Bentinck; and Macaulay was at once made chairman of the committee administering the funds devoted by the government to education. He found a



topsy-turvy situation, in which the text-books laboriously translated into Sanskrit and Persian lay unsold, in which the men who had pursued Sanskrit studies were petitioning the government for pensions because their learning would never get them a living, and in which nothing was being done save by individual benevolence to satisfy the strong demand for teaching in English and English studies. Macaulay came at once to the conclusion that the education policy ought to be completely reversed. The act of 1813, he said, had authorized the expenditure of Indian revenues on *useful* knowledge, not on the antiquated jargon of Indian metaphysics, or the ridiculous history and geography implicit in Sanskrit texts. A single shelf of modern English books contained, he declared, more useful knowledge than the entire Sanskrit literature. He concluded that the government should devote its funds and efforts to teaching English and English knowledge to those who desired to learn. The governor-general agreed with him. With the knack of his generation, Macaulay had indeed expounded a half-truth as though it were the whole. For the next twenty years the extension of English knowledge was the main purpose of the government's educational policy.

In some respects the decision reminds one of Cornwallis's decision to rest the administration of Bengal on laws and law-courts. Both were the decisions of men with only a superficial knowledge of India. Both constituted attempts to impose western institutions and ideas upon a country utterly dissimilar to the West. Both aimed at conferring specific and practical advantages upon the people of India. Both were founded upon theories which could not bear the weight of experience. Macaulay and Bentinck believed in the filtration of knowledge. They thought that every man who learnt English and imbibed English ideas would become a centre from which knowledge would radiate outwards, so that by degrees the whole population would be penetrated



by the new knowledge. But in forming this view they proved their lack of understanding. They forgot the Indian social system. How could knowledge radiate generally outwards among a people whose tradition regarded knowledge as a sacred thing communicable only to those castes privileged by the gods to acquire it? They forgot too, not unnaturally in days when higher education for women was the fad of a few cranks, the fundamental importance for the success of their plans of female education. They proposed to educate boys and boys alone. A thousand difficulties lay in the path of female education. The higher classes kept their women purdah. Every girl who reached the age of puberty unmarried was a public shame to her parents, and so by the age of fourteen at latest girls left their parents' homes and joined the homes of their husbands' families. Women teachers were out of the question. Indian women had only one respectable way of life open to them. Any independent means of livelihood would class them with the dancing-girl and courtesan. But unless the boys who received an English education could mate with girls of a like outlook, their children would be brought up in the old ideas and beliefs. No ideas are so deeply implanted in us as the ideas of childhood and the nursery. English education would therefore be and remain a cultural veneer until the problems of female education had been solved. The fruits of Macaulay's educational policy, like the fruits of Cornwallis's administrative plan, did not and could not ripen nearly so soon as had been hoped. Nevertheless Hindu social and political ideas had been confronted with ideas of a fiercely contrasting nature; and a disintegrating force of a new, subtle and far-reaching character had been brought into play. At last those European influences which had already touched the trade, the navigation, the politics of India, were beginning to fret the base of Hindu society itself.

Indeed, under the impulse of this contact began a



renaissance of Indian thought and literature which is still in progress. The Sanskrit literature had been mainly poetic in form, even when its subject-matter was anything but poetic. It had been preserved for centuries by the oral tradition of the schools. Scholars were known as four-Vedic, five-Vedic, or six-Vedic men, according to the number of the Vedas that they knew by heart, and the elaborate nature of Sanskrit metre provided the student with a close mnemonic test. The chief vernacular literatures comprised mainly translations from the classical epics and songs or ballads. Prose had not yet become a literary form. But the missionaries, especially Carey, Marshman and their associates at Serampore, needed prose, partly in order to present the Scriptures to the people in an intelligible form, partly as the vehicle of their sermons and addresses. These men founded Bengali prose, and their work was swiftly developed by the young men who learnt to read English from them and who began to borrow the prose forms which they most admired in English. The importance of this development is evident. The political pamphlet and the newspaper article were being rendered possible.

Associated with this literary movement was a movement for social reform. Ram Mohun Roy, the most prominent Bengali of his generation, gathered round him in the second and third decades of the nineteenth century a group which eagerly discussed social questions, especially caste, and ultimately formed themselves into a society called the Brahmo Samaj. On the religious side it professed a vague Deism; on the social side it denied caste and, though with less conviction, disapproved of child-marriage. As yet the question of political development in India remained far in the background, although Ram Mohun Roy himself visited (and indeed died in) England, and professed himself a strong supporter of the Reform Bill. He lies buried in Bristol.



On the material side the later portion of the period began also to exhibit kindred influences. Till about 1840 English government had done little in the way of buildings and public works. At that time military roads formed the chief physical memorial of their rule. But engineers had already begun to ponder the problems of irrigation in India, and Colonel Cautley was soon to lead the way, followed at no long interval by Henry Cotton, in the restoration and extension of irrigational canals. However, English attention still remained most closely fixed on the problems of communication, and in Dalhousie's time a beginning was made in linking up Bombay, Calcutta and Lahore by railway. The consequences of this development were to be incalculably great, although they only manifested themselves after the rule of the Company had passed away. The same governor-general introduced the telegraph, a scarcely less powerful agent of change. In fact, what with these modernized communications and the spread of English as a common speech among educated Indians, the possibility of Indian unity became dimly visible on the far horizon.

Other political influences moved in the same direction. I have already explained how the Native States were brought, some by force of arms, others by self-interest, into alliance with the East India Company, and how a number of them passed by annexation under the Company's direct rule. But apart from that, an unmistakable tendency was in progress towards a closer control than was implied by their treaties. The cause of this was two-fold. For one thing the conditions in which the states found themselves were artificial and unhealthy. The worst of despotisms is tempered by the possibility of revolt. But the supporting power of the Company lay behind the power of each prince, great or small; and so the natural political corrective to



in government was lacking. Then, too, every one of the chiefs and princes inherited the same disordered and corrupt methods of administration as had made the task of the Company's servants so hard in the Company's territories. Reform was urgent. The governors-general and the Residents by whom they were represented at each of the principal courts were eager to promote reform. But a natural jealousy drove the princes to avoid change lest men should say they were acting under the governor-general's orders. Urgent as it was, reform was never voluntarily undertaken, and the condition of the states, bad to start with, was, with few exceptions, deteriorating.

This might have been remedied had the Company's government stood firmly forward as not only the protector, but also the supervisor of the princes. That had indeed been Wellesley's aim, which he had incorporated into all his treaties where political conditions allowed. But in this view he stood alone among the Company's governors-general, and Lord Hastings had deliberately avoided including such provisions in his treaties of 1818. His successors all brought out with them the European views regarding treaties and international relations, and sought to apply them to the situation which they found in India. Probably every governor-general went out with the full intention of not interfering with the Company's allies, but before long found himself obliged to do so. A prince's nobles would rebel against him; or his finances would become so desperate that he could raise no more money from native bankers and would apply for help to Calcutta; or he would be anxious to reduce his foreign mercenaries; or British territory would be troubled by the incursions of bandits who sheltered in his state.

Moreover, two practices had become customary with the Foreign Department, which in India corresponded



to the Foreign Office in London. One was the custom of requiring that the choice of a principal minister must have the approval of the British government. This emerged at a comparatively early date. From the time of Wellesley onwards the chief minister of the Nizam was chosen with the concurrence of the Resident. Metcalfe, one of the most distinguished of the Company's servants at this period, mentions the usage with disfavour, but the alternative which he would have preferred, approving or forbidding the measures proposed to be taken, was the very course from which governors-general felt themselves to be debarred save in exceptional circumstances. The other practice, which dates from about 1834, was an insistence that no prince should publicly announce his accession to the government of a state until it had been approved by the Company's representative. The object of both these measures was to make sure, as far as possible, that both the prince and his minister would be persons unlikely to violate their engagements to the Company, and both were intended to avoid any need of interference with their administration. But it is clear that the princes of 1858 occupied a lower position than they had enjoyed forty years earlier. The effects of their situation as client rulers were becoming more clearly apparent. Political facts were exposing the fiction that the princes enjoyed anything in the nature of an international position.

India, in fact, was undergoing the process of unification. The disruption of her political system in the eighteenth century was in course of being reversed. The dominant power was assuming the functions of a universal power and extending its authority over the whole geographical region. At the same time the country was being bound together, as it had never been bound before, by the force of modern communications, and was receiving a medium of speech in which for the first time



in history the men of its far-flung cities could converse together. At the same time a new, more general, more effective public order had been established. Travel became a matter of comparative safety. The public revenues were collected without the use of military force. The power of the new government which had arisen deeply impressed men's minds, and disposed them to respect and sometimes to adopt the beliefs and ideas of the foreigner. India had fallen within the orbit of western influences.

But such great changes could not occur without provoking violent reactions. I have already suggested the contrast which emerged between the Calcutta Brahman taught in David Hare's school or in a Scotch Mission College and the orthodox Brahman who clung fast to Hindu ideas and beliefs. In the eyes of the latter the former was no better than an outcast. He probably ate beef and drank spirits. He neglected ceremonial purifications. He was unclean. His touch, even his shadow, would contaminate. He would not take his part in the family rites—and he would have ruined their efficacy if he had.

The reader may remember the zealots who petitioned the Privy Council against Bentinck's act prohibiting suttee. Such men were the rule, not the exception, among their caste. And in Calcutta they had lived side by side with Englishmen and under English government for a century and a half. What would be the feelings of Brahmans at Allahabad and Benares, where the stories of apostasy would be exaggerated by rumour and where the Englishman was comparatively little known? Both were holy cities, and the second the great centre of the Hindu world, with which the orthodox of Calcutta and Bengal were constantly in communication.

And many things even more alarming in themselves had happened since Bentinck promulgated his



Act against suttee. Of these perhaps the chief was the establishment of English education, with its shocking results (from the Brahman's standpoint) on those youths who were subjected to its influence. Hardly less than this was the activity of the missionaries, preaching in the vernacular that Hinduism was a false religion and that its devotees were destined to everlasting flames. Although the missions were wholly unconnected with the government, both they and the government consisted of men of the same race. Many government servants and many of the Company's military officers supported missions not by subscriptions alone but by personal help. Indians found it hard to believe that the missionaries were not the agents of the government. Then, too, the government took to further legislation touching Hinduism. It seemed to Dalhousie monstrous that a Hindu who chose to become a Christian should forfeit his right to a share of the family estate. He therefore passed an Act declaring that a change of religion was not to affect civil rights. The same Governor-General passed another Act declaring that Hindu widows might re-marry, thus attacking a social observance of the higher castes. Orthodox circles bitterly resented these Acts as violations of the old declaration that the religion of the country should be protected ; and the first of the two certainly had the air of being intended to facilitate conversion. The story began to get about that the government was planning to break down the caste-system and overthrow Hinduism. And this idea must have deeply agitated the orthodox Brahman world.

So far as that alone went such anxiety was regrettable but not dangerous, and contact with western thought close enough to compel the Hindu world to reconsider its position and reorganize its social system was indeed an indispensable condition of escaping from the stagnancy of thought in which men merely chewed and rechewed



the theories and conceptions of the past. Even if the orthodox Brahman was alarmed for the future of his faith, such alarm might very well have led to no political result. But special circumstances had brought into being the means by which the mutterings of the temple might be amplified into a tempest. An organization peculiarly susceptible to orthodox opinion had been created by the East India Company, and control over it had been weakening for a long time.

This organization was the Bengal Sepoy army. At all three presidencies separate armies had been created, part European, part Sepoy ; and besides these Company's forces, there was, also a body of Queen's troops. Normally Europeans stood to Sepoys in the ratio of one to three, but in 1854 the exigencies of the Crimean War led to the recall of four Queen's regiments, and, despite the protests of Dalhousie, they had not been replaced. In 1857 the proportion of European to Sepoy was lower than it ever had been. Moreover in Northern India almost the whole of the European troops were concentrated in the Panjab, so that the heart of the country, the valley of the Ganges, was in fact occupied by the Sepoys.

Now the Bengal Sepoys differed much from those of the other two armies. Both at Madras and Bombay, they were recruited from all sorts of castes and tribes, and included a large proportion of low-caste men. In Bengal, the recruits all came from a single area, Oudh, and were predominantly high-caste, Rajputs and Brahmans. A company would often include a considerable number of men from a single family. The Bengal Sepoys were thus specially homogeneous and peculiarly liable to be swayed by feelings of Brahman orthodoxy.

And control over them, the discipline of the army, was poor. Many causes were working together to bring this about. The annexation of new provinces created a



demand for administrators, and under the Non-Regulation system many were drawn from the army. The ablest officers were chosen, so that the number and average quality of British officers in Sepoy regiments alike fell. Nor was there any proper superannuation. The colonels of Sepoy regiments were old; the brigadiers older still. While the European command was thus deteriorating, a feature peculiar to the Bengal sepoys was adding to the difficulties of the situation. In the Bengal Army promotion followed a strict rule of seniority. The private Sepoy would gain rank, not by the enterprise and gallantry of his conduct, but by his skill in evading bullet and bayonet; and promotion was the reward of mere longevity. The Sepoy officers were not the natural leaders of their men, and so were ill-fitted to act as a sure link between the Sepoy rank and file and their English officers.

With these defects developing their natural consequences, causes of discontent produced their full effects. The disasters of the Afghan War had weakened the Sepoys' confidence in English leadership. Women and children who had accompanied Sepoy regiments to Kabul fell into Afghan hands. Some Sepoys had been compelled to eat unaccustomed and contaminating food: some had worn those sheep-skin coats with which Afghans fence out the cold. Such were bitterly reproached by their military caste-fellows on their return to India. The extension of the Company's territories increased the area in which they might be called upon to serve, and the distance from their homes to which they might be sent. All new recruits were in 1856 obliged to swear to serve wherever they were ordered, whereas in the past the obligation had been only to serve within the limits of the Presidency recruiting them. Visible discontent grew apace. Repeated mutinies occurred in Sepoy regiments after the Afghan War. Some of the regiments behaved ill in the stubborn battles of the Sikh Wars. Experienced officers began to



say that the Sepoy army was growing worse than useless—that it was becoming dangerous. In fact between the alarm of the Brahman world and the decay of military discipline, affairs were moving to a crisis, when any sudden shock might bring about the break-down of the Bengal military machine.

The shock came in 1857. A prophecy had long been current among Hindus that the Company's government would fall amidst scenes of blood and terror a hundred years after the battle of Plassey; and the Hindu Almanack prepared for the Hindu year 1914, which corresponded with 1857-58, reproduced this prophecy. The Sepoys were being re-armed with a muzzle-loading rifle in place of the old smooth-bore musket. The new cartridge was made up with a quantity of grease surrounding the bullet, to facilitate its being forced down the tightly-fitting bore. According to long standing custom, the part of the cartridge containing the powder was torn open with the teeth, the powder poured down the barrel, and then the bullet rammed home. At once an outcry arose among the Sepoys. They declared that the grease contained cow's fat, that the cartridges would defile every man who touched them, that the introduction of the rifle was designed to break their caste. Soon the story included hog's fat as well as cow's fat in the grease, in order to bring Muslim Sepoys into the movement as well.

The government, which had just passed into the hands of Lord Canning, did its best to check the story. It allowed the Sepoys to make up their own grease from vegetable fats, and it punished those men who refused to handle the new cartridges. But excitement spread swiftly. There were outbursts of incendiarism in Sepoy lines. A Sepoy attacked the adjutant of his regiment while the quarter-guard looked on. At last at Meerut, in May, 1857, after a prolonged punishment parade, at which a number of Sepoys were stripped of their military



badges and put in irons, the native regiments broke into open revolt, slew some of their officers, released the prisoners and marched off to Delhi to offer their services to the descendant of the Mughal emperors residing in the palace-fort there and still bearing the imperial title. The Indian Mutiny had begun.

The war that followed was pitiless, for it was on both sides a war of fear and rage. Piecemeal the Sepoy regiments broke, until by the end of the year hardly a Bengal Sepoy regiment survived. At Delhi all the English, men, women and children, who could be found, were either killed in the first outburst or deliberately massacred in a body in the Palace while the emperor's sons looked on and laughed. Shocking stories spread abroad of the mutineers' treatment of the women—I believe these stories had no more truth in them than had the story of the greased cartridges. But the effect of a story bears no necessary relation to its truth. The Sepoys believed that the Company's government was scheming against their faith; the English believed that English women had been raped with every possible circumstance of horror, and for a while meted out an indiscriminate vengeance, as though they looked on every Indian as an enemy.

Yet one thing stands out clearly. The scope of the Mutiny was limited. The Madras Army was untouched: the Bombay Army scarcely touched. That is to say, of the organized bodies of Indians, only that one in which the higher castes were predominant broke into revolt. It was natural therefore that the movement did not extend to the peasants—the great mass of the population—except where there was some special cause at work, as at Jhansi or in Oudh, where a disappointed Ranees or discontented nobles stirred them up. The movement was at bottom one inspired by orthodox Brahman alarm at the progress of measures which imperilled their religious and social position. It was a reaction against the policy



of education and reform on which the Company's government had embarked.

Another notable fact is that although taken at a disadvantage, and assailed by greatly superior numbers, the English fought their way steadily back. They had recovered Delhi and checked the progress of the mutineers before reinforcements from England arrived. This argues some great latent defect among their enemies. Assuredly this was no lack of personal courage, for the Sepoys would often enough fight to the death. But it was a lack of cohesion. The Sepoy regiments, bereft of their English officers, were no longer real units. They displayed the same indecision and lack of confidence as had been shown by all the Indian armies which the English had encountered in the past, with the single exception of the Sikhs. The Muslim did not trust the Hindu; the various castes and tribes did not trust each other; the Sepoy scarcely trusted the men who marched on either side of him and felt no reliance on the officers exercising the command. The Mutiny was suppressed for much the same reason as had made the Company's success in the past a foregone conclusion. The battle was between coherent and incoherent forces. In a phrase, India still could not dispense with English leadership.

Nor can we forget that, just as in the past a multitude of Indians had co-operated with the English leaders to establish the Company's dominion, so also in 1857 and 1858 the Sikhs joined with their recent conquerors to overthrow the Sepoys. The people of Bengal, the people of the south, made no effort to rid themselves of foreign rule. The Indian princes raised not a finger in support of the rebels, and some lent efficient help against them. Some groups of the Sepoys themselves, with a constancy beyond praise, withstood the prevalent contagion, resisted the suspicion with which many Englishmen at that bad time regarded them, and stood fast by the colours they had



sworn to defend. The defence of the Residency of Lucknow was shared by a body of these men.

So India was reconquered. What had been taken by the sword was recovered by the sword. Few episodes have displayed more violently contrasting aspects. In many ways it was catastrophic, above all in its effects upon the relations of the two races. For a generation Englishmen remembered the Mutiny and said within their hearts that no such thing should again happen. When the recollection began to fade from their minds, a rising generation of Indians, who knew nothing by personal experience of the disquiet of earlier days, pointed to the severity with which the Mutiny had been suppressed as evidence of the character of British rule and hailed the Mutiny, despite its failure, as the Indian war of independence. But it also meant in unmistakeable manner that the western influences which had contributed so largely to bringing it about would continue to play upon India with unabated power.

In the preceding pages I have sketched the way in which the Indian Empire was built up, the manner in which it organized itself, and some of the main principles which it developed. It was a military rule, the strength of which lay in the belief of all men that it could not be overthrown. The Mutiny marks a crisis and a turning. The East India Company had imposed political unity and western administrative methods upon India. The following period, the period of government in the name of the Crown, was to develop the first, intensify the second, and introduce into the Indian autocracy the ideas and methods of western politics. Military interest progressively declines : political interest take its place. But this later development could not have arisen without the work achieved by the East India Company and its servants, resting continually upon the force of arms. It is a curious fact



THE COMPANY'S POLICY

CSL

that the building in which the Bombay Legislative Council holds its sessions in these days is built upon the bones of Englishmen who served and died in the eighteenth century as members of the Bombay garrison. It is surely a symbol strangely suggestive of the relation of the Company's rule to that rule of the Crown which was to follow.

18974

1503