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GENERAL SIR ARTHUR COTTON

R.E. K.C.S.I.

HIS LIFE AND WORK

BY HIS DAUGHTER

LADY HOPE

E. R. Hope

WITH SOME

FAMILY PREVENTION STUDIES

BY

WILLIAM DIGBY C.I.E.

PORTRAITS MAPS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

POPULAR RE-ISSUE

His "were imperial works and worthy kings"—MILTON

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656



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TO
MY BELOVED MOTHER
WHOSE INTEREST AND SYMPATHY
THROUGH A LONG LIFE
CHEERED AND SUPPORTED
MY FATHER
IN HIS ARDUOUS TASKS
FOR THE BENEFIT OF
HUMANITY
THIS RECORD OF HIS
LIFE AND WORK
IS
DEDICATED



Preface

IN placing before my readers the Memoir of my Father, and his life work for the benefit of India, in its deliverance from the disastrous effects of Famine, as well as its increased prosperity, I have felt that I am only undertaking a task which it was my bounden duty to accomplish to the best of my ability.

So near his heart lay this ever burning question, so fervent were his desires that his schemes for a far more general irrigation of the country should be carried out to the full, and so heart-breaking was the grief to him, as time rolled on, that the absolute fulfilment of his dearest wishes was either postponed, or neglected, that when his long and earnest life had closed, I felt it incumbent upon me to obey the request he had so often made, in his own touching and pathetic way, that I would gather together the various papers and documents which he had left, and make use of them for the benefit of India, and the supplying of its vast needs.

A duty thus inculcated by one so beloved, whose slightest wish had always been a law to me, could only be undertaken in the spirit of loyal obedience, and a true desire to further his highest ideals.



My father was truly an empire maker, as he was an empire lover; no one ever more zealously longed for the spread of England's civilisation, her privileges and her blessings over distant lands where, hidden too often behind the curtain of natural beauty, or surface intellectuality, there lies a hidden depth of misery and darkness, such as we, in our favoured country, can scarcely know.

With regard to India's temporal interests, he always felt that vast quantities of water might be saved from rushing wastefully into the ocean by tank storage and canal distribution, thus both irrigating and navigating the country as a preliminary to all questions of railway locomotion. "First," he would say, "enrich the country, and then lay down railway lines as advisable."

All these points are fully entered into in the book which I have ventured to place before the British public. Careful calculations are given as regards the increase of revenue by these simple means; and when we compare the statements of profit and loss we have to throw into the famine balance the gigantic consideration of the loss of human life, which, after all, is infinitely more precious than any monetary revenue, or the value of funds spent on irrigation works.

So serious is this subject, so vast in its various phases, that it commands from us a definite and diligent enquiry as to the possibility of lessening these dire evils, and effecting a universal improvement throughout our Indian possessions. My father used sometimes to say,—“I am a man of one idea”; but though it was true that the



PREFACE

ix

CSL

question of Indian irrigation was the leading feature of his public life, he had a vast number of other interests, every one of them tending towards the benefit of mankind, and the increased prosperity of our own nation, with its multitude of dependencies, and its ever-widening interests throughout the world. He carried on his own shoulders, as few men do, the weight of the needs of others,—other men's sorrows affecting him as though they were his own; in fact, through sheer sympathy and a strong sense of responsibility, he *felt* them to be his own.

In his ceaseless study of these great considerations he discovered remedies, and his practical nature seemed to show him at once how these remedies were to be applied.

Now that his lips are silenced, and his pen is laid down, I fervently ask that my readers may themselves look into these great questions, and study them from his point of view, in the light of information now freshly placed before them.

With regard to the writing of the book, I have to acknowledge very gratefully the help given to me by Mr. William Digby, C.I.E., the devoted ardour he has shown in the arrangement of some of its chapters, and the information he has collected in support of this great question of irrigation in India, and its consequent prevention of famine.

I also thank Mr. Walch for his kindness in permitting me to use quotations from some of the pages of his book, on *The Engineering Works of the Godavari Delta*, with photographs of both its scenery and irrigation systems,



CSL

PREFACE

and I am indebted to the India Office for latest particulars regarding irrigation canals which have been incorporated in the irrigation and navigation map.

To other friends who have shown their sympathy with me, and have helped in various ways to forward my labours in connection with this volume, I here tender my grateful and lasting thanks.

E. R. HOPE.



Table of Contents

	PAGE
Preface	vii
An Appreciation of Sir Arthur Cotton	3
CHAPTER I	
Family History—A Notable Band of Brothers—Early Days and Characteristics	7
CHAPTER II	
Young Manhood—The Beginnings of Great Issues	14
CHAPTER III	
Arthur Cotton as a Traveller	26
<i>Appendix</i> : Water in Australia	46
CHAPTER IV	
The Beginnings of Great Duties	50
CHAPTER V	
Preparing for the Great Work—The Redemption of the Godavari District	70
CHAPTER VI	
The District of Godavari—Before and After its Transformation	77
<i>Appendix</i> : The Testimony of a Native Indian Official	89



CONTENTS

CHAPTER VII

PAGE

Part I.—The “most Beneficent and Profitable” Irrigation Work in the World : its Inception, its Construction, its Success	93
---	----

Appendices :

Prosperous Households in Godavari	144
The River and the Delta	145
The Approval of Government	146
A Friendly Civilian	147
A Big Gale and a Hard Test	148
A Civilian Estimate of the Work	148
The Benefits, Too Many for Enumeration	149
What was Done in Twelve Months	149
The Chief Civilian Officials' Testimony	149
Part 2.—Lady Cotton's Reminiscences	151

CHAPTER VIII

Indian Family Life—Furlough—Home Life—The Star of India—Retirement	163
---	-----

CHAPTER IX

Earnest Endeavours and Energetic Labours on Behalf of India's Prosperity	184
---	-----

CHAPTER X

Examination in a House of Commons Committee Room—The Parliamentary Committee of 1872	209
A Commons' Debate—Severe Attack—Speeches by Lord George Hamilton	214
[Memorandum in Reply by Sir Arthur Cotton, with Appen- dices A to F]	224
Mr. Henry Fawcett	257
Rt. Hon. John Bright	258
Sir George Campbell	261
General Sir George Balfour	262



CONTENTS

xiii

CSL

PAGE

The Select Committee of 1878 : its Constitution, its Methods, its Result	264
---	-----

Appendices :

Report of the Select Committee	306
Memorandum by Sir A. Cotton on the Report of the Committee	309

CHAPTER XI

Railways <i>versus</i> Irrigation and Navigation Canals	328
---	-----

Appendices :

The Governor-General of India on Irrigation Extension	382
Sir R. Temple on Irrigation Done and To Be Done	384
How Water was Wasted in 1877	386
Obiter Dicta by Sir Geo. Campbell	388
Colonel Fischer on the Grand Central Reservoir, and other matters	393

CHAPTER XII

The Cost of a Famine in Lives and Money	400
---	-----

<i>Appendix :</i> What the 1900 Famine is Costing People and Country	416
--	-----

CHAPTER XIII

Is Famine in India due to an Insufficiency of Rain?	418
---	-----

<i>Appendix :</i> Through the Famine Districts, by Vaughan Nash	427
---	-----

CHAPTER XIV

The Money, Moral, and Material, Value to India of Sir Arthur Cotton's Work	433
---	-----

CHAPTER XV

Work for All India	437
The Ganges Canal : Controversy with Sir Proby Cautley, K.C.B.	469

CHAPTER XVI

Work in England for India	475
-------------------------------------	-----



xiv

CONTENTS

PAGE

CHAPTER XVII

Life in England—Letters from Florence Nightingale, Sir Bartle Frere, Sir Colin Scott Moncrieff, R.E., and others . . .	492
---	-----

CHAPTER XVIII

Many Interests at Home and Abroad	513
<i>Appendix: A Modern Seer and a New Hope for British Agriculture</i> . .	541

CHAPTER XIX

The Mainspring and Secret of Arthur Cotton's Life, Character, and Characteristics	548
--	-----

CHAPTER XX

The Eventide of Life and Peace	560
--	-----



Illustrations and Maps

TO FACE
PAGEGeneral Sir Arthur Cotton, R.E., K.C.S.I. (*Frontispiece*)

Combermere Abbey	7
Sir Arthur Cotton and his Brothers	9
Mother and Father of Sir Arthur Cotton	12
Lieutenant Arthur Cotton, R.E.	16
Gorge of the Godavari—Looking up Stream	77
Dowlaisweram Anicut—from near the Under Sluices	80
Maddur Branch of Anicut	105
Irrigated Lands, after Harvest	109
Sketch Map of the Godavari Delta, showing Irrigation and Navigation Works	122
Head of Main Canal, Eastern Delta	129
Mukkamala Lock	131
A Houseboat for Canal Travel—Eastern India	135
The Gunnaram Aqueduct crossing the Godavari River	141
Pennumantra Bridge, Gostanadi and Velpur Canal	157
Alamur Lock Weir, from below, Coringa Canal	163
Woodcot, Dorking	497
Sir Arthur Cotton (aged 94) standing in front of 6ft. high English Wheat	513
Sir Arthur Cotton (aged 94) standing in front of Maize grown by him in 1896	537
IRRIGATION AND NAVIGATION MAP OF INDIA, prepared by Sir A. Cotton, and brought up to date from statistics at the India Office	<i>in pocket at end of book</i>



CSL

"If we have done our duty at least to this part of India, and have founded a system which will be a source of strength and wealth and credit to us as a nation, it is due to

ONE MASTER MIND,

which, with admirable industry and perseverance, in spite of every discouragement, has worked out this great result. Other able and devoted officers have caught Colonel Cotton's spirit and have rendered invaluable aid under his advice and direction, but for this first creation of genius we are indebted to him alone.

"Colonel Cotton's name will be venerated by millions yet unborn, when many, who now occupy a much larger place in the public view, will be forgotten; but, although it concerns not him, it would be, for our own sake, a matter of regret if Colonel Cotton were not to receive due acknowledgment during his lifetime."—*Minute by the Government of Madras*, SIR CHARLES TREVELYAN, Governor.



An Appreciation of Sir Arthur Cotton

THE biographies of eminent Anglo-Indians constitute a large library in themselves. Probably there is not one of the biographies of which its subject was not worthy of the honour of permanent record. India has afforded unequalled opportunities for the display of the highest altruistic qualities of which our race is capable. "Englishmen and Englishwomen will work, and have worked, for India until they drop."¹ In the foremost rank of such Englishmen, Arthur Thomas Cotton stands second to none. It is no biographer's enthusiasm which declares that he is, without doubt, the greatest benefactor of British birth the Indian people have ever known. More people have had enough to eat day by day, have worn sufficient and comfortable clothing, have lived in good houses, have had something to spare for the conveniences of life, because Sir Arthur Cotton laboured for India, than can be placed to the credit of any other man of whom I have read or heard. Again, I say this is no biassed eulogium. In chapter XIV. of this work will be found, in statistical form, so far as that is possible, what Arthur Cotton's work

¹ Mr. Vaughan Nash, Special Famine Correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian*, in letter dated April, 1900.



AN APPRECIATION OF

represents to the Indian Government and to the people themselves. To that chapter I ask attention if any reader should consider my words overstrained.

Sir Arthur Cotton's influence is ineffaceably stamped on three portions of the eastern coast of the Madras Presidency. What is true of this region might have been true, in a modified measure, of many other parts of India, especially of some of those provinces which now (July, 1900) are the scenes of awful suffering, had Sir Arthur Cotton's ripe experience not been overborne by administrative jealousy and by official unacquaintance with what really could be done by means of irrigation in almost every part of India.

In the homes of many thousands of families in India, living in comfort, "Cōtōn,"¹ with what he did, is an honoured, almost worshipped, entity; in Britain, it is probable that, owing to his manifold activities by voice and pen throughout many years, no other Anglo-Indian has ever been so widely known. A discussion recently took place in a London assemblage on the causes of famines in India. Incidentally, Sir Arthur Cotton's name was mentioned. Subsequently, one of the leading public men of the metropolis remarked: "Sir Arthur Cotton's name has been mentioned. We, here, know Sir Arthur Cotton; we believe in Sir Arthur Cotton and in what he did for India. He came to us here, and he told us what India needs; we want to see his policy prevail."

What Arthur Cotton did in India was sorely needed. What he would have done is still more sorely needed.

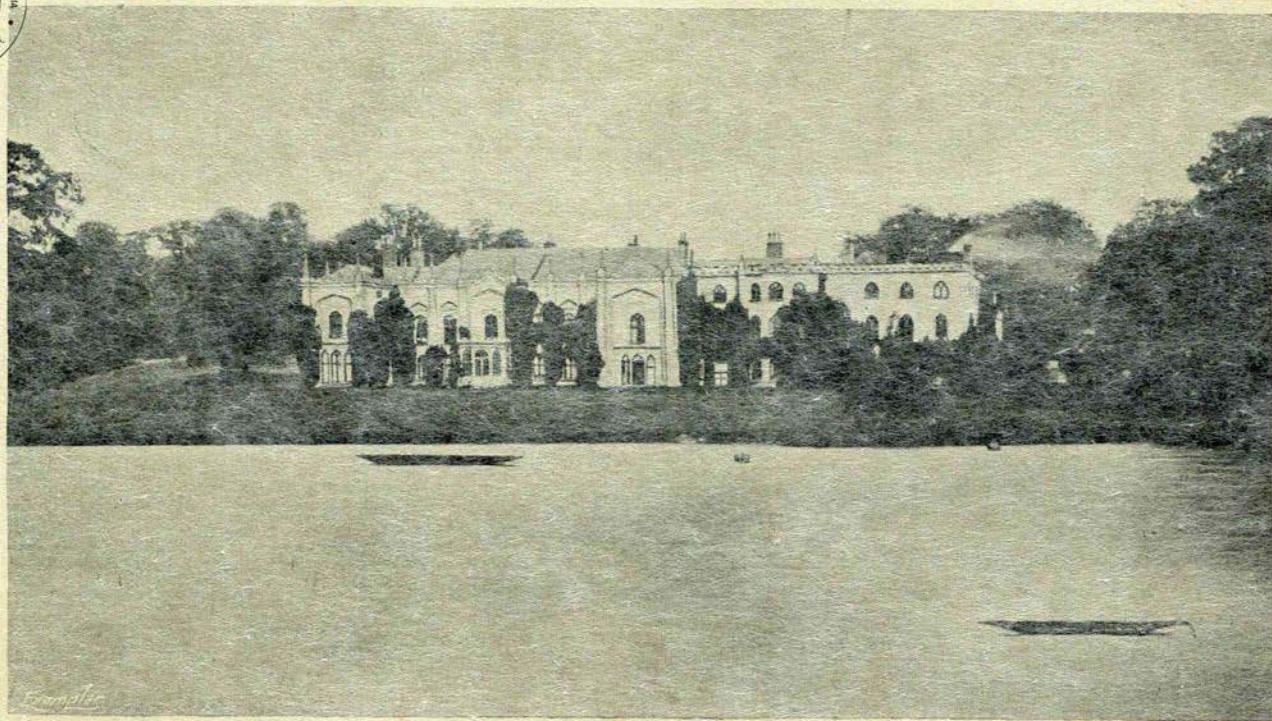
¹ In one of his letters, quoted later, Sir Arthur Cotton asks his correspondent whether the people, to whom reference was made, could really pronounce the short "o," adding that in Northern Madras his name was pronounced as though the "o" were long.



Because his counsel was not followed, again and again have destitution and hideous suffering overtaken vast multitudes, while the progress of one-sixth of the population of the whole world has been arrested. What has been will again be. A few years hence, an even more disastrous famine than that of to-day will afflict our Indian fellow-subjects, a continuing decadence of country and people will prevail, *unless* the readers of this biography, and the English people generally, determine that Sir Arthur Cotton's works shall follow him.

Therefore

is it that this biography is offered to Arthur Cotton's countrymen and countrywomen, with the hope that its narrative of his work and teaching will carry conviction to many minds and produce such beneficent consequences that the present sorrowful condition of India's population shall, so far as widespread irrigation can ensure this, become a matter of regretful historical interest only.



COMBERMERE ABBEY.



CHAPTER I

Family History—A Notable Band of Brothers
—Early Days and Characteristics

GENERAL SIR ARTHUR COTTON, R.E., K.C.S.I., was born on May 15, 1803. He was the tenth son of Mr. Henry Calveley Cotton, who was himself the tenth son of Sir Lynch Cotton, the fourth holder of a baronetcy created, in 1677, in the person of Sir Robert Cotton, K.B., M.P. for Cheshire. The family is of considerable antiquity. As early as the twelfth century, the Abbey of Combermere, with its "surrounding demesne, lands, woods, and timbers," is described by an early historian. In the year 1153, its first abbot was "still surviving." He was followed by other abbots, several of whom were granted fresh privileges and additional lands. In the year 1535, "the site of the monastery, with its church, bell tower, the lake of Combermere, and cemetery, was granted to George Cotton, and Mary his wife, by the King's letters patent," the king being Henry VIII.

Through the handsome Catherine of Beragne the descent of the Cottons may be traced from the Plantagenets. They appear to have served their king and country through several centuries. Sir George Cotton, the second son of John Cotton, of Cotton, in Shropshire, was an esquire of the body to Henry VIII. His younger brother, Sir Richard Cotton, Knight Comptroller of the Household, was a Privy Councillor in the reign of Edward VI. Henry Cotton, younger son of Sir Richard Cotton, was appointed by Queen Elizabeth to the see of Salisbury.

Sir Robert Cotton, grandson of Sir Richard, added



SIR ARTHUR COTTON

largely to the wealth and importance of the family by his marriage with Hester, daughter of Sir Robert Salisbury, of Llewenny, county Denbigh.

Sir Robert Salisbury Cotton, his grandson, is described as "a most frank and hospitable gentleman, and as having dispensed a daily hospitality even more than proverbially Cheshire." His descendant, Sir Stapleton Cotton, distinguished himself in military service in 1817, and received the title of Baron Combermere. Like his kinsman, the subject of this memoir, Sir Stapleton gained his distinction in India. He was the hero of Bhurtpore. He displayed great personal bravery, even wished to lead the storming-party when a breach had been made. The would-be stormer of the breach was Commander-in-Chief in India at the time! He was afterwards Field-Marshal, Constable of the Tower, and Colonel of the 1st Life Guards. This is the testimony which is given to his courage: "Lord Combermere, commonly so careful of the life of the humblest soldier, too imprudent with his own, could with difficulty be restrained from leading the foremost of the stormers of the breach his sappers and miners had made in the walls."

Arthur Cotton was not the only distinguished member of his family. Six of his brothers made their mark in their day, and did useful service for mankind. A portrait of each of them, with Arthur in the centre, faces this page. Of his brothers Sir Arthur has left some record.

Sir Sydney Cotton was a very able officer. He commanded at Peshawur during the Mutiny, and had, as prisoners, five thousand of the mutineers, whom he had disarmed. Among his other services was the raising of the 21st Lancers. When he had been some months in command at Peshawur, a friend of mine sent one of the senior officers of the Adjutant-General's Department at Calcutta, and asked: "How is Sydney Cotton getting on in Peshawur?" The reply was: "This is the way he is getting on. Before he went there we never had an hour's



SIR ARTHUR COTTON AND HIS BROTHERS.



freedom from anxiety, night or day, about the place. Since he went there we have never had one hour's anxiety." Happily he had to work with two of the finest men in India at the time: Sir Herbert Edwardes, the Commissioner, and General Lushington. Peshawur was at that time the station on which more depended than upon any other. It was one of the principal providential facts in the Mutiny that the defence was in the hands of three such officers as those I have named.

In the second volume of Bosworth-Smith's *Life of Lord Lawrence*, the references to General Cotton are many. John Lawrence found in the intrepid commander at Peshawur one who seconded all the stern measures which the civil ruler felt necessary. The manner in which incipient mutiny was checked by some of the disaffected regiments being sent to outpost duty "against an imaginary invasion of the Mohmunds," or nearly marched off their legs "in their amazing race for Delhi," was masterly. Lord Lawrence's biographer remarks that it was fortunate for Lawrence himself that he had such trustworthy coadjutors. ". . . in Edwardes, in Nicholson, in Cotton, at Peshawur, he had admirable lieutenants, men with whom to think was to act, to see a danger was to overcome it, men who worked behind his back as hard as, perhaps harder than, they would have worked under his eye."¹ Again: "No officer could have managed better than Brigadier S. Cotton, and if he is superseded, I do not know what will happen."²

One most important matter provided occasion for a difference of opinion between Lawrence on the one hand, and Cotton, Edwardes, and others, on the other. The peril which existed while Delhi remained untaken led Lawrence to look ahead, and to seek permission from Lord Canning to abandon Peshawur if he thought well. While he was in correspondence with the Viceroy, he wrote to Edwardes: "Pray think of what I have said, and consult Brigadiers

¹ *Life of Lord Lawrence*. By R. Bosworth-Smith, M.A., vol. ii. p. 45.

² *Ibid.*, p. 69.



S. Cotton and Nicholson, but nobody else. No man will retrace his steps more unwillingly than myself. But there is a point when to hold on savours more of obstinacy than of wisdom." General Cotton was not convinced, nor were the other officers consulted. They could not conceive that, under any circumstances, it was wise to abandon Peshawur. They resisted the civil head of affairs by argument and persuasion. Lord Canning took a like view with those who were for holding on, and, on August 7, telegraphed to Lawrence, "Hold on to Peshawur to the last." By this time, however, the tide had turned against the mutineers, and Lawrence no longer urged even the possibility of retirement. It may be interesting to add that the Prince Consort, at Windsor, said to Sir John Lawrence, "I have read your paper on the abandonment of Peshawur, and entirely agree with you."

Richard Lynch Cotton was educated at the Charterhouse, and became an undergraduate at Worcester College in Oxford. In 1815 he was elected to a Fellowship at Oriel, and in 1823 became Vicar of Denchworth. He resigned this living on being appointed Provost of the college by the Duke of Wellington, who was then Chancellor of the University.

Charles Conyers Cotton was, for many years, in the Civil Service of India, retiring when he married Miss Egerton, of Oulton Hall. He lived at Knolton Hall, in Cheshire.

Hugh Calvey Cotton worked with his brother Arthur in the Indian Irrigation Works, and eventually had the sole charge of the Kurnool Anicut.

Admiral Francis Vere Cotton retired early from his naval command, and lived during the latter years of his life in Shropshire.

General Frederick Cotton, C.S.I., was the youngest of the brothers, and is the only one now surviving of that large family. He was in the Royal Engineers in India, and assisted his brother in the Tanjore, Godavari, and other works. He was born in 1807, is a retired Major-General, H.E.I.C.S., and received the Companionship of



GENERAL FRED. COTTON ON RIVER WATER 11

the Star of India in 1868 for his meritorious service in the Public Works Department. He is ninety-two years of age, and, though suffering from impaired sight, is still mentally alert, proof of which may be seen in an article from his pen in *Blackwood's Magazine* for May, 1900. It is entitled, "Value of the Water of the Great Rivers of India." The good sense with which he deals with this question, and with the prospects of future extension of irrigation, is most marked.¹

It was an interesting sight to see these brothers together when they happened to meet, as they did occasionally, at some family gathering. They were a noble body of men, handsome, clever, brilliant in conversation; their callings were useful and without a blemish; not one of them had

¹ Much will be found in later chapters concerning the great use to which Indian rivers may be put. On this point the veteran Engineer remarks: "We have an example, set us by some engineer of former ages, which is so to the point of what is wanted at the present day that I must quote it. Quite in the south of the Peninsula there is a river—the Viga, if I remember right—the water of which was so admirably utilized that only in exceptional years did a drop of it reach the sea. The river was dammed here and there, and the channels, leading the water off for irrigation, had tanks to store water for the perfecting of the crop after the freshes ended, which is exactly the principle on which the great rivers should be treated as far as possible. There has been an idea of late that if water is to be stored it will be necessary to find sites for enormous lakes in which to collect it. It is true that the larger the reservoirs are the cheaper the cost of storing water will be. But, if the value of the water is what I hope I have proved it to be, that is not the first consideration. To explain how sites may be formed everywhere, I would ask my readers to look at the Trigonometrical survey map of the Peninsula of India, where they will find that almost any shallow valley is made, by an embankment across it, into a retaining reservoir. These tanks, so called, being dependent upon the local rains, are valueless in seasons of drought, and, in consequence, do nothing to secure the Peninsula from famine. This would not be the case if a stream, led from a never-failing river, ran through the country to supply them. Indeed, our great hydraulic engineer, Sir Arthur Cotton, had a scheme for making such an artificial river to secure the supply of these tanks. But I only call attention to the possibility to show that, as every part of India has its valleys, there is no good reason why water should not be stored on the old native river Viga system in all parts of the country."

SIR ARTHUR COTTON

a personal enemy, so honourable had been their lives through all the vicissitudes of their different careers. Some of them, however, because of the strength and honesty of their convictions, had very determined opponents, Arthur in particular. But his most inveterate opponent, who, perhaps, was the late Sir George Campbell, K.C.S.I., testified to his great ability and the nobleness of his aims.

Arthur's early life, as well as his future career, owed much to the careful training and admirable judgment of his mother. Mrs. Calveley Cotton was a very remarkable woman, strong both mentally and physically.

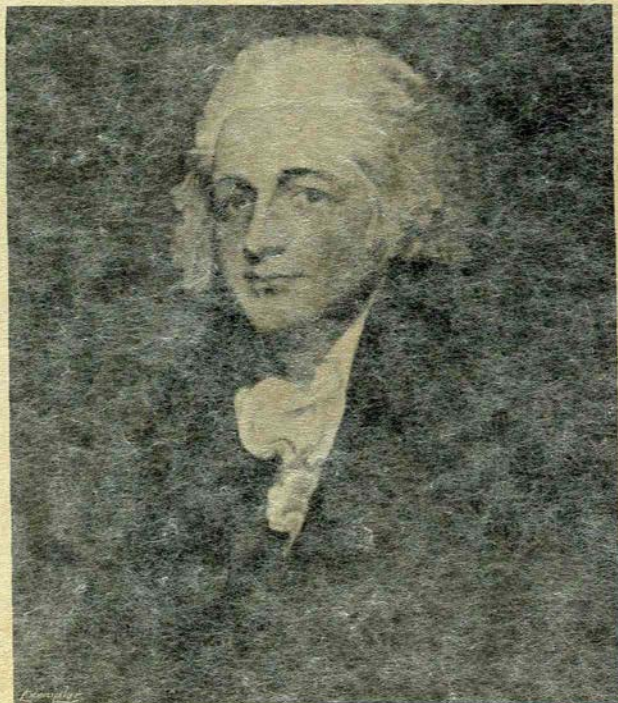
Arthur's bent of mind was curiously shadowed forth in his earliest days in certain traits of character and conduct which were observed by one of his sisters. She and her mother were one day walking in a town with young Arthur by their side, when they remarked on the strange look of the water running in the gutter, wondering what could have given it the colour of blood. Suddenly Arthur disappeared. Hours after the little fellow returned home, having traced to its source the cause of the discoloured stream,—dye works, some distance away. She remembered, too, that often in the nursery he would play with his bread and milk, instead of eating it. When asked the cause of his delay, he replied, "I am making canals."

His brothers, also, remembered that when they were out walking on a rainy day, Arthur would be continually lagging behind, busily tracing small channels in the road with the point of his stick; he would divert the rain-water through the channels, making systems of communication between them.

As an instance of his fearlessness, we are told that, when a boy at school, he had a younger brother (George, one of those who died early) with him, who, unfortunately, incurred the dislike of the head-master, and was bullied and ill-treated in such a way that he was losing both health and spirits, much to Arthur's distress. Finding no means of relief, and having to submit to the rule of the school,



MRS. HENRY CALVELEY COTTON
(Mother of Arthur Cotton).



MR. HENRY CALVELEY COTTON
(Father of Arthur Cotton).



A YOUTHFUL CADET

CSL

13

which was that every boy should place his home letters upon the master's desk before despatching them, the elder brother wrote a full account of the grievances to which the younger one was subjected by the cruelty of a master, and described the effect they were having upon him ; this done, he placed the open letter upon the master's desk for inspection. The master read apparently every word of its contents and allowed the letter to be sent, evidently cowed by the boy's decision and firmness of resolution.

At the age of fifteen he obtained a cadetship for India, and joined the military seminary at Addiscombe, near Croydon, where the cadets intended for the Artillery and Engineer service of the East India Company then received their education.



CHAPTER II

Young Manhood—The Beginnings of Great Issues

ARTHUR COTTON was a boy of only sixteen and a half when, towards the end of 1819, he left Addiscombe, after a career marked by much diligence in study and uniform good conduct. Nowadays few careers are begun so early as was his. More than that, when begun, they are not often pursued with assiduity. Life is taken much more easily by the young at the end of the century than it was at the beginning. This is becoming matter of common complaint and is engaging literary attention simultaneously in London and New York at the time these pages are being revised for the printer. "There is no doubt," says one distinguished writer, "that a very large number of young persons are not willing to work hard. They are anxious to do, in return for their pay, just as little as they can." These pages will show that Arthur Cotton's strenuous nature had no sympathy with any disposition of that kind. So well had he worked at Addiscombe, that he obtained an appointment in the Royal Engineers without having to undergo any examination. To him an examination would have been as naught. But the honour of admission without paying a toll was his, and he deserved it. I believe this is the only instance on record of admission into the scientific corps of Royal Engineers being obtained without an examination.

Second-Lieutenant Cotton was stationed at Chatham, but he was not allowed to remain long at the Depot. In



a short time (on the 31st of January, 1820) he was posted to the Ordnance Survey in Wales. Not unnaturally his early experience was subsequently often in his mind. He was at the most impressionable of ages. His duties took him on foot from place to place, through what was at that time a very wild and lonely country, sparsely populated, and difficult of access on account of the fewness of roads. His surveying tour was successful. He presented an admirable report, covering all the phases of the work entrusted to him, and received high praise for what he had done.

For a year and a half he remained at Chatham, and, in May, 1821, when he was just eighteen, having been appointed to service in India, he embarked for Madras, at which city he arrived in September, after what, for those days, was not a long voyage, extending, as it did, over only four months;—now, the globe may be circled in a little more than half that time. He was attached to the office of the Chief Engineer for the Presidency, and spent nearly a year acquainting himself with the character of the public works he was likely to be called upon to undertake.

In May, 1822, office work came to an end; Lieut. Cotton received the appointment of Assistant to Captain Fullerton, Superintending Engineer of the Tank Department, Southern Division. A most responsible duty was assigned to him, nothing less than the survey of the Paumben Pass, a narrow channel in the causeway of rocks, which forms what is known as Adam's Bridge, between the mainland of India and the island of Ceylon—a bridge of religious and historic importance to Hindus, inasmuch as across it Hanumān, the Monkey-god,¹ led his forces for the conflict with Rāvana and the Rākshasas, which occurred in Ceylon. This was the beginning of a work upon which, at a later date, the young Engineer found useful occupation; the passage now allows of vessels of a few hundred tons

¹ Hanumān himself jumped from India to Ceylon at one bound; his followers found the rocks, which a young Englishman, in after ages, was to remove, useful in following their chief.

SIR ARTHUR COTTON

passing through. Fifty years after, Sir James Elphinstone, Bart., M.P., made a strenuous effort in the House of Commons to secure imperial funds for the enlarging of the passage to such an extent that ocean-going steamers for Madras and Calcutta and the East Coast ports could reach their destination without passing around Ceylon. Again and again, during the course of the agitation, it seemed as if the work might be taken in hand, but, eventually, the effort was in vain; nothing was accomplished. One notable engineering work still awaits its engineer. Little beyond survey work was done by the young Lieutenant in 1822, as he was recalled to the supervision of tank repairs in the districts of Coimbatore, Madura, Tinnevely, Trichinopoly, and Tanjore, where was laid the foundation of that complete knowledge of water—its storage and distribution—which was to bear such wonderful fruit there and in other parts of the Presidency.

Lieutenant Cotton soon after proceeded to headquarters, where he remained until 1824. During this time his outdoor work was chiefly in connection with the erection of military buildings at St. Thomas' Mount, a military station a few miles south of Madras.

The first Burmese war was pending, and troops were being drafted from India to the Land of Pagodas. Among those who expressed a desire to join the expedition was Lieutenant Cotton, who, then only twenty, proceeded to the front. He was associated for some time with the gunboats, reconnoitring, fighting, and eventually with the storming of the fortresses of Mergui and Tavoy. He was engaged in defending Rangoon, and afterwards took part in the assault on the stockades of Kakien. Here he distinguished himself by taking the lead, as the only engineer officer with one of the columns of the main army. He led the storming party against seven forts and stockades; he served also in the trenches, and was engaged in all the most notable actions of that time.

One of these exploits is thus described in his own words:—



LIEUTENANT ARTHUR COTTON, R.E.



"The place taken was Mergui, the southern fort of the coast of Tenasserim, in Burma, not far from the north of Penang. The force was detached from Rangoon about August 24, and sailed direct to Tavoy, in the centre of the coast of Tenasserim, which surrendered, and we then sailed to Mergui, which is beautifully situated on rising ground some miles up the river, where there is good anchorage for ships. One face of the fort is on the river bank, with batteries which were silenced by the men-of-war, while the transports were at anchor half a mile below. The west face of the fort was built, on a line perpendicular to the river, of solid teak timber twelve or fifteen feet high, and had a gate about a quarter of a mile from the river. The force was landed near the shipping, and, according to the utter want of anything like military order usual at that time, the men—soldiers, sepoy, and pioneers—all rushed up to the gate without any arrangement.

"When we reached the gate, exposed to the fire from some flankers, I found there was only one ladder at the spot, which I planted beside the gate, and looked round for others, when a young officer of the 60th called to two or three officers and men by name to follow him, and leading them in—all four—he dropped down on the inside, cut off from all possible help. I looked for more ladders, and was planting a second against the gate, when it was opened by our fine fellow inside, and we rushed in, and carried the whole place in half an hour, capturing the Governor.

"All this without a single order from the officer in command, and if we had not had the most contemptible enemy in the world, we should at least have suffered terrible loss. As it was, our loss was only thirty or forty men.

"The splendid young officer who led, and who would now, of course, have been a V.C., was never mentioned; nor do I believe the staff officer, who wrote the report, knew what had happened, for he was not at the gate, I think. This is a specimen of the whole war. Nobody could now believe the way in which things were then done. Every loss we suffered was solely from the want of any



SIR ARTHUR COTTON

CSL

sort of preparation or military arrangement. The Burmese are the greatest cowards in the world, and had not an idea of stratagem. They never thought of fighting us in the open. When the Governor of Tavoy, who was on board one of our vessels, saw the men rush up to the fort, as if it were play, he threw down the telescope, saying, 'If that's the way you fight, who can stand before you?' Then he went and hid himself in his cabin."

It will be readily realized that if in actual fighting such loose arrangements prevailed, in commissariat and general control of supplies the defects would be very bad. They were bad indeed. Great hardships were suffered by all the force. Not only were the provisions scant in quantity, but they were exceedingly bad in quality. The sick in hospital died by hundreds owing to the want of suitable food.

My father, even after a lapse of so many years, retained detailed memories of those days of peril. He used to tell us that once he was with a small party of men every one of whom was shot down except himself. Several officers, who were his contemporaries, have told us how one day, when the fight was at its hottest, he was seen alone leading a troop of men into the thick of the battle, cheering them on, and cutting his way through the enemy's flank as he went.

It was whilst stationed in Burma that he acquired a dislike to card-playing, a dislike which lasted all his life. He was invited by one of the principal officers to dine with him. This officer was a man of high standing in the army, and much looked up to by the younger men. After dinner Lieutenant Cotton was asked to play. Although he had been well accustomed to the card table in his parent's home in Cheshire, he had never played for money, but being a very youthful subaltern he accepted this invitation as a command, and thought it his duty to play. The more he played, the more deeply he lost, and when he rose from the table he was a poorer man by twenty pounds. His pay was very small, but he had in his possession bank-notes of that exact value, sent to him by his father in a



recent letter, that he might purchase some necessities which otherwise he would have wanted—and wanted in vain. For the moment he could hardly realize the fact that every penny of his money had now to be handed over to his superior officer; however, so it was. Needing the money very badly, he greatly regretted this loss. But he had lost. He might have refused to play, but having consented to take a hand, he had no resource save to part with the much cherished bank-notes, and, of course, he paid. However, he had learned his lesson, and vowed that, so long as he lived, he would never play cards again. This resolution was a lasting one; he could never bear the sight of cards in the house, and never allowed his children to play with them.

Lieutenant Cotton returned to Madras after the Burmese campaign was ended. During the voyage, while sitting on the deck of the ship one evening, admiring the sea and the sky illuminated with stars, the thought struck him forcibly: "Who made these worlds? Upon whose handiwork am I gazing now? It is the work of God, the great Creator." He had never been what is called a religious man, and had never specially studied his Bible. This thought so impressed him that it brought naturally with it the practical enquiry: "If there be a great Creator, if He made the world, the sun, the moon, and the stars, what do I know of Him? Has He ever spoken? If so, what are His words? The Bible is the Word of God. I ought to read it; I should like to know what He says."

There and then, on the impulse of the moment, he went into the saloon where the ship's officers and some of the passengers were playing cards. As he entered, he asked the question: "Is there a Bible on board the ship?"

A loud shout of laughter greeted this question; he was asked if he were going to turn religious. However, on again making his request, it was suggested that some one present possessed a Bible, which was packed in the bottom of his box. It was brought and handed over to him. It may be said, from that hour until the last day of his life,



SIR ARTHUR COTTON

CSL

his chief delight was in the study of the Scriptures. He pored over the Bible that was lent him ; the rest of the voyage was full of the deepest interest, as he drank in its new life-giving truth, new and precious to him.

The result of this experience, and the change that now took place in his life and thought, were in no sense transient. His future career was in every way influenced by it ; his hours, both of toil and pleasure, were marked by a sense of the presence of the Unseen Saviour. His whole nature was characterized by devotion to his Bible, which he always spoke of as "The Word of God," to the teachings of which everything must be subordinated. His motives, pursuits, and interests were all coloured by his prevailing study.

On reporting himself, after arrival in Madras, Lieutenant Cotton was appointed to act as Superintendent Engineer, Central Division, Tank Department. Early in the following year he was confirmed in the appointment. His duties were of the same character as those he performed before he proceeded to Burma, the inspection and repair of Irrigation Works, but now with more of personal responsibility than before. The arduous nature of the work, towards the end of 1827, led to a breakdown of health in the shape of an attack of jungle fever and inflammation of the lungs ; short leave to the Neilgherries, the chief mountain range in Southern India, was granted. Leave over and health restored, the young Engineer was ordered to the Paumben Pass to make a thorough survey of it, and to commence trifling improvements. Work was really begun, but only in a tentative way. A mere pittance of £300 to £400 was granted, but with this small sum the worst obstacles in the channel were removed and the Pass deepened two or three feet.

After eight years' service, he was promoted to the rank of Captain. Then opportunity offered for the beginning of one of the great works which will, through all time, be associated with the name of Arthur Cotton. He was appointed to the separate charge of the Cauveri Irriga-



tion, which formed part of the Southern Division, with oversight and responsibility in regard to the Paumben works. Special study was given to the needs of the Tanjore district, and the moods of the Coleroon River were regarded in almost every possible light, with the view of making that great stream of the utmost possible service. The need for wide-reaching works was exceptionally great. Absolute ruin stared Tanjore and the adjoining districts in the face. "Since the completion of the scheme they are reckoned the richest parts of the Presidency, and Tanjore returns the largest revenue [of any district] in the Empire. Land under the silt-charged waters of the Kistna yields at the most Rs. 8 per acre, while in Tanjore the State often receives twice as much."¹

Plans for the earlier works were evolved and received sanction. They were the product of 1828 and 1829, and on the first of January, 1830, the great work was begun by Lieutenant Fred. Cotton, younger brother of the Superintending Engineer, cutting through the Grand Anicut to construct the sluices. Having got the work started Captain Cotton had perforce to surrender to repeated attacks of jungle fever, and obtained sick leave to Europe, delivering over charge during January, 1830. He was away from his sphere of labour for two and a half years, twelve months of which were spent on the return journey.²

When he returned to England life had a new aspect for him ; he saw everything in a fresh light. Hunting, card-playing, dancing, and other amusements and recreations, which formed a great portion of the interests of those among whom he spent his leisure time, were distasteful to him. He used often to describe what he felt when asked to join in these amusements, the hollowness of such a life, the way in which it pained him to see reasonable men and women thus employing their time ; and I have heard some of his relatives describe him as

¹ *Irrigated India*, p. 158, by the Hon. A. Deakin.

² See Chapter iii. ; "Sir Arthur Cotton as a Traveller."

SIR ARTHUR COTTON

sitting thoughtfully and quietly in one corner of the room while the others were engaged in various ways. The fact was, that he was seeking the Higher Life; he longed to know more of the true foundations of belief; he wanted to consecrate his energies to the Lord Who had so manifested Himself to his heart; his sole enquiry was: "How shall I live my life for Him? What shall I do for His glory and for the benefit of men?"

These questions he felt could not be answered amidst the county society in which he was then living. So, making his own choice, as usual, he went to a village in Oxfordshire, where one of his brothers, an earnest and devoted Christian, was a clergyman of the Church of England and a devoted student of Scripture. There my father remained for a time, helping him in his parish work.

So strongly had Captain Cotton impressed himself and his views in regard to the Cauveri upon the authorities that, despite his prolonged leave, his position was kept open for him, and he resumed charge in the autumn of 1832. The energy with which he threw himself into his duties may be judged from the fact that he had his completed project for the two Coleroon anicuts before the Government and sanction obtained in time for the preliminary works to be finished before the monsoon freshes in June occurred. What the work of the next half-dozen years really meant—alike to the district in which the Superintendent Engineer served and to his own reputation—requires separate treatment. It may suffice to state that prolonged and devoted toil brought about another breakdown in health. Complete change was again necessary, and, mindful of all the pleasure and strength he derived from a southern clime, Captain Cotton turned his steps towards Tasmania.¹ His visit on this occasion was destined to have important consequences upon the whole of his after life; there he was to find the partner of his

¹ The Service Rules at that time prevented his going again to England, and his choice lay between South Africa and Australia.



remaining days, the true, the loving, the cherished, companion in every scene through which he subsequently passed.

Captain Cotton was again in Hobart Town. One day as he was walking with his host, Captain Beecher, they saw a young lady coming towards them. Captain Beecher said to him: "Now I am going to introduce you to a girl whom I should really like you to know." He then told him of the self-denying, earnest, Christian life of his young friend, what a blessing she was in her own home, and how devoted and kind to the sick and poor living in the outskirts of the town. At this moment she came up to them: Captain Cotton was introduced, and he there and then made up his mind "if God would give him so great a gift, he would marry that girl." The young lady was Miss Elizabeth Learmonth, the daughter of Thomas Learmonth, Esq., a gentleman who had become a large landed proprietor in Australia, but who was at that time living with his family in Tasmania.

Her gentle smile and attractive manner won his heart at once; they met day after day. She found in him just what her heart needed—a wise, Christian, sympathising friend, who could help her in every way she desired.

After this, the accident described on pp. 38–39 made additional sick leave necessary, as Captain Cotton's health had been much impaired; he had to spend another year in the colony. Before the end of that time he and Miss Learmonth were engaged. The state of his health was the only objection in the mind of her parents to their union; of this they said, quite gravely: "To all appearance he won't live two years." Over these fears they often laughed in after life, especially when the day for keeping their golden wedding drew near.

So he returned to Madras alone, but only for a short time, the doctors saying that a longer rest and stay in the fine climate of Tasmania was necessary for him. October, 1841, saw him again in the island, and the marriage took place on the 29th of that month.

SIR ARTHUR COTTON

After another year and a half, spent in Tasmania, Captain and Mrs. Cotton returned to India, their voyaging made happier by the presence of a little daughter, two months old.

Two extracts from letters, written by him at this time, may be made. One gives Captain Cotton's ideas about books suitable for a Christian's reading.

"I wish," writes Captain Cotton, "to remind you of one thing, that it would be well, so far as you can judge or ascertain, for you to read none but first-rate books: I mention this, as it may not perhaps occur to you. If we were led into a treasury, and told to help ourselves, why should we fill our pockets with silver, when there was a heap of gold by its side? 'Take unto you the whole armour' (Eph. vi. 13). Naturally we seek for all sorts of things to arm ourselves with: the favour of great men, health, shutting our eyes to the light—anything but the armour of God—things which, so far from being armour themselves, are so vain that no armour can preserve them; nothing but the armour of God—that to which we are directed in His Word—can stand in the evil day. Let us hear what it is—'Having your loins girt about with truth.' The first thing that is done in hot climates, to prepare for great fatigues, is to wind something round the body to support it; for strength is the first thing required."

Again, to the same correspondent:—

"We arrived here (in Tasmania) without trouble; and found a home ready provided for us, with everything we could want. We can remain in this house for some time, and have almost arranged to take a little farm of Mr. D——'s, adjoining the Parsonage. It has a small cottage on it, is capable of irrigation, and has nearly every qualification that I wanted. I believe we shall be able to take possession of it at once, and as I have one engine already complete and put together, I can at once begin to irrigate. There is a garden in full cultivation with fruit trees."

There the first year of the married life of my parents



EARLY MARRIED LIFE

CSL
25

was spent in great happiness. My narrative will now go back to incidents, some of which happened prior to my father's marriage,—his various voyages and journeys, all of which I have gathered into one chapter.

21910



CHAPTER III

Arthur Cotton as a Traveller

SEVENTY years ago it was possible to take things more leisurely than is now conceivable. Those were unhurried days; such days are never likely to return. My father's health was re-established by the rest and recreation he found in England; he was eager once more to be at work. Yet he could calmly contemplate an overland journey to India, which differed vastly from the two days' rapid run from London to Brindisi, and water journeying all the rest of the way. Our traveller zig-zagged through France and Switzerland, visited the Holy Land, crossed the Syrian desert with an Arab caravan, sojourned in Persia and at Bagdad, and made some of the most lasting and valued friendships of his life. He has left on record, in a number of letters to his relatives, entertaining glimpses of his travel-experiences. In the altered circumstances of travelling to-day they are of special interest.

Arthur's first letter was from Namur, reached by way of Ostend. He had proceeded thence to Bruges by the broad canal, handsomely bordered with trees and kept in beautiful order, in a boat extremely well fitted up. This is a mode of travel now unknown. Yet it had many charms. But for such an easy and quiet manner of journeying it is probable that Robert Browning could not have taken his ailing bride to sunny Italy and a new lease of life. From Bruges, my father travelled to



Ghent and Brussels, crossing and inspecting the field of Waterloo, on which he remarks with characteristic acumen :—

“ With the help of a book we had with us we made out the site of the battle perfectly. It appeared to me the finest piece of ground for a general action that could be imagined ; there was sufficient variety of level to show clearly the state of the field throughout, and at the same time not so much broken as to prevent any army from being used with full effect.”

From Geneva to Lyons and other regions, and so by way of Avignon to Marseilles, he leisurely proceeded. Much of the country was of a dreary character, rocky and barren, and reminded him vividly of the worst parts of India.

“ A very stony, bare, country with many low, rocky, hills quite destitute of vegetation, and several of them with old fortifications on them, like the very small Polygar forts in the Carnatic. If it had had the advantage of a few clumps of trees near the villages it would have been exactly like the worst parts of Coimbatore and Mysore.” The advantage apparently was with the Indian scenery.

When at Marseilles he was told of the quarantine harbour formed by a breakwater uniting two islands five miles from the coast. He was not able to visit this work, though anxious to do so ; ever on the watch for that which would help him in India, he wanted to see the breakwater so as to obtain a “hint with respect to the Madras Roads.” His mind, it will be seen, was already anticipating the project, which he afterwards initiated, of a breakwater at Madras.

Society at Alexandria he found to be “an odd mixture of English, French, Italians, and various compounds of these people, with Greeks, Syrians, and others, some sitting on their heels, some on the ground, and some on their proper points of support ; all the males had pipes or cigars in their mouths, and some had large beards, and wore the Arab dress.” “ It makes me quite sick,” he adds,



SIR ARTHUR COTTON

CSL

"to see Englishmen and Christians ashamed of their own dress and customs." The town, miserable place as it was then, had, however, "many beauties in his eyes, for everything looked like India."

From Alexandria he proceeded, again by canal, to the Nile; thence to Cairo, after a voyage of one hundred and twenty-five miles in six days. The Nile, he says, was "nearly full, and level with the surface of the country, which has a fine effect, but, in point of size, the river is nothing, not more than from three hundred to seven hundred yards broad, and the other branch is much smaller." Still comparing everything with the standard of India, he remarks: "Englishmen here are nearly in the same circumstances as in India; the Pasha treats them as well as possible, and, in general, all in authority do the same."

Of the Pyramids he expresses the disappointment so frequently felt as to their apparent diminutiveness. There is nothing with which to compare them. "There is," he remarks, "no high ground in their neighbourhood, so that they stand 'quite independent,' as C—— would observe. I could not, except once or twice for a moment, perceive that they were above thirty or forty feet high. The illusion is so complete and so extraordinary that, though I had heard of it, both respecting the Pyramids and also other stupendous objects of a similar kind, I could not have imagined it possible unless I had experienced it myself."

I was travelling in Egypt, in 1894, when my mother wrote: "Your letter of March 8 came this morning—such a treat to us both. Your father has such lovely, delightful, recollections of desert air and desert life, although his travels were not made under such comfortable circumstances as yours. He had no opportunity either of seeing the wonders you are seeing, having to keep with his caravan."

Arthur Cotton returned through the Nile delta to Alexandria. He carefully examined the system of irri-



gation there employed, and found it far inferior to irrigation in India.

After a long detention at Alexandria he embarked for Beyrout in an Italian brig, arriving there on January 4, 1833. A party was formed to proceed to Jerusalem, consisting of a young Pole on his way to Bagdad, a Danish missionary thoroughly acquainted with Syria, an Irishman born at Malta, a Dutchman, and Michael Trad, a young Syrian; "and it was of this hodge-podge," my father observes, "that an Arab who came to see us at an inn on the road asked if we were not all brothers—we were so much alike." He continues: "We had no want of languages among us, and found occasion at different times for Arabic, English, Spanish, Italian, Latin, Greek, Hebrew, French, and Hindustani; such is the variety of visitors to this place."

The party voyaged along the coast to Jaffa, and so by a roundabout route to Jerusalem. Afterwards he passed through Samaria, making a *détour* to take in Mount Carmel, and so to Damascus. He says: "I was glad to enter upon lands where I knew our Lord Himself had passed before me; almost every place was remarkable for some transaction in which the hand of God had especially appeared." In the vicinity of Mount Carmel the travellers experienced a tremendous storm, from which they found refuge in a convent on the mountain, and stayed there in wretched weather for two days. He commented on the so-called Holy Places at and near Jerusalem, saying: "Lies and absurdities and idolatry meet you at every step." "However," he adds, "forgetting these abominations" (alluding especially to the pretended issue of fire from the Sepulchre), "and remembering that here, indeed, our Saviour paid the price of my forgiveness, that this is the place where alone God has dwelt in a visible shape, and where our Saviour will again appear, as was positively declared at the time of His Ascension, it is full of interest. I went to the top of the Mount of Olives; on one side I saw the Dead Sea, the most decided mark that God is



CSL

SIR ARTHUR COTTON

not unconcerned in what we are doing, and, on the other, Jerusalem, showing, in its degraded state, the consequence of rejecting the Saviour."

It has already been stated that one of the travellers was a young Syrian gentleman, in whom the missionaries in Syria were much interested, as he had decided tendencies towards the adoption of Christianity. He had a great friend, Assad Shidiak, like himself a member of one of the old families of the Lebanon, who held an appointment in a Maronite monastery, but had received the truth of the gospel in its simplicity, and had written a book on the subject. His influence and the teaching of the missionaries had told on Michael, who was of a very amiable disposition and much attached to some of the missionaries.

It was thought that the journey to Jerusalem and Damascus, which Captain Cotton was taking in company with the missionary, Mr. Nicolayson, might be helpful to Michael, who joined them as interpreter. Somewhere on the way to Jerusalem, a Major Skinner joined the party, and they travelled together, Michael making himself of the greatest use to them by his pleasant, ready, tact and kindly way of ingratiating himself with the Arabs and in smoothing over difficulties. Probably this Major Skinner was the English officer who, as a roadmaker, has left his mark on Ceylon only less emphatically than my father has left his on Indian deltas.

Some weeks had been spent in Jerusalem, and the party went to Damascus. Captain Cotton and Major Skinner were the first Europeans to ride into the city in Frankish clothes. The country had been in a very lawless state, and there were fears of an outbreak, but Ibrahim Pasha's strong rule was beginning to be felt, and no disturbance occurred. The head of the fanatical party was executed by Ibrahim's orders during Captain Cotton's visit.

While they were at Damascus, Michael heard that his friend, Assad Shidiak, had suffered much persecution in the monastery for his faith, and had actually been put to death there. A young English merchant in the city,



named Todd, was much moved by Michael's distress, and laid the matter before Ibrahim Pasha, who at once offered him an escort of cavalry. He went direct to the monastery, and demanded admittance. Mr. Todd and the soldiers searched the place, the monks putting them off in vain with excuses, saying Shidiak had died of fever and had been buried. At last one old monk came to Mr. Todd and told him that Shidiak had been his loved friend, and he would show the niche in which he had been walled up, and for some time kept alive. He took Mr. Todd to the place, and pointed out where the wall had been broken down to take out the body, the stones still being about as when the workmen had finished their work. The monks were most subservient, offering refreshments to the escort as well as to Mr. Todd. The latter's reply was: "We will neither eat nor drink in this house on which the curse of God rests. He has seen your murder of His faithful servant." There had been a hope that they might have been in time to deliver the captive, but he had been some time dead.

From Damascus the party had planned to proceed to Bagdad, and were arranging for camels and horses, when Sherif Bey, the governor under Ibrahim Pasha, begged to be allowed to provide an escort and make all arrangements for them, the journey being a most dangerous one. This courtesy they gladly accepted. The Bey put them in charge of a sheikh, who had recently brought a large caravan from Bagdad, and was returning. He was a remarkable man, both in appearance and manners, who had frequently travelled to India with horses, remaining there until they were sold; so that he knew Europeans, and took great interest in the party thus placed under his charge.

They reached Bagdad in safety. The sheikh took them to sleep at his own house the first night. The next morning Captain Cotton went to the Mission House, where Mr. Groves, Mr. Parnell (afterwards Lord Congleton), and Mr. Cronin had been for two or three years.



SIR ARTHUR COTTON

CSL

The details of the desert journey are to be found in a letter to his mother, which my father sent from Bagdad on May 11, 1833. It more than justifies quotation in full, and was as follows:—

MY DEAR MOTHER,—

My last was dated Damascus, so you see I am making progress towards India, though not so rapidly as might be. After many delays and contradictory pieces of advice, we at length left that place, on the 3rd April, in company with a small caravan, and, after twenty-four days' hard marching, we arrived here in excellent health on the 26th. We have since discovered that the real cause of our difficulty in getting away from Damascus was the unwillingness of the sheik of the caravan to let us accompany it, for the Arab tribes are so sensible of the comparative riches of the Franks in general that, if they had discovered us in a caravan, it was to be expected that they would demand an enormous sum as tribute, and make the head of the caravan responsible. However, the sheik at last consented to our accompanying him, on condition that we were dressed like Arabs, and we had to pay a much larger sum than native travellers for our camels. The Pasha of Syria and the principal Bagdad merchants of Damascus committed us to the care of a sheik on whom they placed great dependence, and so we started as well cared for by men we never saw before as if we had been their sons and brothers. And the sheik did not fail in the smallest point of what he had been charged with, so that, excepting the unavoidable tedium of sitting twelve or fourteen hours a day on camels in a warm sun, I never made a journey in my life with less annoyance.

The caravan contained about six or seven hundred camels, divided into twelve or fourteen parties, each under its own sheik, and there were perhaps one hundred and twenty men with them, twenty or thirty of whom were mounted on dromedaries, armed with swords and matchlocks, and rode two or three miles in front, or on the



flanks, according to where they expected the Arabs of the desert to attack them. When no danger was apprehended, the camels were spread over a great space, sometimes more than a mile in breadth, but when Arabs were in sight the whole body kept together. At night the whole party slept in a very small space, the camels packing quite as close as bales of goods, and we all amongst them; from which we learnt that a stable is a garden of pinks and roses compared with the desert bedchamber of our nags.

However, you may suppose that after being on their backs for twelve hours, we had little time to consider whether we were near to or far from them at night. We usually started before sunrise, and continued without halt till near sunset, and sometimes till after that. The camels feed a great part of the day, as they go, wherever they find pasture, and there was no day on which they did not meet with abundance of such things as they like (which were chiefly strong aromatic plants), excepting on the banks of the Euphrates, where there was literally nothing.

At the time we crossed, the desert was in its greatest beauty, and you would be surprised at the variety of flowers; I think I must have seen fifty, half of which would be prized in any flower garden in England. The camels require no water when there is green food for them, and ours did not taste it for twenty days. We passed only two wells, which were in the beds of streams, for as the camels did not need water, the caravan came as straight as possible, considering that the sheik had no compass, and so steered their feet as well as he could by the sun. The camels may well be called Ships of the Desert, in one respect, for when we were on a perfect plain and saw any of them approaching us, and while they were still beyond the horizon, they looked so like vessels at a distance at sea that I could perceive no difference, and when the mirage was spread over the horizon, the illusion was complete. If they are to be called ships, however, we must consider them as belonging to the navy of Lilliput, for our whole



CSL

SIR ARTHUR COTTON

caravan only carried as much as a single one-masted vessel of one hundred tons would convey by sea, little more than a "flat." The desert at first consisted chiefly of a succession of very gentle undulations of ground, of gravelly soil covered, though very thinly, with aromatic plants, excepting in some spots where there was so much vegetation as to appear quite rich to eyes that had got a little accustomed to the desert.

Towards the Euphrates we passed plains of very great extent, without the smallest unevenness, not a plant or knoll rising one foot above the general level. The highest vegetable of any kind that we saw was the flower of a plant like rhubarb, which grew to the height of a foot and a half in some places.

After leaving Damascus two or three days, we did not see a single standing camp of Arabs, which you may suppose was not a very bitter disappointment to a peaceable man like me. We met two parties on the march. One of them took us for Ibrahim Pasha's army, and retreated without their property in great precipitation ; neither party offered to molest us.

The leaders of our caravan were of a very peaceful tribe, a great part of whom are at present living within the walls of Bagdad, and they pay a fixed tribute per camel to the strange tribes through which they pass. We came to the Euphrates in flood, and crossed it in boats ; it was quite full, and about one hundred and fifty yards broad. Between the Euphrates and Tigris we passed a real desert, for, though it was in the spring, not a blade of vegetation was to be seen in many parts. On arriving late at Bagdad, our sheik took us to his house, where we slept, and the next morning crossed the Tigris by a bridge of boats, and found a hearty welcome in the house of the missionaries.

Though we had so little trouble on our journey, I cannot tell you the delight with which we found ourselves among our countrymen again, and sheltered from the sun. On the last day we were seventeen and a half hours on our camels, and we rode about sixty miles, from which you



may judge that I was not much the worse for wear. This, however, must be qualified in some degree, for I was not in a condition to be refreshed by the sight of a wooden-seat chair. The motion of the heavy camels is exceedingly fatiguing, but our sheik had provided us with a very delicate nag, that could walk as prettily as any young lady, so I suffered little comparatively; still, I found that it was not pleasant to make from forty thousand to fifty thousand low bows involuntarily in a day.

You may have heard that the year before last, out of sixty thousand inhabitants of Bagdad, fifty thousand died of the plague, and at the same time the whole city was laid several feet under water by a flood while an army was waiting to besiege it, which took up its ground before the wall as soon as the water retired. The present appearance of the city corresponds with these occurrences. In one night, when the flood first broke down the walls and entered the city, about one-fourth of the houses fell, and buried many persons in their ruins. Much of the space within the walls is now covered with heaps of ruins, and in the other parts there are whole streets without an inhabitant. There is scarcely a vestige remaining of the city's former magnificence; it once contained three millions.

We have received the greatest kindness from the missionaries and the Company's Resident here. They are the only English in the place. There is an easy way of getting to Bussorah by the Tigris, and we hope to start in a large boat on Tuesday, that is, in three days, and to reach Bussorah in four or five days; whence we have a good prospect of a vessel to Bombay. The climate of this place is at present delicious. My companion, Major Skinner, is one of the very few persons who can bear uncomfortable circumstances without annoying himself or anybody else. We hope to go on together.

Mr. Newman, of Oriel, an acquaintance of Richard's, was attached to this Mission, and I had a letter to him, but he left the place some months ago; the others, how-



SIR ARTHUR COTTON

CSL

ever, required no introduction to give us a hearty reception. Colonel Taylor, the Resident, also would have quartered us, if we had not been provided for. Christians and Mussulmans appear to have agreed to shew us kindness every step we have taken from England here, excepting, indeed, our friends in the plains of Esdraelon, and then we received instantaneous redress.

I begin to fear now that the Post Office people at Bombay will have given me up, and sent away my letters, which would be a very grievous disappointment; but I hope not. How little did I think that I should be so long without hearing of you!

An application has been made to the Director from this Pashalik for some of their officers to superintend public works and organize troops, and the Directors of the East India Company have consented to the arrangement; so that there is some hope of a strong and settled government being again established in these miserable countries where every man's hand is against his neighbour.

Among other works in contemplation is the establishment of a regular line of steam boats on the Euphrates, and the cutting of a canal to connect that river with Bagdad, at the expense of the Pasha, thereby completely establishing this as the most easy and expeditious line of communication from England to India. I hope and trust you are all in health and prosperity, as when I left you, but I wish I could know it.

A large packet of letters has lately arrived from Constantinople, but they have been rather a long time on the road. They bring wretched accounts of Ireland. There has been a very serious mutiny discovered in the Madras Army among the native officers and privates, but the end of it is not known here. Our Resident here is in a most extraordinary position with respect to the government, as none of the Arab tribes in the open country, or of the different parties in the cities, can trust one another's word in the least; whenever any disturbances break out, nothing can be settled without getting the Resident to be



a party to the agreement, and they have the most entire confidence in the bare word of a Frank.

Some months ago the people in Bagdad rebelled, and attacked the Palace, and would certainly have put the Pasha to death had he not called upon the Resident, who interfered for him with the conspirators, and he was enabled to settle the business without further bloodshed. The same thing has taken place repeatedly in all parts of the Pashalik, so that what little peace is enjoyed here is by means of a man without any outward power whatever, solely his personal character, and that of his nation, being firmly established. I never saw so striking an instance of the effect of a single upright mind in the midst of a nation of faithless men.

My next letter, I hope, will be from Bombay. May God bless you, and all the members of the family. I send my kindest love to every one.

Ever your most affectionate Son,

ARTHUR.

One of the missionaries who welcomed my father to their homes at Bagdad, as mentioned in the letter, was Mr. Anthony N. Groves. His son, Henry, in an account of the mission, notices Captain Cotton's arrival; and, in another letter written quite recently, my father, referring to Henry Groves's death, says he remembers sleeping with him at this time on the roof of the Mission House. Mr. Groves afterwards accompanied him to Bombay.

They started from Bagdad on May 21, 1833, but were detained by my father's very dangerous illness at Bushire, on the Persian Gulf. The late Lord Congleton wrote to Mrs. Groves:—

"But for your kind husband, Captain Cotton would not, humanly speaking, have got through his illness at Bushire, so ill was he, and so near death. I doubt if he can remember anything about the matter."

He was, however (as he afterwards informed his friends), of the opinion that his grave was dug. "Michael," Mrs.



SIR ARTHUR COTTON

CSL

Groves says, "though most faithful in his attendance, was at times quite overpowered by the circumstances of his beloved master and friend, and almost broken-hearted at the thought of his death."

About the year 1863, Sir Arthur Cotton was recognised at a public meeting by a gentleman, whose name he could not remember, but who informed him that thirty years previously he was in command of the escort of the British Resident at Bushire, and had had charge of his funeral arrangements. My father often used to remark that "he supposed he was himself the only man who had ever visited his own grave."

After about twelve months from the time of his setting out from England Captain Cotton arrived at Bombay, and returned to Tanjore.

This, perhaps, may be the place in which to refer to other journeys made by my father. He visited Australia thrice and Mauritius once. The far-away days during which these journeys were taken, and the practical manner in which the traveller endeavoured to turn his observations and knowledge to the benefit of the country he visited, render a reference to them desirable.

He, who afterwards declaimed so strongly against the construction of railways in India because canals would so much more cheaply carry goods and provide means for cultivation, himself had charge of the construction of a small railway, which will be noticed in due course. At the conclusion of his work on the Red Hills Railway, near Madras, his health broke down, and he went to Tasmania on sick leave, a long, tedious, voyage in those days.

On his arrival in Tasmania he temporarily settled down at Hobart Town. Here he immediately occupied himself with experiments on a centrifugal steam engine, probably the precursor of the steam turbine, which at present is attracting such widespread attention. But the real rotary engine has even yet to establish itself. The idea of a rotary



engine, I believe, was entirely his own. This engine he certainly made himself. Whilst studying its working when it was in motion, unhappily with a boiler of poor quality—the only one he could obtain—the boiler burst, and there was an explosion, which injured him most severely.

In describing this misfortune he took his usual optimistic view of the event by saying: "Yes, the boiler burst and injured both my legs, taking off the flesh of one of them, but I succeeded in getting one hundred and fifty revolutions a minute." This result compensated him for all his sufferings! For many months he could not walk, and all his life he suffered more or less from the result of this accident, especially after work which fatigued him, or in cold weather. It is an interesting fact, however, that he was always a great walker; even after he was seventy years of age he could go long distances on foot. His light, active, figure and wiry frame stood him in good stead, and his energetic habit of mind caused him to greatly enjoy long hours of climbing, or the exploring of new country.

For many weeks after the accident he lay dangerously ill in an hotel in Hobart Town. When he was able to be moved, he was invited to the house of a gentleman, who lived a few miles from Hobart Town on the bank of the Derwent, and there rest and the beautiful scenery did much to help his recovery. He was able to be driven about the neighbourhood, which is, perhaps, amongst the most lovely in the world.

The river Derwent brings vessels of considerable size to Hobart Town, which lies at the foot of Mount Wellington. For eight months in the year the mountain is tipped with snow, while at its foot and for about two miles along its base the sides are covered with the most luxurious growth of plants of many kinds—blue, and red, and yellow—quite unknown in England or India. The charm to the invalid was great, and he improved much in that first change.

Then he became the guest of a family in the centre of



SIR ARTHUR COTTON

CSL

the island, where the scenery was less beautiful, but novel and peculiar, full of different interests, while the Christian society he enjoyed was always helpful and cheering. A farther move took him towards the north, to Norfolk plains, about sixteen miles from Launceston, where again he found Christian residents, whose hospitality and kindness he never forgot. He gradually recovered the power of riding and walking, and after some months returned to Hobart Town and India.

At the time of his first visit to Tasmania Sir John Franklin was governor of the island — a kind-hearted, genial, man, much beloved by those who knew him intimately. My father was a great favourite with him and Lady Franklin, and was often at Government House. He was warmly attached to the fine old explorer.

Before he left for India, the expedition of 1839 to the South Pole arrived in Tasmanian waters. The ships, *Erebus* and *Terror*, were anchored close together in the Derwent, and stayed there some months, Sir John greatly enjoying the society of his old fellow-midshipmen and friends, Sir James Ross and Captain Crozier, the latter of whom commanded the expedition. The society of so many scientific and Christian men was much valued by the community at large, especially by those who had the opportunity of meeting them constantly at Government House. Not many years later Sir John, with Captain Crozier and the same two ships, sailed for the North Pole, where both commanders perished, to the sorrow of many friends and to the grief of the nation.

A few years of strenuous toil in the Godavari Delta, and once more there was a breakdown in my father's health, so serious that the devoted Engineer was obliged to leave his work. Once more a voyage to Australia was determined upon. This time he was not alone. Wife and children were with him.

It so happened that at this time there was no vessel going direct from Madras to Melbourne, so he decided to break the journey at Mauritius, and we sailed for that



VISIT TO MAURITIUS

41
CSL

island, the ship being under the command of a captain who had on board a half-caste family, a queer conglomeration of relatives, who occupied the stern cabin next to our own.

We arrived in the harbour of Port Louis, the beautiful capital of a beautiful island, on a lovely moonlight night. The sight was most impressive; many ships were anchored under the shadow of Peter Botte, a high mountain whose summit is crowned with a round rock which is poised on the point of another rock—a remarkable feature standing, as the mountain does, quite alone. A British man-of-war was among the ships at anchor; its band was playing some lively strains as we drew to our anchorage, then there was a pause, and, to our loyal and devoted ears came the welcome strains of "God Save the Queen."

We remained at Mauritius for two months. First we stayed for a few days at Port Louis; then, finding this place very hot—the climate being most oppressive—we went to the village of Cure Pipe, where we occupied a lovely cottage surrounded by fields, with a running brook close to the house, in which we—the younger ones at least—delighted to wade, and on the banks of which we could gather lovely wild flowers.

When we arrived at Mauritius my father was quite prostrated with weakness as the result of his severe illness, but from the day that we entered our cottage he began to revive, and his strength soon returned to him, so that we had the joy of seeing him restored to health before we were obliged to leave the island for Australia.

At the house of one of our friends near Port Louis there was an enormous tortoise, so large that three or four of us used to amuse ourselves by riding on its back together. It would carry us long distances. Now and then it would disappear and be away for days together. My father called us one Sunday morning to look through a telescope across the lake which adjoined our friend's property, and there we saw the tortoise's head bobbing up and down as it returned from one of its solitary rambles,



SIR ARTHUR COTTON

CSL

swimming to us across this piece of water. I have sometimes heard doubts thrown on the enormous size of this creature as described by those who tell this story, but, in reading Admiral Keppel's life the other day, I found the same tortoise not only spoken of, but exhibited in a drawing as it walked along carrying on its back six men. Thus unexpectedly our description was corroborated.

From Mauritius we went to Australia to stay with my mother's relatives. During this time we had many interesting and curious experiences, but our great interest and pleasure was our father's companionship. He was at leisure and was constantly with us. He would take the greatest pains to teach us and give us information on every subject we could understand. When out for a day's ramble with him, we spent the heated hours of mid-day at an inn, where incidents revealing his exceeding kindness occurred which are as fresh in my memory to-day as when they happened.

The inn was rather a notorious place in that lonely district, lonely then, but now densely populated, being in the neighbourhood of Geelong. There was no other inn near it for many miles. It went by the name of "The Squeakers," and was frequented by a very rough and desperate class of men. On one occasion a relative of ours, who had been riding a great distance, arrived at this inn so exhausted that he threw himself on the bed in a small room, divided only by a wooden partition from the drinking saloon, where a crowd of ruffians were seated. As he lay quite prostrate, too tired to move hand or foot, he heard them saying that they thought it would be a good plan to rob the gentleman, drag him out of his bed, and put him out of sight where no one would ever find him again. During the conversation he heard one voice clear and distinct, marked by a strong Scotch accent, say: "You'll nae touch him; he's a guid man, he works hard. He has ridden fifty miles to-day, and I'll stand by him." This friendly word probably saved his life.

We used to go out early in the mornings to search for



manna. It is a strange thing that the manna described in the book of Exodus seems to be exactly reproduced in that colony. Every morning and evening we found it lying on the ground in large quantities on the sticks, on logs of trees, on blades of grass. It was white and sweet, and deliciously fresh and pleasant to the taste, but it would not keep. We used to collect it in bags, and enjoy it for our breakfast and tea; but if it was kept for a few hours it turned black and could not be eaten. It is generally thought that the manna of Australia is a kind of gum produced by an insect; it is snow white and very sweet. But I do not know that this explanation has ever been verified.

Whilst we stayed here, my father became friendly with the clergyman, the Rev. Mr. Hastie, a Scotchman, and used to go with him from place to place reading to the people. So great was the bond of sympathy between himself and this excellent man, that they corresponded afterwards, Mr. Hastie often saying how greatly he missed him when he was compelled to return to India.

My father was interested in the cattle farms belonging to his brothers-in-law, and also in their immense tallow works, which they had brought to great perfection. But he was even more interested in the plans, which he worked out with the most elaborate care, for the irrigation of the farms, for though, as a rule, rain was plentiful, it was uncertain in its fall, and he would often prophesy the serious results of one year without an ample water supply. He wanted to arrange for water storage on a very large scale, with simple canal systems from point to point, which would have made the owners quite independent, for a long time at least, of the fall of rain. Sad it is to remember that during the last week of his life he was reading a letter, which described the terrible drought then prevailing in that very part of the country. For a long period no rain had fallen, and this letter described the dying of the cattle and sheep from sheer inanition, dried-up stream-beds and the utter absence of grass everywhere. He looked up at me