



pledge, and when he explained why he would not bear the burden of the crime, they broke out into mutiny. He fled from the camp and took refuge in a pagoda, and protected himself for a while with his Burmese soldiers. At last he held a parley with the ringleaders from the walls of the pagoda; and after much debating, it was agreed that he should distribute among the mercenaries a large sum from his own treasures as ransom for the city of Pegu.

After a while the fugitive monk was taken prisoner. He had thrown off his monastic vows, and married the daughter of a mountaineer; but he had discovered his rank to his wife, and her parents betrayed him to the Toungoo king, for the sake of the reward offered for his capture.

The execution of the royal monk was a piteous spectacle. He was taken out of his dungeon; dressed in rags and tatters; crowned with a diadem of straw garnished with mussel-shells, and decorated with a necklace of onions. In this guise he was carried through the streets of Pegu, mounted on a sorry jade, with his executioner sitting behind him. Fifteen horsemen with black ensigns proclaimed his guilt, while fifteen others in red garments were ringing bells. He was strongly guarded in front and behind by a long array of horse and foot and elephants. He was led to the scaffold; his sentence was read aloud to the multitude; and his head was severed from his body by a single blow.

During the revolt at Pegu, one of the Portuguese soldiers who had been in the service of Byeen-noung met with a fearful doom. His name was Diego Suarez. When Byeen-noung was alive and at the height of his prosperity and power, he took a great liking to Diego Suarez, and appointed him governor of Pegu. The man thus became puffed up with pride and insolence, and did what he pleased without regard to right or wrong, keeping a bodyguard of Turks to protect him in his evil ways. One day there was a marriage procession in the streets of Pegu, and Diego Suarez ordered his Turks to bring away the bride. A great



tumult arose, and the bridegroom was slain by the Turks, while the bride strangled herself with her girdle to save her honor; but the father escaped with his life, and swore to be revenged upon the wicked foreigner who had brought such woe upon his household.

Years passed away, but the wretched father could do nothing but weep. Diego Suarez rose into still higher favor with Byeen-noung, and was honored with the title of "brother of the king." At last the people of Pegu broke out in revolt, and the father saw that the time had come for wreaking his vengeance on the wicked man from Portugal. He rushed into a pagoda, carried away the idol, and harangued the multitude, telling aloud the story of his wrongs. The people of Pegu rose up in a wild outbreak of fury. The officers of justice were forced to arrest Diego Suarez, and, in spite of prayers and bribes, to deliver him up to the mob; and he was then stoned to death in the market-place of Pegu, while his house was demolished so that not a tile remained.

The story of Byeen-noung is typical. It tells of a forgotten conqueror who flourished in the sixteenth century; but it also reveals the general conditions of life in Burma, from a remote antiquity down to our own times. Byeen-noung was but the type of Burmese warriors who have arisen at intervals in that remote peninsula; played the part of heroes; conquered kingdoms and founded dynasties; crushed out rebellions by wholesale massacres; and have been followed in their turn by other kings of smaller genius, but equally cruel and tyrannical.

In the middle of the eighteenth century, more than two hundred years after Byeen-noung, there was a warrior of the same stamp who founded the dynasty of Burmese kings still reigning at Mandalay. During the earlier years of that century the Talain kings of Pegu gained the mastery of the kings of Ava, and the people of upper Burma groaned under Talain domination. But about 1750 a deliverer appeared in the person of a man of low origin, known as Alompra the





hunter.<sup>1</sup> He headed a popular insurrection, which at first only numbered a hundred men, but was soon joined by multitudes. Alompra and his newly created army threw off the Talain yoke, and swept down the Irawadi, subverted the Talain dynasty in Pegu, and founded a maritime capital at Rangoon. The English at that time had a factory at Negrais, off the coast; and the merchants were weak enough to court the friendship of Alompra, while selling powder and ammunition to the Talains. A French adventurer informed Alompra of their misdeeds, and the result was that nearly every Englishman at Negrais was massacred by the Burmese.

The successors of Alompra followed in his steps. Bhodau Phra, his third son, was the sixth sovereign of the dynasty. He reigned from 1779 to 1819, and is regarded by the Burmese as the hero of the line next to his illustrious father. He conquered Arakan as far as the boundary of Bengal, and Martaban and Tenasserim as far as the frontiers of Siam. His cruelties were boundless, and were the outcome of the same savage ferocity as those of Byeen-noung. He not only put his predecessor to death, but ordered all the women and children of his victim to be burned alive. On another occasion, on discovering that a plot had been hatched against him in a particular village, he collected together the whole population of the village, including women, children, and Buddhist monks, and burned them all alive in one vast holocaust. Father Sangermano, a Catholic missionary who was in Burma about the same time, has left authentic details of the horrible cruelties perpetrated by Bhodau Phra.

The successor of Bhodau Phra was Phagyi-dau, who brought on the Burmese war of 1824-25; but the story of his reign belongs to the after history.

The kings of Burma from Alompra downward were rude despots of the old Moghul type. They generally maintained large harems; and every high official was anxious to place a sister or a daughter in the royal household, to watch over

<sup>1</sup> Alompra is the most familiar name to English readers: properly it should be Alompara, or Alom Phra.



his interests and report all that was going on. Kings and queens dwelt in palaces of brick and stucco painted white and red; with roofs, walls, and pinnacles of carved timber covered with gilding and dazzling as picture-frames; with durbars, reception halls, thrones, canopies, and insignia of all kinds, radiant with bits of looking-glass and gilding. Sometimes they went on water excursions in large vessels shaped like huge fishes, and covered with gilding; and they were accompanied by long war-boats, each one covered with gilding, and rowed or paddled by fifty or sixty men. Sometimes a king went on a royal progress through his dominions, like the old Moghul sovereigns of Hindustan, carrying his queens, ministers and law courts with him. Each king in turn was constantly exposed to insurrection or revolution, in which he might be murdered, and all his queens and children massacred without regard to age or sex; while a new king ascended the throne, and removed the court and capital to some other locality, in order to blot out the memory of his predecessor. Thus during the present century the capital has been removed from Ava to Amarapura and back again; and at this present moment it is fixed in the comparatively new city of Mandalay. The kings of Burma have always been utterly ignorant of foreign nations; regarding Burma as the centre of the universe, and all people outside the Burman pale as savages and barbarians.

The despotic power of the sovereign, however, was kept in check by an old Moghul constitution, which seems to have been a relic of the remote past. The aristocracy of Burma consists only of officials, who have spread a network of officialism over the whole kingdom. There are heads of tens and hundreds; heads of villages, districts, and provinces; and all are appointed, punished, or dismissed at the mere will of the sovereign. But the ministers and officials at court exercise a power in their collective capacity, to which a king is sometimes obliged to bend; for there have been critical moments when a king has been deposed by the ministers, and another sovereign enthroned in his room.





## HISTORY OF INDIA

CSL

Four chief ministers, with the king or crown prince as president, sit in a great hall of state within the palace enclosure, known as the Hlot-dau. This collective body forms a supreme legislative assembly, a supreme council of the executive, and a supreme court of justice and appeal. There are also four under-ministers, and a host of secretaries and minor officials, who conduct the administration at the capital in the name of the king, but under the orders of the Hlot-dau.

Besides the Hlot-dau, or public council of state, there is a privy council, sitting within the palace itself, and known as the Byadeit. This council is supposed to advise the king privately and personally, and to issue orders in his name, whenever it is deemed inexpedient to discuss the matter in the Hlot-dau.

The real working of these councils has always been obscured by Oriental intrigues. It is, however, obvious that they lack the authority of a hereditary assembly, such as the council of Bharadars at Khatmandu; while the bare fact that they are exclusively composed of officials, nominated by the king, and depending for their very existence on the king's favor, deprives them of any authority they might otherwise have exercised as popular or representative bodies.



## CHAPTER XVI

BURMESE AND BHURTPORE WARS—LORD  
AMHERST

A.D. 1823. TO 1825

THE difficulties of the British government with Burma began about the end of the eighteenth century. Bhodau Phra had conquered Arakan, but the people rebelled against him, and some of the rebels fled into eastern Bengal. The Burmese governor of Arakan demanded the surrender of the fugitives. Sir John Shore was weak enough to comply rather than hazard a collision; but his successor, Lord Wellesley, refused to deliver up political refugees who had sought an asylum in British territory, and who would probably be tortured and executed in Burmese fashion the moment they were surrendered to their oppressors.

Meanwhile every effort was made to come to a friendly understanding with the Burmese government. Colonel Symes was sent on a mission to Ava; and after him a Captain Canning and a Captain Cox. But the Burmese court was impracticable. Bhodau Phra and his ministers were puffed up with pride and bombast. They despised the natives of India, and had been ignorantly led to believe that the English were traders without military capacity, who paid the black sepoys to fight their battles.

At last the Burmese authorities grew violent as well as insolent. They repeated their demands for the surrender of political refugees who had escaped into British territory; claimed possession of an island on the English side of the



frontier at the Naf river; and threatened to invade Bengal unless their demands were promptly conceded.

The wars of Lord Hastings had secured the peace of India, but had been vehemently denounced in England. Lord Amherst was therefore most reluctant to engage in a war with Burma; he was ready to make any concession, short of acknowledgment of inferiority, to avert the threatened hostilities. But the Burmese refused to listen to reason, and were resolutely bent on a rupture. In 1822 their general Bundula invaded the countries between Burma and Bengal; conquered the independent principalities of Assam and Muni-pore, and threatened Cachar. Subsequently Bundula invaded British territory, and cut off a detachment of British sepoys. Lord Amherst was thus forced into hostilities, and in 1824 an expedition was sent against Rangoon under the command of Sir Archibald Campbell.

Meanwhile the Burmese were inflated by the successes of Bundula, and looked forward with confidence to the conquest of Bengal. Bundula was ordered to bind the Governor-General in golden fetters, and send him as a prisoner to Ava. But the British expedition to Rangoon took the Burmese by surprise. They purposed invading Bengal, and they may have expected to encounter a force on the frontier; but they never reckoned on an invading army coming to Rangoon by sea. At the same time the English invaders were almost as much surprised as the Burmese. They had been led to expect a foe worthy of their steel; but they soon discovered that the Burmese army was the most despicable enemy that the British had ever encountered. It was composed of raw levies, miserably armed, without either discipline or courage. Their chief defence consisted in stockades, which were, however, constructed with considerable skill and rapidity.

In May, 1824, the English expedition arrived at Rangoon. The Burmese had constructed some strong stockades, but they were soon demolished by British artillery. The troops were then landed, and found that Rangoon was



empty of population and provisions. The Burmese governor had ordered the whole of the inhabitants—men, women, and children—to retire to the jungle with all their flocks and herds and stores of grain. As for the Burmese soldiery, they had fled in terror at the first discharge of British guns. Shortly after the landing the rains began; and the British army was forced to remain at Rangoon, and to depend for its subsistence on the supplies that arrived from Madras and Calcutta.

In December, 1824, Bundula approached Rangoon from the land side with an army of sixty thousand men. Within a few hours the Burmese soldiery had surrounded the British camp with stockades, and then burrowed themselves in the earth behind. But Bundula was attacked and defeated; his stockades were carried by storm; and he fled in a panic with the remains of his army to Donabew, a place further up the river Irawadi, about forty miles from Rangoon.

Bundula was resolved to make a stand at Donabew. He constructed field-works and stockades for the space of a mile along the face of the river. He sought to maintain discipline by the severity of his punishments; and one of his commanders was sawn asunder between two planks for disobedience of orders.

Early in 1825 the British force advanced up the river Irawadi toward Ava, leaving a detachment to capture Donabew. The detachment, however, was repulsed by the Burmese, and the main army returned to Donabew and began a regular siege. A few shells were discharged to ascertain the range of the British mortars, and next morning the heavy artillery began to play upon the works, but there was no response. It turned out that one of the shells on the preceding evening had killed Bundula. The brother of Bundula was offered the command of the army, but was too frightened to accept it; and he then made his way with all speed to Ava, where he was beheaded within half an hour of his arrival. Meanwhile the Burmese army at Donabew had dispersed in all directions.





The British expedition next proceeded to Prome. All the mad women in Ava, who were supposed to be witches or to have familiar spirits, were collected and sent to Prome to unman the British soldiers by their magic arts. Another Burmese army was sent to attack Prome, but was utterly defeated. The court of Ava was frantic at its losses, but could not realize its position, and showed itself as arrogant as ever. A brother of the king, named Tharawadi, bragged that he would drive the English to the sea, and left Ava for the purpose, but soon returned in the greatest terror.

The British expedition left Prome, and advanced toward Ava; and the court of Ava, and indeed the Burmese generally, were panic-stricken at the invaders. It was noised abroad that the white foreigners were demons, invincible and bloodthirsty; that European soldiers kept on fighting in spite of ghastly wounds; and that European doctors picked up arms and legs after an action and replaced them on their rightful owners.<sup>1</sup>

Early in 1826 a treaty of peace was concluded at Yandabo. The whole country from Rangoon to Ava was at the mercy of the British army. Phagyi-dau, king of Ava, engaged to pay a crore of rupees, about a million sterling, toward the expenses of the war; and the territories of Assam, Arakan, and Tenasserim, were ceded to the British government. The king was left in possession of the whole of Pegu and Upper Burma, and was even permitted to retain the maritime city of Rangoon; while the British headquarters were fixed at Moulmein in Tenasserim.

Later on Mr. John Crawfurd was sent to Ava to conclude a commercial treaty with the king. But the Burmese had already forgotten the lessons of the war, and entertained but little respect for an English envoy after the British army had retired from the scene. Accordingly Crawfurd could effect nothing of any substantial importance to either government.

---

<sup>1</sup> Fytche's *Burma, Past and Present*. General Albert Fytche's work contains many interesting facts in connection with Burmese history.



He found the Burmese officials ignorant, unprincipled, and childish, and in no instance endowed with the artifice and cleverness of Hindus and other Asiatics. Some of them had risen from the lowest ranks of life by the favor of the king; one had been a buffoon in a company of play-actors, while another had got a living by selling fish in the bazar. They did not want any treaty whatever. They evaded every proposition for a reciprocity of trade, and only sought to cajole the envoy into restoring the ceded territories and remitting the balance still due of the money payment. The country was only sparsely cultivated, and there were few if any indications of prosperity. Phagyi-dau was in the hands of his queen, the daughter of a jailer, who was older than her husband, and far from handsome. She was known as the sorceress, as she was supposed to have rendered the king subservient to her will by the power of magical arts and charms.

The first Burmese war is forgotten now by the princes and chiefs of India; but in 1824 and 1825 the current of events was watched with interest and anxiety by every native court. The different chiefs and princes of India had not quite settled down under the suzerainty of the British government; and many restless spirits among the warriors and freebooters of a previous generation would gladly have hailed the defeat of the British troops in Burma, the overthrow of order in India, and the revival of the predatory system of the eighteenth century.

Suddenly, in the crisis of the campaign in Burma, there was a fiasco in the Jat state of Bhurtpore on the British frontier near Agra, which had been under the protective alliance of the British government ever since the days of Lord Wellesley. The Raja of Bhurtpore died in 1825, leaving a son aged seven, named Bulwant Singh. The British government recognized the succession of Bulwant Singh under the guardianship of his uncle; but a cousin of the infant Raja, named Durjan Sal, corrupted the army of Bhurtpore,





put the guardian to death, imprisoned the little prince, and took possession of the principality.

Sir David Ochterlony, the Resident at Delhi, was agent of the Governor-General for Rajputana and Malwa. He belonged to the once famous school of soldier-statesmen, which began with Robert Clive, and boasted of men like Sir Arthur Wellesley and Sir John Malcolm. His Indian experiences were perhaps larger than those of any living English officer. He had fought against Hyder Ali in the old days of Warren Hastings and Sir Eyre Coote; and ten years previous to the fiasco at Bhurtpore he had gained his crowning laurels in the Nipal war. He saw that a conflagration was beginning in Bhurtpore that might spread over Central India; and he ordered a force to advance on his own authority to maintain the peace of Hindustan, support the rights of the infant Raja, and vindicate the offended suzerainty of the British government.

Lord Amherst considered that the military preparations were premature. He doubted the right of the British government to interfere in the Bhurtpore succession; and he was alarmed at the strength of the great fortress of clay, which had resisted the assaults of Lord Lake, and had long been deemed impregnable by every native court in India. Accordingly he countermanded the movement of the troops.

Sir David Ochterlony was much mortified at this rebuff. In the bitterness of his soul he resigned his appointment, and died within two months, feeling that an illustrious career of half a century had been brought to an inglorious close.

The vacillation of the British government induced the usurper to proclaim that he would hold the fortress of Bhurtpore, and maintain his hold on the Bhurtpore throne, in defiance of the Governor-General. The dangerous character of the revolution was now imminent, for Rajputs, Mahrattas, Pindharies, and Jats were flocking to Bhurtpore to rally round the venturesome usurper.

Lord Amherst saw his error and hastened to retrieve it; indeed his council were unanimous for war. An army was



assembled under Lord Combermere and began the siege of Bhurtpore. The British artillery failed to make any impression on the heavy mud walls. At last the fortifications were mined with ten thousand pounds of powder. A terrific explosion threw vast masses of hardened clay into the air; and the British troops rushed into the breach, and captured the fortress which had hitherto been deemed impregnable. The usurper was confined as a state prisoner, and the infant Raja was restored to the throne under the guardianship of the British government. The political ferment died away at the fall of Bhurtpore, and all danger of any disturbance of the public peace disappeared from Hindustan.

Lord Amherst embarked for England in February, 1828, leaving no mark in history beyond what is remembered of Burma and Bhurtpore. He was the first Governor-General who established a viceregal sanatorium at Simla.





## CHAPTER XVII

## NON-INTERVENTION—LORD WILLIAM BENTINCK

A.D. 1828 TO 1835

LORD WILLIAM BENTINCK succeeded to the post of Governor-General, and held the reins of government for seven years, namely, from 1828 to 1835. Twenty-two years had passed away since 1806, when he had been recalled from the government of Madras amid the panic which followed the mutiny at Vellore. During the interval he had protested in vain against the injustice of his recall; and his nomination to the high office was regarded as an atonement for the wrong he had suffered.<sup>1</sup>

The government of Lord William Bentinck covers a peaceful era. He remodelled the judicial system; introduced the village revenue settlement into the northwest provinces; reduced the allowances of civil and military officers; and employed natives in the public service far more largely than had been done by his predecessors. He promoted English education among the natives, and founded a medical college at Calcutta. He labored hard to introduce steam navigation between England and India via the Red Sea. He took active measures for suppressing the gangs of Thugs, who had strangled and plundered unsuspecting travellers in different quarters of India ever since the days of Aurangzeb. Above all he abolished the horrible rite of Sati, or burning widows with the remains of their deceased hus-

<sup>1</sup> Lord Amherst left India in February, 1828. Lord William Bentinck did not arrive until the following July. During the interval Mr. Butterworth Bayley, the senior member of council, was provisional Governor-General.



bands, which had been the curse of India from the earliest dawn of history. Lord William Bentinck thus established a great reputation for prudence, integrity, and active benevolence, which has endured down to our own times.

The state of affairs in Malwa and Rajputana was soon forced on the attention of Lord William Bentinck. Lord Hastings had established closer political relations with the Mahrattas and Rajputs, and his measures were beginning to bear fruit during the administration of Lord Amherst. British officers were appointed Residents at native courts for the purpose of mediating between conflicting native rulers, and otherwise keeping the peace. They were strictly prohibited from all interference in the internal administration; and each native state was left to deal with faction, rebellion, or disputed succession, after its own manner. Closer acquaintance, however, showed that such extremes of non-intervention were incompatible with the duties of the paramount power; and the subsequent history of India betrays a necessary conflict between the principle and practice, which has continued till the present day.

At first there was little difficulty as regards the Mahratta states. The policy of non-interference was preached by the British government; but the British Residents at Gwalior and Indore were occasionally driven to employ detachments of the Subsidiary Force, or other British troops, to suppress mutiny or rebellion, or to root out some dangerous outlaw. Daulat Rao Sindia was weak and impoverished, and anxious to meet the wishes of the British government. Mulhar Rao Holkar was a minor, and the provisional administration was equally as subservient to the British Resident as that of Sindia. In Nagpore the Resident, Mr. Jenkins, was virtually sovereign; and during the minority of the Raja, Mr. Jenkins conducted the administration through the agency of native officials in a highly successful fashion. Meanwhile the subjects of both Sindia and Holkar regarded the British government as the supreme authority, to whom alone they could look for redress or security against the maladministration





of their rulers; and a Resident often found it necessary to use his own discretion in the way of remonstrance or expostulation, without infringing the non-intervention policy.

In Rajputana circumstances were different. Captain James Tod, one of the earliest political officers in that quarter,<sup>1</sup> has left a picture of the country which recalls the plots, assassinations, treacheries and superstitions revealed in Shakespeare's tragedy of "Macbeth." There was the same blind belief in witches and wise women; the same single combats, bloody murders, and flights into foreign territory. Every Raj was distracted by feuds; and the princes and chiefs of Rajputana had been impoverished by Mahrattas or Pindharies just as the old kings of Britain were harassed and plundered by the Danes. The Thakurs, or feudatory nobles, were as turbulent, lawless, and disaffected as the Thanes of Scotland, and often took the field against their sovereign, like the Thane of Cawdor, with bands of kerns and gallowglasses. Many a kinsman of a Maharaja has played the part of Macbeth; while Lady Macbeths were plentiful in every state in Rajputana. The hill tribes, including Bhils, Minas, and Mhairs, were as troublesome as the Highland clans; they made frequent raids on peaceful villages, plundered and murdered travellers, and found a sure refuge in inaccessible and malarious jungles.

Captain Tod was endowed with warm sympathies and an active imagination. He was distressed at the sight of depopulated towns, ruined villages, and pauper courts; and he could not resist the appeals for his personal interference which met him on every side. He was charmed with the relics of the feudal system which he found in Rajputana. To him they recalled a picture of Europe during the Middle Ages. One usage especially delighted him. Occasionally a princess of Rajputana sent him her bracelet as a token that she looked to him for protection. In other words she claimed

---

<sup>1</sup> Afterward Lieut.-Colonel Tod, and author of *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*.



his interference as her chosen knight, on whom she might rely for succor, but whom she was never destined to see.

The condition of the three leading Rajput principalities at this period proves the necessity for the interference of British authorities. In Meywar (Udaipur), the reigning Rana, the acknowledged suzerain of Rajputana, was dependent for his subsistence on the bounty of the ruler of Kotah. In Marwar (Jodhpur), the Maharaja had for years been feigning insanity, and had abdicated the throne, out of terror of Amir Khan of Tonk; but, on the extension of British protection to the states of Rajputana, he once more ascended the throne and resumed the administration of the Raj. Subsequently he quarrelled with his ministers and feudatory nobles; treating them with savage violence, putting many to death, and seeking the help of the British government to support him in these barbarous proceedings. Indeed the endless broils between the rulers of Rajputana and their refractory Thakurs have at different intervals compelled the British government to interfere for the maintenance of the public peace; and it has often been difficult to decide whether to interfere in behalf of a tyrannical Raja or in support of oppressed Thakurs.

In Jaipur, which is much nearer British territory, matters were even worse than in Marwar. The Raja of Jaipur had died in 1818, and was succeeded by a posthumous infant son, under the regency of the mother, assisted by the minister of the deceased Raja. Then followed a series of complications not infrequent in Oriental courts. The regent-mother had a Jain banker for her paramour, as well as other worthless favorites. She squandered the revenues of the state on these parasites, and especially on a Guru, who was her religious teacher or adviser. She set the minister at defiance, quarrelled with him on all occasions, and tried to oust him from his office; and on one occasion there was a bloody conflict within the palace, which ended in the slaughter of thirty men. Next she prevailed on the Jaipur army to break out in mutiny and march to the capital; and





there she distributed money among the rebel soldiery, while the minister fled for refuge to his jaghir or estate in the country.

The British government was compelled to interfere by ordering the Jaipur army to retire from the capital, and sending a British officer to effect a settlement of affairs. A great council of Thakurs was summoned to court, and after much debate and uproar decided on deposing the regent-mother, and recalling the absent minister to fill the post of regent. Such a measure would have been the best possible solution of the existing difficulty, and would consequently have been most satisfactory to the British government. But such off-hand debates and resolutions, however right in their conclusions, and however much in accordance with the unwritten traditions of Rajputs, were not in keeping with that passion for order and formality which is a deeply rooted instinct in Englishmen. Accordingly Sir Charles Metcalfe, the Resident at Delhi, proceeded to Jaipur, and convened a second and more formal council, and subjected the votes to a careful scrutiny. Then it appeared that a small majority had been won over to consider the regent-mother as the rightful ruler of Jaipur. To make matters worse, the regent-mother insisted upon appointing her paramour to be minister of Jaipur, to the scandal of the whole country; and Lord Amherst's government was so pledged to the policy of non-intervention that he declined to interfere, and thus left a legacy of difficulties to his successor.

Such was the state of affairs in Malwa and Rajputana when Lord William Bentinck assumed the post of Governor-General. Like other Anglo-Indian statesmen, before and since, he landed in India with a determination to carry out a large and liberal scheme of imperial government, which was based more on the visionary ideal of home philanthropists than on a practical acquaintance with the people and princes of India. The result was that his conduct of political relations with native states was the outcome, not of fixed political views, but of a conflict between sentiment and



reality, during which his romantic aspirations died out, and he was gradually awakened to a sense of the actual wants and needs of native feudatories. The political administration of Lord William Bentinck was thus a period of probation and enlightenment; and it might be said of him, and perhaps of nearly all his successors, that he was never so well fitted for the post of Governor-General of India as when he was quitting its shores forever.

It should however be borne in mind that at this period the policy of the British government toward native states was purely experimental. Non-interference was strongly advocated by the home authorities, and strictly pursued by the new Governor-General; but at this stage of political development native rulers required counsel and discipline rather than license. Before the British government became the paramount power, native rulers were afraid lest their subjects should rebel, and were thus kept to their duties by the law of self-preservation. After the establishment of British suzerainty, native rulers found themselves deprived of their old occupation of predatory war or foreign intrigue, and sought consolation in unrestrained self-indulgences. They neglected their legitimate duties, and looked to the British government for protection from rebellion. On the death of a native ruler, disorders often reached a climax, especially if there was a disputed succession, or the heir was a minor; for then queens and ministers intrigued against each other for power, and the country was torn by faction and civil war. In the end the British government was compelled to interfere in almost every case to save the state from anarchy and ruin; whereas, if it had only interfered in the first instance, there would have been no disorders at all.

The progress of affairs in Gwalior, the most important of the Mahratta states, is a case in point. Daulat Rao Sindia, the same who had been defeated by Wellesley at Assaye, died in 1827, leaving no son to succeed him. He had been repeatedly advised by the British Resident to adopt a son, but he had persistently refused. Latterly he had been in-



clined to give way, but nothing was concluded; and when he was dying he sent for the Resident, and told him to settle the future government of the Gwalior principality as he might think proper. After his death, his widow, Baiza Bai, proposed to adopt a son, and carry on the government as queen regent during the minority. But Baiza Bai wanted to adopt a boy out of her own family, instead of out of Sindia's family; and as this would have been odious to the court and camp at Gwalior, and would have probably led to serious commotions, the British government refused to sanction the measure. Accordingly Baiza Bai adopted a son out of Sindia's family, known as Jankoji Rao Sindia.

In course of time it appeared that Baiza Bai was bent on becoming queen regent for life, and continuing to govern the state after the young Maharaja had attained his majority. In 1833 Lord William Bentinck proceeded to Gwalior, and both the queen regent and the young Maharaja were prepared to abide by his decision; but he declined to interfere. The result was that a civil war broke out in Gwalior and the army took different sides. The young Maharaja at the head of one body of troops besieged the queen regent in the palace at Gwalior. The queen regent escaped from the palace, placed herself at the head of another body of troops, and marched toward the British Residency. On the way the two armies met, and there would have been a deadly collision had not the British Resident hastened to the spot and prevented the conflict by his personal influence. Lord William Bentinck was then forced to interfere, and recognize the accession of the young Maharaja to the throne, while the queen regent was obliged to retire from the scene. Had the Governor-General ordered this arrangement during his visit at Gwalior all these disorders would have been averted.

In 1833 there was another complication at Indore. Mulhar Rao Holkar died, and left no son to succeed him. His widow adopted a son, and proposed, as in the case of Sindia, to carry on the administration as queen regent during the minority; and the British government recognized the arrange-



ment. Another claimant next appeared in the person of a collateral kinsman of mature years, named Hari Rao Holkar, who was supported by the general voice of the country. Lord William Bentinck might have settled the dispute by a word, but again he declined to interfere. A civil war broke out in Indore, and at last Lord William Bentinck was forced to put an end to the anarchy by persuading the queen regent to retire from the contest with her adopted son, and sending a British force to the capital to place Hari Rao on the throne of Holkar.

Matters were even worse in the petty states of Bundelkhand, to the eastward of Malwa. A Raja of Sumpthur died, leaving two queens or Ranis; the elder was childless, but the younger had an infant son. The son was placed upon the throne, and the younger Rani became regent-mother. Then followed a fierce contest as to who should be appointed manager. The minister of the deceased Raja would have been the best man for the post, but other candidates were put forward by the rival queens, and the British government declined to interfere. The ex-minister fled to his estate, but was attacked by a body of troops belonging to the regent-mother. Finding his affairs desperate, he placed his women and children on a funeral pile built over a mine of gunpowder; he then destroyed them all in a terrific explosion, and rushed out and perished with his adherents, sword in hand. Lord William Bentinck decided that the regent-mother was responsible for the catastrophe, and still declined to interfere.

In Rajputana the policy of non-intervention brought forth equally bitter fruits. Meywar and Marwar were distracted by broils between the rulers and their feudatory nobles. In 1828 the Rana of Meywar died, and seven queens and a concubine perished on his funeral pile.

In Jaipur, where the regent-mother had appointed her paramour to be minister, there was another tragedy.<sup>1</sup> The

<sup>1</sup> See ante, p. 603.



young Maharaja reached his majority, but the regent-mother, and her paramour Jhota Ram, still remained in power, and the country was in a state of anarchy. In spite of appeals from the natives, Lord William Bentinck refused to interpose the authority of the British government for the prevention of disorders. In 1832 Lord William Bentinck went on a tour to the upper provinces, and had an interview with Jhota Ram at Agra; but he was persuaded by the artful minister that it was the British authorities that were to blame, and not the Jaipur government, and accordingly he still declined to interfere.

In 1834 the regent-mother died, after keeping Jaipur in a state of turmoil for sixteen years. Shortly after her death the young Maharaja died under most suspicious circumstances, and all the leading people in Jaipur were convinced that the prince had been poisoned by Jhota Ram. Indeed Jhota Ram found the minds of the Thakurs so inflamed against him that he was forced to tender his resignation.

At this crisis Major Alves, agent for the Governor-General in Rajputana, and his assistant, Mr. Blake, proceeded to Jaipur, and were only just in time to prevent a bloody contest between Jhota Ram and the Thakurs. The ex-minister was ordered to remove to a distance from the capital; and there he concocted a scheme of revenge. In June, 1835, after a morning attendance at the durbar, the two English officers were attacked in the streets of Jaipur by assassins who had been hired by Jhota Ram. Major Alves was severely wounded, and Mr. Blake was barbarously murdered. A judicial inquiry was held, and the offenders were convicted and suitably punished. An infant son of the deceased Maharaja was placed upon the throne, and a British officer was appointed to conduct the administration; and the country was rapidly brought to a state of peace and prosperity.

But while Lord William Bentinck was so lenient toward Mahratta and Rajput states, he felt deeply the serious responsibilities incurred by the British government in perpetuating misrule in Oude. He could not shut his eyes to the



growing anarchy of the Talukdars;<sup>1</sup> the abominable oppressions practiced on the Ryots; the lawlessness of the Oude soldiery; and the weakness and debaucheries of successive rulers, who chose to call themselves kings. He felt that so long as the British government continued to maintain a helpless and depraved king upon the throne, it was morally responsible for the evils of the maladministration. In 1831 Lord William Bentinck threatened the king of Oude that the British government would take over the management of the country unless he reformed the administration. Subsequently the Court of Directors authorized the Governor-General to assume the government of Oude; but by this time Lord William Bentinck was about to leave India, and he contented himself with giving the king a parting warning.

In two other territories, Coorg and Mysore, Lord William Bentinck was compelled to interfere; but in order to apprehend the force of his measures it will be necessary to review the history of the two countries.

Coorg is a little alpine region between Mysore and Malabar; a land of hills, forests, ravines, and heavy rains; abounding in wild elephants and different kinds of game, and enclosing valleys covered with cultivation. On three sides it is walled off from its neighbors by stupendous mountains; on the fourth side by dense and tangled jungles.

The people of Coorg are hardy, athletic, and warlike; clinging to their homes of mist and mountain with the devotion of highlanders. One-fourth of the population are Coorgs properly so-called—a warrior caste, the lords of the soil. The remaining three-fourths are low castes, who were serfs or slaves under Hindu rule, but have since become free laborers.

The Coorg Raj was founded in the sixteenth century by a holy man, who migrated from Ikkeri during the breaking up of the Hindu empire of Vijayanagar, and established a spiritual ascendancy in Coorg which grew into a temporal

<sup>1</sup> See ante, p. 465, note.



sovereignty.<sup>1</sup> He collected shares of grain from the villages round about, and founded a dynasty known as the Vira Rajas.

For nearly two centuries nothing is known of the Vira Rajas. In the eighteenth century Hyder Ali became sovereign of Mysore, conquered Malabar, and demanded tribute from the reigning Vira Raja of Coorg. Payment was refused; Mysore troops marched into the country; mountains, ravines, and forests presented insurmountable difficulties; and the Coorgs offered a brave and bloody resistance. Hyder Ali achieved a partial success by capturing two or three fortresses; by deporting some of the inhabitants, and giving their lands to Muhammadans; and also by imprisoning and murdering several members of the reigning family.

After the death of Hyder Ali his son Tippu tried to destroy the independence of Coorg, and bring it under the Muhammadan yoke; but in every case the invaders were slaughtered or driven back; and whenever a Raja was slain, the Coorgs set up the eldest surviving prince as their Raja. The new Vira Raja was then carried away captive into Mysore; but after four years he escaped back to Coorg and renewed the old struggle. During the wars against Tippu he was the staunch ally of the English, but plundered the Mysore villages with much cruelty and barbarity. After the downfall of Seringapatam in 1799, he was relieved from tribute, but sent an elephant every year to the British authorities in acknowledgment of fealty.

For many years the British government abstained from all interference in Coorg. The country was remote, inaccessible, and uninviting. The Raja was loud in professions of loyalty and gratitude; anxious to stand well with the British authorities, and hospitable to the few officials who visited his country, entertaining them with field sports, animal fights, and other amusements of a like character.

In 1807 the Vira Raja lost his favorite wife. She left no

<sup>1</sup> A picture of Ikkeri about this period is furnished by Della Valle. See ante, p. 138. The foundation of cities and kingdoms by holy men is a common incident in Hindu tradition.



son, but several daughters; and the Vira Raja was anxious that a daughter should succeed him on the throne of Coorg, to the exclusion of his two brothers. Accordingly he begged the British authorities to sanction the arrangement. The English at Madras had no objection; they cared nothing about the Coorg succession; they supposed that the Raja might do as he liked, and that he only asked their permission out of loyal subserviency to the British government. Accordingly the Madras government acquiesced as a matter of course. Years afterward it was discovered that the succession of a daughter to the exclusion of a brother was contrary to the laws and usages of Coorg; and that the Vira Raja had requested the sanction of the British government in order that he might violate the long-established customs of his own country.

Meanwhile the Raja had fits of insanity. He was suspicious, morose and bloodthirsty. He was in constant dread of assassination, and ordered frequent executions during his furious outbreaks. He beheaded his elder brother to secure the succession of his daughter; and he would have beheaded his younger brother Lingaraja in like manner, but the latter abjured the throne, and devoted himself to a life of sanctity, and was generally regarded as stupid and imbecile.<sup>1</sup>

In 1809 the Vira Raja died, and was succeeded by his daughter, while her husband became minister. Subsequently his younger brother, Lingaraja, appeared upon the scene, and showed himself in his true colors. The dullwitted devotee turned out to be an extremely crafty and cruel individual. He forced the husband to retire from the post of minister, and took the government of Coorg into his hands; and he then placed his niece in prison and gave

---

<sup>1</sup> Sir Lewin Bowring, the late Chief Commissioner of Mysore, states that the Coorg Raja put hundreds of his subjects to death in his mad fits of passion. He expresses an opinion, in which most students in Asiatic history will concur, that a brave people, like the Coorgs, would never have submitted to the tyranny and barbarity of the Vira Rajas, but for a belief in their divine right or origin. Bowring's *Eastern Experiences*.





out that she had abdicated the throne. There was no one to interfere, and Lingaraja became ruler of Coorg.

But Lingaraja was in morbid fear of the British authorities. He was guilty of the most cold-blooded cruelties, but took every precaution to prevent their getting wind. He allowed none of his subjects to leave Coorg; he surrounded every British officer who visited his territories with guards and spies; and constructed stockades and defences in the passes leading into his country in order to shut out any force that might be sent to coerce or dethrone him. He died in 1820, and was succeeded by a son named Chikka Vira Raja.

For the space of fourteen years the reign of Chikka Vira Raja was a series of frightful barbarities. He murdered all who had offended him, including all his relatives, old and young, male and female. None were saved excepting his own wives and children, and a married sister who fled from his violence into British territory. Many were shot with his own hands in the courtyard of the palace. Others were dragged out of the palace at night and beheaded in the jungle. His depravity was worse than his butchery; but that was confined to the recesses of his zenana.

At last the atrocities of the Coorg Raja were noised abroad, and the Raja was told that the British government would no longer permit him to perpetrate such merciless massacres. In reply he asserted that he was an independent Raja, and demanded the surrender of his sister and her husband; and when this was refused he declared war against the British government.

In 1834 the career of Chikka Vira Raja was brought to a close. A British force was marched into Coorg. The country was difficult of access, and the Coorgs fought with all the valor of their race; but the Raja was as cowardly as he was cruel, and fled to the jungle and committed more murders. The dead body of his minister was found hanging from a tree; but whether he was hanged by the Raja, or hanged himself to escape punishment, is unknown to this



day. The Raja surrendered to the British authorities, and laid all the murders at the door of his dead minister.

Lord William Bentinck, with his characteristic predilection for Hindu rulers, was anxious that the leading men of Coorg should choose a Raja for themselves. The people of Coorg, without a dissentient voice, declared their preference for the government of the East India Company; but they stipulated that the Raja should be sent away from Coorg, and never allowed to return, as otherwise they would feel bound to obey him.<sup>1</sup> Accordingly Chikka Virra Raja was removed to Benares, and afterward allowed to visit England; and Lord William Bentinck was reluctantly obliged to annex the territory of Coorg to the British dominions, "in consideration of the unanimous wish of the people."

Mysore was a more important country than Coorg. After the downfall of Tippu in 1799, a child of the extinct Hindu dynasty was placed on the throne of Mysore; while a Brahman named Purnea conducted the administration under the supervision of an English Resident.<sup>2</sup> The boy was named Krishnaraj. He was not heir to the Raj, but only a child of the family; and he owed his elevation entirely to the favor or policy of the British government. Accordingly, in

---

<sup>1</sup> The people of Coorg insisted on another condition, namely, that no cows should be killed in Coorg. Indeed, all Hindus, whose feelings have not been blunted by association with Muhammadans or Europeans, regard the slaughter of a cow with the same horror that they would the murder of a mother. Some authorities have cavilled at this stipulation as a concession to Hindu prejudices; and Sir John Malcolm refused to concede it to Daulat Rao Sindia after the victories of Assaye and Argaum. But the two cases were altogether different. Sindia was not in a position to demand such a concession; and setting aside all other considerations, it would have been most impolitic to have admitted it. Moreover, the people of Hindustan had been subjected for ages to Muhammadan dominion. On the other hand, the acquisition of Coorg by the English was of the nature of a compact. The concession was restricted to a little secluded territory sixty miles long and forty broad, which had never been conquered by the Muhammadans. Above all, the stipulation is no breach of morality or decency, although it may be inconvenient to Europeans. If the Hindus of Coorg had claimed the right to burn living widows, or to display obscene symbols or idol cars, the case would have been different.

<sup>2</sup> See ante, pp. 471, 479.



order to give him a show of right, he was formally adopted by the widows of the last two Rajas of the dynasty.

Purnea was a Brahman of experience and capacity. For years he had been the minister of Tippu, and he soon won the confidence of the English Resident at Mysore. He was courteous, dignified, industrious, and careful to keep everything unpleasant out of sight. Successive English Residents—Barry Close, Mark Wilks, and John Malcolm—were more Orientalized than political officers of the modern school, more isolated from Europeans, and more dependent on natives. They were well versed in native character, and more considerate as regards native ways. They did not expect too much from Brahman administrators; judging them by Oriental rather than by European standards; and content to let things alone so long as there were no outbreaks, no brigands, and a good surplus in the public treasury. Accordingly things went on smoothly between the Resident and the Brahman; and as Purnea accumulated large sums in the public treasury, he was lauded to the skies as a minister worthy of Akbar.

But Purnea was a Mahratta Brahman of the old Peishwa type, who considered that Brahmans should govern kingdoms while Rajas enjoyed themselves. He was willing that Krishnaraj should be a symbol of sovereignty, and show himself on state occasions to receive the homage of his subjects; but he was bent on making the Raja of Mysore a puppet like the first Maharaja of Satara, while he perpetuated his own power as minister and sole ruler.

In 1811 Krishnaraj attained his sixteenth year, and proposed to undertake the government of Mysore. The British authorities had no objection; but Purnea was exasperated at the threatened loss of power, and so far forgot himself as to use strong language. Resistance, however, was out of the question. The Raja was placed at the head of affairs, and Purnea resigned himself to his fate, retired from his post, and died shortly afterward.

The government of Mysore ought never to have been in-



trusted to a boy, without some controlling authority. Krishnaraj was a polished young prince of courtly manners, but he had less knowledge of the world than an English charity boy. He was imbued with a strong taste for Oriental pleasures and vices, and there was no one to say him nay. From his infancy he had been surrounded by obsequious flatterers, who were his willing slaves. The result might have been foreseen. Within three years the English Resident reported that the accumulations of Purnea, estimated at seven millions sterling, had already been squandered on priests and parasites. Later on he reported that the finances were in utter disorder. The pay of the army was in arrears, and the Raja was raising money by the sale of offices and monopolies. Worst of all, the public revenues were alienated; the lands were let to the highest bidders, and the lessees were left to extort what they could from the cultivators, while the Raja continued his wasteful expenditure on vicious indulgences and riotous living.

Had the Raja been seriously warned in time that he would be deposed from his sovereignty unless he mended his ways, he would probably have turned over a new leaf. But non-intervention proved his ruin. The English Resident advised him to reform his administration, but he used soft and conciliatory tones, which were lost upon the Raja. Matters grew worse and rebukes became louder, until at last the Raja was case-hardened. The once famous Sir Thomas Munro, the governor of Madras, solemnly pointed out the coming danger to the Raja; but he might as well have preached to the winds. Nothing was done, and the warnings became a farce. The Raja promised everything while the Resident was present; but when the Resident's back was turned, he thrust his tongue into his cheek for the amusement of his courtiers.

In 1830 the people of Mysore broke out in rebellion, and the British government was compelled to send a force to suppress it. It would be tedious to dwell on the military operations, or the political controversies that followed. In



the end the administration of Mysore was transferred to English officers under the supervision of the English Resident; while the Raja was removed from the government, and pensioned off, like the Tanjore Raja, on an annual stipend of thirty-five thousand pounds, and a fifth share of the net revenues of Mysore.

But Lord William Bentinck was still anxious to perpetuate Hindu rule in Mysore. He proposed to restore the government to the Raja under a new set of restrictions; but the home authorities negatived the proposal; and indeed it would probably have ended in the same kind of explosion as that which extinguished the Mahratta Peishwa. He also contemplated a restoration of the old status of an English Resident and a Brahman minister; but Purnea's administration would not bear investigation. It had been cruel and oppressive; and the native officials under him had exacted revenue by methods which were revolting to civilized ideas.<sup>1</sup> Accordingly Lord William Bentinck left matters to drift on; and a few years afterward the English Resident was turned into a Commissioner, and Mysore became a British province in everything except the name. Meanwhile Mysore rose to a high pitch of prosperity; the people were contented and happy; and the yearly revenues of the province rose from four hundred thousand pounds to more than a million sterling.

In one other direction the administration of Lord William Bentinck is an epoch in the history of India. It saw the renewal of the charter of the late East India Company in 1833. Henceforth the Company withdrew from all commercial transactions; and the right of Europeans to reside in India, and acquire possession of lands, was established by law.

Lord William Bentinck retired from the post of Governor-General, and embarked for England in March, 1835, after having held the reins of government for nearly eight years. Whatever may have been his shortcomings in his

<sup>1</sup> See ante, p. 479.



dealing with native states, there can be no question as to the purity of his motives, his sincere anxiety for the welfare of the princes and people of India, and the general success of his administration of the British Indian empire. His financial and judicial reforms are forgotten now, although their results have largely contributed to the well-being of the masses; but, in other respects, the material prosperity of the empire dates from the administration of Lord William Bentinck. The acquisition of Cachar and Assam, between Bengal and Burma, during the first Burmese war, was followed by the cultivation of tea, which has already assumed proportions which would have appeared incredible in a past generation, and ought to increase the domestic comfort of every cottage throughout the British dominion. But the most memorable act in his administration was the abolition of suttee. This horrible rite, which had been practiced in India from a remote antiquity, and had been known to Europe ever since the days of Alexander, was prohibited by law throughout British territories in the teeth of dismal forebodings and prejudiced posterity; and not only has the abolition been carried out with comparative ease, but it has recommended itself to the moral sense of the whole Hindu community of India. In the present day, while the education of females is still looked upon with distrust, and the attempts to put an end to female infanticide are distasteful in many quarters, every Hindu of ordinary education and intelligence rejoices in his heart that the burning of living widows with their deceased husbands is an abomination that has passed away.

In 1835 Lord William Bentinck was succeeded by Sir Charles Metcalfe as Governor-General of India. Sir Charles, afterward Lord, Metcalfe, was one of the ablest and most experienced civil servants of the late Company; but his administration was only provisional, and, beyond repealing the regulations which fettered the liberty of the press, it occupies but a small space in history. It was brought to a close in March, 1836, by the arrival of Lord Auckland.





## HISTORY OF INDIA

CSL

The present chapter brings a decade of peace to a close. It began at the end of the Burmese war in 1826, and ended in 1836, when dark clouds were beginning to gather on the northwest. The war decade begins with the outbreak of hostilities beyond the Indus in 1839, and ends with the conquest of the Sikhs and annexation of the Punjab in 1849.

The administration of Lord Auckland opens up a new era in the history of India. In the beginning of the century the Marquis of Wellesley had deemed it a peremptory duty to guard India against the approaches of France and the first Napoleon. In the second quarter of the same century Lord Auckland's government took alarm at the extension of Russian power and influence in Central Asia; and this alarm found expression in the first Afghan war. Before, however, dealing with the preliminary operations in Kandahar and Kabul, it may be as well to devote a preliminary chapter to the current of events in Central Asia and the previous history of the Afghans.



## CHAPTER XVIII

## CENTRAL ASIA—AFGHAN HISTORY

A.D. 1747 TO 1838

**D**URING the eighteenth century and first quarter of the nineteenth, Central Asia was a neutral and little known region; the homes of Usbegs and Afghans; isolated from the outer world by desert and mountain; but environed more and more closely, as time went on, by the four great Asiatic empires of Persia, Russia, China, and British India.

Roughly speaking, the country northward of the river Oxus is occupied by Usbegs; while that to the south is occupied by Afghans. The Usbegs to the northward of the Oxus may be divided into the dwellers in towns, or Usbegs proper, and the nomads of the desert, better known as Turkomans. In modern times the Usbeg dominion has been parcelled out into the three kingdoms of Khiva, Bokhara and Khokand, which may be described as three semi-civilized oases in the barbarous desert of Turkomans.

Ever since the reign of Peter the Great in the beginning of the eighteenth century, Russia has been extending her empire southward over the Kirghiz steppes which separate her from the Usbegs. These steppes are occupied by the three great tribes of nomads, known as the little horde, the middle horde, and the great horde. Gradually, by a policy of protection followed by that of incorporation, these rude hordes of nomads were brought under Russian subjection; and when Lord Auckland landed in India the tide of Rus-



sian influence appeared to be approaching the three Usbeg kingdoms of Khiva, Bokhara, and Khokand.

Meanwhile the British government had not been unmindful of the progress of affairs in Afghanistan to the southward of the Oxus. This region is distributed into four provinces, each having a city of the same name, corresponding to the four points of the compass. Kabul is on the north, Kandahar on the south, Peshawar on the east, and Herat on the west. Sometimes, but very rarely, these provinces have been formed into a single empire having its capital at Kabul. At all other times they have been parcelled out under different rulers—sons, brothers, or other kinsmen of the suzerain at Kabul, but often independent of his authority. In the centre is the ancient city of Ghazni, the halfway house between Kandahar and Kabul, and the frontier fortress to Kabul proper on the side of Kandahar.

Afghanistan is a region of rugged mountains and elevated valleys. The Hindu Kush, which forms the western end of the Himalayas, throws off toward the southwest a series of mountain ranges, which bound Kabul on the north, and then run in a westerly direction toward Herat, under the names of Koh-i-Baba and Siah Koh. Indeed, the whole region may be described as a star of valleys, radiating round the stupendous peaks of Koh-i-Baba in the centre of the Afghan country, which are clad with pines and capped with snow. The valleys and glens are watered by numberless mountain streams, and are profusely rich in vegetable productions, especially fruits and cereals.<sup>1</sup> The lower slopes throw out spurs which are bleak and bare, and have an outer margin of barren or desert territory.<sup>2</sup> The population

<sup>1</sup> Afghanistan produces wheat, barley, maize, millet and rice; also cotton, tobacco, and castor-oil. It is famous for the culture of fruits, including apples, pears, almonds, apricots, quinces, plums, cherries, pomegranates, limes, citrons, grapes, figs and mulberries. All of these fruits, both fresh and dried, are exported to Hindustan in immense quantities, and are the main staple of the country. Horses and wool are also exported to Bombay.

<sup>2</sup> The heights of Koh-i-Baba bear traces of a remote antiquity. They include the rock fortress of Zohak, the demon king of Arabia, who is celebrated in the Shah Namah. They also include the valley of Bamean on the north of Kabul,



of Afghanistan is about five millions, but only about half can be reckoned as Afghans.

In 1836 the Afghans were separated from British territories by the empire of Runjeet Singh in the Punjab; and also by the dominions of the Amirs of Sind on the lower Indus. But Afghanistan had always been the highway for armies invading India; for Assyrian, Persian, and Greek in ancient times, and for Turk, Afghan, and Moghul in a later age. In the earlier years of the present century, as already related, missions were sent by the British government to form defensive alliances with the Amir of Kabul and the Shah of Persia against the supposed designs of the first Napoleon.

The Afghans are Muhammadans of the Sunni faith; they reverence the first four Khalifs, and have no particular veneration for the prophet Ali. They are split up into tribes, clans, and families, each under its own head, commander, or Sirdar; and they are often at war or feud, and often engaged in conspiracies, rebellions, and assassinations. They are tall, burly, active men, with olive complexions, dark Jewish features, black eyes, and long black hair hanging down in curls. Their countenances are calm, and they affect a frankness and bon-hommie; they will sometimes indulge in a rude jocularly; but their expression is savage, and evil passions are often raging in their hearts like hidden fires. They are bloodthirsty, deceitful, and depraved; ready to sell their country, their honor, and their very souls for lucre. They care for nothing but fighting and loot; delighting in the din of arms, the turmoil of battle, and the plunder of the killed and wounded; without any relish for home life or domestic ties; without a sting of remorse or a sense of shame. There are no people on earth that have a finer

---

with huge colossal statues and temple caves; the relics of the old Buddhist faith which was driven out of Kabul by the advance of Islam under the Khalifs of Damascus and Bagdad.

The Siah Koh includes the mountain fortress of Ghor, which gave its name to a dynasty of Afghan conquerors of Hindustan, which was founded in the twelfth century of the Christian era. The same name reappears in Gour, the ancient capital of Bengal, which is now a heap of ruins. See ante, pp. 97-102.



physique or a viler morale. They are the relics of a nation who have played out their parts in history. In bygone ages they conquered Hindustan on the one side and Persia on the other; but the conquering instinct has died away amid the incessant discord of family feuds and domestic broils.

In olden time there were fierce contentions between Abdalis and Ghilzais. The Abdalis were descended from the sons of a wife, and the Ghilzais from the sons of a concubine. Accordingly the Abdalis declared that they alone were the true Afghans, and that the Ghilzais were an illegitimate offspring. It was a later version of the old feud between Sarah and Hagar, between the children of Isaac and the children of Ishmael. Ultimately the Abdalis got the uppermost, and the Ghilzais took refuge in the mountains.

The Abdalis are pure Afghans; legitimate and orthodox. In ancient times there was a distinguished offshoot, known as the tribe of Barukzais. In modern times the Abdalis have been known as Duranis; and a distinction has grown up between the Duranis and the Barukzais. The origin of this distinction is unknown, but the rivalry between the two is the key to Afghan history. The dynasty of Ahmad Shah Abdali was known as the Durani Shahs;<sup>1</sup> their hereditary ministers were heads of the Barukzai tribe; and Afghan history has culminated in modern times in the transfer of the sovereignty from the Shah to the minister, from the Durani to the Barukzai.<sup>2</sup>

The modern history of the Afghans begins with the assassination of Nadir Shah in 1747. This catastrophe convulsed Asia like the sudden death of Alexander the Great at Babylon twenty-two centuries ago. The overgrown Persian

<sup>1</sup> Ferrier says that the name of Durani was given to the Abdalis by Ahmad Shah Abdali on his accession to the throne in 1747; but the name may have had a still earlier origin. Both Duranis and Barukzais were originally included under the name of Abdalis.

<sup>2</sup> There are more intricacies of clans and tribes, which would only bewilder general readers. Thus the hereditary ministers, described hereafter as Barukzais, were, properly speaking, Mohamedzais, the most distinguished branch of the Barukzais. The Mohamedzais comprised about four or five thousand families, while the Barukzais numbered fifty thousand families.



empire was broken up, and there were bloody wars for the fragments. The Afghan Sirdars and their several contingents left the Persian army, and went to Kandahar to choose a Shah for themselves, who should be a king in his own right, and owe no allegiance to the Persian or the Moghul.

The Afghans could not agree about a Shah. The Sirdars quarrelled and wrangled according to their wont. Some called out for Ahmad Khan, the chief of the Duranis; others called out for Jemal Khan, the chief of the Barukzais; but in their hearts every Sirdar wanted to be the Shah. At last a holy Dervish called out amid the uproar, "God has made Ahmad Khan the greatest man among you!" And he twisted barley stalks into a wreath and placed it on the head of Ahmad Khan. Then Jemal Khan hailed Ahmad Khan as Shah;<sup>1</sup> and the people carried Ahmad Khan to the great mosque at Kandahar; and the chief Mulla poured a measure of wheat upon his head, and proclaimed that he was the chosen of God and the Afghans. So Ahmad Khan Durani became Shah of Kandahar, and Jemal Khan Barukzai was the greatest man in the kingdom next the Shah.

All this while Kabul was held by certain Persian families, who were known as Kuzzilbashes, or "Red-caps"; for when Nadir Shah was alive he placed the Persian "Red-caps" in the fortress of Bala Hissar,<sup>2</sup> to hold the city of Kabul against the Afghans. The Kuzzilbashes are Shiahs, while the Afghans are Sunnis; nevertheless, Ahmad Shah made a league with the "Red-caps," and they opened their gates to him, and he became Shah of Kabul as well as of Kandahar. Henceforth Ahmad Khan spent the spring and summer at the city of Kabul, and the autumn and winter at the city of Kandahar.

Ahmad Shah treated his Sirdars as friends and equals, but he showed the greatest kindness to Jemal Khan. He

<sup>1</sup> Shah signifies "king," and Mirza signifies "prince," or son of the Shah.

<sup>2</sup> The Bala Hissar, or "palace of kings," has been the scene of many a revolution and massacre. At this moment (November, 1879) it is being destroyed by the British army.





kept the Afghans constantly at war so that no one cared to conspire against him. He conquered all Afghanistan to the banks of the Oxus; all Herat and Khorassan; all Kashmir and the Punjab as far as the Himalayas; and all Sindh and Beluchistan to the shores of the Indian Ocean. He invaded Hindustan, captured Delhi, and re-established the sovereignty of the Great Moghul.<sup>1</sup> He gave his Sirdars governments and commands in the countries he conquered; and they lived in great wealth and honor and were faithful to him all his days. He died in 1773, being the year after Warren Hastings was made Governor of Bengal.

Ahmad Shah left eight sons, but he set aside his first-born, and named his second son, Timur Mirza, to be his successor on the throne. The first-born was proclaimed Shah at Kandahar, but Timur marched an army against him; and all the chief men on the side of the first-born deserted his cause and went over to Timur, but Timur beheaded them on the spot lest they should prove to be spies. Then the first-born fled into exile, and Timur Shah sat on the throne of his father, Ahmad Shah.

Timur Shah gave commands and honors to his Sirdars, and heaped rewards on the head of Payendah Khan, the son of Jemal Khan, who succeeded his father as hereditary chief of the Barukzais. But the Sirdars thwarted the new Shah, and wanted to be his masters; and he abandoned himself to his pleasures and put his trust in the Kuzzilbashes.

At this time the people of Balkh to the northward of Kabul were insolent and unruly.<sup>2</sup> They affronted every governor that Timur Shah put over them, and refused to pay taxes; and at last no Sirdar would accept the government. So the matter became a jest among the Afghans; and monkeys were taught to howl with grief, and throw

<sup>1</sup> See ante, pp. 392, 402.

<sup>2</sup> Balkh is a fertile but little known territory to the northward of Kabul, between the so-called Himalayas (Koh-i-Baba) and the Oxus. It was the Baktria of Herodotus. The beautiful Roxana, whom Alexander loved and married, was a daughter of the king of Baktria.



dust upon their heads, whenever one of them was offered the government of Balkh.

Meanwhile there were troubles in the Punjab and Sindh; and Timur Shah went to Peshawar with his army of Kuzzilbashas to put them down. One afternoon the Shah was taking his siesta in the fortress at Peshawar, and the Kuzzilbashas were slumbering outside the walls, when a company of armed conspirators got in by treachery, and sought to murder him. Timur Shah heard the tumult, and ran into a tower and barred the gateway. He then hastened to the top of the tower, and shouted to the Kuzzilbashes below, and unfolded his long Kashmir turban, and waved it from the battlements. The Red-caps awoke just in time. The conspirators were breaking into the tower when they were assailed and cut to pieces. The leader of the conspiracy escaped to the mountains, but was cajoled into surrender by solemn oaths of pardon and promises of reward, and was then put to death without scruple. Timur Shah was so furious at the outbreak that he wreaked his vengeance upon the inhabitants of Peshawar, and put a third of the people to the sword.

After this massacre Timur Shah was stricken with remorse and terror, and grew melancholy mad. He died in 1793, leaving twenty-three sons to fight against each other for the throne of Afghanistan.

The princes were preparing for war when Payendah Khan, the new chief of the Barukzais, averted the bloodshed. He had resolved that the fifth son of Timur Shah, named Zeman, should succeed to the throne; but he called all the sons of Timur Shah, and all the Sirdars, together in one building in order that they might choose a Shah. After long debate Zeman quietly left the assembly followed by Payendah Khan; and all those who remained behind found that the doors and windows were locked and barred, and that the place was surrounded by soldiers. For the space of five days no one could get out, and no one could break in. Every day a small morsel of bread was given to each



prisoner, which sufficed to keep him alive; and when they were all reduced to skin and bone, they yielded to their fate and swore allegiance to Zeman Shah.

After this Zeman Shah resolved to cripple the power of the Sirdars. He would not seek to conciliate them as his father and grandfather had done; but he deprived them of their commands and emoluments. He grew jealous of Payendah Khan to whom he owed his throne, and removed him from his posts and reduced him to poverty. The flames of discontent began to spread abroad among the Sirdars, but were quenched by treachery and massacre. Many were tempted to court by oaths and promises, and were then put to death. In this manner Zeman Shah established a reign of terror at Kabul.

At this time the brothers of Zeman Shah were dispersed over the provinces, and breaking out in plots and insurrections. The Sikhs were rebelling in the Punjab. Zeman Shah set out from Kabul to repress the revolt; but he was called back by the news that his eldest brother had been proclaimed Shah at Kandahar, and that another brother, named Mahmud Mirza, had rebelled at Herat. After a while his eldest brother was taken prisoner and deprived of eyesight; and Mahmud Mirza was bribed to quietness by being appointed governor of Herat.

Zeman Shah next marched to Lahore, and quieted the Sikh rebels in like manner. He cajoled the head rebel, Runjeet Singh, into a show of obedience, and appointed him Viceroy of the Punjab; but from that day the Punjab was lost to the Afghans, and passed into the hands of the Sikhs. Runjeet Singh proved himself to be a warrior of mark, who laid the foundations of a Sikh empire. His later relations with the British government have already been told in dealing with the administration of Lord Minto.

When Zeman Shah had settled Lahore, he placed his brother Shah Shuja in the government of Peshawar, which was the gate of the Punjab, and then returned to Kabul.



While Zeman Shah was at Lahore, he threatened to invade Hindustan, and invited Lord Wellesley to join him in the conquest of the Mahrattas. Had Lord Wellesley been acquainted with the surroundings of Zeman Shah, he would have scoffed at the idea of an Afghan invasion.

No sooner had Zeman Shah returned to Kabul than tidings reached him that the Barukzais were plotting against him at Kandahar, to avenge the disgrace of Payendah Khan, the chief of their tribe. Accordingly Zeman Shah hurried away to Kandahar, and thought to crush the Barukzais by confiscating their wealth, and executing all who were disaffected. The Barukzais grew desperate, and plotted to set up Shah Shuja of Peshawar in the room of Zeman Shah; but the plot was betrayed by one of the conspirators. Accordingly Payendah Khan, and every Sirdar who had leagued with him, were summoned to the fortress at Kandahar under the pretence of being consulted by the Shah on public affairs. One by one they were conducted into the presence of Zeman Shah and butchered on the spot, and their bodies were exposed in the public square. In this way Zeman Shah established his authority at Kandahar, and then returned to Kabul.

Payendah Khan, chief of the Barukzais, left nineteen sons by six different mothers, and the eldest was named Futih Khan. When the unfortunate father was murdered at Kandahar, Futih Khan fled to Herat, and began to plot with Mahmud Mirza, the governor of Herat, to dethrone Zeman Shah and set up Mahmud in his room. When their plans were all ready, Futih Khan conducted Mahmud to Kandahar, and raised an army of Barukzais, and marched toward Kabul. Zeman Shah came out against them, but was defeated utterly, and taken prisoner and deprived of sight. Mahmud thus became Shah of Afghanistan, while his blinded brother Zeman fled through many countries, and suffered many pangs and privations, and at last found an asylum at Ludhiana in British territory. Thus the once





famous Afghan ruler, who threatened to conquer Hindustan, and excited the alarm of Lord Wellesley, was supported to the end of his days on a pension granted him by the East India Company.

Mahmud was Shah only in name; the real sovereign was Futih Khan, the Vizier, who had succeeded his father as chief of the Barukzais. Mahmud the Durani Shah was a puppet like the Mahratta Sahu; while Futih Khan, the Barukzai Vizier, was a Peishwa like Balaji Rao.

In 1801-2 there were risings of the Ghilzais, the children of the concubine, the Ishmaels of the Afghans; but Futih Khan attacked them in the mountains and routed them with great slaughter; and he then built up a pyramid with their heads and returned in triumph to Kabul.

After a while there was a bloody strife at Kabul between the Sunnis and the Shiah; in other words, between the Afghans and the Red-caps. The Red-caps thought to spite the Sunnis by tormenting an Afghan boy; and the parents of the lad went to the palace for justice, and were told to go to the mosque.<sup>1</sup> The parents ran into the great mosque at Kabul while a Saiyid was preaching, and rent their clothes and filled the air with their cries. The Saiyid stopped the sermon to hear their story, and then issued a fatwa<sup>2</sup> for the slaughter of all the Shiahs in Kabul. The Sunni congregation armed themselves and rushed to the quarter of the Kuzzilbashs, slaughtered every Red-cap they met in the streets, and then broke into the houses, carried off the plunder, and set the buildings on fire. The storm raged throughout four days. At last the Barukzai Vizier interposed with a troop of horsemen, and put a stop to the riot, but not before four hundred Kuzzilbashs had been slain.

The Sunnis had been scattered by matchlock and sabre,

---

<sup>1</sup> The Durani Shahs had always trimmed between the Afghans and the Kuzzilbashs, or Red-caps, and stood aloof from every conflict between the two. Accordingly both the Durani Shah and the Barukzai Vizier got rid of the petition of the parents by referring the complainants to a religious tribunal.

<sup>2</sup> A fatwa was a religious command bearing some resemblance to a papal bull.



but their wrath was not appeased, and they swore to be revenged on the friends of the Shiahhs. In 1803, when the Barukzai Vizier was putting down revolts among the mountain tribes at a distance from Kabul, Shah Shuja was persuaded to come from Peshawar, and was hailed by the Sunni multitude at Kabul with shouts and acclamations. Mahmud Shah fled in alarm to the Bala Hissar, but soon found himself a close prisoner in one of the dungeons. Shortly afterward the Barukzai Vizier returned to Kabul and became minister to Shah Shuja.<sup>1</sup>

In 1809 there were other plots and other explosions. Shah Shuja had grown impatient of the dictation of his Barukzai Vizier and removed him from office; and then went to Peshawar to receive Mr. Elphinstone, and make an alliance with the English against France and Napoleon. Meanwhile the deposed Vizier leagued with the Kuzzilbashes, and delivered his old master, Mahmud Shah, from his prison, and placed him on the throne at Kabul. Shah Shuja completed his negotiations with Mr. Elphinstone, and then turned back to go to Kabul, but was routed by the Barukzais and Kuzzilbashes; and he fled through the Punjab to British territory, and became a pensioner at Ludhiana like his brother Zeman Shah.

Mahmud Shah was thus restored to the throne of Afghanistan, but he was still feeble and effeminate, and a mere tool in the hands of his Barukzai Vizier, Futih Khan. He abandoned himself to his pleasures, and left the government to his Vizier. But Afghanistan prospered under the rule of the Barukzai. Futih Khan was a conqueror as well as an administrator. He reduced Sind and Beluchistan to obedience, but he could do nothing in the Punjab, for he was constantly baffled and defeated by the Sikh ruler, Runjeet Singh.

About this time Herat became a bone of contention be-

<sup>1</sup> The Barukzai Vizier's acceptance of office under Shah Shuja, while his old master Mahmud was pining in the dungeons of the Bala Hissar, is one of those typical data which serve to bring out the real character of the Afghans.



tween the Afghans and the Persians.<sup>1</sup> It has already been seen that when Zeman was Shah, his brother Mahmud became governor of Herat. When Mahmud became Shah, another brother, named Firuz, became governor of Herat. Firuz coined money in the name of Mahmud Shah, and his son married a daughter of Mahmud Shah; but Firuz ruled Herat as an independent sovereign, and refused to send any tribute to Kabul.

In 1816 Firuz was between two fires. On one side Kabul demanded tribute; on the other side Persia demanded possession. At last Persia sent an army to take possession of Herat, and Firuz was forced to send for help to Kabul. The Barukzai Vizier rejoiced over the request. He marched an army to Herat before the Persians reached the place; and he entered the fortress and declared that Firuz was a rebel, and took him prisoner and sent him to Kabul. At the same time the Vizier's younger brother, Dost Muhammad Khan, broke into the zenana and robbed the ladies of their jewels, and carried away a girdle set with precious stones that was worn by the daughter of Mahmud Shah. Futih Khan was angry at this outrage, and ordered his brother to restore the girdle; but Dost Muhammad Khan refused to give it back, and fled away to Kashmir.<sup>2</sup>

All this while Kamran Mirza, the son of Mahmud Shah, had been very jealous of the Vizier; and when he heard that his sister at Herat had been robbed of her girdle, he complained to his father very bitterly. So Mahmud Shah was persuaded to avenge the insult by destroying the Vizier's eyesight, and Kamran hastened to Herat to carry out the

<sup>1</sup> The Shah of Persia claimed Herat on the ground that it had been conquered by Nadir Shah. The claim, however, was a mere sham. Persia might just as well have claimed Kabul and Kandahar, since both provinces had been conquered by Nadir Shah. The plain fact was that Ahmad Shah Durani had conquered Herat, but his successors could not hold it, as it was too remote from Kabul; and Herat became an independent sovereignty in the hands of any Afghan prince who obtained the government.

<sup>2</sup> This is the first appearance of Dost Muhammad Khan, the founder of the Barukzai dynasty, upon the page of history. At a later period he was a leading character in the Afghan war of 1839-42.



sentence. Futih Khan was surprised and bound, and his eyes were pierced with red-hot needles in the presence of Kamran.<sup>1</sup>

When Dost Muhammad Khan heard what had been done, he raised an army in Kashmir and marched against Kabul to avenge the atrocity committed on his eldest brother. Mahmud Shah was seized with terror at the approach of the avenging army, and fled away to Ghazni, the half-way fortress between Kabul and Kandahar. At Ghazni he was joined by his son, Kamran, and the blind Barukzai Vizier from Herat. But his kingdom had passed out of his hands, and his troops deserted him in large numbers, and went over to Dost Muhammad Khan. In his wrath he sent for the blind Vizier, and ordered his Sirdars to put him to death before his eyes. Kamran struck the first blow. All the Sirdars then began to torment the blind Vizier with their daggers; and after enduring excruciating agony, Futih Khan expired without a groan.

The plots and broils which followed are tedious and bewildering. Mahmud Shah and his son, Kamran, fled to Herat, and became independent rulers of that remote territory. The surviving sons of Payendah Shah, known as the Barukzai brothers, assumed different commands in Kabul, Kandahar, Kashmir, and Beluchistan. But Afghanistan was without a sovereign. Not one of the Barukzai brothers ventured at this period to usurp the Durani sovereignty. They were willing to set up Shah Shuja as a puppet and to rule Afghanistan in his name; but Shah Shuja refused to accept their terms, and insisted upon being absolute and uncontrolled sovereign of the Af-

<sup>1</sup> The following table of Durani Shahs and Barukzai Viziers may be found a convenient aid to the memory:

Ahmad Shah Durani . . .	1747	Jemal Khan Barukzai . . .	1747
Timur Shah " . . .	1773	Payendah Khan " . . .	1773
Zeman Shah " . . .	1793	Futih Khan " . . .	1800
Mahmud Shah " . . .	1800	" " " . . .	1803
Shah Shuja " . . .	1803	Dost Muhammad Khan Barukzai, Amir of Kabul .	1826
Mahmud Shah (restored) .	1809		





ghans. Under such circumstances the Barukzai brothers abandoned Shah Shuja, and he was forced to return to Ludhiana. They then tried to set up another prince of the family; but soon found that their new Durani puppet was plotting against them with Shah Shuja on one side at Ludhiana, and with Mahmud Shah on the other side at Herat. The result was that the puppet was dethroned, and the Barukzai brothers quarrelled among themselves, while Runjeet Singh occupied Peshawar and Persia threatened Herat.

At last, in 1826, Dost Muhammad Khan became master of Kabul. Subsequently he was formally elected king by an assembly of Sirdars, and proclaimed Amir by the chief Mulla, with all the ceremonies that had been observed at the coronation of Ahmad Shah. But he was environed by dangers. On the north there were revolts in Balkh; on the south one of his brothers was holding out against him at Kandahar; on the east he was harassed by Runjeet Singh at Peshawar, with Shah Shuja and the British government in the background; on the west there was Mahmud Shah and Kamran at Herat, with Persia plotting behind and Russia looming in the distance. Amid such perplexities Dost Muhammad Khan was willing and anxious to conclude an alliance with the British government, provided only he could be assured that the English were not plotting to restore Shah Shuja, and would help him to recover Peshawar from Runjeet Singh.

In the midst of these turmoils, Great Britain and Russia were at variance in Central Asia. The bone of contention was Herat. From a remote antiquity Herat has been the key to India; the first turnpike on the great highway from Persia to Hindustan.<sup>1</sup> In 1836 Russia was making a cat's-paw of Persia and urging the Shah to seize Herat. Great Britain was anxious to keep Persia out of Herat, lest the

---

<sup>1</sup> The fortified city of Herat is a quadrangle about four miles on each side. It was surrounded by a rampart of earth about ninety feet high which appeared to environ the city like a long hill. The rampart was supported on the inside by buttresses of masonry; and was surmounted by a wall thirty feet high flanked with round towers and loop-holed for musketry.



place should become a gateway through which Russia might advance toward India. But the British government did not tell Persia plainly that war would be declared if she attempted to occupy Herat. Had this been done, Persia would never have besieged Herat, and an English army would never have invaded Afghanistan.

The result of all this underplotting and hesitation was that in 1837 the Shah of Persia marched an army against Herat. By this time the government of Herat had changed hands. Mahmud Shah had been murdered in 1829, and his son Kamran was sovereign of Herat; but Kamran was a slave to opium-eating, and other enervating pleasures, and his Vizier, Yar Muhammad Khan, was the real ruler. Yar Muhammad Khan was a cruel and extortionate despot; he has been described as the most accomplished villain in Central Asia; but at this period he hated Persia with all his heart and soul. On one occasion he had been entrapped into a meeting with a Persian prince on the frontier, under pretence of settling all differences between Herat and Persia; and two of his teeth had been forcibly extracted to induce him to comply with the demands of the Shah.<sup>1</sup> Kamran would have submitted to the Shah of Persia at the first summons; but Yar Muhammad Khan swore that he would never surrender Herat until his teeth were restored to his gums; and that as long as he had a sabre to draw or a cartridge to fire, he would never bow his head to the Kajar Shah.

The siege of Herat was one of the most memorable events of the time. It lasted from November, 1837, to September, 1838. The Afghans fought manfully, harassing the Persian army with repeated sorties. Even the women and children

---

<sup>1</sup> The Persian prince was Abbas Mirza, eldest son of Futh Ali Shah, the second sovereign of the Kajar dynasty. Abbas Mirza died a few months afterward, and Yar Muhammad Khan escaped to Herat. Futh Ali Shah died in 1834, and was succeeded on the throne of Persia by his son, Muhammad Shah, who besieged Herat in 1837. Futh Ali Shah, sovereign of Persia, must not be confounded with Futh Khan, the Barukzai minister at Kabul, who was murdered in the year 1817.





mounted the walls and threw down bricks and stones on the Persian soldiers. But the canals which supplied the city with water were cut off by the enemy; the inhabitants were starving; and Kamran was treacherously plotting the surrender of the city to the Persians. Indeed, Herat would have been lost to the Afghans but for the heroic exertions of a young lieutenant, named Eldred Pottinger, who was present in the city during the siege. Pottinger animated the Afghan soldiery by his gallant exploits, and cheered the drooping spirits of Yar Muhammad Khan by his energy and counsel. At last the siege was brought to a close by diplomacy. The British government threatened Persia with war, and the Shah raised the siege of Herat, and returned to his own dominions.

All this while Dost Muhammad Khan was most anxious to recover Peshawar from Runjeet Singh. He implored Lord Auckland to call on Runjeet Singh to restore Peshawar. But the British government had no desire to pick a quarrel with Runjeet Singh, and declined to interfere. The result was that Dost Muhammad Khan made advances to Russia, and received a Russian mission at Kabul; and the British government in return resolved to dethrone Dost Muhammad Khan, and restore Shah Shuja to the throne of Kabul.



## CHAPTER XIX

AFGHAN WAR—LORDS AUCKLAND AND ELLEN-  
BOROUGH

A.D. 1839 TO 1842

ON the 1st of October, 1838, Lord Auckland published a declaration of war at Simla; and shortly afterward the British forces were on the move for Kabul. They could not march through the Punjab, because Runjeet Singh refused permission. Accordingly they marched through Sind to Quetta; and there the Bombay column joined the Bengal column. At Quetta Sir John Keane took the command of the united armies, and then set out for Kabul.

Kandahar was captured in April, 1839. A British force was left at Kandahar under the command of General Nott; while Major (now Sir Henry) Rawlinson was placed in political charge of the province in the name of Shah Shuja. In July Ghazni was taken by storm,<sup>1</sup> and Dost Muhammad Khan fled over the Oxus into Bokhara. In August the British army entered Kabul, and Shah Shuja was restored to the throne of Afghanistan. Henceforth he was supposed to govern the country under the advice and help of the English minister and envoy, Sir William Macnaghten.

In November, 1839, the Russian government sent a counter expedition from Orenberg toward Khiya, with the view of establishing Russian influence over the three Usbeg Khanates to the northward of the Oxus. The time of year, however, was most unfortunate. Winter snows and waterless

<sup>1</sup> At the storming of Ghazni the late Sir Henry Durand distinguished himself as a young subaltern in the Engineers by blowing up the Kashmir gate.





wastes forbade the Russian force to reach Khiva; and after heroically fighting against the severest privations and disasters, it was compelled to return to Orenberg.

Meanwhile the Afghans seemed perfectly satisfied with British occupation. Large subsidies were paid by the English envoy to Afghan chiefs, as well as to the mountain tribes who guarded the passes; while the presence of the English troops was a godsend to all the shopkeepers and provision-dealers in the bazars. The British army remained at Kabul during 1840. Toward the end of the year, Dost Muhammad Khan surrendered to the English envoy, and was sent to Calcutta, where he was detained as a prisoner, but treated as a guest. The old Barukzai warrior was indeed often entertained at Government House, where he is said to have played at chess with Miss Eden, the sister of the Governor-General.

Meanwhile there were complications at Herat. After the retreat of the Shah of Persia in 1838, the revenues of Herat were exhausted, the troops were without pay, the inhabitants were starving, and the Vizier, Yar Muhammad Khan, was trying to raise money and get rid of the surplus population, by selling the people as slaves to the Usbegs. The British government averted these evils by advancing large sums of money for the payment of the troops, the repair of the fortifications, and the relief of Kamran and his Vizier; no doubt with the view of establishing a permanent influence at Herat.

Kamran and his Vizier were in no way grateful for these subsidies. They suspected that the British government had sinister designs on Herat, and accordingly opened up a treacherous correspondence with the Shah of Persia. Major D'Arcy Todd, who had been appointed English envoy at Herat, withheld the money payments on his own authority, unless the Vizier agreed to receive a contingent of British troops into Herat. The result was that the Vizier grew furious at the stoppage of the subsidies, and called on Major Todd either to pay up the money or to leave Herat. Major Todd was so



disgusted with the perfidy and greediness of the Herat rulers that he threw up his post and returned to British territory. Lord Auckland was naturally exasperated at the abandonment of Herat. Matters had been squared with Persia, and the continued presence of Major Todd would have sufficed to maintain British influence at Herat. Major Todd was dismissed from political employ, but found a soldier's death four years afterward on the field of Ferōzeshahar.

The British occupation of Afghanistan continued through the year 1841, for it was not deemed safe to leave Shah Shuja unprotected at Kabul. Meanwhile, the double government satisfied no one. Shah Shuja was smarting under the dictation of Sir William Macnaghten. The English envoy and minister was in his turn impatient of Afghan ways and prejudices. The Afghan officials were disgusted with the order and regularity of English administration, which was introduced under the new regime. The Mullas refused to offer up public prayers for Shah Shuja, declaring that he was not an independent sovereign. Even the rise of prices, which filled the pockets of the bazar dealers, lessened the value of money and excited the discontent of the masses.

So long, however, as subsidies and money allowances were lavished among turbulent Sirdars and refractory mountain tribes, there was no lack of loyalty toward Shah Shuja and his English allies. But the flow of gold could not last forever. The revenues of Afghanistan had been overrated. The British authorities had put their trust in the estimates of Shah Shuja when at Ludhiana; forgetting the Machiavelian maxim that it is dangerous to rely upon the representations and hopes of exiles. The expenses of the British occupation were so enormous that economy was imperative. Accordingly Sir William Macnaghten began to cut down the subsidies and money allowances. From that moment the loyalty which had sprung up in a single night like the prophet's gourd began to sicken and die away. The Afghans grew weary of the English and their puppet ruler, Shah Shuja. Conspiracies were formed; petty outbreaks



became frequent; while the Ghilzais, and other mountain tribes at the passes, being no longer bribed into acquiescence, became most troublesome and disorderly.

At this period there were no alarms for the safety of the British army in Kabul. On the contrary, English officers had been induced to bring up their wives and families from the depressing heats of Bengal to the cool climate of Kabul; and no precautions were taken against a possible rising of the whole people. The British cantonment was three miles from the city, with only a mud wall round it that could be easily ridden over. Sir William Macnaghten and his family lived in a house close by the cantonments; he had been appointed Governor of Bombay, and was about to be succeeded by Sir Alexander Burnes as envoy and minister at Kabul. Burnes himself was as much at home at Kabul as at Calcutta; he occupied a house near the centre of the city, surrounded by bazars, and above all by a turbulent population of Afghans and Kuzzilbashes, who were ever and anon endeavoring to settle the knotty disputes between Sunnis and Shiabs by force of arms.

Meantime there had been some changes in the command of the British army of occupation. General Elphinstone, an aged and infirm officer, unfit for the post, had taken the place of Sir John Keane. Next to General Elphinstone were Sir Robert Sale and Brigadier Shelton.

The British army of occupation was exposed to danger from another cause. It had been originally quartered in the fortress known as the Bala Hissar, which commanded the whole city and suburbs of Kabul. So long as the British kept possession of the Bala Hissar, they could hold out against any insurrection. But Shah Shuja quartered his harem in the Bala Hissar, and objected to the presence of the English soldiers; and Sir William Macnaghten was weak enough to remove the troops from the fortress, and quarter them in an unprotected cantonment about three miles from the city.

The catastrophe that followed may be told in a few



ords. In October, 1841, Sir Robert Sale left Kabul with a brigade to reopen communications between Kabul and Jellalabad, which had been closed by the disaffected mountaineers. Sale effected his task after a long struggle and considerable loss. His subsequent defence of Jellalabad against the repeated assaults of a large Afghan army is one of the heroic events in the war.

On the 2d of November, 1841, an insurrection broke out in the streets of Kabul. Sir Alexander Burnes thought of escaping to the English cantonment in the disguise of an Afghan; but he changed his mind, and resolved to hold out to the last in his English uniform. He barricaded his house, and sent to Macnaghten for a battalion of infantry and two field-pieces. Such a force at the beginning of the outbreak would have saved the life of Burnes. Its appearance in the streets of Kabul would have led the Kuzzilbashes to rally round Burnes, and raise the war-cry against the Sunnis. But Macnaghten was doubtful, and General Elphinstone was afraid that Shah Shuja might object, and the two together agreed to wait for further information. Meanwhile the mob of Kabul, the most dangerous in Central Asia, was surging round the house of the Englishman. Burnes held out with thirty-two others from eight o'clock in the morning until two in the afternoon, when the mob burned down the gate, and rushed in, and all was over. Burnes and twenty-three others were killed; the remaining nine escaped by a miracle.

At three o'clock that same afternoon, Brigadier Shelton made a lame attempt to enter the city with a couple of battalions of infantry; but by this time the suburban population had joined the rioters. It was impossible to cut a way through the narrow streets and crowded bazars, and Shelton was compelled to return to the cantonment. Meanwhile the uproar was increasing in the city. Thousands of Afghans flocked to Kabul in hopes of plunder; and it soon appeared that the whole Afghan nation had risen against the rule of the foreigner.



At this crisis the British commanders appear to have been paralyzed. General Elphinstone and Sir William Macnaghten were planning a retreat to Jellalabad, the half-way house between Kabul and Peshawar. Provisions were running short; the people of Kabul kept back all supplies from the British cantonment, and the army of occupation was becoming demoralized.

At last Macnaghten began to negotiate with the leaders of the insurrection, and especially with Akbar Khan, the eldest son of Dost Muhammad Khan. This man had fled from Kabul about the same time that his father had made his way to Bokhara; but, on hearing of the revolt, he had hastened back to Kabul, and was bent on seizing the government of the country. Shah Shuja was shut up in the Bala Hissar, but could do nothing; he was already ignored, and his end was drawing nigh.

Akbar Khan and other Afghan Sirdars solemnly engaged to supply the British army with carriage and provisions. In return they received from Macnaghten promises of large sums of money and hostages for the payment. But instead of keeping to their engagement, the Afghans demanded more money and more hostages. Winter had set in, and snow was falling; and it was even proposed that the British army should remain at Kabul till the spring. At length, after many delays and evasions, there was a final meeting between Macnaghten and the Afghan chiefs on the 23d of December, 1841. But the English envoy had given mortal offence to the Afghans, and when he appeared at the meeting he was suddenly attacked and murdered by Akbar Khan.

Subsequently the Afghan chiefs tried to explain away the murder. Akbar Khan vowed that he had acted on the mad impulse of the moment, and not with any deliberate intention of committing murder. Negotiations were renewed, and in January, 1842, the British forces began their retreat from Kabul, followed by Akbar Khan and a large army of Afghans. Then followed a horrible series of treacheries and massacres. Akbar Khan demanded more hostages, includ-



ing English ladies and children. The Ghilzai mountaineers covered the heights on either side of the Khaiber Pass, and poured a murderous fire on the retreating force. Akbar Khan declared that he could not restrain the Ghilzais, but at the same time he permitted his own forces to share in the massacre and plunder. Thousands of British troops and camp-followers were carried off by successive volleys, or died of hunger and privations, or fell down in the snow from wounds or fatigue and were butchered by the Afghans. Thus perished a force which left Kabul with four thousand fighting men, and twelve thousand followers. Out of all this number, only a solitary individual, an English surgeon named Brydon, managed to escape to Jellalabad. He was brought in by Sale's garrison half dead from hunger and wounds; but he lived to tell the tale for more than thirty years afterward.

Such was the state of affairs in February, 1842, when Lord Ellenborough landed at Calcutta and succeeded Lord Auckland as Governor-General. Men's hearts were bursting with shame and indignation as they heard of the murder of the British envoy, and the destruction of sixteen thousand men. Englishmen in India were burning to retrieve the disgrace which had befallen British arms, and to avenge the slaughter which cast a gloom over the whole country. But Lord Auckland had been too much oppressed by the disaster to respond to the call; while Lord Ellenborough, who succeeded him, was too much alarmed at the danger to which the British garrisons were exposed at Jellalabad and Kandahar to plan such a scheme of vengeance as should vindicate the honor of England, and restore the prestige of British arms.

A force was assembled under General Pollock to march through the Punjab, and relieve Sale's garrison at Jellalabad. Runjeet Singh died in June, 1839, and the Sikh rulers who came after him did not resist the passage of British troops. In due course Pollock marched his army through the Punjab and reached Peshawar, but halted there for





some weeks to reassure the sepoys who were reluctant to enter the Khaiber Pass.

In April, 1842, Pollock crowned the heights of the Khaiber with British infantry, and engaged hotly with the mountaineers; and within a short space of time the white dresses of the Ghilzais were to be seen flying off in all directions. He then pursued his victorious march through the Khaiber to Jellalabad, and reached the place at a critical moment. Sale had been closely beleaguered by a large army of Afghans under the command of Akbar Khan; and he had just inflicted a heavy defeat on the enemy, and compelled Akbar Khan to raise the siege and return to Kabul.

Meanwhile the city of Kabul was distracted by the struggle between the factions of Barukzais and Duranis. A Barukzai chief, named Zeman Khan, had taken possession of the city; while the Durani sovereign, Shah Shuja, shut himself up in the Bala Hissar. Indeed Shah Shuja was in sore peril and perplexity. He sent letters to Jellalabad, swearing eternal devotion to the British government; and he sent messages to the Barukzai leaders, swearing to drive the British out of Afghanistan. At last the Barukzais called upon him to lead the Afghan army against the British garrison at Jellalabad, and bound themselves by solemn oaths to protect him from all harm. The old Durani left the fortress of the Bala Hissar decked out in all his robes and jewels; and was then shot dead by an ambush of matchlock men, and rifled of all his precious things.

The Barukzais, however, failed for the moment to get the mastery. The Bala Hissar was still in the hands of the Duranis, and a son of Shah Shuja was proclaimed sovereign within the walls of the fortress. The civil war continued to rage between the two parties. There was fighting in the streets from house to house, while the guns of the Bala Hissar were playing upon the city.

At this juncture Akbar Khan returned from his defeat

<sup>1</sup> Zeman Khan was a nephew of Dost Muhammad Khan. He had been elected king by the Barukzais in the absence of Akbar Khan.



Jellalabad. Both Barukzais and Duranis were dreading the return of the English; and Akbar Khan commanded the respect of all parties of Afghans by declaring that he was negotiating with General Sale. But Akbar Khan had his own game to play. He joined the Barukzais and captured the Bala Hissar. Then he went over to the Duranis, paid his homage to the son of Shah Shuja, and began to rule as minister. The boy sovereign, however, was in mortal fear of being murdered by his self-constituted minister; and he at last escaped to the British camp, and placed himself under the protection of General Pollock.

Akbar Khan thus became ruler of Kabul, and the fate of the prisoners and hostages was in his hands. He had not treated them unkindly, but he was determined to use them for his own purposes. He wrote to General Pollock offering to deliver them up, provided the English departed from Jellalabad and Kandahar without advancing to Kabul. Pollock rejected the proposals. Akbar Khan then sent the captives to a hill fortress far away to the northward; and marched out of Kabul with a large army to prevent Pollock from advancing on the Afghan capital.

Meanwhile Lord Ellenborough was hesitating whether to withdraw the garrisons from Jellalabad and Kandahar, or permit them to march to Kabul. Secret instructions were sent to the two generals to withdraw; but the secret got wind and raised a storm of indignation, as it was imagined that the captives were to be abandoned to the tender mercies of the Afghans. Accordingly Lord Ellenborough modified his instructions, and ordered the two generals to use their own discretion as regards an advance to Kabul.

General Nott was a hot-tempered officer, and when he received the orders to withdraw he was furious with rage. Both Nott and Rawlinson knew that a retreat from Kandahar would raise the whole country against them, and end in disaster like the retreat from Kabul. Rawlinson had already tried to stir up the neighboring Durani chiefs to rally round Shah Shuja, but found that they were as bit-



Early opposed to the British occupation as the Barukzais. Accordingly there was no alternative but to wait for reinforcements; and for months the force at Kandahar was exposed to desperate assaults, which were met by still more desperate repulses; while Nott and Rawlinson continued to hope for a change of orders.

General Pollock was the mildest of men, but even he was moved with shame and anger at the order to withdraw. He wrote to Nott begging him not to leave Kandahar until he heard more; and reported to headquarters that he could not leave Jellalabad for want of transport. Subsequently, he received the modified instructions; and in August, 1842, he heard that Nott had set his face toward Kabul. Accordingly he left Jellalabad accompanied by Sale, and entered the Tezeen valley.

At Tezeen the British soldiers beheld a sight which could never be forgotten. The valley was the scene of one of the bloodiest massacres during the ill-starred retreat from Kabul. The remains of their murdered comrades were still lying on the ground, and the sight exasperated the avenging army. At that moment the army of Akbar Khan appeared upon the scene; and the heights around bristled with matchlock men from Kabul. Pollock's force advanced in the face of a murderous fire, and gave no quarter. The enemy was utterly routed; indeed the victory at Tezeen was the crowning event of the war. Akbar Khan fled to the northern mountains, never to return until the English left Afghanistan; and in September, 1842, the British flag was floating over the Bala Hissar.

Nott soon arrived at Kabul bringing with him the sandalwood gates of Somnath, which Mahmud of Ghazni had brought away from Guzerat in the eleventh century, and had since then adorned his tomb at Ghazni. This was a whim of Lord Ellenborough's, who had ordered the gates to be brought away as trophies of the war.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Sir Henry Rawlinson was of opinion that the gates were not genuine, but fac-similes of the originals, which must have perished long ago. The author has seen the gates at Agra, and has no doubt of the correctness of Sir Henry Rawlinson's conclusions.



All this while the probable fate of the prisoners and hostages caused the utmost anxiety. Suddenly all fears were allayed. The captives managed to bribe their keepers, and were brought into the British camp at Kabul amid general acclamation.

The glory of the avenging army was marred by acts of barbarity. The great bazar at Kabul was blown up by gunpowder. It was one of the finest stone buildings in Central Asia, but it was the place where Macnaghten's remains had been exposed, and it was destroyed as a fitting punishment for the crime. Amid the confusion, the two armies broke into the city and perpetrated deeds in revenge for the slaughter of their comrades in the Khaiber, over which history would fain draw a veil.

The proceedings of Lord Ellenborough at the close of the Afghan war were much condemned by his contemporaries. He issued a bombastic proclamation respecting the gates of Somnath which exposed him to much ridicule. The gates had been carried away from an idol temple by a follower of the prophet; consequently their recovery could not delight the Muhammadan princes of India. Again the gates had adorned the tomb of Mahmud of Ghazni; consequently they were impure in the eyes of Hindus. Lord Ellenborough also received the avenging army, on its return from Kabul, with a show of painted elephants, and other displays of Oriental pomp, which jarred against English tastes. But these eccentricities are forgotten by the present generation, and can hardly be treated as history.

One episode in the history of the Afghan war conveys a useful lesson. In the heyday of success, when Afghanistan was first occupied by a British army, it was proposed to establish British influence in the Usbeg Khanates to the northward of the Oxus. Colonel Stoddart was sent to Bokhara to form friendly relations with the Amir; and Captain Conolly, who had been sent on a like mission to the ruler of Khokand, joined Colonel Stoddart at Bokhara. The Amir of Bokhara regarded both officers with suspicion, and kept them under





## HISTORY OF INDIA

CSL

close surveillance; but he hesitated to proceed to extremities; for aught he knew, the British army at Kabul might be moved across Balkh and the Oxus into Bokhara. But successive disasters in Kabul sealed the doom of the two officers. When the news of the insurrection at Kabul and murder of Sir Alexander Burnes reached Bokhara, both officers were imprisoned in loathsome dungeons; but when it was known that the British army had perished in the Khaiber Pass they were taken out of their dungeons and publicly beheaded in the market-place of Bokhara.



## CHAPTER XX

## SINDE AND GWALIOR—LORD ELLENBOROUGH

A.D. 1843 TO 1844

THE first act of Lord Ellenborough after the Kabul war was the conquest of Sind. This territory occupied the lower valley of the Indus. In the middle of the eighteenth century it formed a province of the Afghan empire of Ahmad Shah Abdali. Subsequently the Amirs or rulers of Sind established a certain kind of independence, or only paid tribute to Kabul when compelled by force of arms.

During the early part of the British occupation of Afghanistan, the Sind Amirs had rendered good service to the British government; but after the disastrous retreat from Kabul some of the Amirs swerved from their treaty obligations. The result was a war which was triumphantly carried to a close by Sir Charles Napier. In February, 1843, Napier won the battle of Meeanee; and in the following March he won the battle of Hyderabad in the neighborhood of the Sind capital of that name. The war was brought to an end by the annexation of Sind to the British empire.

It would be useless, in the present day, to attempt to review the Sind question. Sir Charles Napier, who commanded the army, considered that the Amirs were guilty of disaffection and deception; while Major Outram, who was political agent in Sind, considered that their guilt was not sufficiently proved. One Amir, who professed the utmost loyalty to the British government, and who convinced Sir





Charles Napier of the guilt of the others, was subsequently convicted of perjury and forgery, which was punished at the time, but since then has been more or less condoned. The difficulty of proof among a people who cannot be bound by oaths, and who have always been accustomed to the forgery of seals and fabrication of documents, has often enabled the guilty to escape, and may sometimes have led to the punishment of the innocent. The question, however, of whether the Sindia Amirs were guilty or otherwise of treacherous designs against the British government has long since died out of political controversy.

During the administration of Lord Ellenborough there was a change of policy in dealing with the Mahratta states of Sindia and Holkar. Lord Ellenborough remodelled the government of Gwalior, and contemplated the annexation of Indore. Such strong proceedings were direct violations of the non-intervention policy of Lord William Bentinck; but in order to decide how far they were expedient, it will be necessary to bring the following facts under review.

The condition of Gwalior under Daulat Rao Sindia has already been indicated.<sup>1</sup> It will be remembered that, at his death in 1827, his widow Baiza Bai became queen regent and adopted a boy to succeed her deceased husband as Maharaja. In 1833 the boy attained his majority, but disputes arose which ended in civil war. At last Lord William Bentinck was forced to interfere against his will, and the war was at an end. Baiza Bai retired from Gwalior, and Maharaja Jankoji Rao ascended the throne of Sindia.

Justice was satisfied by the elevation of the young Maharaja, but the queen regent was revenged. Baiza Bai had proved herself to be an able administrator; and as long as she was sole ruler, the government of Gwalior worked smoothly. On the other hand, Jankoji Rao Sindia was a do-nothing Maharaja. He was content with the pride and

<sup>1</sup> See ante, pp. 606-7.



of power; he was assured of the protection of the British government; and he cared nothing for his country or people. Accordingly the government was weak and distracted. The administration was carried on by a council of ministers, but there was a rankling rivalry for the post of premier between an uncle of the Maharaja, named Mama Sahib, and the hereditary keeper of the crown jewels, named Dada Khasji. In the end the uncle of the Maharaja got the better of the jewel-keeper, and Mama Sahib became chief minister.

Meanwhile the army of Gwalior had grown turbulent and disaffected. It numbered thirty thousand infantry, ten thousand cavalry, and two hundred guns. It was not required for defence, as Gwalior was protected against foreign invasion by the subsidiary alliance with the British government; but it absorbed two-thirds of the revenues of Gwalior, and resisted all attempts at disbandment or reduction.

The British government had no concern with the army of Gwalior so long as it kept within Sindia's territories. But the Punjab had become a political volcano. Ever since the death of Runjeet Singh, in 1839, the Sikh army of the Khalsa, numbering seventy thousand soldiers and three hundred guns, had been a menace to Hindustan. Lord Ellenborough foresaw that sooner or later the Sikh army would cross the Sutlej into British territory. A spark would have kindled a flame in the army of Gwalior; and if its movements were combined with those of the Sikh army, they would have raised such a storm in Hindustan as had not been witnessed since the days of Nadir Shah.<sup>1</sup>

Jankoji Rao Sindia died in February, 1843, leaving no children real or adopted. His widow, named Tara Bai, was a girl of twelve years of age. This girl adopted a boy, who

---

<sup>1</sup> It was this consideration which induced Lord Ellenborough to pause before sending the avenging army under General Pollock into Kabul. Meanwhile any attempt at explanation would have precipitated a Sikh invasion. Consequently Lord Ellenborough, while proving himself a statesman of forecast, was for some time one of the best abused Governors-General that ever landed in India.





was a distant relative of her husband's family. The boy was only eight years of age, but he was enthroned as Maharaja under the name of Jyaji Rao Sindia.<sup>1</sup> The adoption was approved by the durbar and the army, and was recognized by the British government.

The next question was the appointment of a regent. The Gwalior durbar wished the administration to be carried on as before by a council of ministers; but Lord Ellenborough urged the appointment of one individual as regent. The girl queen was anxious that the Dada should be regent; but Lord Ellenborough was in favor of Mama Sahib. Accordingly the Gwalior durbar was told that the Governor-General preferred Mama Sahib, and Mama Sahib was appointed regent of Gwalior.

Then followed a feminine intrigue. Tara Bai, in spite of her youth, set to work with the other palace ladies to thwart and harass Mama Sahib. The vexed and baffled regent sought to strengthen himself against this female confederacy, by betrothing the boy Maharaja to his own niece; but this step proved his ruin. Tara Bai feared that the marriage would ultimately destroy her own influence over the Maharaja; and in spite of the remonstrances of the British Resident, this young girl dismissed Mama Sahib on her own authority, and assumed the name of regent, leaving all real power in the hands of the Dada.

Lord Ellenborough was excessively angry at this movement, and well he might be. He had interfered in behalf of a minister whom he would not support; and he had been defied by a Mahratta girl of twelve. The restoration of Mama Sahib was out of the question; the Governor-General could not reinstate a regent minister who had been outwitted by a girl. He could, however, insist on the removal of Dada Khasji; and accordingly he ordered the British Resident to withdraw from Gwalior, and not to return until the Dada had been dismissed from office. The Gwalior durbar was

<sup>1</sup> In the present year (1880) Jyaji Rao Sindia is still Maharaja of Gwalior.



greatly alarmed, and entreated the Resident to return, but he was immovable.

Meanwhile the Dada had gained over the army of Gwalior by his largesses, and disturbances broke out in which fifty or sixty persons were killed. Accordingly Lord Ellenborough determined to take active measures for restoring tranquillity to Gwalior, and disbanding the army. In December, 1843, he arrived at Agra, but there were no signs of submission at Gwalior. He ordered the British army to advance to Gwalior under Sir Hugh Gough. The Dada now made his submission, but Lord Ellenborough was bent on the disbandment of the dangerous army.

The chiefs and soldiers of Sindia saw that the independence of the state, and the existence of the army, were threatened by the British government. Accordingly they made common cause against the Governor-General, and were defeated in the battles of Maharajpore and Punniar, both of which were fought on the 29th of December, 1843.

In January, 1844, a treaty was concluded at Gwalior which placed the future relations of the British government with that state on an improved footing. The administration was intrusted to a council of six nobles, which was called the council of regency, and was required to act implicitly on the advice of the Resident whenever he might think fit to offer it. The new government was required to cede enough territory to maintain a contingent trained and disciplined by British officers, henceforth known as the Gwalior Contingent. At the same time the overgrown army of Gwalior was reduced to six thousand cavalry, three thousand infantry, and thirty-two guns.

In February, 1844, there was a crisis in Holkar's state of Indore. Hari Rao Holkar died in 1843, and was succeeded by an adopted son, who died in 1844, leaving no son, real or adopted. There was not only no heir, but no person having the right to adopt an heir. The Indore state was of modern origin; it owed its existence to predatory conquest; and it was maintained for the sole benefit of the followers of the





court. Lord Ellenborough ordered steps to be taken to ascertain the national feeling on the subject.

Meanwhile the government of Indore was left under the regency of the mother of Hari Rao Holkar, who died in 1843; and this lady proposed to nominate a fitting successor to the boy who died in 1844. Before, however, Lord Ellenborough could decide the question, the British Resident at Indore declared, on his own authority, that the British government would perpetuate the state of Holkar; and he enthroned the nominee of the queen mother, with all the formality of a hereditary chieftain, under the name of Tukaji Rao Holkar.<sup>1</sup> Lord Ellenborough was exceedingly wroth at this unauthorized proceeding, and severely censured the Resident, but, under the circumstances, he declined to interfere with the succession of 'Tukaji Rao Holkar.

In June, 1844, Lord Ellenborough was recalled from the post of Governor-General. This arbitrary measure took India by surprise. There had, however, been angry controversies between Lord Ellenborough and the Court of Directors, and the former had not been always discreet; but the ability, industry, and energy of the noble earl had deeply impressed the public mind, and there were many who regretted his recall.

Lord Ellenborough was succeeded by Sir Henry Hardinge in the post of Governor-General. During the remainder of 1844, and nearly the whole of 1845, the new Governor-General was chiefly occupied in watching the progress of events in the Punjab until the breaking out of the first Sikh war. Before, however, treating of those important transactions, it will be necessary to glance at the current of affairs in other quarters.

---

<sup>1</sup> In the present year (1880) Tukaji Rao Holkar is still Maharaja of Indore.



## CHAPTER XXI

## WAR DECADE—BURMA AND NIPAL

A.D. 1839 TO 1849

**D**URING the administration of Lords Auckland and Ellenborough, there were strange troubles in Burma, Nipal, and the Punjab. The native courts at Ava, Khatmandu, and Lahore, were in a state of ferment, more or less excited by the Kabul war; and the political workings are all the more important from the pictures which they present of Oriental life outside the area of British suzerainty.

This ferment was not visible within the British pale. The Mahratta governments of Sindia and Holkar were too weak and distracted to indulge in hopes or fears as regards the possible downfall of the British empire. The Rajput states were a prey to the maladministration of their rulers and the disaffection of their respective feudatories. In Marwar especially, the growing anarchy and disorder compelled the British government to send a force to keep the peace between the Maharaja and his Thakurs during the very year that the columns from Bengal and Bombay were advancing on Kabul. Neither Rajput nor Mahratta troubled about disasters in Central Asia, or imagined the possibility of a renewal of the old wars in Hindustan.

But public feeling was different in the three courts outside the frontier. Rumors were rife that the Governor-General had sent the flower of the British army into the remote regions of Central Asia to fight against the Amir, the Shah, and the Czar; and the air was clouded with predictions that British power would be shattered in the coming





storm, and that Brahma and Muhammad, Gotama Buddha and Guru Govind would be avenged on the followers of the Nazarene.

In Burma and Nipal there was marked hostility toward the British government. Indeed in 1840 it seemed likely that while one *corps d'armée* was occupying Kabul, and a second was keeping the peace in Rajputana, a third would be threading the valley of the Irawadi, while a fourth would be climbing the slopes and shelves of the Himalayas. At Lahore there was less hostile display, but the war spirit was burning beneath the surface like the hidden fires of a volcano, and was destined at no distant period to burst into flames.

Burma was essentially a weak government, and its army was beneath contempt; but the heavy cost of the Burmese war of 1824-26, and the terrible loss of life from fever and malaria, had rendered the British government most anxious to keep on friendly terms with the Court of Ava. In 1830 Colonel Burney was sent as a permanent Resident to Ava, in accordance with the treaty of Yandabo; but he was treated by the barbarous court more as a spy to be watched and guarded, than as an envoy anxious only for the maintenance of friendly relations.

In 1837 there was a revolution in the palace at Ava. The king, Phagyi-dau, had become hypochondriacal and insane, and was dethroned by his brother Tharawadi, and placed in confinement. Then followed the inevitable massacre. The sorceress queen, the heir-apparent, and the ministers of the deposed sovereign, were all put to death, together with their dependents. Tharawadi became king of Burma, and sought to blot out the memory of his predecessor by removing his capital from Ava to Amarapura.

Colonel Burney was alarmed at this revolution. He knew that Tharawadi was a bitter enemy of the English, and had heard him express contempt for the British government. Accordingly he deemed it prudent to retire from



DEATH OF TIPPU SAHIB AT SERINGAPATAM

*India, vol. two.*





the scene, and thus escape an insult which might provoke a rupture.

Lord Auckland was angry at the withdrawal of Colonel Burney, and sent another Resident to take his place. But Tharawadi was intolerable; he was not only cruel and depraved, but arrogant and insolent to the last degree. No English officer would remain long in the depressing climate of Upper Burma, to be treated with scorn and contumely by an ignorant barbarian. One Resident after another retired to Rangoon on the plea of ill-health. At last in 1840 Tharawadi drove the Residency out of the capital, in violation of the treaty of Yandabo. Lord Auckland's government ignored the outrage rather than resent it, and abstained from all further attempts to maintain a Resident at Amarapura.

Tharawadi was puffed up beyond measure at the success of his efforts to throw off the English alliance. In 1841 he marched a large army to Rangoon, threatening to drive the English out of Arakan and Tenasserim. But his warlike ardor cooled down as he approached Rangoon, for he remembered how the Burmese fled from before the English in 1824. Accordingly he put aside all thoughts of war, and amused his subjects by casting a great bell for the golden pagoda at Rangoon. After a few months he returned to his remote capital in the upper valley of the Irawadi with all the barbaric pomp of gilded barges, while nothing more was heard of war.

In 1845 the reign of Tharawadi was brought to a close. He had degenerated into a tyrant of the worst type; drinking himself into such paroxysms of fury that it was dangerous to approach him. In these mad fits he would shoot a minister or stab a queen; and courtiers and ladies plotted together for their own protection. Suddenly Tharawadi passed away from the palace, and was never seen again. Whether strangled, smothered, or poisoned, is a palace mystery, like the suicide with scissors in the palace at Stamboul. It is sufficient to know that in 1845 Tharawadi ceased to reign, and his eldest son ascended the throne of Burma.



Pagan Meng, the new sovereign, was of a different stamp to his father. Tharawadi, with all his faults, had a majestic presence, and spoke and looked like a king. Pagan Meng, on the contrary, was a man of low tastes and vulgar pleasures. He moved his capital from Amarapura to Ava, and there he devoted himself to cock-fighting, ram-fighting, gambling, and other mean pursuits. Meanwhile, like Macbeth, he was in constant terror. He would not trust his own Burmese courtiers, but preferred a Muhammadan for his minister. He condemned all suspected persons to the most horrible deaths; and stifled all complaints by throwing the blame upon the minister. Two of his own brothers were butchered in this horrid fashion, together with their wives, children, servants, and dependents of every kind.

At last the people of Ava rose in revolt against such detestable cruelty. The minister was given up to the populace to secure the safety of the king. For three days this unfortunate Muhammadan was tortured by the mob, and was then beheaded at the place of execution with numbers of his creatures.

All this while there was no British Resident at Ava to act as a check upon the king or his people. Rangoon was near the sea, and was consequently free from such atrocities; but petty acts of tyranny were practiced by the local governor toward European and American strangers, who were fined, imprisoned, or put in the stocks on the most frivolous charges. No civilized man will endure such barbaric insolence without appealing to his government for redress; and no government can ignore such appeals without loss of prestige and national honor. It was not, however, until the Punjab had been brought under British administration that Lord Dalhousie saw the necessity for remonstrating with the king of Burma. The sequel will be told hereafter in dealing with Lord Dalhousie's administration.

The progress of affairs in Nipal during the war decade was more serious than in Burma. There was some bond





of common interest between the Ghorka and British governments; while the court of Khatmandu was more respectable and intelligent than the court of Ava, and had a much better army at its command.

Here it should be explained that from a remote period in history the sacred city of Benares has been the resort, not only of pilgrims and devotees, but of Hindu political refugees of every class and kind. Dethroned sovereigns, childless queens, disgraced ministers, and forlorn princes and princesses have taken up their abode at Benares, and generally to intrigue and plot, as well as to sacrifice and pray.

Ever since the rise of the Ghorka dynasty in Nipal, revolutions have been frequent in the court of Khatmandu. Sometimes an able minister of the stamp of Bhim Sein Thapa and Jung Bahadur has kept the peace for a number of years; but such intervals of tranquillity are always sooner or later brought to a close by revolutions. Such revolutions were common enough in every Hindu court in India before the British government became the paramount power; and one and all have been accompanied by a massacre, together with a stampede to Benares of all the survivors of a fallen dynasty or ministry. Consequently throughout the present century Benares has been a hot-bed of intrigues and plots for restoring some royal exile to Nipal.

From 1804 to 1837 Bhim Sein Thapa was the sole ruler of Nipal; not only as prime minister, but for a long period as the paramour of the regent-mother; and for thirty-three years he filled up all superior posts and commands at the annual Panjani with members of the Thapa clan; and rigidly excluded all others, whether Bharadars or Brahmans, from office or power.

The Nipal war of 1814-16 did not weaken the authority of Bhim Sein Thapa. The young Maharaja attained his majority in 1816, but died shortly afterward, and was succeeded in his turn by an infant son. In 1832 the old regent-mother died, but Bhim Sein Thapa was still supreme. The infant attained his majority, and was placed upon the throne;



but he proved a weak and vacillating prince, and for a long time was a mere puppet in the hands of Bhim Sein Thapa.

But Bhim Sein Thapa was thwarted by an unexpected enemy. He had selected the daughter of a Hindu farmer in British territory to be the bride of the young Maharaja.<sup>1</sup> The girl grew into an ambitious and scheming woman, and was constantly stirring up her husband to throw off the yoke of the minister. Bhim Sein Thapa thought to neutralize or divide her influence by introducing a second bride into the palace. The step, however, proved fatal to his power. The elder queen became more bitter than ever; she soon behaved like a female fiend bent on the destruction of Bhim Sein Thapa and his family.

The restless activity of this extraordinary woman is a remarkable feature in Nipal history. She formed a close intimacy with Runjung Pandey, the son of the prime minister who had been disgraced and ruined in 1803. She persuaded the Maharaja to restore the estates of the Pandey family, which had been confiscated on that occasion. She won over the Guru, or spiritual teacher of the Maharaja, known as the Misr Guru;<sup>2</sup> and this religious intriguer soon proved a most formidable opponent to the British government as well as to the Thapa ministry.

Mr. Hodgson, the British Resident at Khatmandu, was in danger of being entangled in this web of intrigue. Ever since the war of 1814-16, Bhim Sein Thapa had been as friendly toward the English as a Ghorka nobleman of those times could allow himself to be. At the conclusion of the war the enemies of the prime minister wanted the British government to deliver the young Maharaja out of his hands; but the predecessor of Mr. Hodgson had declared emphatically that the British government would not interfere in the

---

<sup>1</sup> The duty of the minister to choose a bride for the boy Maharaja is as old as the Maha Bharata. It will be remembered that Bhishma provided wives for his half-brother and nephews.

<sup>2</sup> If a Brahman is addressed as a learned man he is called Pandit; if otherwise he is called Misr, or Mitter; i.e., Mithra, or the sun.





affairs of Nipal. This very refusal to interfere led the whole court to regard that British Resident as the friend of Bhim Sein Thapa; and Mr. Hodgson was thus hated by all the enemies of the prime minister; by the elder queen, the Pandays, and the Misr Guru.

In 1837 there was an explosion. The youngest son of the elder queen died suddenly. It was widely rumored that the infant had taken poison intended for the mother; and Bhim Sein Thapa was charged with having instigated the court physicians to administer poison to the elder queen. Amid the commotion, Runjung Pandey, the head of the Pandey clan, was appointed prime minister by the Maharaja. Bhim Sein Thapa was arrested, put in irons, and thrown into prison, together with a nephew named Matabar Singh. The family of Bhim Sein Thapa was placed under a guard, and all the family property was confiscated. The physician who attended the child was put to the torture until he implicated Bhim Sein Thapa, and then he was put to death.

This revolution, however, only went half way, and was then met by a reaction. There was a moderate party at Khatmandu, represented by a Brahman named Rughonath Pundit,<sup>1</sup> and a Bharadar named Futteh Jung Chountria. This moderate party was willing that Bhim Sein should be brought under some control, but was opposed to the destruction of the Thapas and elevation of the Pandays. Again the younger queen was a staunch friend of Bhim Sein Thapa: she had been given in marriage to the Maharaja in order that she might act as a counterpoise to the elder queen; and she perpetually urged the Maharaja to restore Bhim Sein Thapa to the post of prime minister.

The working of these jarring influences ended in a political compromise. The Pandays were removed from the ministry. Rughonath Pundit, the leader of the moderate party, was made premier, and moderate councils prevailed. The Thapas were not restored to power, but Bhim Sein and his

<sup>1</sup> See last note on previous page.



nephew, Matabar Singh, were released, pardoned, and received by the Maharaja in public durbar. They were then each presented with a dress of honor and a caparisoned horse, and returned to their respective homes amid the cheers and acclamations of soldiers and citizens. The family estates were still under confiscation, but a garden house was restored to Bhim Sein Thapa, and a yearly pension was assigned for his support. Thus for a brief space matters seemed to quiet down at Khatmandu.

These moderate measures would not satisfy either of the two queens. In 1838 there were violent dissensions in the palace. The elder queen insisted on the restoration of the Pandeys to the ministry, while the younger queen insisted on the restoration of the Thapas. Suddenly the elder queen left the palace in a fury, and proceeded to the temple of Pusput Nath, accompanied by Runjung Pandey, declaring that she would never return to the palace until the Maharaja appointed her favorite to be prime minister.

The temple of Pusput Nath is about three miles from Khatmandu. It is well worthy of description, for it is the most celebrated fane in all Nipal. It is approached by a road through the suburbs of the city, beautifully paved with brick and granite. Hard by the temple precinct are the houses of priests, three or four stories high, built of bricks, which are hidden by woodwork curiously carved; with wooden balconies supported by carved rafters, and railed in by wood carvings. Intricate tracery hangs down from the balconies in broad wooden fringes; while other tracery surrounds the grotesque windows. The temple precinct is enclosed by a wall. Massive folding doors open into a handsome courtyard, filled with images, shrines, a kneeling figure of Siva, a huge bell, and other sacred objects in picturesque confusion. The temple building stands in the centre of the court facing the folding doors. It is a quaint structure roofed with lead, with silver doors, carved windows, and large eaves covered with gilding. It is ascended by a double flight of steps, guarded by four sculptured lions, and





a large copper figure of a bull kneeling, superbly covered with gilding.

In this sacred place the elder queen took up her abode; and during her stay there the Maharaja attended on her daily with all his court. This flight to Pusput Nath was the first of a series of vagaries by which the elder queen tormented the whole court and forced the Maharaja to do her bidding. In the present case she was appeased by the retirement of Rughonath Pundit, and the appointment of Runjung Pandey to the post of premier.

In 1839 the elder queen succeeded in wreaking her vengeance on the Thapa family. The charge of poisoning was revived. The execution of the physician who attended her infant son would not satisfy her thirst for vengeance. The other court physicians were thrown into prison, and only escaped torture by committing suicide. The brother of Bhim Sein, named Runbir Singh, turned fakir. Bhim Sein saw that he was doomed, and appealed to the Resident for protection; but the Resident could do nothing, for he had been strictly forbidden to interfere in the affairs of Nipal.

At last Bhim Sein Thapa was brought before the durbar, and the so-called confessions of the dead physicians were produced against him, charging him with wholesale poisonings at intervals during a long series of years. He manfully defended himself, denounced the confessions as forgeries, and demanded to be confronted with his accusers. Not a single chieftain, however, dared to say a word in his behalf. The Maharaja gave way to a burst of indignation, real or feigned, and ordered him to be chained and imprisoned as a traitor.

The fate of Bhim Sein Thapa has many parallels in Oriental history. He was threatened with torture, with dishonor in his zenana, with torment and shame unknown to Europe, until he killed himself in despair. His remains were dismembered and thrown to the dogs and vultures. His family was reduced to penury, and banished to the snows of the Himalayas; and a decree was issued declaring that the Thapas



were outcasts, and that no one of the Thapa clan should be employed in the public service for the space of seven generations.

All this while the elder queen and the Pandey ministry had been intriguing against the British government. Mata-bar Singh had been sent to the court of Runjeet Singh at Lahore, and thus escaped the doom which had befallen his uncle. A second emissary was sent to Burma to report on the growing rupture between the Burmese court and the British government. A third had gone to Lhasa to persuade the Chinese authorities that some recent conquests of the Sikhs in Ladakh had been made at the instigation of the British government. A fourth had been sent to Herat to report on the prospects of a war between the English and Persia. Meanwhile prophecies were disseminated through British provinces predicting the speedy downfall of the British supremacy, and preparations were being made for war throughout Nipal. It was thus evident that the Ghorka court was only waiting for some disaster to the British arms to declare war against the British government.

In 1840 Lord Auckland addressed a letter of remonstrance to the Maharaja, and moved a corps of observation to the frontier. This measure had a wholesome effect upon the Maharaja. He dismissed the Pandey ministry in a panic, and appointed Futteh Jung Chountria to be premier. This latter chieftain belonged to the moderate party, and was well disposed toward the British government. In 1841 the Maharaja dismissed the Misr Guru, and the latter was forced to go on pilgrimage to Benares.

The elder queen was driven frantic by this reversal of her designs. She was not content with leaving the palace and going to Pusput Nath; she separated herself altogether from the Maharaja, assumed the dress of a female ascetic, and threatened to go on pilgrimage to Benares. She tried to terrify the Maharaja into abdicating the throne in favor of her eldest son, the heir-apparent. On one occasion she induced the soldiery at Khatmandu to break out in mutiny.





She encouraged the heir-apparent to commit the most extravagant and cruel acts in order to alarm the Maharaja. All this while she was constantly urging the Maharaja to reinstate the Pandeys, dismiss the British Resident, and declare war against the British government.

The weak and vacillating Maharaja was moved to and fro like a pendulum by alternate hopes and fears. At one time he expatiated in durbar on the rumored disasters of the English in Burma and China. At another time he was assuring the Resident of his friendship toward the British government, and offering to send his forces in support of the British army in Afghanistan.

In 1841 the elder queen was indisposed, and the Maharaja was anxious for a reconciliation. She became softened by her sickness, and threw off her ascetic dress, and talked of restoring the Thapas to their caste and estates. Toward the end of the year she died suddenly, not without suspicions of poison. After her death there was no more talk of hostility with the British government, and the corps of observation was soon withdrawn from the frontier. All difficulties in the relations between the two states were thus removed; and all signs of secret agents from other native states passed away from Khatmandu.

In 1842 a curious incident occurred which reveals something of the working of English journalism on Oriental minds. A report appeared in a Calcutta newspaper that the elder queen had been poisoned. The Maharaja was wild with rage, and called on the British Resident to surrender the editor. He was determined, he said, to flay the journalist alive, and rub him to death with salt and lemon-juice; and he threatened to declare war if the Governor-General refused to accede to his demand. After a suitable explanation of British law and usage, the Maharaja cooled down, and subsequently sent an apology to the Resident for the warmth of his language.

At this period the mad freaks of the heir-apparent caused great excitement in Nipal. He engaged elephants to fight



in the streets of Khatmandu, and caused the death of several persons. He wounded Bharadars and their sons with a sword or knife. He was only a boy of twelve, but he would often beat his wives, who were girls of nine or ten. Sometimes he threw them into the river; and he kept one poor girl so long in a tank that she died in consequence. A female attendant interfered and he set her clothes on fire. He was brutally jealous of his stepmother, the younger queen and her two sons, and they ultimately fled from his cruelty into the plains.<sup>1</sup> In these acts of insane violence he had been originally encouraged by his deceased mother in the hope of terrifying his father into abdication; and after her death they became more frequent than ever.

When the news of the destruction of the British army in the Khaiber Pass reached Khatmandu, the heir-apparent indulged in still more dangerous freaks. He threatened to murder the British Resident, or drive him out of the country. He displayed a special spite against Jung Bahadur, the same chief who afterward became celebrated in Europe. He commanded Jung Bahadur and other chiefs at court to jump down wells at the hazard of their lives; and no one seems to have ventured to disobey him.<sup>2</sup> Many of the common soldiers were maimed for life by being compelled at his orders to jump down wells or off the roofs of houses. Strange to say, the Maharaja made no attempt to restrain his son in these eccentric cruelties, because the astrologers had declared that the young prince was an incarnation of deity, and foretold that at no distant period he would extirpate the English foreigners. The consequence was that on more than one occasion the prince assaulted his own father, and once inflicted severe wounds.

---

<sup>1</sup> Major, afterward Sir Henry, Lawrence succeeded Hodgson as Resident at Khatmandu. He refers to these strange scenes, and gives the leading actors the names of Mr. Nipal, Mrs. Nipal, and Master Nipal. See *Memoirs of Lawrence*, by Edwardes and Merivale.

<sup>2</sup> In after years Jung Bahadur boasted that he had practiced the art of jumping down wells as the best means of saving his life on these occasions. See *Oliphant's Journey to Khatmandu*.





Meanwhile the disasters in Kabul induced the Maharaja to recall the Pandeys to court, and the Misr Guru from Benares. One of the Pandeys, named Kubraj, amused the heir-apparent by getting up mock fights between Ghorkas and English. The English were represented by natives of low caste painted white, and dressed in British uniforms; and they were of course defeated, and dragged about the streets in most ignominious fashion.

At this juncture, however, the Pandeys made a false step. A number of libels, reviving the old scandal that the elder queen had died from poison, were traced to Kubraj Pandey, and he and other Pandeys were arrested and put in irons. A State trial was held by the Bharada Sobah, or council of chieftains, at which the Maharaja sat as President. The trial lasted several days, during which there was a general stoppage of business. At last Kubraj Pandey was convicted; his right hand was cut off, his property was confiscated, and he was sent into banishment.

Toward the close of 1842 the cruelties and insults of the heir-apparent toward all classes, and the cowardly apathy of the Maharaja, brought Nipal to the brink of a revolution. The chiefs and people complained that they did not know who was the Maharaja, the son or the father. The ferment spread through the whole valley; public meetings were held on the parade ground at Khatmandu; and at one large meeting, said to number eight thousand people, a committee was appointed for drawing up a petition of advice and remonstrance to the Maharaja. Finally the soldiery made common cause with the chiefs and people. They demanded that the Misr Guru should be sent back to Benares, and that the surviving queen should be recalled from her voluntary exile in the plains, and appointed regent of Nipal.

On the 2d of December, 1842, there was a meeting of the chiefs and officers, at which the Maharaja unexpectedly made his appearance. His presence prevented any allusion to the regency of the queen. He sought by arguments, entreaties, and threats, to induce the assembly to let things remain as



they were. In reply, he was told that the people could not obey two masters; that he must either keep his son under control, or abdicate the throne in his son's favor. Many instances were quoted in which the soldiers had been punished by the heir-apparent for obeying the commands of the Maharaja. The Maharaja promised to abdicate by and by, and begged that during the interval his son might be addressed by his title; but the assembly raised a groan of dissent. The Maharaja ordered the officers of the army to leave the meeting, but they refused. Next he ordered the Bhavadars to leave, but they also refused. He then retired, and the assembly broke up, convinced that the Maharaja and his son were infatuated beyond redemption.

There was evidently something behind the scenes. It was said that the Maharaja had solemnly promised the deceased queen that he would abdicate the throne in favor of her son, and that he was equally afraid of breaking his oath and retiring from the sovereignty. The Chountria ministry vacillated between father and son. They were anxious to know who was to be Maharaja, but they were jealous of the movement for the regency of the surviving queen.

On the 5th of December the draft petition was submitted by the committee to a vast assembly of all the Bhavadars, municipal authorities, merchants, and officers and soldiers of every grade. It was unanimously approved and ordered for presentation on the 7th, as the intermediate day was unlucky. The Maharaja was present with the heir-apparent, and tried to browbeat the assembly, but all his wrath was expended in vain.

On the night of the intermediate day there was an outbreak in the city of Khatmandu. The bugles were sounded, and three hundred soldiers tried to arrest the Bhavadars under the orders of the Maharaja. The attempt failed, and kindled the popular indignation to the highest pitch. Next day the Maharaja yielded to the petition, and a deputation was despatched to bring in the young queen.





Next day the queen was conducted into Khatmandu, and invested with the authority of regent. The Bharadars and officers presented their honorary gifts and congratulations. But the ferment soon died out, and her authority ebbed away. The Chountrias vacillated between the Maharaja, the heir-apparent, and the regent queen; and the counsels and commands of the queen were unheeded by the durbar.

In 1843 the Chountria ministers were again in trouble. They implored the queen to stand forth as the head of the country, to insist on the December pact, or to retire to the plains; and they promised to accompany her with all the leaders of her party. But she said that they had let the occasion slip, and the country was not ripe for another revolution. In reality she was plotting to set aside the heir-apparent on the plea of insanity, and to set up the elder of her two sons in his room; and she suspected that the Chountrias were secret supporters of the heir-apparent.

About this time all parties at Khatmandu were inviting Matabar Singh to return to Nipal. This man was as able and brave as his famous uncle Bhim Sein Thapa. He spent some time feeling his way, but at last entered Khatmandu, and had an interview with the Maharaja.

A few days afterward there was a council of Bharadars at the palace. The written confessions of the Pandeys were produced, admitting that the charges of poisoning originally brought against the Thapas were all false. Five Pandeys were then beheaded. Kubraj Pandey was dragged to the place of execution with a hook through his breast. Others were flogged and their noses cut off. Runjung Pandey, the head of the family, was on his death-bed, and was mercifully permitted to die in peace. In this way Matabar Singh wreaked his vengeance on the murderers of Bhim Sein Thapa.

Before the end of 1843, the decree against the Thapas was annulled, and Matabar Singh was appointed premier in the room of Futteh Jung Chountria; but he soon found that it was impossible to please the conflicting parties. He



ried to support the heir-apparent in the hope of procuring the restoration of the confiscated estates of his family; but by so doing he excited the bitter resentment of the queen; and from this time she was apparently bent upon working his destruction.

In 1844 Nipal seemed to be again on the eve of a revolution. The violent acts of the heir-apparent, the vacillations of the Maharaja, the rash and overbearing conduct of Matabar Singh, and the absurd and contradictory orders which daily issued from the palace, were exhausting the patience of the Bharadars. These chiefs were anxious that there should be but one ruler in Nipal, but they were unwilling that Matabar Singh should be that ruler. Matabar Singh would probably have cut his way to supreme power by a wholesale massacre of Bharadars, as his uncle Bhim Sein had done at the beginning of the century; but he was restrained by the wholesome counsels of Major, afterward Sir Henry Lawrence, who about this time succeeded Mr. Hodgson as British Resident at Khatmandu.

All this while Matabar Singh was plotting to drive the Maharaja to abdicate the throne in favor of the heir-apparent; while the Maharaja and the queen were secretly plotting to destroy Matabar Singh. The Maharaja, however, continued to heap honors on the head of the minister he had resolved to destroy. In the beginning of 1845, Matabar Singh was appointed premier for life. Later on, the Maharaja bestowed other marks of favor on the premier. At last, on the night of the 18th of May, 1845, Matabar Singh was murdered in the palace.

The story was horrible. Late at night the minister had been summoned to the palace, under the pretence that the queen had seriously hurt herself. He hurried off unarmed to obey the summons, accompanied by two kinsmen. The kinsmen were stopped at the foot of the palace stairs, and Matabar Singh was conducted alone to a room next the queen's where the Maharaja was standing. As he advanced toward the Maharaja a rapid fire was opened upon him from





behind the trellised screen. He begged for mercy for his wife and children, and then expired. His mangled remains were lowered into the street, and carried off for cremation to the temple of Pusput Nath; and the paved road to the sanctuary was trickled with his blood. Many chiefs were suspected of being implicated in the murder. Jung Bahadur boasted that he had fired the fatal shot; but the prime mover in the plot is said to have been Guggun Singh, the paramour of the relentless queen.

The murder of Matabar Singh was followed by a ministerial crisis which lasted many months. Meanwhile all India was watching the Sikh war on the northwest. The war was brought to a close early in 1846, and the year was approaching its fourth quarter when Khatmandu was aroused by a story of a massacre which sent a thrill of horror through Hindustan.

Ever since the murder of Matabar Singh, there had been bitter quarrels in the palace. A ministry had been formed by Futteh Jung Chountria; and the queen had procured the appointment of her favorite Guggun Singh, as a member of the ministry.<sup>1</sup> At this period the queen exercised a commanding influence in the government of Nipal, and plotted to secure the succession of her elder son to the throne in the room of the heir-apparent.

The heir-apparent was filled with wrath at the aspect of affairs. He swore to be revenged on the murderers of Matabar Singh, and he publicly threatened Guggun Singh. He abused his father for not abdicating the throne in his favor, and declared that he would seize the government; while the Maharaja vacillated as usual, or played one party against another to suit his own purposes.

On the night of the 14th of September, 1846, Guggun Singh was murdered in his own house. The queen heard of the catastrophe, and hastened to the place on foot, and filled the air with her lamentations. She despatched a mes-

<sup>1</sup> The ministry comprised Futteh Jung Chountria as premier, three other members as his colleagues and deputies, and Jung Bahadur as military member.



senger to tell the Maharaja of the murder; and she summoned all the civil and military officers to the spot. The council assembled in such hot haste that many appeared without arms. The queen demanded the immediate execution of one of the Pandeys, whom she charged with the murder; but the Maharaja refused to have the man put to death unless it was proved that he was guilty. Altercations arose; shots were fired; and the premier and others fell dead. A party of soldiers, armed with double-barrelled rifles, poured in a murderous fire, and more than thirty chiefs were slaughtered.<sup>1</sup> Jung Bahadur was appointed premier on the spot, and undertook the sole management of affairs.

The queen next called on Jung Bahadur to destroy the heir-apparent and his brother; but the new premier declared for the heir-apparent, and carried out more executions. Subsequently, the Maharaja proceeded on pilgrimage to Benares, accompanied by the queen, leaving the heir-apparent to carry on the government until his return to Khatmandu.

In 1847 the Maharaja left Benares to return to his capital, but he loitered so long on the way, and displayed so many aberrations of mind, that the Bharadars installed the heir-apparent on the throne, and declared that the Maharaja had abdicated the sovereignty.

Meanwhile, Jung Bahadur was appointed prime minister for life, and tranquillity returned to the court of Nipal. In 1850 Jung Bahadur paid a visit to England, and after his return in 1851 an abortive plot was formed to destroy him. Since then the Ghorkas have engaged in wars on the side of Thibet, but nothing of permanent interest has transpired in Nipal. Jung Bahadur died early in 1877.

---

<sup>1</sup> It is impossible to say how many persons fell in this horrible butchery. Reports vary from thirty to a hundred and twenty.





## CHAPTER XXII

## SIKH HISTORY—RUNJEET SINGH, ETC.

Ante 1845

THE history of the Punjab is one of the most important episodes in Indian history. The Sikh government was a theocratic commonwealth like that of the Hebrews under the Judges; but they were a sect rather than a nationality, animated with a stern military enthusiasm like Cromwell's Ironsides. Nanuk Guru founded the Sikh community in the fifteenth century, but great reforms were carried out in the seventeenth century by Guru Govind. The essence of the Sikh faith was that there was only one God; that the Guru for the time being was his prophet; that all Sikhs were equal in the eyes of God and the Guru; and that all were bound together in a holy brotherhood known as the Khalsa. Guru Govind abolished all social distinctions among the Khalsa. He sprinkled holy water upon five faithful disciples, namely, a Brahman, a Kshatriya, and three Sudras. He hailed them as Singhs or lion warriors; he declared that they were the Khalsa,<sup>1</sup> or brotherhood of faith in God and the Guru;<sup>2</sup> and he promised that whenever five Sikhs were gathered together he would be in the midst of them. This idea of five Sikhs forming a Khalsa will be found to have a strange meaning in the later history.

Henceforth a representative of Nanuk Guru and Guru Govind was the spiritual teacher of the Sikhs. He was em-

<sup>1</sup> According to Cunningham, the Khalsa signifies "the saved or liberated."

<sup>2</sup> God, as taught by Guru Govind, was a spirit invisible to ordinary eyes, and only to be seen by the eye of faith in the general body of the Khalsa.



phatically known as the Guru, and the watchword of the Sikhs was "Hail, Guru!"<sup>1</sup> He combined the functions of a prince with those of a prophet. The city of Umritsir, the "pool of immortality," became the religious centre of the Sikhs; and every year there was a grand gathering at the sacred city, like the Hebrew gatherings at Shiloh.

The Sikhs originally had no nationality. They were a close religious community formed out of Hindus, Muhammadans, and others. They were all soldiers of the Khalsa. They were divided into twelve fraternities, known as Misl, or "equals." The Misl were not tribes in the Hebrew sense of the word. They were not descended from the twelve sons of a common ancestor; there was no division of the land among the twelve Misl as there was among the twelve tribes. The Misl were fraternities, increasing and diminishing according to circumstances. Indeed, the number "twelve" was more traditional than real; some gave birth to other Misl, while some died out altogether.

The leader of a Misl was known as the Sirdar; he was the arbiter in time of peace, and the leader in time of war. The Sirdar might be fervent in his devotion to God and the Guru, and at the same time he might be nothing more than a freebooter. Irrespective of the Misl, any Sikh warrior who gained distinction by killing a tiger, or shooting an arrow through a tree, would soon be joined by a band of lawless followers, and call himself a Sirdar. There was no question of pay. Every man provided himself with a horse and matchlock, and perhaps other weapons, and then fought and plundered under the banner of his chosen Sirdar, in the name of God and the Guru.

The Sirdars were warriors and judges, like Joshua or Jephthah, and they differed just as widely. There were Sirdars of the Puritan type, who took the field at the head of their sons and vassals; tall wiry men, with eagle eye, soldier-like bearing, unshorn locks, and flowing beards; armed to the teeth with matchlock, pistol, blunderbuss, sword, and

<sup>1</sup> The cry "Hail, Guru!" implies "Hail to the state or church of the Guru!"





spear; and attended with all the showy accompaniments of stately camels, prancing steeds, and tinkling bells. There were also Sirdars of the Pindhari type, whose followers were low caste men, turned into Sikhs by twisting up the hair, combing out the beard, assuming a tall turban and yellow girdle, and mounting a strong bony horse with a sword at their side and a spear in their hand.

Besides these regular and irregular Sikhs, there was a set of fierce fanatics known as Akalis. They were a stern and sombre brotherhood of military devotees—soldiers of God—instituted by Guru Govind, and distinguished by steel bracelets and blue dresses and turbans. The Akalis were not lazy drones like Fakirs, for when not engaged in arms they would find other work to do for the good of the community at large.<sup>1</sup>

Toward the close of the eighteenth century, the Sikh Misls were dying out. The fraternities had been broken up by assaults from Afghan and Moghul, by internal feuds, and by the freebooting habits of irregular Sirdars. The old religious fervor was still burning in the breasts of the Khalsa, but there was no one to direct it or control it.

About 1800 the young warrior Runjeet Singh came to the front. Born in 1780, he was appointed viceroy of Lahore by the Afghan sovereign at Kabul before he was twenty. His career was now before him. He stirred up the enthusiasm of the Khalsa to throw off the yoke of the Afghans. He engaged in conquests on all sides, and brought new countries and peoples under the dominion of the Khalsa. He never suffered the Khalsa to be at rest; and he thus prevented the Sirdars from revolting against his authority, or fighting one another. His ambition was boundless except

---

<sup>1</sup> The late Captain Cunningham states in his History of the Sikhs that he once found an Akali repairing, or rather making, a road among precipitous ravines. On the other hand, a Sikh fakir has been lying on a large stone outside Allahabad for the last thirty or forty years, absorbed in religious contemplations, and supported by voluntary subscriptions. He is said to have lain there during the mutiny, regardless of shot or shell. The author saw him in 1878, when he appeared to be a robust devotee of seventy, or perhaps older.



## HISTORY OF INDIA

CSL

on the side of the Sutlej. Had he flourished a generation earlier he might have conquered Hindustan; but while he was still a young man, the British empire in India was an established fact; and the victories of Lord Lake had inspired him with a wholesome respect for the British power. He refused to protect Jaswant Rao Holkar in 1805; and he yielded to the demands of the British government in 1809 as regards the Cis-Sutlej states. Henceforth he proved as faithful to his alliance with the British government as Herod, king of the Jews, was faithful to his alliance with Rome.

Meanwhile Runjeet Singh knew how to deal with the Khalsa. The Sikh army was drilled by successive French adventurers, named Allard, Ventura, Avitable and Court; but Runjeet Singh would not needlessly excite the jealousy of the Sirdars by treating the Europeans as trusted advisers. Again, Runjeet Singh was known as the Maharaja of the Punjab, but he only styled himself the commander of the army of the Khalsa, and he ascribed all the glory of his victories to God and the Guru Govind.

Runjeet Singh was short in stature, and disfigured with smallpox which had deprived him of his left eye. He could neither read nor write. Yet this stunted and illiterate being was gifted with a genius, tact, and audacity, which enabled him to keep both the Punjab and army of the Khalsa under perfect control. He shrank from inflicting capital punishments, but he was remorseless in cutting off noses, ears, and hands; and for years after his death there were many poor wretches at Lahore who complained of the mutilations they had suffered under the iron rule of Runjeet Singh.

The religion of Guru Govind may have purified the forms of public worship, and reformed the morals of the lower classes, but many abominations lingered in the land down to the end of the Sikh government. Widows were burned alive with their deceased husbands. Murders were frequent in the provinces. The court of Lahore was a sink of iniquity; rampant with all the vices that brought down fire and brimstone on the cities of the plain.





Runjeet Singh died in 1839, and five favorite queens and seven female slaves were burned alive with his remains. Then began a series of revolutions which shook the Sikh dominion to its foundations, and left it prostrate at the feet of the British power.

At this period the court of Lahore was split into two factions, the Sikhs and the Rajputs. The Sikhs had been jealous of the rapid rise of two Rajput brothers in the favor of Runjeet Singh. The brothers were originally common soldiers, but had been raised to the rank of Rajas, and were known as the Jamu Rajas. Gholab Singh, the elder, was appointed viceroy of Jamu, between Lahore and Kashmir. Dhian Singh, the younger, was prime minister at Lahore.

In 1839, Kharak Singh, eldest son of Runjeet Singh, succeeded to the throne of Lahore. He was an imbecile, but he had a son of great promise, named Nao Nihal Singh. Both father and son were bent on the destruction of the Jamu Rajas. They began by the removal of Dhian Singh, the younger of the two Rajas, from his post as head of the administration at Lahore; and they appointed a wretched parasite in his room, who was regarded with contempt by the whole court. But the Rajput blood of Dhian Singh boiled at the indignity, and he cut his successor to pieces in the presence of his royal master. Kharak Singh took fright at the murder, and shut himself up in his palace, where he perished within a year of his accession.

In 1840, Nao Nihal Singh became Maharaja, but was killed at his father's funeral by the fall of an archway.<sup>1</sup> This sudden and tragic event led to the general belief that both father and son were murdered by the exasperated ex-minister.

Dhian Singh was an intriguer of the common Asiatic

---

<sup>1</sup> Strange to say, there is a plot in an ancient Hindu drama for the destruction of Chandra-gupta, the Sandrokottos of the Greeks, by the very same artifice of a falling archway. The drama is known as "Mudra Rakshasa," or the "Signet of the Minister." An English translation will be found in Wilson's Theatre of the Hindus. For the story of Chandra-gupta, see ante, p. 67.



type. He thought to set up a son of Runjeet Singh as a puppet Maharaja, and to rule in his name under the title of minister. But he was checkmated for a while by the old dowager queen, the widow of Kharak Singh. This lady declared that the widowed queen of the young Nao Nihal Singh was about to become a mother; and on the strength of this assertion she assumed the post of queen regent in behalf of the unborn infant. The story was a farce, for the alleged mother was a girl of eight; but the Sikh court at Lahore held Dhian Singh in such hatred that all the chief Sirdars affected to believe the story, and recognized the regency of the dowager queen.

In 1841, the Sirdars were disgusted with the queen regent. Her private life was detestable; and she was compelled to resign the regency and retire into the country. Subsequently, she was beaten to death at the instigation of Dhian Singh, by four of her own slave girls, who dashed out her brains with a heavy stone while engaged in dressing her hair.

Meanwhile Dhian Singh was triumphant. He placed Sher Singh, a reputed son of Runjeet Singh, on the throne at Lahore, and ruled the kingdom as minister. But a new power had risen in the body politic, which within a few short years was destined to work the ruin of the dynasty.

Ever since the death of Runjeet Singh in 1839, the army of the Khalsa had grown more and more turbulent and unruly. They rose against their French generals, and compelled them to fly for their lives.<sup>1</sup> They clamored for increase of pay, and committed the most frightful excesses and outrages. Sher Singh and his minister were compelled to yield to the demands of the troops; and henceforth the army of the Khalsa was absolute master of the state. The soldiers continued to obey their own officers, but the officers themselves were subject to the dictation of punchayets, or committees of five, which were elected from the ranks. Guru Govind had promised that whenever five Sikhs were

<sup>1</sup> At this period there were only two French generals in the Sikh army, Aitavale and Court.





assembled in his name, he would be in the midst of them. Accordingly, punchayets were formed in every regiment, and were supposed to be under the guidance of the unseen Guru; and their united action controlled the whole army. Sher Singh and his minister saw that no power, save that of the English, could deliver the Sikh government from the dictation of the Khalsa. In 1841, they opened the Punjab to troops passing between British territory and Kabul, and they begged the British government to interfere and suppress the growing disorders of the Khalsa.

In 1843 there was an explosion at Lahore. Maharaja Sher Singh had been plotting the murder of the minister, and the minister had been plotting the murder of the Maharaja. Both plots were successful, and recoiled on the heads of the authors. One morning Sher Singh was shot dead on parade, and his son was assassinated, while Dhian Singh was murdered about the same hour.

Amid these commotions, a son of Dhian Singh, named Hira Singh, appealed to the army of the Khalsa, and promised large money rewards. With the aid of these Pretorian bands, he placed an infant son of Runjeet Singh upon the throne, under the name of Maharaja Dhulip Singh. The mother of the boy was then appointed queen regent, and Hira Singh succeeded his murdered father in the post of minister. It was at this crisis that Lord Ellenborough foresaw that the army of the Khalsa would one day threaten Hindustan; and he marched a British force toward Gwalior with the view of disbanding Sindia's unruly army as described in a previous chapter.

During 1844 affairs at Lahore reached a crisis. The new minister tried in vain to break up the army of the Khalsa; the punchayets were all-powerful, and would not allow a company to be disbanded, or even removed from Lahore, without their consent. The result was that Hira Singh was murdered, and the government of Lahore was left in the hands of a boy Maharaja, a regent-mother, and a disaffected army.



## HISTORY OF INDIA

CSL

The regent-mother was as depraved as the widow of Kharak Singh, who was deposed in 1841. She appointed two ministers; one was her own brother, and the other was a paramour, named Lal Singh. The army of the Khalsa grew more and more clamorous for largesses and increase of pay; and were only prevented from plundering Lahore by being moved away under the sanction of the punchayets to exact money contributions from the viceroys of outlying provinces, such as Kashmir and Multan. At the same time the two ministers, the brother and the paramour, were intriguing against each other. The brother gave mortal offence to the army of the Khalsa, and was tried and condemned by the punchayets as a traitor to the commonwealth, and was finally shot dead by a party of soldiers outside Lahore.

The regent-mother and her paramour were now in sore peril. The paramour, Lal Singh, became sole minister, but another Sirdar, named Tej Singh, was appointed to the nominal command of the army of the Khalsa. But Tej Singh was the slave as well as the commander-in-chief of the army of the Khalsa; and was compelled to act according to the dictation of the punchayets. In a word, the new government was at the mercy of the army, and saw no way of saving themselves, except by launching the Sikh battalions on British territories, and no way of averting the sack of Lahore, except by sending the Sikh soldiery to sack Delhi and Benares.





## CHAPTER XXIII

TWO SIKH WARS—LORDS HARDINGE AND  
DALHOUSIE

A.D. 1845 TO 1849

IN November, 1845, the Sikh army of the Khalsa crossed the Sutlej, to the number of sixty thousand soldiers, forty thousand armed followers, and one hundred and fifty large guns. The Sikh army had been strangely underrated by the British government. It was as superior to all other native armies, excepting perhaps the Ghorkas, as Cromwell's Ironsides were to the rabble following of the other parliamentary leaders. Its marked strength, however, was neutralized by the duplicity of its leaders—Lal Singh, the paramour, and Tej Singh, the nominal commander-in-chief. Both men were traitors of the deepest dye; both at heart were willing to see the Sikh battalions mowed down by British artillery in order that they might secure their own personal safety and the continuance of their own government at Lahore. All this crafty and unscrupulous villany was conspicuous throughout the subsequent war.

The British government, under Sir Henry Hardinge, the new Governor-General, was scarcely prepared for the storm that was gathering on the line of the Sutlej. Sir John Littler held the fortress of Ferozepore with ten thousand troops and thirty-one guns; but if the Sikh generals had only been true to the Khalsa, they might have environed Ferozepore, overwhelmed Littler's force, and pushed on to the heart of Hindustani. As it was, Littler marched out of Ferozepore



## HISTORY OF INDIA

CSL

and offered the enemy battle; but the Sikh generals declined it, and divided their forces. Lal Singh moved with one *corps d'armée* toward Ferozeshahar, about ten miles off, and began to build formidable intrenchments, leaving Tej Singh to watch Littler at Ferozepore.

Meanwhile Sir Hugh Gough, Commander-in-Chief, and Sir Henry Hardinge, the new Governor-General, were hurrying toward the frontier with a large force to relieve Littler. On the 18th of December they met the army of Lal Singh at Moodkee, and gained a doubtful victory. The British sepoys reeled before the Khalsa battalions, and even a European regiment was staggered for a few moments by the rapidity and precision of the Sikh fire. But Lal Singh fled at the beginning of the action, and thus brought about the defeat of the Sikh army.

Two days after the battle of Moodkee, the British army advanced against the Sikh intrenchments at Ferozeshahar, and was joined there by the force under Littler. The assault was made on the 21st of December, but the Sikhs defended their position with the obstinacy and desperation of fanatics. Such resistance was terrific and unexpected. Gough charged up to the muzzle of the Sikh guns, and carried the batteries by cold steel; but it was in the face of an overwhelming fire. British cannon were dismounted and the ammunition blown into the air. Squadrons were checked in mid career; battalion after battalion was hurled back with shattered ranks; and it was not until after sunset that portions of the enemy's positions were finally carried by the British army.<sup>1</sup>

After a night of horrors the battle was renewed, but meanwhile there had been mutiny and desertion in the enemy's camp. The treasury of Lal Singh had been plundered by his own soldiers. The British troops met with feeble opposition; and it was soon discovered that, owing to the cowardice or treachery of Lal Singh, the Sikh army was in full flight to the Sutlej. Tej Singh marched up at

---

<sup>1</sup> Cunningham's History of the Sikhs.





this crisis, and found the intrenchments at Ferozeshahar in the hands of the British. Accordingly, after a brief cannonade, he fled precipitately to the Sutlej, leaving his forces without orders, to fight or follow at their pleasure.

In January, 1846, both sides were reinforced; the Sikhs recrossed the Sutlej into British territory, and hostilities were renewed. On the 26th of the month, Sir Harry Smith defeated a Sikh force at Aliwal.

At this time Gholab Singh of Jamu had arrived at Lahore, and offered to make terms with the Governor-General. Sir Henry Hardinge replied that he was ready to acknowledge a Sikh sovereignty at Lahore, but not until the army of the Khalsa had been disbanded. The Sikh generals were utterly unable to fulfil such a condition; they were literally at the mercy of the Khalsa army. It is said, however, that they offered to abandon the Khalsa army to its fate, and to leave the road open to the march of the British army to Lahore, provided the Governor-General acknowledged the sovereignty of Maharaja Dhulip Singh, and accepted the government of the regency.

Meanwhile the main body of the Khalsa army had thrown up a formidable series of intrenchments at Sobraon. Early in February, 1846, the British army advanced to the attack under Gough and Hardinge. Sobraon proved to be the hardest fought battle in the history of British India. The Sikh soldiers, unlike their treacherous commander Tej Singh, were prepared to conquer or die for the glory of the Khalsa. The British brought up their heavy guns, and prepared to pour in a continuous storm of shot and shell, and then to carry the intrenchments by storm.

Shortly after midnight on the 10th of February, the British planted their guns in the desired positions. At early morning, amid darkness and fog, the English batteries opened upon the enemy. At seven o'clock the fog rolled up like a curtain, and the soldiers of the Khalsa, nothing daunted, returned flash for flash, and fire for fire. As the sun rose higher, two British divisions of infantry in close



order prepared for the assault. The left division advanced in line instead of column, and the greater part was driven back by the deadly fire of muskets and swivels and enfilading artillery. The right division formed instinctively into wedges and masses, and rushed forward in wrath, leaped the ditch with a shout, and then mounted the rampart and stood victorious amid captured cannon. Tej Singh fled to the Sutlej at the first assault, and broke the bridge over the river; but whether this was done by accident or treachery is a problem to this day. Meanwhile the soldiers of the Khalsa fought with the valor of heroes, the enthusiasm of crusaders, and the desperation of zealots sworn to conquer the enemy or die sword in hand. At last they gave way; they were driven by the fire of batteries and battalions into the waters of the Sutlej, and the battle of Sobraon was won. But the victory was dearly purchased. More than two thousand British troops were killed or wounded before the day was brought to a close; but the Sikhs are said to have lost eight thousand men.

Thus ended the first Sikh war. The British army crossed the Sutlej in a bridge of boats, and pushed on to Lahore, and dictated their own terms at the old capital of Runjeet Singh. The reduction of the Sikh army of the Khalsa was carried out without further parley, and its numbers were limited for the future to twenty thousand infantry and twelve thousand cavalry. The Jullunder Doab was taken over by the British government, and the British frontier was extended from the Sutlej to the Ravi. Meanwhile Sir Henry Hardinge was raised to the peerage.

Lord Hardinge called on the Lahore government to pay one million and a half sterling toward the expenses of the war. But the treasures of Runjeet Singh, estimated at the time of his death at twelve millions sterling, had been squandered during the anarchy which followed his decease, and only half a million remained to meet the demands of the British government at this crisis. Gholab Singh, viceroy of Kashmir and Jamu, offered to pay the million to the





British government, provided he was recognized as Maharaja of those territories. The bargain was concluded, and henceforth Gholab Singh was an ally of the British government, and independent of the Sikh government of Lahore.

Lord Hardinge was next called upon to decide on the future settlement of the Punjab. He would not annex the country, or take over the internal administration. He preferred accepting the existing government of the infant Maharaja, Dhulip Singh, and the regency of the queen mother and her paramour. But he would not create a subsidiary army for the protection of the native government, as had been done in the case of the Nizam of Hyderabad and the Mahrattas. On the contrary he was resolved to withdraw the British troops from the Punjab at the earliest possible opportunity; for experience had taught the bitter lesson that a subsidiary force only demoralized native rulers, and rendered the British government responsible for the maintenance of oppression and misrule.

But Lord Hardinge was thwarted by circumstances. The Lahore durbar loudly declared that unless a British force remained to keep the peace in the Punjab, the army of the Khalsa would recover its strength and overturn the regency. Accordingly, much against his inclination, Lord Hardinge deferred withdrawing the British force until the close of the year; but he solemnly assured the Lahore durbar that at the end of 1846 every British soldier and sepoy must return to British territory. The Sirdars bent to their fate, but many declared that annexation had become a necessity; and that so long as a Sikh government was maintained at Lahore, with or without British troops, so long the disbanded army of the Khalsa would cherish hopes of a return to independent power.

Major Henry Lawrence was appointed British Resident at Lahore, and Lal Singh, the paramour of the queen mother, filled the post of prime minister.<sup>1</sup> Shortly afterward a fla-

<sup>1</sup> In dealing with the modern history of British India, the distinction between the three Lawrence brothers must always be borne in mind. George was one



## HISTORY OF INDIA

CSL

grant act of treachery was proved against Lal Singh. A rebellion broke out in Kashmir and Jamu against the sovereign authority of Maharaja Gholab Singh. Major Lawrence hastened to the spot with a body of Sikh troops, and effectually suppressed it; and the leader of the rebellion then produced the written orders of Lal Singh, urging him to resist Gholab Singh by every means in his power. Such a breach of faith was unpardonable. Lal Singh was removed from his office, and deported to British territory, where he passed the remainder of his days in confinement.

The year 1846 drew to a close. Again the Lahore durbar assured Lord Hardinge that the Khalsa army would regain its old ascendancy if the British force was withdrawn. Accordingly a compromise was effected. Eight leading Sirdars were formed into a council of regency under the express stipulation that the entire control and guidance of affairs should be vested in the British Resident. Having thus guarded against oppression or misrule, Lord Hardinge decided that the British force should remain in the Punjab for a period of eight years, by which time Maharaja Dhulip Singh would attain his majority, and might be intrusted with the supreme authority.

This settlement of the Punjab continued, without material change, until the departure of Lord Hardinge from India in 1848. During the interval many useful measures were carried out. The British army in India was reorganized; the finances were restored; and efforts were made to induce the native states to follow the example of the British government, in forbidding widow burning, female infanticide, slavery, and other abominations, throughout their respective territories. In 1848 Lord Hardinge returned to England with the pleasant conviction that he had secured the peace of India for some years to come.

---

of the hostages in the first Afghan war, and had a narrow escape with his life at the time when Macnaghten was murdered. Henry had been Resident in Nipal, and was now transferred to Lahore. John was Commissioner of the Jullunder Doab, and afterward became successively Chief Commissioner and Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab, and finally Governor-General and Viceroy of India.





Lord Dalhousie, the new Governor-General, landed at Calcutta in January, 1848. The history of his administration will be told in the next chapter, but it may be as well in the present place to review the current of Punjab affairs, which ended in the second Sikh war, and permanent annexation of the kingdom of Runjeet Singh.

Major Henry Lawrence, the Resident at Lahore, was an officer in the Bengal artillery, of large political experience. About this time he was obliged to proceed to England on account of his health, and was succeeded by Sir Frederic Currie, a Bengal civilian. New systems of finance and revenue were subsequently introduced into the Punjab, which guarded against undue exactions, and secured a greater regularity in the collection of revenue, but gave great umbrage to Sikh Sirdars. Discontent and disaffection began to seethe beneath the surface, and it was soon evident that the spirit of the Khalsa was still burning in the breasts of the disbanded soldiery.

A spark sufficed to set the Punjab in a conflagration. Mulraj, viceroy of Multan, had succeeded his father in the government of the province as far back as 1844; but the Lahore durbar had required him to pay a million sterling as a fine on succession. He took advantage of the struggles between the regency and the soldiery to delay payment. He then managed to get his claim reduced to less than one-fifth, and finally refused to pay the fraction. When, however, the Sikh war was over, and a British Resident was posted to Lahore, Mulraj found that further resistance was useless, and that he must pay up. But he was irritated at the new order of things. He complained that the new system of finance and revenue about to be introduced by the British Resident would diminish his income. Finally he resigned the government of Multan on the plea that there were dissensions in his family.

Sir Frederic Currie and the council of regency took Mulraj at his word. A successor, named Khan Singh, was appointed to the government of Multan. Mr. Vans Agnew,



a Bengal civilian, was appointed to accompany Khan Singh, and introduce the new fiscal system into Multan. In April, 1848, Khan Singh, Mr. Vans Agnew, and Lieutenant Anderson, arrived at Multan with an escort of three hundred and fifty Sikh troops and a few guns, and encamped at a fortified mosque in the suburbs, known as the Edgah.

Mulraj paid a visit to Mr. Vans Agnew at the Edgah, and declared himself ready to deliver up the town and citadel. He then produced the accounts of the previous year, and asked for a deed of acquittance. Mr. Vans Agnew, however, called for the accounts of the previous six years. Mulraj was affronted at the demand, but nevertheless agreed to furnish the documents. Mr. Vans Agnew and Lieutenant Anderson next proceeded with Mulraj to inspect the establishments in the citadel, and at his request they dismissed a portion of their escort. On leaving the citadel the two Englishmen were felled from their horses and dangerously wounded. Mulraj was riding by the side of Mr. Vans Agnew, but at once galloped off to his country residence. The wounded officers were carried off by their attendants to the Edgah, but the guns of the citadel began to open fire upon the mosque. In spite, however, of their wounds the two officers made a manful resistance, and returned the fire with the guns of the Sikh escort; but the escort proved treacherous, and went over to the enemy; and a mob of savages rushed into the mosque, and cut the two Englishmen to pieces. Immediately afterward Mulraj removed his family and treasure into the citadel, and issued a proclamation calling upon the people of every creed to rise against the English.

These atrocious murders were committed after the setting in of the hot weather. Lord Gough was anxious to postpone military operations for some months until the beginning of the cold weather; and there was consequently much delay in putting down the revolt. A young lieutenant, named Herbert Edwardes, who was employed in the revenue settlement of Bannu, beyond the Indus, marched a force to Multan





on his own responsibility; and being joined by other levies, he defeated Mulraj on the 18th of June, and ultimately shut him up in the citadel at Multan.

Meanwhile there was treachery in the Sikh government at Lahore. The queen mother of Dhulip Singh was exasperated at the loss of her paramour, and was secretly corrupting the troops. At the same time she was organizing a confederacy of Sirdars against the British government, and carrying on intrigues with the Amir of Kabul, the Maharaja of Kashmir, and the princes of Rajputana. Fortunately these proceedings were discovered in time, and the dangerous lady was removed from Lahore to the sacred city of Benares, and provided with a suitable pension.

Subsequently, an influential Sirdar, named Sher Singh, was sent at the head of a Sikh force to co-operate with Lieutenant Edwardes against Mulraj. But Sher Singh played a double game. While swearing eternal fidelity to the British government he was secretly corresponding with the rebels. A force of seven thousand British troops under General Whish was sent against Multan, and it was confidently expected that the town and fortress would be speedily taken, and that Mulraj would then receive the just punishment of his crimes. The guns had already begun to open on Multan, when Sher Singh ordered the drums of religion to be beaten, and went over to the enemy with five thousand Sikhs, and proclaimed a religious war against the English. General Whish was obliged to retire from Multan and throw up intrenchments. It was soon evident that the whole of the Punjab was in a state of revolt; and that the veterans of Runjeet Singh's army were assembling to renew the contest with the British government, retrieve their lost honor, and revive the glory and supremacy of the army of the Khalsa. In a word, the delay in crushing the paltry outbreak of Mulraj had aroused the military enthusiasm of the Sikhs throughout the Punjab, and necessitated a second Sikh war.

Lord Dalhousie rose to the occasion. Being new to India



he had deferred to the opinion of the Commander-in-Chief as regards the postponement of military operations, but he soon apprehended the dangerous significance of the revolt. He saw that the work of his predecessor had to be done over again; and he was resolved that this time there should be no half measures; no bolstering up of an effete and treacherous government, but a restoration of order and law under British administration. In October, 1848, he proceeded from Bengal to the Punjab. Before he went he made a declaration in a public speech, which is at once characteristic and historical—"Unwarned by precedent, uninfluenced by example, the Sikh nation has called for war, and on my word, sirs, they shall have it with a vengeance."

All this while Sher Singh had been coldly and suspiciously received by Mulraj. Both had revolted against a common enemy, but each one was jealous of the other, and had his own ends to pursue. Accordingly, Sher Singh left Multan, and marched boldly toward Lahore. About the same time his father, Chutter Singh, had been tempting Dost Muhammad Khan, Amir of Kabul, to join in the general rising against the British government, by promising to make over the coveted province of Peshawar. Major George Lawrence, a brother of Henry, was in charge of Peshawar, which was held by a garrison of eight thousand Sikhs; but the Sikh garrison went over to the Afghans and attacked the Residency, and George Lawrence and others were carried off prisoners. Captain Herbert held out for a while in the fort of Attock, near the junction of the Kabul river and the Indus to the eastward of Peshawar, but was forced in like manner to succumb to the Afghans.

In October, 1848, the British army under Lord Gough was assembled at Ferozepore. In November it crossed the Ravi, and engaged Sher Singh in an indecisive action at Ramnuggur. On the 13th of January, 1849, Lord Gough approached Sher Singh's intrenchments at Chilianwallah, which were held by thirty thousand Sikhs and sixty guns. Nothing was known of the disposition of the Sikhs, for their





camp was covered by a thick jungle, and Lord Gough resolved to defer the attack till the following morning. At that moment the Sikhs opened fire with some guns in advance. The indignation of Lord Gough was kindled at the challenge, and he rashly ordered a general charge. Then followed the most sanguinary encounter in the history of British India, which ended in a doubtful victory on the part of the English. The Sikhs were driven from their position, but they took up another three miles off. Both sides fired salutes in honor of victory, but the English had lost more than two thousand four hundred officers and men.

The fatal field of Chilianwallah is already half forgotten, but the tidings of the disaster were received in England with an outburst of alarm and indignation. Sir Charles Napier was hastily sent to India to supersede Lord Gough as Commander-in-Chief. Meanwhile General Whish captured the town of Multan, and opened a terrible cannonade on the citadel. Mulraj offered a desperate resistance, but was at last compelled to surrender the fortress, and gave himself up to the English. General Whish then left Multan in charge of Lieutenant Edwardes, and proceeded to join Lord Gough in a final struggle with Sher Singh.

The crowning victory at Guzerat was gained by Lord Gough on the 22d of February, 1849. It was essentially an artillery action, and is known as the battle of the guns. The Sikhs opened a cannonade with sixty guns and fired with singular rapidity, but their resistance was in vain. For two hours and a half they were exposed to a storm of shot and shell, which was eventually followed by a charge of bayonets, and rush of cavalry. The Sikh army became literally a wreck; its camp, its standards, and nearly all its cannon, fell into the hands of the conquerors. The battle of Guzerat decided the fate of the Punjab, and the hopes of the Khalsa were quenched forever.

Lord Dalhousie was fully prepared for this result. He had resolved on the annexation of the Punjab, and had already drawn up a programme for the civil administration



## HISTORY OF INDIA

CSL

of the province, and the appointment of British officials to the several grades. All old errors in former settlements were rectified in dealing with the Punjab; all known abuses were guarded against; and the government of the Punjab, instead of struggling into existence like the government of Bengal, seemed to spring, like another Minerva, full armed from the brain of Zeus. To this day the administration of the Punjab is one of the greatest triumphs of British rule, and a model for Asiatic statesmen throughout all time.

The minor details connected with the conclusion of the war may be dismissed in a few words. Dost Muhammad Khan and his Afghans were driven out of Peshawar, and narrowly escaped to Kabul. Mulraj was imprisoned for life on account of the part he played in the murder of the two Englishmen. The young Maharaja Dhulip Singh was provided with a yearly annuity of fifty thousand pounds, and ultimately settled in England. Within a few short years the memory of Runjeet Singh died away from the land. The soldiers of the Khalsa enlisted under British banners, and during the sepoy revolt of 1857 were the foremost among those who wrested Delhi from the sepoy mutineers, and avenged the insulted sovereignty of British rule.





## CHAPTER XXIV

## MATERIAL PROGRESS—LORD DALHOUSIE

A.D. 1848 TO 1856

LORD DALHOUSIE was a man of energy and power. Short in stature, like the once famous Marquis of Wellesley, there was a fire and determination in his eye which revealed a genius for command.<sup>1</sup> So long as he held the reins of government his administrative ability and intellectual vigor commanded general respect and admiration; but his imperious temper, impatience of opposition, and alleged lack of sympathy for native rulers, stirred up an antagonism to his policy which is only slowly fading away.

Lord Dalhousie was Governor-General of India at the age of thirty-six. He was a staunch believer in moral and material progress, and he had already served an apprenticeship to the work as President of the Board of Trade under the premiership of Sir Robert Peel. Within two years of his arrival in India he had perfected his knowledge of the country and people. The Sikh uprising of 1848 familiarized him with those convulsions on the frontier to which Hindustan has always been exposed; while the newly conquered territory of the Punjab opened out a virgin field to his administrative energies.

The Punjab is nearly as large as England. It covers fifty thousand square miles, and contains a population of four millions. One-fourth of the people are Sikhs; the re-

<sup>1</sup> De Quincey talks of the foppery of the eye, and quotes the cases of Lord Wellesley, Dr. Parr, and Augustus Cæsar; but there was no foppery about the eye of Lord Dalhousie.



mainder are Hindus and Muhammadans. The Sikh government and the army of the Khalsa had been scattered to the winds. Accordingly Lord Dalhousie was called upon to create a new administration out of chaos, which should adapt itself to a mixed population who knew nothing of order or law; and he brought to bear upon his task the experiences which had been gained during a century of British rule in India, and which enabled him to avoid the mistakes which had been committed by his predecessors in Bengal and elsewhere.

The new province was divided by Lord Dalhousie into seven divisions, and each division into as many districts as were necessary. Each division was placed under a commissioner and each district under a deputy-commissioner. Fifty-six officers were employed in these two grades; one-half being selected from the civil service, and the other half from the army. Below these were the subordinate grades of assistant and extra-assistant commissioners, who were selected from what is known as the uncovenanted service, and comprised Europeans, East Indians, and natives.

The management of the new administration was intrusted to a Board of Administration, consisting of three members, namely, Henry Lawrence, John Lawrence, and Robert Montgomery.<sup>1</sup> Henry Lawrence presided at the Board, and carried on the political work, namely, the disarming of the country, the negotiations with Sikh Sirdars, and the organization of new Punjabi regiments. John Lawrence took charge of the civil administration, especially the settlement of the land revenue. Robert Montgomery superintended the administration of justice throughout the province, and compiled a short manual for the guidance of the officials and people, which contained all that was necessary in a few pages.

<sup>1</sup> Colonel, afterward Sir Henry, Lawrence, belonged to the Bengal Artillery. John Lawrence, afterward Viceroy of India and a peer of the realm, belonged to the Civil Service. Mr. Charles Grenville Mansel was originally third member of the Board, but he was subsequently succeeded by Sir Robert Montgomery. Both Mansel and Montgomery belonged to the Civil Service.





The working of the Board of Administration was not satisfactory. The sympathies of Henry Lawrence were all on the side of the Sikh Sirdars, who were regarded with disfavor by Lord Dalhousie, and whose antecedents were certainly as bad as they well could be. The result was that in 1853 the Board of Administration was broken up, and John Lawrence was placed in the sole charge of the government as Chief Commissioner.

The British administration of the Punjab was in every way a new creation. The government of Runjeet Singh had been the rude work of an unlettered warrior, without constitutional forms of any sort or kind, and without any law except the will of the one great despot at the head. The only officers of state were soldiers and tax-collectors; the only punishments were fines and mutilations; and there was not a single civil court in the Punjab excepting at Lahore. The local authorities were little despots who oppressed the people and defrauded the state, like the underlings of Tippu Sultan in Mysore; but sooner or later the majority were compelled to disgorge their ill-gotten wealth, and were often condemned to poverty and mutilation at the arbitrary will of Runjeet Singh.

The officers of the new Punjab commission were required to fulfil every kind of administrative duty. They were magistrates and judges, revenue collectors and head policemen, diplomatists and conservancy officers. For many months of the year their homes were in camp, with their tents open to all comers, from the lowest class of petitioners to the wealthiest Sirdars.<sup>1</sup>

One of the first measures of Lord Dalhousie was to provide for the military defence of the province. The British frontier had been advanced from the Sutlej westward to the

<sup>1</sup> The general confidence of the natives of the Punjab in British officers was sometimes carried to an amusing excess. On one occasion, when the late Lord Lawrence was Viceroy of India, a number of Punjab people travelled to Calcutta, a distance of some fifteen hundred miles, to speak to "Jan Larrens Sahib" about a cow. The writer saw the men himself. Unfortunately "Jan Larrens Sahib" was at Simla.



range of mountains beyond the Indus. The mountains were inhabited by brave and lawless tribes, who numbered a hundred thousand men at arms, and had been the pest of the plains ever since the days of Akbar. Lord Dalhousie tried to bar out these barbarians by a series of fortifications, connected by a line of roads, along the whole frontier; and he organized a special force of five regiments of infantry and four of cavalry for the protection of the marches.<sup>1</sup> Meanwhile he disarmed the whole of the population of the Punjab, excepting the inhabitants on the British side of the border. A hundred and twenty thousand weapons were surrendered to British officers; and the manufacture, sale, or possession of arms was strictly prohibited.

The land revenue was settled on easy terms. Runjeet Singh had collected half the produce. Lord Dalhousie reduced it to an average of one-fourth, and ordered a further reduction of ten per cent, to reconcile the renters to the payment of coin instead of kind. The consequence was that cultivation largely increased, and thirty thousand of the old Khalsa soldiery exchanged the sword for the plow.

Transit duties were abolished altogether. Runjeet Singh had covered the Punjab with a network of custom-houses for the collection of these duties on goods and merchandise; but all were swept away by a stroke of the pen from Lord Dalhousie.

Meanwhile slavery and thuggee were rooted out of the Punjab; and infanticide, that bane of Oriental life, was suppressed as far as might be. Bands of outlaws and dacoits, who had been accustomed under Sikh rule to plunder villages and travellers with impunity, were attacked, captured and punished by sheer force of arms. The Punjab was intersected with roads as if it had been a Roman province.<sup>2</sup> In

<sup>1</sup> This is the line of frontier which has recently been abandoned (1880). Further particulars respecting it will be found in the story of the Sitana campaign of 1863, which is told in the concluding chapter of the present volumes.

<sup>2</sup> The most important road constructed in the Punjab was that which united Lahore with Peshawar. It extended very nearly 300 miles, passed over 100 great bridges and 450 smaller ones, penetrated six mountain chains, and was





a word, within seven years of the battle of Guzerat, the Punjab presented more traces of British civilization and dominion than any other province in British India.

Three years after the conquest of the Punjab the British government was drawn into a second war with the king of Burma. Never was a war begun with greater reluctance. To all appearance there was nothing to gain; for the territories of Arakan and Tenasserim, which had been acquired after the first war, had never paid their expenses. But Lord Dalhousie had no alternative. By the treaty of Yandabo both the British and Burmese governments were pledged to afford protection and security to all merchants trading at their respective ports or residing within their respective territories. This treaty, however, had been repeatedly broken; and Englishmen trading at Rangoon were oppressed and maltreated by the Burmese officials, while every effort to obtain redress was treated with contempt and scorn.

In 1851 the European merchants at Rangoon laid their complaints before the British government at Calcutta. English sea-captains had been condemned on false charges to pay heavy fines, and were then subjected to imprisonment and insult. British merchants, who had been living at Rangoon under the provisions of the treaty of Yandabo, were driven to declare that unless they were protected by their own government they must abandon their property and leave Burmese territory.

Ever since 1840 the British government had ceased to maintain an accredited agent at Ava. Accordingly Lord Dalhousie sent Commodore Lambert to Rangoon in Her Majesty's ship the Fox, to investigate the complaints; and

---

carried by embankments over the marshes of two great rivers. Every obstacle was overcome by Colonel Robert Napier of the Bengal Engineers, whose work in the Punjab would have won him the highest honors in Europe, and who has become famous in later days as Lord Napier of Magdala. Canals and irrigation works were not forgotten. Among others the great canal of the Bari Doab was constructed between the Ravi and the Chenab, under the direction of Colonel Napier. It was equal to the noblest canal in Europe, and extended with its three branches to the length of 465 miles.



also intrusted him with a letter of remonstrance to the king of Burma, which he was to forward to Ava or withhold as might seem expedient. When the Fox reached Rangoon, the Burmese governor threatened to put any one to death who dared to communicate with the ship. Some Europeans, however, escaped to the frigate, and the Commodore sent on the letter from Lord Dalhousie to the king at Ava. After some weeks a reply was received to the effect that the offending governor would be removed from Rangoon, and that strict inquiries would be made into the complaints brought against him.

Commodore Lambert was delighted with the letter from Ava. He thought everything was settled, but he was soon undeceived. The governor was certainly recalled from Rangoon, but he went away in triumph, with all the pomp of music and war boats. A new governor arrived, but he was bent on treating the English with the same contempt and arrogance as had been displayed by his predecessor. He took no notice whatever of the Commodore. At last he was asked to fix a day for receiving a deputation of English officers, and he replied that any day would do. Accordingly early one morning he was told that a deputation would wait upon him at noon. At the time appointed the English officers reached the governor's house, but were not allowed to enter. They were kept out in the sun by the menial servants, and told that the governor was asleep; while the governor himself was looking insolently out of the window, and seeing them exposed to the insults and jeers of the mob. At last the patience of the officers was exhausted, and they returned to the frigate.

Commodore Lambert then took possession of one of the king's ships lying in the river, but promised to restore it, and to salute the Burmese flag, on receipt of ten thousand rupees, as compensation for the injured merchants, and a suitable apology from the governor of Rangoon. In reply, the Burmese opened fire on the Fox from some stockades on both sides of the river; but the guns of the Fox soon demol-





ished the stockades, and the Burmese ports were declared in a state of blockade.

Lord Dalhousie made another appeal to the king of Burma, and meanwhile prepared for war. A land force of five thousand eight hundred men was sent to Rangoon under General Godwin, together with nineteen steamers manned with two thousand three hundred sailors and marines. A steamer was sent up the river Irawadi with a flag of truce to receive a reply from the king, but it was fired upon by the Burmese. Accordingly the troops were landed; Rangoon was captured in the face of a heavy cannonade, the three terraces of the great Shive Dagon pagoda were carried by storm, and the British ensign was fixed on the golden dome.

The capture of Rangoon was followed by that of Bassein and Prome.<sup>1</sup> The Burmese soldiery fled to Upper Burma, and the people flocked to Rangoon and hailed the British as their deliverers. Meanwhile there had been a revolution in Ava. The Pagan Meng had been deposed, and his half-brother, the Meng-don Meng, was taken from a Buddhist monastery and placed upon the throne. The new sovereign was anxious for peace, but refused to conclude any treaty. Lord Dalhousie steamed to Rangoon the following September and decided on annexing Pegu to the British empire, and leaving the king in possession of Upper Burma.

The same administrative changes were carried out at Pegu as had been begun in the Punjab, but with limited resources and on a less brilliant scale. Major, the present Sir Arthur Phayre, was appointed Commissioner of Pegu, and introduced British administration with a strong substratum of Burmese officials. With the assistance of Captain, now General Fytche, and other distinguished officers, Major Phayre succeeded in clearing the new province of

---

<sup>1</sup> There are two places named Bassein. There is Bassein, near Bombay, where the Peishwa concluded a treaty with Lord Wellesley; and the Bassein named in the text, which is situated on the southwest corner of the delta of the Irawadi.



robbers and outlaws and establishing order and law. Ultimately in 1862 the three territories of Arakan, Pegu, and Tenasserim were formed into the province of British Burma, with Major Phayre as Chief Commissioner. The consequence has been that British Burma not only pays the whole expense of the local administration, but contributes a large yearly surplus to the imperial treasury. Since 1852 the population of Rangoon alone has increased tenfold, and promises to become another Calcutta; and when the population of Pegu has increased in a like ratio, the province will prove as productive as Bengal. Already the Irawadi is beginning to pour down as much wealth to the sea as the Ganges and Jumna before the introduction of the railways; and within another generation, when existing obstructions are removed, new fields of commerce will be opened out in Western China, and restore the fabled glories of the Golden Chersonese to the Malacca peninsula.<sup>1</sup>

The Punjab and Pegu were the favorite, but not the only fields of Lord Dalhousie's labors. His influence was felt in every province of the empire, every department of government, and every native state under British protection. His reforms extended to every branch of the administration—army, public works, education, revenue, finance, justice, and general legislation. He promoted canals and steam navigation, and he introduced railways and cheap postage. He constructed four thousand miles of electric telegraph wires, and two thousand miles of road, bridged and metalled. He opened the Ganges canal, the longest in the world. In a word, Lord Dalhousie was emphatically the pioneer of western civilization in India; the first of that modern dynasty of rulers, under whom India has ceased to be a remote and outlying region, and has become part and parcel of the British empire, sharing in all the blessings of European science and culture.

<sup>1</sup> Should the frontier of British India ever be continuous with Persia, Russia, and China, new markets will be opened to British manufactures of which the present generation can form no conception, while the resources of the new countries, which at present are undeveloped, will serve to enrich half Asia.





The administrative successes of Lord Dalhousie naturally impressed him with a strong sense of the vast superiority of British administration over Oriental rule. He would not interfere with the treaty rights of native allies, but he was resolute in putting down widow burning, witch torturing, self-immolation, mutilation, and other barbarous usages, in the territories of native princes, as much as in those under British administration. Any prince, Rajput or Mahratta, who hesitated to punish such atrocities within his own territories to the entire satisfaction of the British government, was visited with the marked displeasure of Lord Dalhousie, threatened with the loss of his salute, refused admittance to the Governor-General's durbar, or deprived of one or other of those tokens of the consideration of the British government which are valued by the princes and nobles of India. At the same time Lord Dalhousie was never wanting in paternal regard for native states during a minority. He duly provided for the education and administrative training of Sindia and Holkar; and was anxious that they should be fitted for the duties of government before they attained their majority and were placed in charge of their respective territories.

The administration of native states was no doubt wretched in the extreme. Indeed it is only of late years that native officials have received an English education, and profited by the example set in British territories, to carry out some measures of reform. Both Lord Dalhousie, and his predecessor, Lord Hardinge, were deeply impressed with the responsibility incurred by the British government in perpetuating native misrule. Both agreed that no rightful opportunity should be lost of acquiring territory and revenue; in other words, of bringing native territory under British administration. The motives of both rulers were unquestionably pure; neither Hardinge nor Dalhousie could have any personal object in adding to the territories of the late East India Company, beyond the promotion of the moral and material welfare of the native populations. But their sentiments were open to



misconstruction, and might be interpreted to mean that the appropriation of native territory would be always justifiable, provided a decent excuse could be found for the transfer.

No one seems to have doubted that the British government was bound to maintain the integrity of native states so long as a native ruler did not forfeit his rights by some public crime. Again, no one doubted the right of a son, or other male heir, to inherit a Raj. But a question was raised as to the rights of an adopted son; and as this question has been much distorted by controversy, it may be as well to explain it from a Hindu point of view. Practically, the law of adoption has ceased to have any political importance. The British government has conceded the right of adopting an heir to the Raj to native princes in general. But a right understanding of the law of adoption is absolutely necessary to a right understanding of the policy of Lord Dalhousie.

Among all orthodox Hindus a son is regarded as a religious necessity. A son is required to offer cakes and water to the soul of a deceased father, and indeed to the souls of all deceased ancestors up to a certain generation. Moreover, in the belief of modern Hindus, the world of shades is a kind of temporary hell or purgatory, where the soul of the father is supposed to dwell until all its sins have been wiped away by the sacrifices and other good works of the son. When this end has been attained, the soul either returns to earth to resume its existence through successive transmigrations, or it ascends to eternal life in some superior heaven, or is absorbed in the Supreme Spirit—Vishnu, Siva, or Brahma.

It is this religious necessity which has brought about the early marriage of Hindu boys. Should, however, the husband fail to become the father of a son, he may either marry a second wife, or he may adopt a son; and a son in either case, whether natural or adopted, inherits the property at the father's death, and becomes the head of the household.

The question of adoption in the case of a Hindu principality stands on a different footing. The adopted son may succeed to the property of his nominal father, and perform





in his religious duties; but the question of inheriting a Raj is of a political character, and depends on the will of the paramount power. In either case, whether the inheritance to a Raj is granted or refused, the adopted son is still expected to perform all the religious duties necessary for the well-being of the deceased father.<sup>1</sup>

The question of the right of adoption in the case of a Hindu principality was never raised in India before the rise of British power. There was no public law in the matter; the question of might alone made the right. If a Hindu principality was conveniently near, it was brought under Moghul rule by treachery, chicanery, or force of arms, without the slightest regard to the rights of a reigning Raja, or the rights of his heirs or representatives.<sup>2</sup> If a principality was remote and strong, every effort was made to seduce or threaten the native ruler into paying tribute; or at any rate into rendering homage and presenting nuzzers, or honorary gifts, as an acknowledgment of the suzerainty of the Moghul. Whatever, however, might be the circumstances of the case, no succession was deemed valid unless it received the formal approval and sanction of the paramount power; and this end could only be obtained by a Hindu prince in the same way that a Muhammadan officer obtained the government of a province, namely, by sending presents and tribute to the Moghul court, and receiving letters and insignia of investiture in return.

The British government, however, professed from the very first to adhere to the policy of non-intervention, and

---

<sup>1</sup> The present Maharaja Holkar has more than once taken over the estate of a feudatory on the ground that he had left no natural heirs, and that the adopted son had no claim to inherit landed property.

<sup>2</sup> Akbar was anxious to maintain the Rajput principalities as a counterpoise against Afghans and Moghuls, and his policy was to give a daughter in marriage to a Rajput prince, and insist upon her son being the heir to the principality. But Aurangzeb was only anxious to convert the Hindus to Islam, and a Rajput prince who turned Muhammadan would have been recognized as heir to the principality in the same way that an Irishman of a Roman Catholic family secured the family estate in the last century by becoming a Protestant. Neither Akbar nor Aurangzeb were likely to trouble themselves about the law of adoption.



care<sup>d</sup> not who succeeded to the throne so long as there were no civil wars.<sup>1</sup> Accordingly in the case of Sindia, as already seen, the dying ruler was advised by the British government to adopt a son in order to prevent any broils as regards a successor. At the same time the queen or minister was generally anxious for an adoption, as if it could be established it might set aside the claim of a brother or other collateral heir, and would enable the queen or minister to exercise sovereign authority during the minority. It thus became customary for a native prince to apply for the consent of the British government before adopting a son who should be heir to the Raj; and at every succession, whether the son was natural or adopted, the recognition of the British government was deemed necessary to its validity. The youthful heir was formally invested with a dress of honor by the British representative, and in return he publicly acknowledged his fealty to the British government.

The policy of Lord Dalhousie will be rendered intelligible by dealing with matters of fact. The first native principality brought to his notice was that of Satara. The story of Satara has already been told. The representative of Sivaji reigned as a puppet Raja in a state prison at Satara, while successive Peishwas, or ministers, reigned as real sovereigns at Poona. After the extinction of the Peishwas in 1818, Lord Hastings resuscitated the Raja of Satara for reasons of state; took him out of a prison, and invested him with a small principality. He thought by so doing to reconcile Sindia and Holkar to the extinction of the Peishwas. But the generosity, whether real or apparent, was thrown away. The Mahrattas had long forgotten to care for the Raja of Satara, and they soon forgot the ex-Peishwa.

But the elevation of the Raja of Satara from a prison to a principality turned the young man's head. Instead of being grateful for his change of fortune, he was incensed with his benefactors for not restoring him to the throne and

---

<sup>1</sup> See ante, p. 601.





empire of Sivaji. He fondly imagined that if he could only get rid of the British government he might recover the old Mahratta sovereignty which had been usurped by the Peishwas for more than seventy years, and which, as far as Satara was concerned, had never been anything more than a shadow and a sham. Accordingly, in spite of his treaty obligations to abstain from all correspondence with states or individuals outside his jurisdiction, the Raja of Satara opened up communications with the Portuguese authorities at Goa, and even with the exiled Appa Sahib of Nagpore; and to crown his misdoings, he employed certain Brahmans to tamper with some sepoy officers in the Bombay army.

It was impossible to overlook these proceedings, and there was some talk of punishing the Raja; but Sir James Carnac, the Governor of Bombay, took a lenient view of the case, and told the Raja that all would be forgiven if he would only promise to keep the treaty more faithfully for the future. But by this time the Raja was too far gone to listen to reason. He spurned all interference, asserted his sovereignty, and was accordingly deposed and sent to Benares, and his brother was enthroned in his room.

The new Raja of Satara took warning by the fate of his predecessor, and gave no trouble to the British authorities. But he had no son or male heir, and he repeatedly requested the British government to permit him to adopt a son who should inherit the Raj. Every application, however, was refused. Under such circumstances he might possibly have adopted a son who would have inherited his private property, and performed all the religious ceremonies necessary for delivering his soul from a Hindu purgatory. But he appears to have hoped on to the last; and in 1843, two hours before his death, he adopted an heir on his own responsibility, and left the result in the hands of the British government.

Lord Dalhousie decided that the adopted son might inherit the private property of the deceased Raja, but that the principality of Satara had lapsed to the British government. This decision was confirmed by the Court of Directors. The



result was that the Raj of Satara was incorporated with the Bombay Presidency, and brought under British administration.

Shortly afterward, the Kerauli succession was taken into consideration. Kerauli was a Rajput principality, which had paid a yearly tribute to the Peishwa; but it was taken under British protection in 1818, and relieved from the further payment of tribute. The Raja showed his gratitude by joining in the outbreak of Durjan Sal of Bhurtpore in 1826; but he subsequently expressed his attachment to the British government, and his offence was condoned.

The Raja of Kerauli died in 1848 without a natural heir, but, like the Satara Raja, he adopted a son just before his death. Lord Dalhousie was inclined to think that Kerauli, like Satara, had lapsed to the British government; but the Court of Directors decided that Kerauli was a "protected ally," and not a "dependent principality," and accordingly the government of Lord Dalhousie recognized the adopted son as the heir to the Raj.

In 1853 the Nagpore succession was brought under discussion. The fortunes of this Raj are of peculiar interest. The story begins with Lord Hastings and ends with Lord Dalhousie; but it may be told in the present place as an episode.

In 1818 the territory of the Bhonsla Rajas was placed at the disposal of the British government. The treacherous Appa Sahib had fled into exile, leaving no son, real or adopted, to succeed him on the throne of Nagpore. Accordingly the ladies of the family were permitted to adopt a boy, who assumed the name of Bhonsla, and was accepted as an infant Raja; and Mr. Richard Jenkins, the Resident at Nagpore, was intrusted with the management of affairs during the minority, and exercised something like uncontrolled powers.

The management of Mr. Jenkins was denounced in England as a departure from the ruling doctrine of non-intervention; but nevertheless it was attended with singular



success. Mr. Jenkins organized a native administration under British management, and did not commit the fatal error of expecting too much.<sup>1</sup> The consequence was that in Nagpore, and in Nagpore alone, outside British territory, disorders were repressed, vexatious taxes abolished, debts liquidated, and expenditure reduced; while crime diminished, revenue improved, and a large surplus accumulated in the public treasury.<sup>2</sup>

In 1826 the young Raja attained his majority, and the British management was withdrawn from Nagpore. In 1837 the Raja had grown utterly demoralized; he cared nothing for his people, but spent his whole time, like a little Sardanapalus, in the female apartments of his palace. In spite of this adverse circumstance, the people of Nagpore were less oppressed than those of any other native state in India. The system organized by Mr. Jenkins was much

<sup>1</sup> There is a well-known couplet by Mat Prior, which English officials in high position would do well to bear in mind in dealing with native subordinates:

"Be to their virtues very kind,  
Be to their faults a little blind."

<sup>2</sup> The exponents of the policy of non-intervention had much to say in its favor. The subsidiary system which secured native princes on their thrones was supposed to have aggravated the evils of native rule by stripping the state of all responsibility, and thus stifling all desire for the improvement of the country and people. The princes of India lost their accustomed stimulants of war and plunder, and sank into apathy, or sought consolation in vicious self-indulgence. Under such circumstances there were grounds for hoping that non-intervention would revive the sense of responsibility, and enable every native principality to recover its lost vitality.

But this lost vitality is a myth. It may have existed in some remote era, some golden age of Rajput romance; but it is as unknown to history as the exploits of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table. It was the dream of the Brahmanical compilers of the Hindu epics, and is as unreal as the fabled stories in the Arabian Nights of the golden reign of Haroun Alraschid. Ever since Europeans became acquainted with India the vitality of native rule has only found expression in predatory wars and administrative extortions; and when at last the princes of India were bound over by the subsidiary alliances to keep the peace, the native states were moribund, and nothing but new blood would impart life or energy to native administrations.

What was really wanted was a guiding influence to open the eyes of native rulers to their duties toward their subjects, and to inspire them with that spirit of emulation which is necessary to awaken them to a higher ambition and loftier aims. After the wars of 1817-18 the princes of India were peculiarly amenable to such influences, and hence the administrative successes of Mr. Jenkins in Nagpore.

deteriorated, especially in the administration of justice. But the people spoke of "Dunkin Sahib" with affection, and all the middle and lower classes were heartily desirous of British rule.

In 1853 the Raja of Nagpore died, leaving no son or heir, natural or adopted. Nagpore had been a "dependent principality" ever since 1818, and Lord Dalhousie had to determine whether to permit the widows to adopt a son, and thus make over Nagpore to a Mahratta lad who might have turned out no better than his successor;<sup>1</sup> or to bring Nagpore under a similar administration to that which had proved so successful in the Punjab. Lord Dalhousie decided on the latter course, and his view was accepted by the Court of Directors. Accordingly Nagpore was incorporated with British territory, and now forms a part of the Central Provinces.

Besides the annexation of territories, Lord Dalhousie abolished certain expensive pageants, which had long ceased to exercise any authority or influence, and only proved a dead weight on the public treasury. In 1853 the titular Nawab of the Carnatic died without an heir; and Lord Dalhousie declared the dignity extinct, and withdrew the heavy share of the revenue which had been made over by Lord Wellesley for the maintenance of the pageantry. At the same time pensions were assigned to the different members of the Carnatic family. Shortly afterward the titular Raja of Tanjore died without heirs, and the family were treated in like fashion. Since then the home government have placed the different pensions on a more liberal footing.<sup>2</sup>

In 1853, Baji Rao, the ex-Peishwa, was gathered to his fathers. He was the last relic of the old Mahratta empire. He was born in 1775, when Warren Hastings was being

<sup>1</sup> The widows of the deceased Raja are said to have adopted a son immediately after his demise, but this was a religious ceremony having nothing to do with the Raj. Indeed the widows were aware at the time that such an adoption was invalid as regards the Raj without the previous sanction of the British government.

<sup>2</sup> Besides the foregoing annexations the little principality of Jhansi, in Bundelkund, lapsed to the British government in like manner from want of natural heirs. The matter is only of moment from the terrible revenge exacted by the ex-queen during the sepoy revolt of 1857.





dragged into the first Mahratta war. In 1795, at the age of twenty, he became Peishwa of Poona. In 1802 he ran away from Jaswant Rao Holkar, and threw himself into the arms of the English at Bassein, near Bombay. He was restored to Poona by the British army, but forfeited his throne in 1817 by his treacherous outbreak against the British government. From 1818 to 1853, from the age of forty-three to that of seventy-seven, he dreamed away his life in Oriental indulgences at Bithoor, on the liberal pension of eighty thousand pounds a year.

Baji Rao left no natural heir. He had adopted a son, who was afterward known as Nana Sahib. He must have saved a large sum out of his yearly allowance. Nana Sahib acknowledged that the accumulations amounted to nearly three hundred thousand pounds sterling; but it was subsequently discovered that they aggregated half a million. Nevertheless, Nana Sahib prayed for the continuation of the pension, and pretended that it had been granted, not by way of grace or favor, but as compensation to the ex-Peishwa for his loss of territory. Such a preposterous claim was beneath discussion; but it was taken into consideration by Lord Dalhousie and the Court of Directors, and was only rejected after the fullest inquiry.

The dealings of Lord Dalhousie with the Nizam of Hyderabad demand a passing notice. By the treaty of 1801 the Nizam was bound to furnish a military contingent in time of war of six thousand infantry and nine thousand horse. But the rabble soldiery which he supplied during the subsequent wars proved to be worse than useless in the field. Accordingly it was agreed by mutual consent that a permanent force should be maintained by the Nizam, reduced to half the number of native troops, but to be disciplined and commanded by British officers. This new body of troops was known as the Nizam's Contingent, as distinguished from the Hyderabad Subsidiary Force.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Nizam's Contingent on the new footing consisted of 5,000 infantry, 2,000 cavalry, and four field batteries.



From a very early period the Nizam had failed to provide the necessary funds for the maintenance of the Contingent. From time to time large advances were made by the British government to meet the current expenditure, until a debt accumulated of half a million sterling. The Nizam might have escaped this obligation by disbanding the Contingent; but this he repeatedly and obstinately refused to do, and indeed the force was necessary for the maintenance of peace and order in his own territories. Again, he might have disbanded the hordes of foreign mercenaries, Arabs and Rohillas, which he kept up under the name of an army, and which were a burden upon his treasury, a terror to his subjects, and useless for all military purposes. But he was as obstinate upon this point as upon the other. At last, in 1843, he was told by Lord Ellenborough that unless the debt was liquidated and the necessary funds were provided regularly for the future, the British government would take over territory and revenue as security for the payment.

This threat seems to have created some alarm in Hyderabad. Chandu Lal resigned the post of minister, and the Nizam attempted to carry on the administration alone, but his efforts were fitful and desultory. Meanwhile mere dribblets of the debt were paid off, and the Resident was amused with excuses and promises; and in this fashion matters drifted on.

At last Lord Dalhousie insisted on a cession of sufficient territory to provide for the maintenance of the Nizam's Contingent. He would not touch the hereditary dominions of the Nizam; he merely took over the territory of Berar, which Lord Wellesley had given to the Nizam in 1803, after the conquest of the Raja of Nagpore. Accordingly Berar was brought under British administration; and since then all surplus revenue accruing from the improvements in the revenue system has been made over to the Nizam's treasury.

The last important measure in the career of Lord Dalhousie was the annexation of Oude. The story of Oude is an unpleasant episode in the history of British India. In





1764 the English conquered Oude, but Lord Clive gave it back to the Nawab Vizier. In 1801 Lord Wellesley took over one-half of the territory to provide for the defence of Hindustan against Afghans, French, and Mahrattas. From the days of Lord Wellesley to those of Lord Dalhousie Oude was a millstone round the neck of the British government. Every Governor-General in turn condemned the administration of Oude as tyrannical, extortionate, and corrupt to the last degree; each in turn denounced the reigning Nawab Vizier, and yet shrank from the distasteful task of taking the necessary steps for carrying out a radical reform. Lord Hastings tried polite remonstrance; he wished, he said, to treat the Nawab Vizier like a gentleman; and the result was that the Nawab Vizier assumed the title of "king," in order to place himself on a par with the so-called king of Delhi. In 1831 Lord William Bentinck, the friend of native princes, threatened to assume the direct administration of Oude, but ultimately left India without doing it. From the day of his departure the introduction of British rule in Oude was a mere question of time. It was one of those painful operations which no Governor-General liked to perform; but it was absolutely necessary to the well-being, not only of the people of Oude, but of the British empire in India. In 1847 Lord Hardinge, who had labored to save the Sikh government in the Punjab, was so aghast at the desolation of Oude that he solemnly warned the king that the British government would assume the management of his country within two years unless he employed the interval in carrying out a complete reform in his administration.

In 1851 Colonel Sleeman, the British Resident at Lucknow, made a tour through Oude, and reported on the state of the country. The people were at the mercy of the soldiery and landholders. While Oude was protected by British troops from every possible foe, a standing army of seventy thousand men was kept up by the king; and as the pay of the troops was very small, and nearly always in arrears, they were driven to prey upon the helpless vil-



lagers. It is needless to dwell on the plunder, outrage and crime that were the natural consequence. The wretched inhabitants complained that brigands and outlaws were sometimes merciful, but that the king's troops never knew how to pity or how to spare. The Talukdars, or landholders, built forts throughout the country, and levied revenue and blackmail, like the Afghan chiefs who preyed on Hindustan before the days of Akbar. All this while the king was shut up in his palace; he was seen by no one except women, musicians, and buffoons. The government was a monstrous system of corruption, under which every office was bought with money, and every official was left to reimburse himself as fast as he could by oppression and extortion. Reform was out of the question; every evil had been festering in the body politic for the greater part of a century, and nothing but new blood could save the country from destruction.

Lord Dalhousie was anxious to deal gently with the king of Oude. The family had always been loyal to the British government, and had always done their best to help it in the hour of need. Lord Dalhousie would have left the king in the possession of the sovereignty while taking over the direct management of his territories. But the patience of the Court of Directors was worn out; they were determined to annex the country and abolish the throne; and in 1856, being the last year of Lord Dalhousie's administration, the sovereignty of the kings of Oude was brought to a close.

During the administration of Lord Dalhousie the hill tribes of Bengal forced themselves on the attention of the British government. As far back as 1832 there had been a strange rising of the Koles, an aboriginal tribe of Western Bengal, who at some remote period had been driven into the hills by the Hindu settlers, and there maintained their primitive language, habits, and superstitions, down to modern times. The Koles had been troubled by British laws and exasperated by encroaching Zemindars. Accordingly they broke out in rebellion, and committed many outrages before they were repressed. Lord William Bentinck withdrew the





Koles from the operation of the ordinary laws, and placed their country in charge of a special commissioner. Since then the Koles had advanced in civilization and prosperity, and large numbers had been converted to Christianity. In 1855 there was an insurrection of another aboriginal tribe, known as the Santals, who inhabit the hill ranges of Rajmahal on the northwest frontier of Bengal proper. They had been harassed by the civil suits of Bengali money-lenders, and they advanced into the plains, to the number of thirty thousand men, to make war upon the British government with pickaxes and poisoned arrows. The British authorities were taken by surprise. The Santals began the work of pillage and murder, and spread abroad a wild alarm before a British force could be marched against them. The outbreak, however, was soon suppressed, and Lord Dalhousie dealt with the Santals in the same way that Lord William Bentinck had dealt with the Koles, namely, by placing them in charge of a special commissioner.



## CHAPTER XXV

## SEPOY MUTINIES—LORD CANNING

A.D. 1856 TO 1858

LORD CANNING was forty-four years of age when he succeeded Lord Dalhousie as Governor-General of India. He had seen something of official life; he had been Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs under Sir Robert Peel, and Postmaster-General under Lord Aberdeen and Lord Palmerston. He was a good administrator—moderate, cautious, conscientious, and “safe”; and as such he was well fitted to carry on, slowly but surely, the great work of moral and material progress begun by Lord Dalhousie.

In 1856 the political atmosphere of India was without a cloud. A few events occurred, but they were of small historical interest, and cannot be regarded as in any way foreshadowing the storm which was about to burst upon the plains of Hindustan.

The annexation of Oude had been carried out with more harshness than Lord Dalhousie had intended. The king removed from Lukhnow to Calcutta, and settled down with his women and dependents in the suburbs at Garden Reach, while the queen-mother and heir-apparent went on a bootless mission to England. Meanwhile an administration, like that which had proved so successful in the Punjab, was introduced into Oude; but it did not work smoothly. The new rulers forgot that Oude was not a conquered country like the Punjab; and that the Oude Talukdars, bad as they may have been, were not rebels and traitors against the British government. Consequently the leading officers dis-





puted among themselves; and there were many complaints of severity toward native officials and landholders. At last, early in 1857, Sir Henry Lawrence was appointed Chief Commissioner of Oude, and it was believed that all would soon be well.

The status of the so-called kings of Delhi was placed upon a new footing. Ever since 1803, when Shah Alam was taken under British protection by Lord Wellesley, the kings had been without a history. The family dwelt in the old Moghul palace at Delhi, and multiplied in Muhammadan fashion. Palace life was made up of vain attempts to revive the dignity and pomp of a bygone age, or to obtain an increase of pension from the British government. All political vitality had died out of the family. Deaths, marriages, and births followed in dreary monotony, varied by quarrels and intrigues, which had little meaning or interest outside the palace walls.

The continued residence of the Moghul family at Delhi infected the whole capital. The Muhammadan population was more disaffected toward the British rule than in any other city in India. Lord Wellesley would have removed the family to Bengal at the beginning of the century; but the poor old pageant of that day clung to Delhi with the pertinacity of second childhood, and it seemed cruel to remove him in his old age. Since then two generations had passed away; the Moghul court had become an antiquated nuisance, and Lord Dalhousie determined to banish it forever.

The reigning king at Delhi was an infirm old man named Bahadur Shah. The heir-apparent was his grandson; and Lord Dalhousie agreed to recognize the grandson as the successor to the pageant throne, and to make some addition to his pension, on the condition that he should clear out of Delhi on the death of his grandfather, and take up his abode at the Kutub—an old royal residence near Delhi which had been founded in the thirteenth century.<sup>1</sup> But Bahadur Shah

<sup>1</sup> See ante, p. 100.

married a young wife in his old age, and she gave birth to a son; and henceforth the young queen strained every nerve to secure the pageant throne for her boy, after the manner of younger wives since patriarchal times.

In July, 1856, the heir-apparent died suddenly in the palace. There is no moral doubt that he was poisoned, and that the young queen was implicated in the crime. The catastrophe was suspiciously followed by applications from old Bahadur Shah that the son of his favorite wife might be recognized by the Governor-General as the heir and successor to the throne. But the request was refused. An elder brother stood in the way, and Lord Canning recognized this elder brother as heir-apparent, but without any bargaining or agreement. When Bahadur Shah died the new king was to remove to the Kutub by the simple decree of the British government.

The wrath of the favorite queen may be left to the imagination. She is said to have been a daughter of the house of Nadir Shah, and the hereditary ambition of the family was burning in her brain. She intrigued in all directions against the British government; possibly with the Shah of Persia, with whom Great Britain was at war; possibly with Kuzzilbash chiefs at Kabul; but the extent and character of her plots must be left to conjecture. No one dreamed that the mortified princess could in any way work mischief to the British government; and to this day it is difficult to believe that she was in any way the originator of the sepoy mutiny.

Meantime there were more difficulties with Persia respecting Herat. The death of Yar Muhammad Khan, in 1852, was followed by troubles in Herat; and the province became a bone of contention between the Shah of Persia and old Dost Muhammad Khan, of Kabul. At last the Shah moved an army to Herat and captured the fortress, contrary to his treaty with the British government. Accordingly England declared war against Persia. An expedition was sent from Bombay to the Persian Gulf under the command of Sir James Outram. The alliance with Kabul was





strengthened;<sup>1</sup> four thousand stand of arms were presented to Dost Muhammad Khan, and he was promised a subsidy of ten thousand pounds a month so long as the Persian war lasted. The capture of Bushire by the English and the victory at Mohamrah brought the Shah to his senses. He withdrew from Afghanistan, and renounced all pretensions to Herat; and in March, 1857, peace was concluded between Great Britain and Persia.

About this time there is said to have been rumors of a coming danger to British rule in India. In some parts of the country chupaties, or cakes, were circulated in a mysterious manner from village to village. Prophecies were also rife that in 1857 the Company's Raj would come to an end. Lord Canning has been blamed for not taking alarm at these proceedings; but something of the kind has always been going on in India.<sup>2</sup> Cakes or cocoanuts are given away in solemn fashion; and as the villagers are afraid to keep them or eat them, the circulation goes on to the end of the chapter. Then again holy men and prophets have always been common in India. They foretell pestilence and famine, the downfall of British rule, or the destruction of the whole world. They are often supposed to be endowed with supernatural powers, and to be impervious to bullets; but these phenomena invariably disappear whenever they

---

<sup>1</sup> The hostility of Dost Muhammad Khan during the second Sikh war had been condoned; and a treaty of friendship was concluded by Lord Dalhousie with the Kabul ruler in 1855.

<sup>2</sup> A great deal of alarm has been written and spoken as regards native intrigues. As a matter of fact, plots and intrigues of one sort or another are the daily life of the natives of India. There are more plots and intrigues in a single establishment of native servants than in a hundred English households. An Englishman in India, who chooses to study the character of his servants, will know more in a few months of native thoughts and ways than he can learn in books from the study of a lifetime. A still better insight into native character may be obtained in government schools. The author is conscious that during the three or four years that he held the post of Professor of Moral Philosophy and Logic in the Madras Presidency College, he gained a larger knowledge of Hindu life, and a greater respect for Hindu character, than during the many years he has since spent in official and literary duties. The warm friendships among young Hindus, their devotion to the wishes of their parents, and the unreserved trust which they place in their English instructors who take the trouble to win their confidence, have never perhaps been sufficiently appreciated.

come in contact with Europeans, especially as all such characters are liable to be treated as vagrants without visible means of subsistence.<sup>1</sup>

One dangerous story, however, got abroad in the early part of 1857, which ought to have been stopped at once, and for which the military authorities were wholly and solely to blame. The Enfield rifle was being introduced; it required new cartridges, which in England were greased with the fat of beef or pork. The military authorities in India, with strange indifference to the prejudices of sepoys, ordered the cartridges to be prepared at Calcutta in like manner; forgetting that the fat of pigs was hateful to the Muhammadans, while the fat of cows was still more horrible in the eyes of the Hindus.

The excitement began at Barrackpore, sixteen miles from Calcutta. At this station there were four regiments of sepoys, and no Europeans except the regimental officers.<sup>2</sup> One

<sup>1</sup> There are few human beings so helpless or so ignorant that they cannot prophesy the end of all things. Prophecies, however, are not confined to Orientals. The great German traveller, Carsten Niebuhr, who visited Bombay in 1763, two years after the battle of Paniput, was guilty of the following oracular utterance, which reads somewhat strangely by the light of later history: "The power of the Muhammadans indeed becomes daily less; and there are at present some Hindu princes who may restore the nation to its ancient splendor. The Mahrattas have successfully begun a project which has this aspect. It is the exorbitant power of the English that at present retards the progressive improvement of the Hindus. But when this colossal statue, whose feet are of clay, and which has been raised by conquering merchants, shall be broken in pieces, an event which may fall out sooner than is supposed, then shall Hindustan become again a flourishing country." The learned German must have been utterly ignorant of Mahratta rule, and seems to have formed an idea out of his moral consciousness.

<sup>2</sup> A sepoy regiment of infantry in the Bengal army was at this time composed of 1,000 privates, 120 non-commissioned officers, and 20 commissioned officers, all natives. It was divided into ten companies, each containing 100 privates, 12 non-commissioned officers, and 2 commissioned officers. The non-commissioned officers were known as naiks and havildars, corresponding to corporals and sergeants. The commissioned officers were known as jemadars and subahdars, corresponding to lieutenants and captains. The European officers corresponded to those in English regiments.

The sepoy regiment was never quartered in barracks, but in lines. Every regiment occupied ten rows of thatched huts, a company to each row. In front of each row was a small circular building for storing arms and accoutrements after they had been cleaned.

The European officers lived in bungalows, or thatched houses near the lines,





day a low caste native, known as a Laskar, asked a Brahman sepoy for a drink of water from his brass pot. The Brahman refused, as it would defile his pot. The Laskar retorted that the Brahman was already defiled by biting cartridges which had been greased with cow's fat. This vindictive taunt was based on truth. Laskars had been employed at Calcutta in preparing the new cartridges, and the man was possibly one of them. The taunt created a wild panic at Barrackpore. Strange, however, to say, none of the new cartridges had been issued to the sepoys; and had this been promptly explained to the men, and the sepoys left to grease their own cartridges, the alarm might have died out. But the explanation was delayed until the whole of the Bengal army was smitten with the groundless fear; and then, when it was too late, the authorities protested too much, and the terror-stricken sepoys refused to believe them.<sup>1</sup>

The sepoys have proved themselves brave under fire, and loyal to their salt in sharp extremities; but they are the most credulous and excitable soldiery in the world. They regarded steam and electricity as so much magic;<sup>2</sup> and they fondly believed that the British government was binding India with chains, when it was only laying down railway lines and telegraph wires. The Enfield rifle was a new mystery; and the busy brains of the sepoys were soon at work

---

but too far off to control the movements of the men during the heat of the day. In order, however, to maintain continuous European supervision, two European sergeants were allowed to every regiment to live within the lines, and report day by day all that was going on to the European adjutant.

<sup>1</sup> There is, however, some excuse for the military authorities even in the matter of greased cartridges. Bazar rumors are often flying about in India, and causing the utmost alarm, while any attempt at authoritative contradiction on the part of government only gives further currency to the fable, and increases the panic. If a bridge is about to be built, it is noised abroad that children's heads are wanted for the foundations, and then not a child is to be seen in the streets for weeks. This has been of common occurrence, even within the last twenty years. Again, in Lord Auckland's time, a rumor got abroad that the blood of hill-men was required to restore the Governor-General to pristine youth; and all the coolies and hill-men at Simla suddenly ran away. Contradiction would have been useless in such extreme cases; but still, if undertaken in time, it might have quieted the minds of the sepoys.

<sup>2</sup> To this day the Asiatic Museum at Calcutta is only known to natives as the "magic house."



to divine the motive of the English in greasing cartridge's with cow's fat. They had always taken to themselves the sole credit of having conquered India for the Company; and they now imagined that the English wanted them to conquer Persia and China. Accordingly, they suspected that Lord Canning was going to make them as strong as Europeans by destroying caste, forcing them to become Christians, and making them eat beef and drink beer.

The story of the greased cartridges, with all its absurd embellishments, ran up the Ganges and Jumna to Benares, Allahabad, Agra, Delhi, and the great cantonment at Meerut; while another current of lies ran back again from Meerut to Barrackpore. It was noised abroad that the bones of cows and pigs had been ground into powder, and thrown into wells and mingled with flour and butter, in order to destroy the caste of the masses and convert them to Christianity.<sup>1</sup>

The stories of sinister designs on the part of the English were sharpened by sepoy grievances. Very much had been done for the well-being of the native army; the sepoys had become puffed up and unmanageable; and they complained of wrongs, or what appeared in their eyes to be wrongs, which Englishmen cannot easily understand. When quartered in foreign countries, such as Sind and the Punjab, they had been granted an extra allowance, known as batta; but when Sind and the Punjab became British territory the batta was withdrawn. Numbers, again, had been recruited in Oude, and they had another secret grievance. So long as Oude was under Muhammadan rule, every complaint from an Oude sepoy, that his family or kindred were oppressed, was forwarded to the British Resident at Lukhnow, and promptly redressed. When, however, the country was brought under British administration the complainants were referred to the

<sup>1</sup> There was some excuse for this credulity. Forced conversions had been common enough under Muhammadan rule. Aurangzeb destroyed pagodas and idols, and compelled all servants of government to become Muhammadans. Tippu Sultan converted crowds of Brahmans to Islam by compelling them to swallow cow's flesh. The Hindu sepoys, who had been taken prisoners by the Afghans during the Kabul war, were forced to become Muhammadans.





civil courts. This was resented by the sepoy as a grave indignity. He was no longer the great man of the family or village; he could no longer demand the special interference of the British Resident in their behalf. Accordingly he was exasperated at the introduction of British rule in Oude; at the same time he never manifested the slightest desire for the restoration of the ex-king.

In January, 1857, there were incendiary fires at Barrackpore. In February, General Hearsey, who commanded the Presidency division, expostulated with the sepoys on the absurdity of their fears as regarded their religion; but his words were without authority, and no one heeded them.

Toward the end of February a detachment of the Thirty-fourth Native Infantry at Barrackpore arrived at Berhampore, a hundred and twenty miles up country, near Murshedabad. Accordingly the sepoys from Barrackpore told the story of the cartridges to their comrades of the Nineteenth Native Infantry, which was stationed at Berhampore. A day or two afterward the sepoys of the Nineteenth refused to receive the cartridges that were served out to them; and at night-time they seized their arms, shouted defiance, and created a disturbance. Unfortunately there were no European soldiers at Berhampore; indeed there was only one European regiment in the whole line of country from Barrackpore to Patna, a distance of four hundred miles; and half of that was quartered at Fort William at Calcutta, and the other half at Dumdum, six miles from Calcutta.<sup>1</sup> Colonel Mitchell, the officer in command at Berhampore, had no force to bring to bear upon the mutinous infantry except a detachment of native cavalry and a battery of native artillery; and it was exceedingly doubtful whether they would act against their fellow-countrymen. However, the Nineteenth was not ripe

---

<sup>1</sup> There was also one European regiment at Dinapore, near Patna, and another at Agra. Beyond these there was nothing but a handful of European artillerymen and a few invalided soldiers of the Company's European army. The largest European force in Hindustan was stationed at Meerut, forty miles from Delhi.



for revolt; and after some remonstrances the sepoys laid down their arms and returned to the lines.

In March, the Eighty-fourth Europeans was brought away from Rangoon to the river Hughli. With this additional strength, Lord Canning resolved to take action. Accordingly the Nineteenth was marched from Berhampore to Barrackpore to be disbanded. Before it reached its destination there was much excitement in the lines of the Thirty-fourth, which probably originated in the sympathies of the sepoys for their comrades who were coming from Berhampore. A sepoy, named Mungal Pandey, walked about the lines with a loaded pistol, calling upon his comrades to rise, and threatening to shoot the first European that appeared. Lieutenant Baugh, the adjutant of the regiment, rode to the parade-ground, followed by the European sergeant and a Muhammadan orderly. Mungal Pandey fired at him, wounded his horse, and brought Lieutenant Baugh to the ground. A scuffle ensued; Baugh received a severe blow from a sword; while a guard of sepoys under a jemadar stood by and did nothing. The sergeant came up breathless, called on the jemadar for help, and tried to seize Mungal Pandey; but he too was struck down. To crown all, the jemadar came up with his twenty sepoys and began to beat the heads of the two Europeans with the butt-ends of their muskets. At this moment Mungal Pandey was arrested by the Muhammadan orderly; and General Hearsey galloped up, pistol in hand, and ordered the sepoy guard back to their posts, threatening to shoot the first man who disobeyed orders. The sepoys were overawed by the general, and the disaffection was stayed. Mungal Pandey saw that his game was up, and tried to shoot himself, but failed. A day or two afterward the European regiment from Rangoon was marched to Barrackpore; and the Nineteenth Native Infantry arrived from Berhampore, and was disbanded without further trouble. In the following April Mungal Pandey and the mutinous jemadar were brought to trial, convicted, and hanged.

For a brief interval it was hoped that the disaffection





was suppressed. Excitement manifested itself in various ways at different stations throughout the length of Hindustan and the Punjab—at Benares, Lukhnow, Agra, Umballa, and Sealkote. In some stations there were incendiary fires; in others the sepoys were wanting in their usual respect to their European officers. But it was believed that the storm was spending itself, and that the dark clouds were passing away.

Suddenly, on the 3d of May, there was an explosion at Lukhnow. A regiment of Oude Irregular Infantry, previously in the service of the king, broke out in mutiny and began to threaten their European officers. Sir Henry Lawrence, the new Chief Commissioner, had a European regiment at his disposal, namely, the Thirty-second Foot. That same evening he ordered out the regiment, and a battery of eight guns manned by Europeans, together with four sepoy regiments, three of infantry and one of cavalry. With this force he proceeded to the lines of the mutineers, about seven miles off. The Oude Irregulars were taken by surprise; they saw infantry and cavalry on either side, and the European guns in front. They were ordered to lay down their arms, and they obeyed. At this moment the artillery lighted their port fires. The mutineers were seized with a panic, and rushed away in the darkness; but the ringleaders and most of their followers were pursued and arrested by the native infantry and cavalry, and confined pending trial. Subsequently it transpired that the native regiments sympathized with the mutineers, and would have shown it but for their dread of Henry Lawrence and the Europeans. The energetic action of Lawrence sufficed to maintain order for another month in Oude. Meanwhile the Thirty-fourth Native Infantry was disbanded at Barrackpore, and again it was hoped that the disaffection was stayed.

The demon of mutiny was only scotched. Within a week of the outbreak at Lukhnow, the great military station of Meerut was in a blaze. Meerut was only forty miles from Delhi, and the largest cantonment in India. There were



three regiments of sepoy—two of infantry and one of cavalry; but there were enough Europeans to scatter four times the number; namely, a battalion of the Sixtieth Rifles, a regiment of Dragoon Guards known as the Carabineers, two troops of horse artillery, and a light field battery.

In spite of the presence of Europeans there were more indications of excitement at Meerut than at any other station in the northwest. At Meerut the story of the greased cartridges had been capped by the story of the bone-dust; and there were the same kind of incendiary fires, the same lack of respect toward European officers, and the same whispered resolve not to touch the cartridges, as at Barrackpore. The station was commanded by General Hewitt, whose advancing years unfitted him to cope with the storm which was bursting upon Hindustan.

The regiment of sepoy cavalry at Meerut was strongly suspected of disaffection; accordingly it was resolved to put the men to the test. On the 6th of May it was paraded in the presence of the European force, and cartridges were served out; not the greased abominations from Calcutta, but the old ones which had been used times innumerable by the sepoy and their fathers. But the men were terrified and obstinate, and eighty-five stood out and refused to take the cartridges. The offenders were at once arrested, and tried by a court-martial of native officers; they were found guilty, and sentenced to various periods of imprisonment, but recommended for mercy. General Hewitt saw no grounds for mercy, excepting in the case of eleven young troopers; and on Saturday, the 9th of May, the sentences were carried out. The men were brought on parade, stripped of their uniforms, and loaded with irons. They implored the general for mercy, and finding it hopeless, began to reproach their comrades; but no one dared to strike a blow in the presence of loaded cannon and rifles. At last the prisoners were carried off and placed in a jail, not in charge of European soldiers, but under a native guard.

The military authorities at Meerut seem to have been





under a spell. The next day was Sunday, the 10th of May, and the hot sun rose with its usual glare in the Indian sky. The European barracks were at a considerable distance from the native lines, and the intervening space was covered with shops and houses surrounded by trees and gardens. Consequently the Europeans in the barracks knew nothing of what was going on in the native quarter. Meanwhile there were commotions in the sepoy lines and neighboring bazars. The sepoys were taunted by the loose women of the place with permitting their comrades to be imprisoned and fettered. At the same time they were smitten with a mad fear that the European soldiers were to be let loose upon them. The Europeans at Meerut saw nothing and heard nothing. Nothing was noted on that Sunday morning, excepting the absence of native servants from many of the houses, and that was supposed to be accidental. Morning service was followed by the midday heats, and at five o'clock in the afternoon the Europeans were again preparing for church. Suddenly there was an alarm of fire, followed by a volley of musketry, discordant yells, the clattering of cavalry, and the bugle sounding an alarm. The sepoys had worked themselves up to a frenzy of excitement; the prisoners were released with a host of jail birds; the native infantry joined the native cavalry, and the colonel of one of the regiments was shot by the sepoys of the other. Inspired by a wild fear and fury, the sepoys ran about murdering or wounding every European they met, and setting houses on fire, amid deafening shouts and uproar.

Meanwhile there were fatal delays in turning out the Europeans. The Rifles were paraded for church, and time was lost in getting arms and serving out ball cartridges. The Carabineers were absurdly put through a roll call, and then lost their way among the shops and gardens. Meanwhile European officers were being butchered by the infuriated sepoys. Gentlemen and ladies were fired at or sabred while hurrying back in a panic from church. Flaming houses and crashing timbers were filling all hearts with



terror, and the shades of evening were falling upon the general havoc and turmoil, when the Europeans reached the native lines and found that the sepoys had gone, no one knew whither.

The truth was soon told. The mutiny had become a revolt; the sepoys were on the way to Delhi to proclaim the old Moghul as sovereign of Hindustan; and there was no Gillespie to gallop after them and crush the revolt at its outset, as had been done at Vellore half a century before. One thing, however, was done. There were no European regiments at Delhi; nothing but three regiments of sepoy infantry, and a battery of native artillery. The station was commanded by Brigadier Graves; and there were no Europeans under his orders excepting the officers and sergeants attached to the three native corps. Accordingly telegrams were sent to Brigadier Graves to tell him that the mutineers were on their way to Delhi.

Monday at Delhi was worse than the Sunday at Meerut. The British cantonment was situated on a rising ground about two miles from the city, which was known as the Ridge. The great magazine, containing immense stores of ammunition, was situated in the heart of the city. One of the three sepoy regiments was on duty in the city; the other two remained in the cantonment on the Ridge.

The approach to Delhi from Meerut was defended by the little river Hindun, which was traversed by a small bridge. It was proposed to procure a couple of cannon from the magazine and place them on the bridge; but before this could be done the rebel cavalry from Meerut were seen crossing the river, and were subsequently followed by the rebel infantry. The magazine remained in charge of Lieutenant Willoughby of the Bengal Artillery. He was associated with two other officers, and six conductors and sergeants; the rest of the establishment was composed entirely of natives.

Brigadier Graves did his best to protect the city and cantonment until the arrival of the expected Europeans from Meerut. Indeed, throughout the morning and greater part





of the afternoon every one in Delhi was expecting the arrival of the Europeans. Brigadier Graves ordered all the non-military residents, including ladies and children, to repair to Flagstaff Tower—a round building of solid brickwork at some distance from the city. Large detachments of sepoy were sent from the Ridge to the Kashmir gate, under the command of their European officers, to help the sepoy regiment on duty to maintain order in the city.

Presently the rebel troops from Meerut came up, accompanied by the insurgent rabble of Delhi. The English officers prepared to charge them, and gave the order to fire, but some of the sepoys refused to obey, or only fired into the air. The English officers held on, expecting the European soldiers from Meerut. The sepoys hesitated to join the rebels, out of dread of the coming Europeans. At last the Delhi sepoys threw in their lot with the rebels, and shot down their own officers. The revolt spread throughout the whole city; and the suspense of the English on the Ridge, and at Flagstaff Tower, began to give way to the agony of despair.

Suddenly, at four o'clock in the afternoon, a column of white smoke arose from the city, and an explosion was heard far and wide. Willoughby and his eight associates had held out to the last, waiting and hoping for the coming of the Europeans. They had closed and barricaded the gates of the magazine; and they had posted six-pounders at the gates, loaded with double charges of grape, and laid a train to the powder magazine. Messengers came in the name of Bahadur Shah to demand the surrender of the magazine, but no answer was returned. The enemy approached and raised ladders against the walls; while the native establishment escaped over some sheds and joined the rebels. At this crisis the guns opened fire. Round after round of grape made fearful havoc on the mass of humanity that was heaving and surging round the gates. At last the ammunition was exhausted. No one could leave the guns to bring up more shot. The mutineers were pouring in on all sides. Lieutenant Willoughby gave the signal; Conductor Scully



fired the train; and with one tremendous upheaval the magazine was blown into the air, together with fifteen hundred rebels. Not one of the gallant nine had expected to escape. Willoughby and three others got away, scorched, maimed, bruised, and nearly insensible; but Scully and his comrades were never seen again. Willoughby died of his injuries six weeks afterward, while India and Europe were ringing with his name.

All this while bloody tragedies were taking place within the palace at Delhi. The rebels from Meerut were quartering themselves in the royal precincts, and murdering every European they could find. Mr. Fraser the commissioner, Mr. Hutchinson the collector, and Captain Douglas, who commanded the palace guards, were all slaughtered within the palace walls. So was an English chaplain, with his wife, daughter, and another young lady, all of whom had been residing as guests with Captain Douglas. Fifty Christian people—men, women, and children—who had been captured by the rebels and thrown as prisoners in the palace dungeons, were butchered in cold blood by the order of the king.<sup>1</sup>

On the evening of that terrible Monday all was lost. The city of Delhi was in the hands of the rebels. The so-called royal family, which had been maintained by the generosity of the British government for more than half a century, had joined the rebel sepoys. Brigadier Graves and the surviving officers on the Ridge, and all the anxious fugitives in Flagstaff Tower, were compelled to fly for their lives. Their subsequent trials and sufferings were among the most touching episodes in the story of the great convulsion. Meanwhile the European regiments which might have saved them, and saved Delhi, were kept at Meerut to guard the barracks and treasury. The greased cartridges had created the panic and brought about the mutiny; but it was the

<sup>1</sup> The old king, Bahadur Shah, has been held responsible for these murders, but his vindictive queen was probably more to blame. Her son, a mere lad at the time, was appointed vizier to his father.





SEPOY REBELS BEING SHOT FROM THE MOUTHS OF THE CANNON  
*India, vol. two.*



incapacity of the military authorities at Meerut that raised the revolt in Hindustan.

The revolution at Delhi opened the eyes of Lord Canning to the gravity of the crisis. Hitherto his sympathies had been with the sepoy. An ignorant and credulous soldiery had been thrown into a panic, and had been worked into a state of perilous excitement by intriguing Brahmans and fanatical Mullas, as well as by secret agents and alarmists of all kinds. But now the excitement had culminated in intoxication and madness; the sepoy were thirsting for the blood of Europeans; and pity was changed to indignation and horror. Accordingly Lord Canning telegraphed for European regiments from every quarter—from Bombay and Burma, from Madras and Ceylon—to crush a rebellion which was establishing a reign of terror in Hindustan.

The sepoy mutiny at Barrackpore might possibly have been crushed at the outset by physical force. In 1824, at the beginning of the Burmese war, there was a similar mutiny at the same cantonment. Three sepoy regiments had been ordered to Chittagong, but refused to march. They had been frightened by rumors of the bad climate of Burma, and the magical arts which were said to be practiced by the Burmese. There had also been some difficulties about transport, and they demanded an extra allowance, known as double batta. Sir Edward Paget was Commander-in-chief in Bengal. He marched to Barrackpore with two regiments of Europeans and a detachment of artillery. He paraded the disaffected regiments in the presence of the Europeans, and loaded his guns with grape. The sepoy were told that they must either begin the march or ground their arms. They replied with defiant shouts. Then the fatal order was given, and the guns opened fire on the disaffected soldiery. Eleven sepoy only were killed, but the remainder broke up and fled in a panic of terror. Sir Edward Paget was much censured, but a generation passed away before there was another mutiny.

Whether Paget was right or wrong, it would have been





a blunder and a crime to have taken such an extreme measure at the outset of the disaffection in 1857. Indeed, Lord Canning indignantly refused to contemplate such measures; and by so doing he saved the reputation of the British nation. But when the sepoy rebels set up the Moghul at Delhi as their nominal sovereign, the security of the population of India was at stake. In other words, the establishment of the supremacy of the British government at the earliest possible date was necessary, not only for the safety of the British empire in India, but for the salvation of the masses.

The progress of the revolt throws no further light on its origin or character. Station after station followed the example of Meerut. The sepoys seem to have all been infected by the same delirious fever; they rose in mutiny, shot down their officers in most cases, set the buildings on fire, plundered the treasury, and then rushed off to Delhi. Wherever, however, the Europeans were in any force, and were brought directly to bear upon the mutineers regardless of red tape and routine, the station was either saved from destruction, or the mischief was reduced to a minimum.

It would be tedious and needless to tell the story of the sepoy revolt so far as it was a mere military mutiny, with Delhi for its headquarters. But at three stations the mutiny was more or less of a political character, which imparts an individuality to the history; namely, at Lukhnow, at Jhansi, and at Cawnpore.

The city of Lukhnow, the capital of Oude, extends four miles along the right bank of the river Goomti. All the principal buildings, including the British Residency, were situated between the city and the river. The Residency was a large walled enclosure, comprising not only the mansion of the Chief Commissioner, but several houses and underground buildings on a large scale. Near it was a strong turreted, castellated structure known as the Muchi Bawun.

Ever since the explosion at Lukhnow on the 3d of May, Sir Henry Lawrence had been incessantly occupied in taking



precautionary measures against an outbreak which he knew to be inevitable. On one side of the Residency was a disaffected city, the homes of palace parasites, who had been deprived of their means of subsistence by the breaking up of the native court and departure of the royal family to Calcutta. On the opposite bank of the river Goomti was the native cantonment, occupied by British sepoy as evilly disposed toward the English as the disaffected rabble of Lukhnow. Accordingly Sir Henry Lawrence saw that the work before him was to prevent mutiny in the cantonment and rebellion in the city; and to make every preparation for a successful defence in the event of a general insurrection.

The native force at Lukhnow consisted of the three sepoy regiments of infantry, and one of cavalry; there was also a native battery of artillery. The whole numbered thirty-five hundred men. The European force consisted of the Thirty-second Foot, numbering five hundred and seventy strong, and sixty artillerymen.

The communication between the cantonment and the city was by two bridges; one near the Residency, and the other at the Muchi Bawun. Sir Henry Lawrence brought all the European non-combatants with their families within the Residency walls; and took steps to prevent any combined movements on the part of the cantonment and city. He disposed his troops, European and native, in such a way as to bear directly on the sepoys in the event of a rising; and he established a strong post between the Residency and the Muchi Bawun to command the two bridges leading to cantonments.

At nine o'clock on the night of the 30th of May, the outbreak began at the native cantonment. Shots were fired as a signal, and parties of sepoys began to burn down the bungalows and shoot their European officers. Presently the insurgents rushed to the bridges, infuriated with bhang and excitement, but were received with such a volley of grape that they retreated toward their lines hotly pursued by Sir Henry Lawrence and his Europeans. They attempted to





return to the cantonment, but found it hopeless, and made off to Delhi. Sir Henry Lawrence dared not pursue them with a disaffected city in his rear, which was already surging with excitement. Accordingly, he left a detachment of Europeans to guard the cantonment, and then returned to Lukhnow. Of all the thirty-five hundred sepoy, scarcely a fourth remained true to their colors, and these gradually dropped off during the progress of the rebellion.

On the 4th of June there was a mutiny at Jhansi—a little chiefship of Bundelkund, which had lapsed to the British government in 1853 from want of natural heirs. The town was situated about a hundred and forty miles to the south of Agra. It was garrisoned entirely by sepoy, and the mutiny was of the usual type. The sepoy went about burning and murdering; while the Europeans, including women and children, and numbering fifty-five in all, took refuge in the fort.

At this moment, the Rani of Jhansi, the widow of the deceased chief, sent guns and elephants to help the mutineers. She was a vindictive woman, inflamed with the blind ferocity of an Oriental, and burning to be revenged on the English for not having been intrusted with the adoption of a son, and the management of the little principality.

The fugitives in the fort were short of provisions; they could not have held out for twenty-four hours longer. The Rani solemnly swore that if they surrendered the fort without further fighting their lives should be spared and they should be conducted in safety to some other station. The rebel sepoy took the same oath, and the little garrison were tempted to accept the terms and leave the fort two by two. With fiendish treachery the whole fifty-five—men, women, and children—were seized and bound, and butchered in cold blood, by the orders of the Rani.

Still more terrible and treacherous were the tragedies enacted at Cawnpore, a city situated on the Ganges about fifty-five miles to the southwest of Lukhnow. Cawnpore had been in the possession of the English ever since the beginning of the century, and for many years was one of



the most important military stations in India; but the extension of the British empire over the Punjab had diminished the importance of Cawnpore; and the last European regiment quartered there had been removed to the northwest at the close of the previous year.

In May, 1857, there were four native regiments at Cawnpore, numbering thirty-five hundred sepoy. There were no Europeans whatever, excepting the regimental officers, and sixty-one artillerymen. To these were added small detachments of European soldiers, which had been sent in the hour of peril from Lukhnow and Benares during the month of May.

The station of Cawnpore was commanded by Sir Hugh Wheeler, a distinguished general in the Company's service, who was verging on his seventieth year. He had spent fifty-four years in India, and had served only with native troops. He must have known the sepoy better than any other European in India. He had led them against their own countrymen under Lord Lake; against foreigners during the Afghan war; and against Sikhs during both campaigns in the Punjab.

The news of the revolt at Meerut threw the sepoy into a ferment at every military station in Hindustan. Rumors of mutiny, or coming mutiny, formed almost the only topic of conversation; yet in nearly every sepoy regiment the European officers put faith in their men, and fondly believed that though the rest of the army might revolt yet their own corps would prove faithful. Such was eminently the case at Cawnpore, yet General Wheeler seems to have known better. While the European officers continued to sleep every night in the sepoy lines, the old veteran made his preparations for meeting the coming storm.

European combatants were very few at Cawnpore, but European impedimenta were very heavy. Besides the wives and families of the regimental officers of the sepoy regiments there was a large European mercantile community. Moreover, while the Thirty-second Foot was quartered at Lukhnow,





the wives, families, and invalids of the regiment were residing at Cawnpore. It was thus necessary to secure a place of refuge for this miscellaneous multitude of Europeans in the event of a rising of the sepoys. Accordingly General Wheeler pitched upon some old barracks which had once belonged to a European regiment; and he ordered earth-works to be thrown up, and supplies of all kinds to be stored up, in order to stand a siege. Unfortunately there was fatal neglect somewhere; for when the crisis came the defences were found to be worthless, while the supplies were insufficient for the besieged.

All this while the adopted son of the ex-Peishwa was residing at Bithoor, about six miles from Cawnpore. His real name was Dhundu Punt, but he is better known as Nana Sahib. The British government had refused to award him the absurd life pension of eighty thousand pounds sterling which had been granted to his nominal father; but he had inherited at least half a million from the ex-Peishwa; and he was allowed to keep six guns, to entertain as many followers as he pleased, and to live in half royal state in a castellated palace at Bithoor. He continued to nurse his grievance with all the pertinacity of a Mahratta; but at the same time he professed a great love for European society, and was profuse in his hospitalities to English officers, and was popularly known as the Raja of Bithoor.

When the news arrived of the revolt at Meerut on the 10th of May, the Nana was loud in his professions of attachment to the English. He engaged to organize fifteen hundred fighting men to act against the sepoys in the event of an outbreak. On May 21st there was an alarm. European ladies and families, with all European non-combatants, were removed into the barracks; and General Wheeler actually accepted from the Nana the help of two hundred Mahrattas and a couple of guns to guard the treasury. The alarm, however, soon blew over, and the Nana took up his abode at the civil station at Cawnpore, as a proof of the sincerity of his professions.



At last, on the night of the 4th of June, the sepoy regiments at Cawnpore broke out in mutiny. They were driven to action by the same mad terror which had been manifested elsewhere. They cared nothing for the Moghul, nothing for the pageant king at Delhi; but they had been panic-stricken by extravagant stories of coming destruction. It was whispered among them that the parade ground was undermined with powder, and that Hindus and Muhammadans were to be assembled on a given day and blown into the air. Intoxicated with fear and bhang, they rushed out in the darkness—yelling, shooting, and burning according to their wont; and when their excitement was somewhat spent, they marched off toward Delhi. Sir Hugh Wheeler could do nothing. He might have retreated with the whole body of Europeans from Cawnpore to Allahabad; but there had been a mutiny at Allahabad, and moreover he had no means of transport. Subsequently he heard that the mutineers had reached the first stage on the road to Delhi, and consequently he saw no ground for alarm.

Meanwhile the brain of Nana Sahib had been turned by wild dreams of vengeance and sovereignty. He thought not only to wreak his malice upon the English, but to restore the extinct Mahratta empire, and reign over Hindustan as the representative of the forgotten Peishwas. The stampede of the sepoys to Delhi was fatal to his mad ambition. He overtook the mutineers, dazzled them with fables of the treasures in Wheeler's intrenchment, and brought them back to Cawnpore to carry out his vindictive and visionary schemes.

At early morning on Saturday, the 6th of June, General Wheeler received a letter from the Nana, announcing that he was about to attack the intrenchment. The veteran was taken by surprise, but at once ordered all the European officers to join the party in the barracks, and prepare for the defence. But the mutineers were in no hurry for the advance. They preferred booty to battle, and turned aside to plunder the cantonment and city, murdering every Christian that came in their way, and not sparing the houses of their





own countrymen. They appropriated all the cannon and ammunition in the magazine by way of preparation for the siege; but some were wise enough to desert the rebel army, and steal away to their homes with their ill-gotten spoil.

About noon the main body of the mutineers, swelled by the numerous retainers of the Nana, got their guns into position, and opened fire on the intrenchment. For nineteen days—from the 6th to the 25th of June—the garrison struggled manfully against a raking fire and fearful odds, amid scenes of suffering and bloodshed which cannot be recalled without a shudder. It was the height of the hot weather in Hindustan. A blazing sun was burning over the heads of the besieged; and to add to their misery, one of the barracks containing the sick and wounded was destroyed by fire. The besiegers, however, in spite of their overwhelming numbers, were utterly unable to carry the intrenchment by storm, but continued to pour in a raking fire. Meanwhile the garrison was starving from want of provisions, and hampered by a multitude of helpless women and children. Indeed, but for the latter contingency, the gallant band would have rushed out of the intrenchment, and cut a way through the mob of sepoys, or perished in the attempt. As it was, they could only fight on, waiting for reinforcements that never came, until fever, sunstroke, hunger, madness, or the enemy's fire, delivered them from their suffering and despair.

On the 25th of June a woman brought a slip of writing from the Nana, promising to give a safe passage to Allahabad to all who were willing to lay down their arms.<sup>1</sup> Had there been no women or children the European garrison would never have dreamed of surrender. The massacre at Patna a century before had taught a lesson to Englishmen which ought never to have been forgotten. As it was, there were some who wanted to fight on till the bitter end. But

<sup>1</sup> Nana Sahib pretended to grant this boon only to those who were not connected with the acts of Lord Dalhousie. Subsequent events prove that this was sheer hypocrisy.



the majority saw that there was no hope for the women or the children, the sick or the wounded, except by accepting the proffered terms. Accordingly the pride of Englishmen gave way, and an armistice was proclaimed.

Next morning the terms were negotiated. The English garrison were to surrender their position, their guns, and their treasure, but to march out with their arms, and with sixty rounds of ammunition in the pouch of every man. Nana Sahib on his part was to afford a safe conduct to the river bank, about a mile off; to provide carriage for the conveyance of the women and children, the sick and the wounded; and to furnish boats for carrying the whole party, numbering some four hundred and fifty individuals, down the river Ganges to Allahabad. The Nana accepted the terms, but demanded the evacuation of the intrenchment that very night. General Wheeler protested against this proviso. The Nana began to bully, and to threaten that he would open fire. He was told that he might carry the intrenchment if he could, but that the English had enough powder left to blow both armies into the air. Accordingly the Nana agreed to wait till the morrow.

At early morning on the 27th of June the garrison began to move from the intrenchment to the place of embarkation. The men marched on foot; the women and children were carried on elephants and bullock-carts, while the wounded were mostly conveyed in palanquins. Forty boats with thatched roofs, known as budgerows, were moored in shallow water at a little distance from the bank; and the crowd of fugitives were forced to wade through the river to the boats. By nine o'clock the whole four hundred and fifty were huddled on board, and the boats prepared to leave Cawnpore.

Suddenly a bugle was sounded, and a murderous fire of grape shot and musketry was opened upon the wretched passengers from both sides of the river. At the same time the thatching of many of the budgerows was found to be





## HISTORY OF INDIA

CSL

on fire, and the flames began to spread from boat to boat. Numbers were murdered in the river, but at last the firing ceased. A few escaped down the river, but only four men survived to tell the story of the massacre.<sup>1</sup> A mass of fugitives were dragged ashore; the women and children, to the number of a hundred and twenty-five, were carried off and lodged in a house near the headquarters of the Nana. The men were ordered to immediate execution. One of them had preserved a Prayer-book, and was permitted to read a few sentences of the liturgy to his doomed companions. Then the fatal order was given; the sepoy poured in a volley of musketry, and all was over.

On the 1st of July Nana Sahib went off to his palace at Bithoor, and was proclaimed Peishwa. He took his seat upon the throne, and was installed with all the ceremonies of sovereignty, while the cannon roared out a salute in his honor. At night the whole place was illuminated, and the hours of darkness were whiled away with feasting and fireworks. But his triumph was short-lived. The Muhammadans were plotting against him at Cawnpore. The people were leaving the city to escape the coming storm, and were taking refuge in the villages. English reinforcements were at last coming up from Allahabad, while the greedy sepoy were clamoring for money and gold bangles. Accordingly the Nana hastened back to Cawnpore, and scattered wealth with a lavish hand; and sought to hide his fears by boastful proclamations, and to drown his anxieties in drink and debauchery.

Within a few days more the number of helpless prisoners was increased to two hundred. There had been a mutiny at Futtehghurh, higher up the river, and the fugitives had fled in boats to Cawnpore, a distance of eighty miles. They knew nothing of what had transpired, and were all taken prisoners by the rebels, and brought on shore. The men

---

<sup>1</sup> The survivors were Lieutenants Mowbray-Thomson and Delafosse, and Privates Murphy and Sullivan.