



sovereign. But if there was apathy in one of the great political circles, at least the rancour of party violence appeared to have subsided in the other, inasmuch, that from the date of the accession of the Tories to power, and the introduction of their famous India bill in 1784, all mention of Mr. Hastings and of his supposed delinquencies had, in either house of parliament, ceased to be made. On the other hand, his reception at the India House, in the King's palace, and by almost every member of the Cabinet, the prime minister excepted, had been such as to evince the best feelings in his favour. And finally, the very fact that the discomfited Whigs were known to hate him; that Mr. Burke still threatened in private, and Mr. Fox and Mr. Grey joined in his threats,—this circumstance alone was sufficient to induce a persuasion among Mr. Hastings and his personal friends, that, even on the ground of good policy, if by no higher motive swayed, the Cabinet would to a man support him. Accordingly, when, on the 20th of June, a few days after his arrival in London, Mr. Burke, just before the close of the session, gave notice that “if no other member would undertake the business, he would himself, at a future day, make a motion respecting the conduct of a gentleman just returned from India,” the indication was received not so much with indifference, as with satisfaction; because both Mr. Hastings and his friends looked forward



with confidence to the opportunity which the motion would afford, wringing from Parliament, if not from a higher source, the rewards which the Governor-General's faithful and distinguished services had merited, and which had been too long, and too perversely, withheld.

It is no business of mine to determine the true nature of the principle on which Mr. Burke's implacable hostility to Mr. Hastings was founded. The admirers of the great orator assure us, that he never acted except from a sense of duty, and that, whether right or wrong in his views of this particular matter, they were taken up conscientiously, and conscientiously adhered to. This may be true; for Mr. Burke's mind seems to have been so peculiar in its construction, that with him prejudice no sooner matured itself than it became a principle; and he obeyed its impulses with the ardour of one who neither loves nor hates either men or things, except in extremes. I am willing to admit, for example, that Mr. Burke may have credited the tales which were told him by the enemies of Mr. Hastings, and of the East India Company; and that his original object was, not so much to punish the crimes of an individual delinquent, as to put a stop to a system under which such crimes could be perpetrated. But when the measure of 1783 fell to the ground,—that measure, of which, though called by Mr. Fox's name, Mr. Burke and the



late Sir Arthur Pigot were the real authors,—when the bill was thrown out, which was to have secured to the Whigs for ever the patronage of British India, with all the influence which such patronage was calculated to ensure ; when Mr. Burke and his friends not only sustained the loss of place, but were held up to the ridicule and scorn, over and above, of the whole nation ; and all these evils were known to have overtaken them chiefly through the instrumentality of Mr. Hastings, and the powerful party which supported him ; then indeed, the zeal which had heretofore animated Mr. Burke in favour of justice, or mercy, or truth in the abstract, merged in a sense of unmitigable and deadly rancour towards the individual whom he regarded as the personification rather than the main support of their opposites. I believe that Mr. Burke was by far too great a man to be swayed in a case like this by the impulses of mere personal feeling. The stories which were told at the moment concerning Mr. Hastings's neglect of his nephew ; and the thirst for vengeance which a sense of outraged vanity created, I therefore hold to be without foundation. But political loves and political hatreds are to personal feeling what the hurricane of a tropical climate is to a gale of wind at our season of the equinox. Whenever men become the slaves of these, and no human being ever was their slave if we may not predicate the truth of Mr. Burke, they appear to



lose all power of discriminating between fact and fiction. Mr. Hastings had defeated the favourite scheme of Mr. Burke's whole public life. He had driven Mr. Burke and his party from political power; and Mr. Burke in particular, and his party in general, devoted themselves to crush their enemy; under the persuasion that by convicting him of the crimes of oppression, and cruelty, and peculation, they would justify, in the eyes of the world, the terms of their own India bill, and place themselves in the light of martyrs to the cause of justice and humanity.

It is by no means impossible, had Mr. Hastings been content to drop quietly into the shade of private life, but that the party which desired his ruin, and so long laboured to bring it about, would have abstained altogether from attacking him. They knew that he had many and influential friends in every circle of society; and they might have shrunk from the prospect of engaging in a struggle, the issue of which was, to say the least of it, doubtful. But neither now, nor at any former period, was Mr. Hastings disposed to avail himself of the political cowardice of his enemies. He felt that he had deserved high rewards from his King and country; he was not willing to compromise these for the mere absence of censure. He therefore encouraged his friends to press the subject



forward; and to win for him, at all hazards, the justice which the House of Commons appeared reluctant voluntarily to award. Accordingly, when parliament met again in 1786, on the very first day of the Session, and on the first opportunity that presented itself, Major Scott reminded Mr. Burke of the notice which he had given in the preceding June, and desired that he would name an early day for acting upon it. Mr. Burke's reply is well known; and deserves all the praise, on the score of wit, which his admirers have heaped upon it; yet it seemed to indicate, even in him, a reluctance to proceed. For Mr. Burke stood well nigh alone at this juncture, in the desire to prosecute, of which the inexpediency had been warmly pressed upon him a day or two previously at a great meeting of the Whigs at the house of the Duke of Portland. Nevertheless, Mr. Burke felt that his own character was at stake, and he set the advice of his associates at defiance. The consequence was, that on the 17th of February, he caused the vote of censure which had been passed on Mr. Hastings in 1782 to be read, and then moved, in a committee of the whole house, "for a copy of the correspondence which had passed between Warren Hastings, Esq., late Governor-general of Bengal, and the Court of Directors of the Honourable East India Company, between



January, 1785, and January, 1786," including, of course, the letters written on both sides, subsequently to the return to England of the Governor-general.

From this date, the trial of Warren Hastings may, in strict propriety of speech, be said to have begun. A warm debate undoubtedly followed, in which some members of the Government took part; and the motion was resisted, among others, by Mr. Dundas, whom Mr. Pitt, as in duty bound, supported. But Mr. Burke was opposed, not upon the high ground of Mr. Hastings's eminent services, and of the benefits which had accrued from them to the Company and the nation, but on a point of form; which, as far as the subject of the debate was concerned, might as well have been waved. Neither Mr. Hastings nor his personal adherents ever entertained the slightest objection to the production of any papers which might tend to throw light upon his character or sentiments. Still, though the public, or at least that portion of it which was already disposed to view with favour the conduct of the late Governor-general, experienced and expressed a great deal of disappointment at the tone which the minister had assumed, the Governor's personal friends persisted in believing, that when matters came to a crisis Mr. Pitt would not desert them. The following letter, written in part by Mr. Hastings's dictation, sets



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the matter in a sufficiently clear point of view ;
and I therefore insert it.

To Mr. THOMPSON.

London, 25th February, 1786.

My dear Thompson,—The governor being so hurried as not to be able to write you in the manner he wishes, desires me to do it for him. He says that since his arrival in England, he has purposely, for various considerations, kept himself aloof from the Court of Directors, and indeed he has not received that attention from them which he certainly merits, therefore has not had satisfactorily the acquaintance with their proceedings which he could desire. He further observes that the decease of his worthy friend Mr. Sullivan has widened the distance between him and the Court, and its occurrence at the present crisis is peculiarly unfortunate. However, he still enjoys opportunities of having gratuitous information though unsought by him. Mrs. Hastings is making up the papers which will convey to you information of Mr. Burke's progress in his attempt to substantiate the charges he has so long boasted to bring against our friend. You must not however regard the statement of Mr. Pitt's and Mr. Dundas's speeches as fairly given, for they by no means spoke of our friend with such cool and sparing approbation as the paper describes. On the contrary (I was one day in the House myself), they both expressed the warmest applause of his conduct, and boldly declared their opinion, that, instead of censure, he merited praise and honourable rewards from his country as the man, who, beyond all doubt, had by his exertions alone, preserved to her her possessions in the East. Even Mr. Burke seems to have receded from his usual violence, seeing, no doubt, the airy dagger of his gloomy



imagination fly from his grasp at the instant when he means to clutch it. Instead of criminal, he now seems to dwell most on charges of political error, and it is the general opinion that numerous as the motions are for papers, no criminal charge will be found in the House on their examining the papers called for, but rather that the perusal will open the mind of every member, who is not determinately set against conviction; and I believe persons of that description are now very few. It is lucky for our friend's cause that such papers are called for, as he will now have an opportunity of his conduct being judged of from the best evidence, his own correspondence showing the real sentiments of his heart unprepared for defence, against the attacks of an enemy, and which he could not have brought to public notice himself without a charge of ostentation. I have no doubt but that numbers of the opposition, when they shall thus see Mr. Hastings as he really is, will be ashamed and sorry for having so long been blind to his merit, and be ready to repair the injury by joining in his exculpation. Mr. Burke has not yet made any specific charge, and it is thought that he will not be able to form any that will meet the approbation of the House. On Tuesday the business comes on, and Mr. B. will then be pushed to make his charge. Thus the business stands at present, but be of good heart, and let not thy noble courage be cast down, for the clouds of error are dispersing, and truth must appear. Your ever affectionate friend.

To the same.

My dear Thompson,—You must yourself forgive me, and excuse me to my other friends, for I cannot write. Read all the preceding as mine, except my own praises.

I sent you a long letter, and list of commissions by



a late packet, I hope not the Halswell's. I cannot now repeat them, but request your particular attention to the following, viz.:—

To procure two large tiger skins, and six pairs of sheets of the breadth of a bed, I forget whether of the Massulipatam, or Vizagapatam manufacture: not to be very fine, but a degree above ordinary. Let these commissions be expressed to be for the Comte de Haganeck, the imperial ambassador, lest I should forget it. I have promised the speedy execution of this commission, and owe it for his civilities.

Captain Ley has promised to take charge of a horse for me. Procure a good one for me, if you can; one equal to Sulliman. It is for Mrs. Hastings, who cannot get one fit for herself in England. (My Arabian is in amazing health, spirits, and beauty.) Be kind to Captain Ley and introduce him to all my friends. He is a worthy gentleman; so is Mr. Caruthers, his chief mate, and Mr. Lindsay, who is gone in a former ship. Seek him and be kind to him for my sake.

Mrs. Hastings grieves that she cannot write, but charges me to say everything kind for her. She is pretty well, but not so well as I wish.

Your friends in the Crescent were all in perfect health last month. Adieu, Yours, ever affectionately.

The debate of the 17th had turned entirely upon this one point, namely, whether Mr. Burke was justified in calling for papers, no specific charges having been brought against Mr. Hastings; or whether the forms of the House did not require that the accuser should first of all state his case; and then ask for the production of documents by which it might be supported. The House de-



cided that the latter was the more becoming course, and Mr. Burke in consequence requested and obtained time to arrange his materials.

On the 3rd of March, however, and again on the 6th and 17th of April, the question was in some sort reopened by a demand for papers explanatory of the negotiations which had ended in the late peace with the Mahrattas. But Mr. Pitt appears not yet to have made up his mind as to the tone which it would be becoming or convenient for him to assume, in the threatened discussion. He therefore resisted this motion as he had done the last, on the broad and general ground of inexpediency; and his party acting as it is the custom of parties to act in like cases, Mr. Burke's proposition was a second time negatived by a large majority.

Nothing daunted by these repulses, which, to say the truth, were as little calculated to restrain the enemies, as to encourage the friends of the accused, Mr. Burke applied himself to the task of moulding his case into form; and on the 4th of April brought forward eleven out of the two and twenty charges, on which he proposed, and ultimately succeeded, in grounding an impeachment. In the preparation of these charges it is now universally admitted, that he was largely assisted by Mr. Francis. "The charges brought forward by Mr. Burke against Mr. Hastings," says one who,



whatever might be the perversion of his views on other points, was in this respect very accurately instructed,* "were on those subjects which had been matter of discussion between Mr. Francis and Mr. Hastings, while the former gentleman was in India; the impeachment of Mr. Hastings was therefore a continuation of Mr. Francis's opposition to Mr. Hastings's government. All the materials for twenty-two charges brought forward by Mr. Burke were furnished by Mr. Francis." I believe that this is true, neither am I at all disposed to doubt that Mr. Francis, "in whose character strong resentment was a leading feature," aimed at little more, while supplying these materials, than the gratification of a personal revenge. But, as I have already said, we are bound to take higher ground, while attributing motives to Mr. Burke. His hatred was that of a thwarted politician, who has reasoned himself into a belief that he is the champion of abstract truth, at the very moment when he is but the representative of a faction. Accordingly his whole bearing, both on the 4th of April and subsequently, was that of one who believes what he is asserting. He inveighed against Mr. Hastings as a very monster among his kind, and made no secret of the desire with which he burned, to crush him. The reader, who is by this time familiar with the whole tenour of

* See Nicholl's Recollections.



Mr. Hastings's administration, and from whom not so much as one thought in that great man's mind while presiding over the destinies of India has been kept secret, will judge of the reasonableness of this feeling by instituting for himself a comparison between facts, as they have elsewhere been stated, and the following epitome of the eleven first and gravest of the twenty-two charges which his enemies in Parliament brought against him. I copy what is subjoined from the introduction to the history of the trial, which was published in 1796. On the 4th of April then, Mr. Hastings was charged—

I. With gross injustice, cruelty, and treachery against the faith of nations, in hiring British soldiers for the purpose of extirpating the innocent and helpless people who inhabited the Rohillas.

II. With using the authority delegated to him through the East India Company for treating the King, Shaw Allum, Emperor of Hindostan, or otherwise the Great Mogul, with the greatest cruelty, in bereaving him of considerable territory, and withholding forcibly that tribute of twenty-six lacs of rupees which the Company engaged to pay as an annual tribute or compensation for their holding in his name the duannee of the rich and valuable provinces of Bengal, and Bahar, and Orissa.

III. With various instances of extortion, and other deeds of mal-administration against the



Rajah of Benares. This article consisted of three different parts, in each of which Mr. Hastings was charged with a series of the most wanton oppressions and cruelties. He gave in papers concerning the rights of the Rajah, his expulsion, and the sundry revolutions which had been effected by the British influence under the control of the late Governor-general, in the zemindarry.

IV. With the numerous and insupportable hardships to which the royal family of Oude had been reduced, in consequence of their connexion with the Supreme Council.

V. With having, by no less than six revolutions, brought the fertile and beautiful provinces of Farruckabad to a state of the most deplorable ruin.

VI. With impoverishing and depopulating the whole country of Oude, and rendering that country, which was once a garden, an uninhabited desert.

VII. With a wanton, and unjust and pernicious exercise of his powers, and the great situation of trust which he occupied in India, in overturning the ancient establishments of the country, and extending an undue influence, by conniving at extravagant contracts, and appointing inordinate salaries.

VIII. With receiving money against the orders of the Company, the Act of Parliament, and his own secret engagements; and applying that



money to purposes totally improper and unauthorized.

IX. With having resigned by proxy for the obvious purpose of retaining his situation, and denying that deed in person, in direct opposition to all those powers under which he acted.

X. With treachery to Muzuffir Jung, who had been placed under his guardianship.

XI. With enormous extravagance and bribery in various contracts, with a view to enrich his dependants and favourites.

Of the events which immediately followed the production of these articles, as well as the discussion of others which Mr. Burke brought forward in the course of the week, neither the space at my command, nor my own inclinations, permit me to take any notice. Enough is done when I state that Mr. Burke was listened to generally with silence; till on the 26th Mr. Hastings petitioned, through Major Scott, to be supplied with a copy of the charges, and to be heard in his own defence at the bar of the House. This petition gave rise to a sharp debate, for though Mr. Burke affected the extreme of liberality, he was not willing either to furnish the paper required, or that, in the present stage of the business, Hastings should be permitted to speak for himself. But both points were carried against him. A majority of sixty, in which Mr. Pitt was again included, determined that Mr.



Hastings's desire should be acceded to, and the 1st of May was selected as the day on which the House would be prepared to hear him. Mr. Hastings felt that the interval was by far too brief, and has made an entry to this effect in his journal. "I had but five incomplete days," says he, "to reply to a volume that could not be read in less than two." Yet he applied himself to the task with all the powers of his vigorous mind, and he entirely accomplished it. The following, to his friend Mr. Thompson, will best explain how he felt, and what he did on the occasion.

London, 20th May, 1786.

My dear Thompson,—I had only time for a short letter to Larkins by the Swallow, which was general for the information of all my friends. Yesterday I received a short and hasty letter from you by the Rodney, dated the 11th January. I expect more by the same despatch; two more boxes not being arrived, nor have I any letter yet from Palmer, and only one short one from Larkins. I look in vain for some tidings of my private bureau, but neither of your letters have yet mentioned a syllable about it; yet, surely, you had long ago received my first letters concerning it.

This will be carried by Mr. Willis, who sets off to-morrow for India by the way of Bussora, and has promised to take charge of a book of Mr. Burke's articles of impeachment and another of my defence. Shore has a part of the last; but you will now have it complete. It has produced an effect exceeding my most sanguine hopes. The publication of the charges (nothing appearing in opposition to them) had begun to impress the minds of all men with an opinion



against me, and Mr. Fox exultingly said so to the House. Such is popular judgment! The world knew the character of my accuser, and had seen nothing but his accusations. It knew that something could be said on the other side; yet decided on the accusation only before it. In a happy hour, and by a blessed inspiration, I resolved to try the effect of a petition to be heard in person. Against my expectation it was granted; and everybody came to ask me why I had done so imprudent a thing. Some called it rash, others mad, and all men condemned it—all but my *great* friend the Chancellor. I had but five days granted me to defend myself against sixteen historical libels, to which three more were added, and other two, before the second day of my appearance. On the 25th of last month Major Scott presented my petition, and it was granted, the next Monday (the 1st May) being appointed for my appearance at the bar of the House. On the 1st I attended, and was called in a quarter before four. I read the three first parts of my defence, Markham and the two clerks of the House the rest till half-past ten, when I was dismissed. The next evening I read the rest. I was heard with an attention unusual in that assembly, and with the most desirable effect; for it instantly turned all minds to my own way; and the ground which I then gained I still retain complete possession of. When I had finished the reading, I prayed for leave to lay my minutes (*i. e.* the defence) on the table. It was granted; and they became records of the House. A motion was made by Scott that they should be printed, and that too was agreed to; both unanimously. Sir Robert Barker, the same evening (for I was dismissed by seven), examined as a witness, and Colonel Champion and C. Marrack the next day. On the 5th Mr. Burke desired leave to bring on another charge, declared the last; it was admitted. This



was the twenty-second. I forget when it was presented. I received a copy of it on the afternoon of the 8th, and the same day petitioned to be heard to this. I was ordered to attend on the 10th. With some difficulty I was ready in time; and am happy that, stinted as I was, and indeed most dreadfully, in time, I did not demand an extension of it for any part of the defence, though the most unreasonable allowance had been asked and taken for framing the charge, when all the documents had been prepared. I attended, presented my defence, but was excused reading it; for I was fearful of wearying my hearers. This has been the close of my labours. Since that Captain Jaques, Major Balfour, Messrs. Gardiner and Gilpin, and Mr. Middleton have been examined. Middleton's evidence is not yet concluded. If Mr. Burke calls no more, Captain Williams and Colonel Popham will be called by my friends, though they too are the prosecutor's evidences. None are summoned on my part. Part of the next week will be given to the examination; and the 30th is fixed for debating the first question upon the first charge, viz. that the Rohilla war was a high crime and misdemeanor. It has been agreed to take the opinion of the House in the same manner separately on each article; but Mr. Burke said, he should consider the judgment of the House on the first as decisive of all the rest. This may shorten the process. But it is impossible to say that it will; for nothing can be more irregular than all the past. I dread the fate of the next unhappy victim whom this precedent may doom to the same scene of iniquity; for the purest integrity alone can stand it. In all this long scene, now exceeding three months, I have undergone only twelve or fourteen days of personal labour; and I have no reason to complain of much suffering, as it has never affected either my health or spirits, nor (except a few



days of the publication of the charges), my credit with the public; which, I believe, now stands higher by many degrees than it ever did. I have now, too, a well-grounded hope that a short period will bring the whole to a conclusion; I mean in the House of Commons. This is the summary of the business of the last three months. The detailed history would fill volumes, and much of these as portentous as instructive. They have destroyed the energy of their governments abroad, and are precipitating their own destruction.

I have not visited any of the ministers since the prosecution began. I have not been at the levee nor drawing-room. I have not desired the attendance of a single member. I have broken engagements which were officiously, but kindly, made to bring me acquainted with members of the House. I have disdained every species of management. I have acted against all that the word calls discretion. Every artifice of a man who has long thrown away the check of shame has been practised against me. Yet, my friend, I promise you that he will be most foully discomfited, and my name shall shine the brighter for the means which have been taken to extinguish it.

I thank God I am not wholly useless beyond my own little sphere, nor inattentive to the scene of my past service; but I cannot enumerate particulars. I have some reason to believe, and I hope it was so, that my known esteem for Shore contributed to the choice made of him for his present office. It is the best thing done for India for these many years. Lord Cornwallis goes with good dispositions, and a fair and honourable character and gentle deportment. I have not been able to serve Davies. I early applied to Mr. Sullivan; but unfortunately he had already obtained the pro-



mises of his friends for the gentleman of that name who is now at Madras. But the Board of Control has opposed his appointment, and Davies will of course retain his post till the arrival of the ships of the next season. In the mean time, if I can find a fair occasion to promote his appointment to it, I will. At present it is too delicate a point to meddle with, as the two bodies are at variance about the Directors' appointment.

Remember my commissions, viz. the two tiger skins, and six pair of Massulipatam sheets, for Comte Haganeck; and the horse, shawl goats, and Bootan turnip-seed for myself. Remember, too, to inquire for, and to send my ivory cot. I have received the cinnamon seed.

But, above all, recover and send me the contents of my bureau. I also request you to send me the remainder of my papers. I miss many of the most valuable, and almost all the consultations, except those which were bought from Sir J. Clavering.

I have corrected a part of the defence. You must correct for yourself the errors which remain. Let all my friends read it.

I am yet unsettled, not having been able to fix upon a temporary place of retirement in the country. Indeed I cannot yet go far from town. Mrs. Hastings, who always mentions you with affection, is well, though not of such firm health as I could wish. I gain health, though but slowly; but no wonder. I have not time even for the society of my dear Arab, who is in fine health and spirits; but I cannot get a horse for Mrs. Hastings. If you succeed in procuring one for the Barrington, it will probably arrive before we shall have met with one of English breed; and it will lengthen her life, and with it mine. There is a spur for your



exertions. When Shore arrives, remind him of my application to the Board for Mrs. Hastings's banyan, Etwarree, and Kulleem o'Deen.

Deliver the enclosed yourself to Lord Cornwallis. I intended to have written it by the Swallow; but his Lordship went away the 29th, and I was then in the midst of my defence, which prevented me. I have cut off the first charges, and sent you only the six last, to save package. The former you will have in abundance by the Swallow and other ships.

Tell Colonel Pearce I cannot write to him; but that I will labour for him as effectually as for myself when I have got through my present impeachment. I have spoken and written of him to Lord Cornwallis. Adieu, my dear Thompson, yours ever affectionately.

Mrs. Hastings desires me to acknowledge the receipt of your letter, and to inform you that the Begum's ivory chairs are of *very great value*, not of little, as you seem to estimate them. She requests that you will present her respects to the Begum (and mine, pray), and desire that she will not order any velvet or other worked seat to the chairs, as they will make the whole seizable by the custom-house officers. She also begs that they may be sent by a ship that will swim.

Tell Palmer that I have received his letter; but that I have not received a line from the Nabob Vizier, Hyder Beg, nor the Prince, not since I arrived in England.

Neither have I received the recovered letter, or any other from Nizam Ally Cawn; nor any from Moodajee.

I have not written to Palmer, because I expected him in England. I am at this instant pressed to the last moment, as Willis lives in the city, and goes away this evening. Be kind to him.

The peculiar phraseology of the preceding letter



seems to indicate, that Mr. Hastings was not at this time so sanguine as many of his friends touching the final issue of the inquiry which had just been opened. They, drawing their conclusions from the tone assumed by Mr. Pitt in the first debate, anticipated his steady co-operation, and that of the other members of the Government, in all their future proceedings. And when Mr. Pitt again joined them in their attack on the first charge, by voting that the Governor-general, for his conduct in the Rohilla war, was not deserving of censure; they no longer hesitated to declare in all quarters that the ball was at their foot. But Mr. Hastings was a great deal more sober in the view which he took of affairs; and, as the event proved, a great deal nearer the truth. Neither the vote of the minister on the Rohilla charge, nor his request that Mr. Hastings would furnish him with a correct view of the nature of a zemindarry tenure, sufficed for a moment to mislead that able politician. He drew up with great care such a paper as Mr. Pitt required; and sent it to him on the 8th of June. Yet he did so with a strong impression on his mind that Mr. Pitt would sooner or later desert him; and the event proved, and very shortly too, that Mr. Hastings's view of the case was the right one.

On the 13th of June the Benares charge was opened by Mr. Fox in a speech full of malignity



towards Mr. Hastings; whom he accused of violating every law both of national and individual faith. The friends of Mr. Hastings expected that Mr. Pitt, to whom the merits of the case were known, would defend the accused on the obvious ground that he was justified in every step that he had taken. And so far the minister fulfilled these expectations, that he scouted the notion of Cheyt Sing's independence, while he vindicated the right of the Bengal Government to demand from its vassal additional supplies during a season of great difficulty. Yet, strange to say, Mr. Pitt summed up by avowing his intention of voting for the impeachment, because the fine which Mr. Hastings had proposed to exact from the refractory vassal, was out of all proportion to the weight of the offence. "When the Benares charge," says an eye-witness, "was argued in the House of Commons, Mr. Fox rested his argument solely on this principle, that Cheyt Sing was an independent prince, no way liable to be called on for succour by the Bengal Government. Mr. Pitt resisted this opinion of Mr. Fox. On the contrary, he said, Cheyt Sing was a vassal of the Bengal empire, and as he received protection from that empire, he owed to it allegiance; and in consequence of that duty of allegiance, was liable to be called on for extraordinary aids on extraordinary emergencies. He also assented to an assertion which had been advanced in the course of the debate, viz. that Mr. Hastings having



only put Cheyt Sing under arrest for the purpose of subjecting his conduct to examination, could not be criminated for having inflicted too harsh a punishment on him. But he said "that the whole of Mr. Hastings's conduct showed that he intended to punish Cheyt Sing with too much severity; this intention was criminal, and for this criminal intention he should, though with extreme reluctance, vote for the impeachment of Mr. Hastings."

I have no language in which to describe the surprise and disappointment, and in many instances the indignation, with which the announcement of this proceeding on the part of Mr. Pitt was greeted. The personal friends of Mr. Hastings were of course furious in the extreme. They asserted that they were betrayed; inveighed against the minister for deceiving them, and appealed to the country, through the medium of the press, against so foul a conspiracy. Neither were the members of the Cabinet itself unanimous in supporting its chief, either in the act which he had perpetrated, or the grounds on which he rested it. Lord Thurlow, in particular, openly denounced them both, making use, among other expressions, of this, that "if a girl had talked law in such terms, she would have been without excuse." Mr. Hastings alone received the announcement of the minister's defection without dismay. The following, to Mr. Thompson, gives so faithful a picture of



his mind under the circumstances, that I cannot think of withholding it.

Baschlen Park, 18th July, 1786.

My dear Thompson,—I just learn that I am almost too late to write to India by the Intelligence, which is to be despatched the day after to-morrow, and I am at too great a distance from my letters to write from them. Yours, indeed, are not on subjects which require reply. By the King George, the last ship, I have only one short letter from you. This seemed to promise a speedy termination of Ganga Govin Sing's vexations, and I trust that Lord Cornwallis's arrival will finally close them, and that justice will be done to his merits and abilities. You will hear from others what justice I have received. With ministry and opposition both united against me, I have been declared guilty of a high crime and misdemeanor in having *intended* to exact a fine too large for the offence, the offence being admitted to merit a fine, from Cheyt Sing. This has given consequence to my accuser, who was sinking into infamy, and had every reason to expect punishment for the baseness and falsehoods of his charges against me. It is new to me to see a criminal prosecution hang over a man's head the length of a Chancery suit in a land where the laws will not permit the jury to sleep over a trial for murder. What, or in what manner, the next proceedings are to be carried on against me I know not; nor can I take any measures whatever to direct them to a favourable issue. They will take their own course. Hitherto neither my credit nor character has suffered by the last vote,—no not, I believe, in the opinion of an individual. I have not solicited, nor will I, the interest of a single member of the House, and after what has passed am indifferent about the issue, provided only that it be speedy. It



hurts me, I own, to be tried by judges who vote with their party in a judicial, as they do in a political question, and people talk of it as a thing of course. In the meantime, my prosecutors (for they are many, and they are also my judges) fill the papers with the most wicked lies to inflame the public against me, and my friends tell me that I must not give myself any concern about them; yet everybody believes every calumny so uttered, if they do not affect themselves, their friends, or party connexions.

The worst effect of this business is, that it keeps me at a distance from all men in business, and prevents me from attempting to do the good which I think I could do. I see nobody, but in the character of a mere idler; yet I have not been absolutely idle, nor unusefully busy. However this affair may end, I see in this, and in two others not very unlike it, strong symptoms of decline in the power of this empire.

I have bought a very pleasant little estate of ninety-one acres in Old Windsor, called Beaumont Lodge, a *modus agri non ita magnus, hortus ubi, &c.*, exactly answering Horace's wish; and if I live in England, I may probably end my days upon it; for I see nothing in England that I like so much. Mrs. Hastings is in health much as she has been; if anything, better since we came to Beaumont Lodge. We are much interested in the success of our haymaking, which has been prodigious, and never feel a tendency to be out of humour or spirits, but when we look towards London. Tell my friends that I am well, and remember them affectionately.

Whether life be long or short, it is wise to provide for its most distant wants. I therefore remind you of my commissions. Tell Turner that I thank him heartily for sending me the shawl goats; but I have not yet received them; and am told they are all dead. Two



of Lord North's are arrived; yet let him continue to send others, and not forget the turnip seeds. Any other from Bootan would grow in England. I beg of you to send me seeds of the lichen, of both sorts; the custard apple; and, if possible, the mango, with such others as may have a chance of succeeding. I will make up a little collection for you.

It pains me to recur to the subject of my bureau. I have not yet received any intelligence from you or Larkins about it. You cannot conceive my anxiety about it. Adieu. Your ever affectionate friend.

I shall have an opportunity of showing, by and bye, that Mr. Hastings, when he spoke of himself as thrown aside like a worn-out habit, wholly mistook his position. The world is apt enough to turn its back upon a great man in adversity. Neither did the world ever behave too well to him. Nevertheless, his talents and acquirements were throughout appreciated as they deserved to be in the highest quarters; and more than one appeal was made to both in a way which could not fail to gratify, even though it brought no more solid benefit on their owner. As yet, however, his attention was occupied mainly in the conduct of his own defence. For he felt that the defection of the minister from the ranks of his supporters had so far changed the aspect of his affairs that he must thenceforth look only to the abstract justice of his cause, not to the good offices of either of the great parties into which the political world was divided. He therefore applied himself more



than ever to the task of dealing with the subject so that it might be rendered intelligible to the thinking classes of his countrymen as well without as within the walls of Parliament. The following, addressed to his old friend Mr. David Anderson, seems to me well worthy of insertion. Though referring chiefly to a pamphlet which one of the many volunteers in his defence proposed to compile, and concerning which Mr. Anderson had been consulted, it gives, at the same time, such a clear summary of the chief events of his government and of the principle on which it was carried out, that crude and undigested as the style may be, I cannot bring myself to suppress it. Even the self-praise, of which the writer is evidently ashamed, and which he certainly never meant for other eyes than those of his correspondent, could not have proceeded except from one whose conscience assured him that it was merited. I will not, therefore, presume to draw my pen through it, confident that it cannot tell, in the judgment of any right-minded person, against either the good sense or the modesty of the writer.

TO MR. ANDERSON.

Beaumont Lodge, 13th September, 1786.

My dear Anderson,—I wrote and despatched a short letter to you yesterday, merely to acknowledge the receipt of yours of the 1st, as you would be anxious to hear of its safe arrival. I am much pleased with



Mr. —'s reflections on the past mode of proceedings. He might have added to them, that by joining in one charge such a variety of distinct and heterogeneous matter, some of which was criminal, some doubtful, much of it perfectly innocent, and all involved in obscurity, and devoid of applied or express evidence, and putting the whole to one vote, it was impossible that the members, even if they were disposed to it, should give just sentence; because one thinking one point impeachable, another another, and all inclining to the belief that of course some part of the dirt, where so much was thrown, must adhere,—the majority could not avoid giving judgment for the impeachment, though on each point the same majority would acquit me. But when to this is added that one body is *conjuratum* against me, and another equally ready to join the caprice of the minister, the purest integrity has no security. When I appeared before the House in my defence, I declared my readiness to stand or fall by each charge, and protested against an acquittal produced by a general comparison of my good with my blameworthy actions. But I did then expect that the question upon each charge would be simple, that is, that it would involve but one position, and that either the leading one, or one following and dependent on another already decided. For instance:—"Was Mr. Hastings warranted in exacting from Cheyt Sing an additional subsidy for the extraordinary exigencies of the war?" To this every man who knew but little of the subject could reply Yea or No. The question following it would be:—"Was Mr. Hastings warranted in exacting a fine from Cheyt Sing for his refusal?" This also admits of an easy answer. If given in the affirmative, Mr. Pitt might ask, "Was not fifty laes too much?" And this would be rejected by its absurdity, for the same question must have been repeated



with a progressive diminution of the sum, till it should exactly hit the sense of the majority; and all the lawyers would condemn the question in the terms of it, as being contrary to all law, and incapable of being reducible to any determined rate by law. But to ask a mob of giddy and uninformed men, is Mr. Hastings impeachable for having "paired his nails, shaved his beard, put on two stockings not fellows, got drunk on the King's birthday, eat bad rice instead of wholesome flour, and entertained a treasonable design against Cheyt Sing, &c.," including five hundred affirmations, some of which were true, but innocent; some blameworthy on a good principle; some wrong, but of no consequence; some right, but applied to wrong construction; and many strictly right and most meritorious, but contrary to a false, wicked, or dangerous principle which Mr. Burke would establish in the stead of mine;—what is this but to punish me because the House of Commons cannot solve his enigmas?

In such a confusion prepared against me, I am willing to get rid of such a tribunal at any rate; though I think that the House will get as little credit by the mode proposed for dismissing the inquiry, as they have in their past conduct of it, or in entering upon it at all. But in this I have no concern. It is their concern, not mine. For I shall never admit the effect of any vote that they can give, as either conveying real credit or dishonour on my character.

I am upon the whole much pleased with what I understand of the proposed plan, and greatly obliged to you for your assent to the request made to you respecting it. But in this also you will meet with the same difficulties that have discouraged *your friend*, from the incapacity of the House of Commons to act in a judicial character even in the arrangement of materials provided for their information. Every docu-



ment that he or you can want is before the House, and comprised in the numerous folio volumes which have been printed on India affairs, but so mixed and dispersed that it would take an age to find them out and give them connexion. I will try what I can do when I go to town, with the aid of Mr. Scott, who alone can give me aid of this kind. In the mean time the following are the points which will best deserve to be put forward in such a display.

Mr. Hastings found the government of Bengal, to which he succeeded in April, 1772, inefficient, in debt one and a half crores, and without resources. He constituted offices, all now extant being of his formation. He divided the departments of the Council. He brought the revenues from the charge of two provincial Councils, which kept the knowledge of them from the superior Board, to Calcutta; instituted new courts of civil and criminal justice, distributed at due distances over the province, with superior courts placed over them, the Board presiding over one of the last, and himself singly over the other. He and his Council, with great labour, reduced the expenses of every department, and formed a complete system of economical establishments. He rigidly obeyed the orders of the Court of Directors in revoking the authority and annihilating the influence of Mahmud Reza Cawn, for which he received their thanks, and the persecution of the same men united to support Mahmud Reza Cawn against him. He reformed and arranged the Nabob's household and expenditure. He first converted the funds of salt and opium from private emolument to the profit of the Company. The first of these was afterwards taken out of the hands of the Board by the Court, and given to the Board of Trade, where it declined to such a degree as to become a charge to the Company. He proposed its resumption; and lastly, having freed



the management of it from the intricacies of its former varied tenures, he, on his own responsibility, and against the judgment of his colleagues, reduced it to a simple and easy system, yielding a yearly and unfailing net produce of fifty lacs (half a million sterling) for ever, not only without oppression, but by means which facilitated and equalized the circulation of the necessities of life, and gave bread besides to thousands in its commercial progress.

He freed the provinces from the yearly incursions of the Seniassies, who never failed to visit them before his time, and from the second year of his accession have abandoned them entirely.

He received the thanks of the whole body of the Directors for the first acts of his government; and received the reproaches of the same body, under exactly the same signatures, as soon as the new Council proclaimed themselves his enemies.

In June, 1773, he left Calcutta with less than 50,000 rupees in the treasury, and after means unsuccessfully tried to borrow money. In September he returned with twenty lacs in specie, and with thirty more in actual receipt, with an annual fund established of twenty-five lacs more in the establishment of the army subsidy. This sum he settled for the army, whenever it should be wanted, for the support of our ally, the Nabob of Oude; and by making the terms fixed, and the employment and dismissal of the troops optional to the Nabob, he most effectually rendered their appropriation, and the subsidy with it, perpetual. He established the alliance between the two states on conditions of such equal advantage, that the representatives of both parted equally satisfied; and had the succeeding governments pursued the same line, and the Nabob ul Dowlah lived, Oude would have been a shield of defence, and a source of wealth, to Bengal, while it



derived reciprocal support and the means of wealth from Bengal. In the originating connexion and subsequent war with the Rohillas he did what all states ought to do. The invasion of the country threatened ruin to those of our ally, whom he joined in repelling it, the Rohillas giving a solemn pledge in writing for the payment of twenty lacs, in consideration of the expense and risk incurred in their protection. They obtained their safety, and refused to pay the price of it. We made war with them, on just grounds surely, unless any other process than that of the sword can be devised for recovering the rights of nations; defeated them, with the death of their ungrateful and perfidious leader; and annexed their dominion to that of Oude, which from that period became defensible throughout. The Directors, as usual, allowed the justice of our proceedings, and approved them, but condemned both when Clavering and his associates condemned them.

From this period Bengal has been growing in power, wealth, population, and greatness.

On the 20th of October, 1774, arrived the three members of the new Council, and for two years superseded that of which I had before the principal head. I was a man unknown, unprotected, and unconnected at home, and possessed no other influence abroad than that which I had acquired by my own knowledge and practice, in the credit which the success of my measures impressed on the people of Indostan, and in the attachment of my fellow servants and citizens. Without time allowed for the pretext of provocation, the impatience of my adversaries hurried them to a declaration and to acts of hostility on the 3rd day after their arrival. They persevered in their persecutions, which were gross to personal outrage, till the death of Colonel Monson; and their opposition, which the death of General Clavering did but suspend for an instant, till



their final annihilation by the departure of Mr. Francis in December, 1780. In so long an interval, what had I wherewith to sustain the weight of their oppressions but the superior weight of my own character, and the consciousness of superior desert, set against the claim of high names, which supported the respect of my adversaries; King, Lords, Commons, and Directors, and half the people of England against me; the power of patronage employed in the seduction of my fellow servants; and for a while the rule taken out of my hands, to be employed in a warfare against me, and in that only. Yet even in that time the confidence of my opponents allowed me to conduct the current business, in which they never interrupted me but for occasions of personal attack. I suffered in patience; I did my duty where I could; I waited for better and more lasting means; no act or word of intemperance escaped me; no meanness of submission ever afforded my assailants the triumph, even of a moment, over me; and I have been told that they themselves have been heard to confess themselves foiled, even when they had brought their long prepared plans of attack to the Board, and I was unprepared to resist them.

When intervals of accidental authority enabled me to act, and I never had more than intervals, I employed them in forming and setting in motion the greatest and most successful measures of my Government. When these were impeded by frequent changes of influence, I still contrived to keep them in existence, and again gave them energy when my power returned. My antagonists sickened, died, and fled. I maintained my ground unchanged, neither the health of my body nor the vigour of my mind for a moment deserted me, nor did my difficulties end here. New coadjutors became new enemies, with the same encouragement from one body, (the Directors,) but without the same personal conse-



quence. Mr. Wheeler, Mr. Macpherson, and Mr. Stables were, as soon as they could stand without me, my successive, and lastly my united opponents. Mr. Wheeler has declared to me, that he was enjoined to oppose me, and complained that he was deserted. Mr. Stables pleaded the advice of one friend, and Mr. Macpherson showed me that of another, not to link themselves to a falling man, but save themselves by showing that the same policy that sought my removal did not require theirs. Yet even when they were all three in force against me, I awed them into a surrender of a wretch whom they had scandalously protected in the most infamous of all oppressions, and compelled them to yield me the charge of a province which he had reduced to the brink of ruin, with the national honour linked with it; and in spite of their wishes, for they durst not act against me, I succeeded. I need not expatiate on this subject. You know it all as well as I do.

From the month of February, 1772, to the 23rd of August, 1782, I had enjoyed so uninterrupted a state of equal health, though with a constitution by no means robust, that I had never had cause to postpone the meeting of Council, or other appointed applications of business, and scarce allowed myself an hour of indulgence from it. Even in the severe sickness which then seized me, many hours were still devoted to my duty, and I dictated from my bed what I could not write at my desk. Of my manner of living at Lucknow, and its effects on the Nabob's authority, and the peace of his country, you know as much, or more, than I can write.

I now proceed to the last subject, in which I must combine the wars with France, Hyder, and the Mah-rattas (as to the insurrection of Benares, I leave it to shift for itself).



The first hostilities against the Mahrattas commenced unknown and unsuspected by our Government. They were built on the standing orders of the Court of Directors, and had not even the shadow of a plea to justify them, if that authority should not be allowed, as it certainly was not, a sufficient one. They took place about December, 1774. We heard of them some time in the beginning of the ensuing year. I urged the Board (then substantially consisting of Clavering, Monson, and Francis) to condemn the measure, and command the government of Bombay to retract it; but as the means of doing this, to proceed with their operations in the field till they could make peace without soliciting it. The majority resolved on peace at all events, and ordered back the army abruptly to its quarters. A peace was made, but on terms so loose, and with concessions on our part so degrading, that the conditions were never fulfilled on either side. I opposed the negotiation; but when the treaty was concluded, I was its most strenuous assertor, for there are two letters to Bombay on record, both written by me after Monson's death, in one of which we indirectly threatened them with dismissal if they were aggressors in the breach of it; and in the other we gave them long instructions for the accommodation of every point of their differences. In the mean time they were invited by a conspiracy of one part of the Mahratta administration to unite in a plan for the restoration of their former adherent Ragoba, on which the accession of Sukeram Babboo, the minister, and principal of the two only persons who were subscribers to the treaty of peace, served for a pretence for their concurrence. They agreed to become parties in it, prepared to take the field, and advised our Government of it, excusing their engaging so far without our licence by the nature and necessity of the project, which required both



secrecy and instant decision and action. What could we do? I had then the rule with Mr. Barwell's aid. The design was more desperate than those who had adopted it were themselves aware of. I did not believe that it would take place; but that the government of Bombay, sanguine as it was, would shrink on the moment of execution. But I judged that they were yet involved too far to recede without some consequences of danger; that if they did act and succeeded they had not strength to maintain their ground; if they failed, they had not strength to defend themselves. Whichever way the subject presented itself, it displayed dangers which without our support appeared insurmountable, and the die was cast before we were apprized of the throw. It was not a time to blame, nor to distinguish between the measures of right and wrong. The wrong (for wrong it was) was theirs who did it. Our part was to hinder it from affecting the interests of our common masters, and, if possible, convert it to their advancement. At my instance the Board ratified what they had done, sent them money, provided a powerful detachment which was ordered to march by a route and through an untraced geography to their relief. I had previously sounded, and ensured an ally in the Rajah of Berar. Leslie, who commanded the detachment (and I had no choice of a better leader), disobeyed his instructions. We recalled him, but he died, and Goddard was appointed in his place. He marched rapidly by the prescribed line, was received by the government of Berar with every due of hospitality: but here the design received a check, and required a total alteration.

On the formation of the detachment I deputed Elliott to the Rajah of Berar, and entrusted him with a plan for engaging the junction of that chief with views to his own elevation. With these the Rajah was



well acquainted, and had manifested an eagerness for Mr. Elliott's arrival, with many other symptoms which could assure me of his readiness to take the part which I wished. In the first draft of the orders which were sent to Bombay at the time of Elliott's mission I had, in peremptory terms, required their forbearance of every plan of their own till they should receive our instructions for their future proceeding in the event of his success. Unfortunately the Court of Directors had given their orders, of which we had recently received the copy, to Bombay, to resume the cause of Ragoba *in case of a breach* of the treaty, which in a manner directed the breach of it, and the expression strongly indicated that meaning. With such an authority strengthening and sanctifying the predilection of the government of Bombay, I was dissuaded from tying up their hands to give a preference to my own plan; and I altered the clause first drawn to a general and loose caution. This, indeed, might in common sense have appeared sufficient, since they had already abandoned their original design, and so weak was the party of Ragoba in his own state, that it was manifest he must have depended upon the English alone for his success; and we had not on that side of India any strength adequate to such an enterprise. The consequence was, that no sooner did they hear of Goddard's approach, than they precipitately rushed to the field, without plan, alliance, or weighed strength, with troops that had scarce ever seen service, under the command of an officer who was then actually bedridden. They were defeated, yielded themselves prisoners of war, and were ignominiously reconducted to Bombay. Poor Elliott died before he had completed his journey. Moodajee, anxious for the accomplishment of the negociation, pressed me to transfer his credentials to his secretary, Mr. Farquhar; but learning almost instantly the new engagements



concluded with Ragoba, and the hurried preparations which marked equally a want of judgment portending what actually happened, and a want of union and consistency in the councils of the ruling and dependant state, he wrote a second letter revoking all that he had written in the first, complaining of our want of power to enforce our own plans and orders, and earnestly pressing the return of General Goddard.

Goddard, however, had orders to proceed, arrived without opposition on the confines of Surat, acquired possession of a large territory, which, though of little use to us, was a loss of revenue to the Mahrattas which they could ill afford; and a campaign ensued in which our arms recovered their lustre, and the British name more than the credit which it had lost. But no substantial advantage was gained.

Now, my dear Anderson, I need not go on any further. You well know the rest. Carnac's detachment drew off Mahdajee Sindia, and induced him to conclude a separate peace.

The history of the confederacy should follow. The wrongs and revenge of Nizam Ally Cawn; the combination of Nizam Ally Cawn, the Peishwa, Mahdajee Sindia, Moodajee Boosla, and Hyder Ally, with the parts severally allotted to each; Sindia withdrawn from it by Carnac's diversion, his own policy coinciding; Nizam Ally Cawn won from the party by the interposition of Bengal seasonably affording him an ample and unexpected redress of all his grievances; Moodajee kept faithful to us by secret intercourse, and his army removed and induced to return by negotiation (nor let its withdrawing to give Pearse's detachment a free passage, the assistance given to him in his march, nor the horse sent, though but ostensibly, to his support, be forgot). The next subjects are the war with Hyder, and the war with France, and finally the



peace concluded with the Mahrattas, which eventually produced one with Hyder, in the terms of which I had no concern.

What a world of various and interesting matter does this abridgment include, were it spread out into all its detail! But your great task will be to select and reject, not to amplify. I would not have it forgot, that every design of the Surat expedition (which was undertaken against the judgment even of the most experienced officers in Bengal) was explained in a series of letters to the ministry of Great Britain, its causes, its motives and objects, and its dependencies discussed, and its expected consequences foretold; every successive letter verifying the expectations of the preceding, and proving that the plan was well digested, as its various checks and counteractions, all notwithstanding terminating with success, demonstrated the solidity of its composition.

Let it be also remembered that to conduct so complicated and vast a plan as it became in its progress, I sometimes had power, sometimes wholly, sometimes in part, often overruled; yet I persevered and carried it in triumph to its destined end. Nor that my exertions were the most vigorous under the pressure of the greatest difficulties; and that my confidence and pretensions rose in proportion to the despondency of my rulers at home and my colleagues of the other presidencies.

Let not my allusion to the plagues of Egypt and the land of Goshen be unnoticed; nor that, like Augustus, *urbem lateritiam recepi, marmoream reliqui*.

If I might be allowed to point out the best features of my own character in office, I should place these in the catalogue:—Integrity and zeal; affection for my fellow servants, and regard for the country which I governed; official regularity; accuracy and colla-



teral provision (you must find out the meaning of these words) in the creation of new offices or systems of policy, in instructions for political negotiations, and in the construction of treaties; sincerity and unreserve in my dealings with the chiefs in connexion with our Government; a study to choose agents most fitted for their trusts, confidence liberally given to them, and their conduct guarded from the hazard of every responsibility which belonged in right to myself; and lastly, patience, long suffering, confidence, and decision.

My dear David, let no man see this. I am ashamed of my own praises bestowed so lavishly by my own pen. But I mean this only as a farrago of hints to help your sounder judgment and clearer recollection. I fear that it may tend only to confuse and embarrass you; for it is most unmethodically arranged, and almost illegibly written. In truth, I am not qualified at any time for such a work, and now less than ever, as all that I have written was written by fits, and with a mind disturbed by pain. I intended as I went on to mark the official records required as vouchers for the facts as they occurred, but I wanted time and patience. If you, as you proceed in your own work, will make out such a list, and send it to me, I will furnish you with the papers.—Adieu, my dear friend, yours ever most affectionately.

P.S. I have read over the above, and think that it may be of use to myself hereafter, if it should not be so to you; so keep it.

I subjoin to this another letter addressed to the same true and well-tried friend, not because it throws any fresh light on the state of the writer's affairs at the moment, but because it illustrates—what far more deserves the attention of the world



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—the temper of his mind and feelings under every variety of circumstances. Mr. Anderson had misunderstood some expressions in Mr. Hastings's communication of the 13th, and replied to it with a slight tone of vexation. How kind, and gentle, and beautiful is the rejoinder.

To the same.

Beaumont Lodge, 28th September, 1786.

My dear Anderson,—I have received yours, and am glad that mine reached you in safety. David Anderson is the last man living whom I should have suspected of *cavilling*, and Warren Hastings is the last man living at whom he should *cavil*; for you have not misapplied the expression. I meant no more by the words *your friend* than to avoid the mention of the name to which I alluded, in conformity to your recommendation of secrecy and my own sense of the necessity of it; and for the same reason I left a blank for the name (as I well recollect) in the beginning, where the context sufficiently indicated the person intended by it. I am hurt to think that you could for an instant judge me (I am sure against experience) capable of little jealousy, and of yourself too; and on this occasion I have the additional mortification to know that the misconception will last for a fortnight before my explanation can remove it.

I am satisfied with the fulness of your brief conclusion on the Rohilla and Benares subjects. I had intended to have given you a few more hints about the interposition with Madras, but I have been lazy through the effects of my rheumatic complaint, which grows worse and yet hangs upon me.

I will write to the Chancellor about Shore's brother. Had it not been for his late desperate sickness, I



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should have performed my promise many months ago.
—I am, my dear friend, your affectionate.

I need scarcely add that there needed no further explanation to restore these two men to the footing on which they had so long stood towards one another. Among all his friends, and he had many, none were more devoted to Mr. Hastings than David Anderson; among all whom he loved, and his benevolence was as extensive as it was sincere, Mr. Hastings, I am inclined to say, loved David Anderson the most.



CHAPTER X.

Proceedings in the Commons—Hastings arraigned at the Bar of the House of Lords—The Impeachment opened.

It will not be expected that I should follow, step by step, the order of events which terminated in the trial of Mr. Hastings; much less can I pretend, within the compass of a memoir like this, to give an analysis, however brief, of the proceedings which characterized the trial itself. It is matter of history that, after separating on the 19th of July, Parliament met again on the 23d of January; and that on the 1st of February, 1787, the House of Commons returned to the examination of witnesses which the summer recess had interrupted. Then followed debates on the different charges, as one by one they were brought forward; almost all of which terminated unfavourably for Mr. Hastings: till finally, on the 3d of April, the House came to the determination of exhibiting articles of impeachment against the late Governor-general of Bengal at the bar of the House of Lords, and of nominating a committee to whom the management of the business should be entrusted. The names of the gentlemen thus honoured are, I doubt not, familiar to many of



my readers ; yet for the benefit of such as may not be at home in this department of history, I subjoin a list of them :—

Edmund Burke, Esq.
Right Hon. C. J. Fox.
R. B. Sheridan, Esq.
Sir James Erskine.
Right Hon. Thomas Pelham.
Right Hon. W. Wyndham.
Hon. Sir Andrew St. John.
John Anstruther, Esq.
William Adam, Esq.
M. A. Taylor, Esq.
Charles Grey, Esq.
General Burgoyne.
Welbore Ellis, Esq.
Right Hon. Frederick Montagu.
Sir Grey Cooper.
Sir Gilbert Elliot.
Dudley Long, Esq.
Lord Maitland.
Hon. G. A. North.

An attempt was made to add to this list the name of Philip Francis, but the Commons would not consent. They positively refused, in defiance of Mr. Burke's adjurations, to employ as their agent in the prosecution of Mr. Hastings, one whose personal hostility to the accused was notorious ; whereupon the managers, as if to evince their contempt for the decision of such a body, appointed Mr. Francis their assessor, in order, as they said, that the benefit of his talents



and experience might not be lost to a cause in which the very first principles of moral right were involved.

Meanwhile Mr. Hastings, whom the events of 1786 had prepared for much that was to follow, was not inattentive to his own honour, nor negligent in preparing the means of its vindication. He bestirred himself during the recess to set his character right before the world; as well as to draw up such a statement of facts as might, when the proper time comes, be read as his personal defence. The following letters, which relate to these proceedings, I judge it expedient to insert, for this among other reasons, that they do justice to the many friends who volunteered to aid him in his difficulties. To Lord Thurlow he had been indebted all along for countenance and support, while struggling to maintain himself in power. They were not, it will be seen, withdrawn, now when the question to be determined was, whether he should spend his latter days in peace, or go a dishonoured and ruined man to his grave.

TO DAVID ANDERSON, Esq.

Ewell, 27th October, 1786.

My dear Anderson,—On my return to town the evening before last I received your favour of the 15th, and yesterday morning I again left Beaumont Lodge for this place, which is in Surrey; where I write with interruptions, impending engagements, and restricted time; so I must come quickly to the material point. I



have many reasons to wish for your early return to town. You cannot possibly work without materials, and you have none where you are. Major Scott has promised to assist, and will be much advanced by the time that you can come. As to myself, I literally do nothing, nor can bring myself to do anything till I know what is to be done against me; and indeed I feel a mighty repugnance against it from my contempt of my accusers, and something like it for those who, not having the plea of malice and revenge, permit both to operate in so unworthy a manner against me; and I know, besides, that if the former could carry the question for impeachment, they would not dare to do it.

But my wish to see you early arises principally from another cause. I know not to what I may be early destined; early, for my destiny must be now soon fixed. If to a public life, which is possible, I wish to have the benefit of your counsel in the crisis which may precede it, and I should have a pleasure in its being early seen that I have a proper estimation of your talents as well as attachment. But I may not pursue the subject; it would look too like profession, which I hate.

My memoir was surreptitiously obtained by a mercenary stationer, who printed, and had actually published it. I could only punish him by giving the property to another, Murray, the editor of the English Review; and by him it has, I believe, been, or is near being, published. I am sorry for it; for it will draw cavils upon me, which will pass because I shall not answer them; but it could not have been longer suppressed, and the impression now made is a correct one.

Mrs. Hastings desires me to make her compliments, and hopes you will pass your Christmas at Beaumont Lodge. We are both well. I rode yesterday to this



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place, a journey of at least twenty-two miles, without baiting. Adieu, yours affectionately.

I am pleased exceedingly with what you write of Dr. Adam Smith's approbation.

To the same.

Ewell, 29th October, 1786.

My dear Anderson,—I wrote you a short letter three days ago from this place. For fear of a miscarriage, I repeat my wish to see you in this end of the earth before the meeting of Parliament, which is now fixed for the 20th of January. I am afraid that I must myself undertake the drudgery which in your hands would have been a more pleasing and more easy labour; for my great *Gooroo* has enjoined it. Still you must take a large part in it. We shall not leave Beaumont Lodge till the meeting, and shall be very happy to have you for our guest to that time. Iforgot to tell you that I wrote immediately after receiving your letter, with Mr. Shore's enclosed in it, to the Chancellor, but he received it while he was leaving Buxton, and has been so good as to commission Scott, whom he has seen, to mention that as his reason for not answering it, adding his wish that the object of it was already within compass. I write this only to you. I should be glad, however, that when you write to Mr. Shore, you would let him know that I have not neglected him. Your affectionate.

Mrs. Hastings desires me to join her request that you will make Beaumont Lodge your immediate residence, and save yourself the fatigue of twenty miles out of your destined 400.

To the same.

Beaumont Lodge, 9th October, 1786.

My dear Anderson,—I hope you have received my last, as I should be sorry indeed that you should re-



tain, a moment longer than was necessary for its removal, the impression of such a mistake as you committed in yours. I see advertised for publication a pamphlet written by a new volunteer in my cause, whom though I have not seen, nor know, I have seen his book, and will order it to be sent to you, because it sets the matter in a new light, and by assuming only one general principle, equally applicable to all the charges, and avoiding the discussion of each, which nobody could understand, is likely to do more service than publications of more knowledge and better composition. I was assured, when I was last in town, that Parliament will certainly meet in November, and that this abominable business would be first and speedily despatched. They seem to have enough prepared for the next sessions, without such unprofitable matter.

I understand by the Winterton's despatches that your brother and Sindia have had a serious quarrel, which was occasioned by Sindia's giving protection, and bestowing public honours, on Mowlary Hyroodeen and his brother Sala o'Deen, whom James had dismissed for treachery. Your brother insisted on their being turned out of the camp, and this being evaded, himself left it in resentment, and retired to Agra, where he was waiting the Board's commands, Sindia having in the mean time made a proper atonement for his behaviour. The Board had expressed a wish that he might return, but properly referred it to his discretion. Perhaps you have not heard this; the latter part you very probably have not. I hear little besides; but that little I dislike: nor do I know a syllable of what passes in the India House. Turner has sent me an abundant supply of turnip seeds, ingeniously packed, and in excellent preservation. They will do admirably for Scotland, and you shall have some for trial. At what time of the year are your turnips sown? Where has Sands fixed himself? I have also got a Bootan bull, of the



Chowry species, one female shawl goat, and I am told that there is a male for me in the Dublin, some time arrived. The bull is in fine health, and I am in quest of a mate of his own size, to secure what I can of the breed; for I doubt if we shall ever get another from India.

Did I tell you that the Chinese only use the seeds of the red palma christi, accounting the green unwholesome? I don't know which is the sort used in England; but it is worth inquiring. I am yet unable to ride; in other respects well. Mrs. Hastings is, I thank God, in better health than she has known since I arrived in England. Whether Beaumont Lodge has contributed to this, God knows. I think that we should be both better for a month's residence in a drier atmosphere than this island, I fear, can afford in any part of it. Adieu, your affectionate.

Thus far Mr. Hastings proceeded with his arrangements, ere the session of 1787 opened. He soon found, after the investigation of his case was resumed, that more would be necessary. He therefore determined to meet his enemies on the ground where they imagined that they were most secure, by obtaining from the people of India—the Hindoo and Mussulman inhabitants of the country which he had so long governed—testimonials of the estimation in which, both as a ruler and a man he had been and still continued to be held. The following letters to Sir John Shore, afterwards Lord Teignmouth, and to Mr. Thompson, his friend and ancient secretary, explain themselves.



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To Sir JOHN SHORE.

St. James's Place, 19th February, 1787.

Dear Shore,—As I have now every reason to believe that an impeachment will be carried against me to the House of Lords, and have had a severe warning given me not to trust to my own integrity, or services, as I may conceive them, for the event,—and as I fear no issue of the trial so much as its influence on my future and lasting reputation,—I apply to you, my friend, to afford me such assistance as, I hope, may be in your power to obviate such a conclusion, by collecting the testimonials of the most respectable inhabitants of the provinces of Bengal, and such other creditable vouchers, of whatever kind, beyond the provinces, as may refute the calumnies with which I have been loaded, and ascertain whatever pretensions I may have to more positive merit.

I am charged with cruelty, oppression, violation of treaties, and with the general guilt of having sacrificed every duty to the views of interest, ambition, or private vengeance. I am not sure that rapacity makes a part of the catalogue of my imputed crimes, because the instances which have been adduced in evidence to prove it apply only to acts done for the relief of the public necessities, and it is scarcely (I believe not at all) insinuated, that I have practised it for any profit of my own.

I wish to make my appeal to the justice and generosity of those to whom it best appertains, to pronounce upon my real character, according to their several relations or concerns with the government of Bengal during the periods in which I held an efficient share in its powers; that they may declare whether I deserve these imputations, or whether I am entitled to their testimony of the reverse.

Whether I have extorted money from individuals to



gratify my own avarice; or whether I have not notoriously abstained from every means which might have promoted my own interest, with the injury of individuals or the public:

Whether I have counteracted, or permitted; or whether I have not, on the contrary, to the utmost of my power prevented men in office or favour from oppressing or plundering those who were subjected to their authority or influence:

Whether the provinces have been infested with robbers, or plundering Seneassies, as much during my administration as in the times preceding it:

Whether the provinces have suffered the calamities either of war or famine during my administration; or whether they have not enjoyed both uninterrupted peace and abundance, though our Government and nation were for years engaged in wars with powerful states and neighbours, and were at one time threatened with a dearth from the same causes which produced one in 1768:

Whether I have oppressed the reiate by intolerable or unequal taxes, for the public service; or whether I have not rather multiplied the sources of public wealth, and equalized the burthens imposed on the people:

Whether I have neglected the administration of justice; or whether I have not established Courts of Civil and Criminal Justice, and supported both in the exercise of their functions beyond the experience of any former times:

Whether I have offended, or discountenanced the laws, customs, and religious worship of the country; or whether I have not respected, protected, and conformed to them:

Whether I have shown a disregard to science; or whether I have not, on the contrary, by public endowments, by personal attentions, and by the selection of



men for appointments suited to their talents, given effectual encouragement to it:

Whether in my public negotiations, and in my general intercourse, I have made use of artifice and trick, or of truth and plain-dealing:

Whether I have affected a display of state; whether I have ever shown an inordinate solicitude for my personal safety; or whether I have not been thought to err in the opposite extremes:

Whether I left the country in a worse or in a better state of population and cultivation than I found it:

And lastly, whether the English name, power, and influence were ever greater, more respected, or more extensively known in India before than during my administration, and particularly at the close of it.

The persons who can be most instrumental in collecting the suffrages which I require, are Gunga Govin Sing; Allee Ibraheem Cawn; Beneram, or Bissumbes Pundit; Rajah Govindram; Tofuzzel Hossein Cawn; Mowlary Majud O'Deen, or his brother Muftee Ahmed; and I believe I may venture to join Mahdajee Sindia. I would wish at least to have his testimony, and those of every other chief with whom our Government was in connexion; Moodajee, the ministers of Poona, Nizam al Moolk, Assofo' Dowlah, and the Nabob Wallah Jah.

I cannot prescribe the means. Perhaps I have been too particular in detailing the ends. But you must make allowances for my anxiety, and the cause which I have to make me more than ordinarily anxious.

If you think that you can undertake this commission with an assurance of its complete execution, you will of course (as I should on every account wish) first propose it to Lord Cornwallis for his approbation. If he objects to it, there must of course be an end to it. Even from the little which I know of his Lordship, and from his general character, I give him credit for



qualities incompatible with such a supposition, and assure myself besides that he will not in Bengal have changed the opinion which he entertained of me in England for a worse.

I will not ask your forgiveness for wishing to impose on you so much trouble; but I ought if I thought that it might eventually draw on you the same enmities which are now directed at me. I confess, I think such may be the consequence, though I rather hope that the crisis of this phrenzy may terminate with me. If it does not, I am not sure that any conduct will be a safeguard against it.

You will readily comprehend that I do not mean to use the justification which I solicit from your means for any purpose of meeting the impending trial; for though I am certain that every artifice will be put in practice to protract it, it will be impossible to extend the delay beyond another sessions; I mean another after the present. The result, therefore, of this plan can be of no other benefit to me than that of retrieving my character from the injury which it may have received from the present prosecution, and its legal consequences. These must all have ceased long before the result of my commission can arrive in England. I am not sure that the House of Commons will vote an impeachment. I cannot be certain that the same prejudices, the same intrigues, and the same influence may not follow me into the House of Lords, though in judicial matters the character of that assembly stands hitherto unimpeached. But I have been told by judgments much better informed than those of common men, that much is to be apprehended, even in that assembly, from the respect paid to a decided judgment of the House of Commons, and yet more to the ascribed inclination of the minister; and I myself have my doubts of another kind. The charges may prove so numerous and com-



plicated, that every mind will not be able to comprehend them, or to retain even what they do comprehend; and the tedious and artificial examination of the witnesses to every charge will, with the other process, take up such a length of time, that the aged, infirm, and indifferent will not sit out the trial. I may therefore lose many verdicts in my favour. None will be lost of those which are predetermined against me. I am almost ashamed of these suspicions; yet, after what has passed, how can I avoid them? I have been condemned by one assembly for having intended by a resolution, which was confined to my own breast, to exact a fine from Cheyt Sing exceeding his offences, admitted to be great, and a fine, if moderate, admitted to be a legal and proper punishment. I have been condemned for permitting the jagheers and treasures to be taken from the mother of the Nabob Assof o' Dowlah, because in the evidence adduced by my prosecutor to prove my guilt, I had not brought proofs sufficient of the Begum's rebellion against her sovereign, and hostility to our nation; though the charge, black and rancorous as it is, and the admired harangue of the mover of the charge, fabricated with the labour of months, and the combination of all the powers of a great party, both stated in terms that the money produced by these exactions was applied to the relief of the public necessities, and they have not dared to suggest that I took or attempted to take any part of it to my own use. Let, however, this business end as it will, a great portion of mankind will think they judge with candour, if, unable to comprehend any part of the accusations, they acquit me, at a guess, of some, and conclude that where so much is alleged against me, much of it must be necessarily true. The plan which I have recommended may be productive of that species of evidence which the meanest capacity will understand, and which



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will most effectually and totally efface every prejudice against me. Let it arrive when it will, whether I shall have received an absolute and unqualified acquittal, or a condemnation; whether I am alive or dead, it will answer the end for which I want it. I am ever, my dear Shore, your most affectionate friend.

To Mr. THOMPSON.

St. James's Place, 19th February, 1787.

My dear Thompson,—If the letter which I have written with this to Mr. Shore should be delivered to you according to its direction, and God forbid that it should be in one of the events supposed in it, I request that you will open and read it as addressed originally to yourself, and then you will conform to the contents of it. Yours affectionately.

To the same.

St. James's Place, 29th March, 1787.

My dear Thompson,—I have not time to write answers to your letters. I have not yet paid your draft, because I could not raise the money without loss. It will be paid in the course of next month. I have written a letter to Shore, which I have directed, in case of his absence or death, to you, and in either case I have desired you to execute the commission which is contained in it. I sometimes flatter myself that, as the thought is obvious, my friends in Bengal will have anticipated it. I suppose that of course Shore will show you the letter. Mr. Pitt has shown himself so unequivocally on the same side with Mr. Burke in the business of my impeachment, and they have so many followers, that there is no doubt of its going to the House of Lords. I am only fearful of delays. I shall be perfectly contented if I am completely out of the hands of the Commons this sessions. But that the impeachment will be voted you may be assured, though



it will be strongly contested, (and on grounds with which I have but a remote and accidental concern,) and the two sides of the house disagree upon the articles, each condemning and approving what the other approves and condemns. My friends in India will hear with indignation, and my enemies with ridicule, that in one charge I have been condemned for removing Mr. Shea from Furrukhabad, and leaving Mozuffer Jung unprotected, and of course oppressed. I send you a paper which contains a brief state of the charge which is to be debated to-morrow. I have caused sixty to be printed, with the intent of distributing them among my friends: but am advised that it will not be prudent, as my friends will give them to my enemies, and these will turn them to ridicule, extract centos from them to turn my own words against me; and as no one will read them but those who mean to pervert what they read, the rest will believe whatever is asserted to be quoted from them. This was done with the charge of the Begums.

I cannot yet give up my bureau. I am sorry that you did not make public search for it. I now beg you to do so, and obtain the support of Lord Cornwallis for making it. It is strange. Every January did Larkins's writers, and my banyans, take an accurate account of my dead stock, and of the Company's dead stock, as they lay in my two houses. Yet you tell me that the Company's sircars claimed for the Company what they pleased, and were allowed what they claimed! but I know not why I complain. I beg that you will send home every paper of mine that was left, and that has existence. Many were left that I have eagerly sought for among those which I have, in vain. Not one of my pictures has been sent after me, none of my Tibbet pictures, not one, but Mrs. Hastings's of Zoffani's, and that packed so negligently that it ar-



rived almost spoiled. I thank you for your intention of sending Sulliman. If he is not too old, he may yet do two or three years of service; at least his breed is invaluable. I have in vain sought for a horse that Mrs. Hastings can ride, and this is now my only chance. You will be pleased to hear that Mrs. Hastings gains health and strength visibly, though of a constitution still too susceptible. I am certainly better than I was the last year: yet I shall not be completely well till I can make trial of the drier atmosphere of the continent. I am, my dear Thompson, yours most affectionately.

The doubt which rested on the mind of Mr. Hastings, when the preceding letter was written, (if indeed he can be said to have doubted, even then, concerning an issue so obvious,) was not slow in receiving its solution. On the 21st of May, Mr. Burke moved that he should be taken into the custody of the serjeant-at-arms, and he was taken into custody accordingly. In this state he accompanied the managers to the bar of the House of Lords, where articles of impeachment were exhibited against him; and he departed from it on bail, being bound over to appear again when required, himself in the sum of £2000, and two sureties to the amount of £1000 each. Thus, after a long life spent in the public service, during no inconsiderable portion of which he had been at the head of a mighty empire; after having been repeatedly thanked in that position by the East India Company, and thrice continued in office



by a solemn vote of the legislature; Mr. Hastings found himself called upon to defend his character, perhaps his life, against the violence of a faction, which accused him of crimes the most repugnant to his nature, and of which it seems hardly credible that the most rancorous of his personal enemies could have believed him to be guilty. For the only boons which he could now solicit, and which were not of course refused, were, that he might be furnished with a copy of the indictment, and be allowed counsel, and time for the preparation of his defence. He went forth, therefore, to the world, a branded man, whom nothing short of a formal acquittal, by the highest tribunal in the nation, could restore to his legitimate place in society.

From this time forth, throughout an interval of not less than seven years, Mr. Hastings continued on his trial. There was arrayed against him all the eloquence, and talent, and influence of a scarcely divided House of Commons; while he depended for support upon his own lofty sense of right alone, and the indefatigable exertions of the three distinguished lawyers to whom the care of his defence had been committed. But the questions at issue between him and the managers soon spread beyond the limits of Westminster-hall. Not England only, but all Europe, watched with intense interest the progress of events; while India sent home its countless testimonies to the



public and private virtues of the man whom his own government rewarded for the benefits he had conferred upon them by a prosecution, which in every point of view has no parallel in history. As might have been expected, moreover, the passions of men began immediately to be roused, and the press teemed with pamphlets criminatory or otherwise of the accused. These had their day, and were certainly not without their uses ; but as I cannot afford space to describe in detail the events of the impeachment itself, far less will it be expected of me that I should make further allusion to the countless pamphlets which discussed it, than by placing upon record the fact, that they once existed and are now forgotten.

A reference to the journals of Parliament will inform the curious in these matters, of the extraordinary solemnity with which the Peers met for the first time in their judicial capacity. "The House," says the historian of the trial, "met at ten, and by eleven a message was sent to the Commons, that the House was immediately going to adjourn to Westminster Hall, to proceed upon the trial of Warren Hastings, Esq. A message was immediately returned that the Commons were ready to substantiate their charges. The Lords were then called over by the clerk, and arranged by Sir Isaac Heard, principal king at arms, when upwards of two hundred proceeded to Westminster



Hall." From the same authority we learn, that "previous to their Lordships' approach to the hall, about eleven o'clock, her Majesty, with the Princesses Elizabeth, Augusta, and Mary, made their appearance in the Duke of Newcastle's gallery. Her Majesty was dressed in a fawn coloured satin, her head-dress plain, with a very slender sprinkling of diamonds. The royal box was graced with the Duchess of Gloucester and the young prince. The ladies were all in mourning dresses; a few with feathers and variegated flowers in their head-dress, but nothing so remarkable as to attract public attention. Mrs. Fitzherbert was in the royal box. The Dukes of Cumberland, Gloucester, and York, and the Prince of Wales, with their trains, followed the Chancellor, and closed the procession. Upwards of two hundred of the Commons, with the speaker, were in the gallery. The managers, Charles Fox and all, were in full dress; but a very few of the Commons were full dressed, some of them were in boots. Their seats were covered with green cloth—the rest of the building was 'one red.'

"Mr. Hastings stood for some time. On a motion from a peer, the Chancellor allowed as a favour that the prisoner should have a chair; and he sat throughout the day, except occasionally when he spoke to his counsel. His counsel were Mr. Law, Mr. Plumer, Mr. Dallas. For the Commons, Dr. Scott and Dr. Lawrence; Messrs, Mansfield, Piggot, Burke, and Douglas.



“ A party of horse guards, under the command of a field-officer, with a captain’s party from the Horse Grenadiers, attended daily during the trial. A body of three hundred foot-guards also kept the avenues clear ; and a considerable number of constables attended for the purpose of taking offenders into custody.”

I pass over the description of the fitting up of the hall itself, as well as of the order in which the Peers entered and arranged themselves, that I may extract the following account of the manner in which the business of the court began. “ At twelve,” says my authority, “ the court was opened, and the serjeant-at-arms, with a very audible voice, made the usual proclamation ; after which, in old blunt English, he summoned ‘ Warren Hastings, Esq. to come forth in court, and save thee and thy bail, otherwise the recognizance of thee and thy bail will be forfeited.’ Hereupon Mr. Hastings appeared at the bar with his two sureties, Mr. Sullivan and Mr. Sumner, and immediately dropped upon his knees ; but the Lord Chancellor signified that he might rise. He seemed very infirm and much indisposed. He was dressed in a plain poppy coloured suit of clothes.

“ After Mr. Hastings appeared at the bar, a proclamation as follows was made :—

“ ‘ Whereas charges of high crimes and misdemeanours have been exhibited by the knights,



citizens, and burgesses in Parliament assembled, in the name of themselves and of all the Commons of Great Britain, against Warren Hastings, Esq., all persons concerned are to take notice that he now stands on his trial, and they may come forth in order to make good the said charges.'

"Proclamation being made, the Lord Chancellor rose, and addressed the prisoner as follows:—

" ' Warren Hastings, You are called upon, after every expedient allowance, for your defence. You have had bail: you have counsel. Much time also has been granted you, becoming well the circumstances of your case. For the matter in the charges is most momentous, and the dates are remote since the occurrences in those charges alleged against you are said to have been committed. These advantages you must understand, while you feel; you are to deem them, not an indulgence of this House, but the fair claim of right, a concession of nothing, but what you have in common with all around you—what every British subject may ask, and every British tribunal must allow. Conduct your defence, therefore, in a manner that may befit your station, and the magnitude of the charges against you, and estimate rightly the high character of those you have to answer—the Commons of Great Britain; who at once, perhaps, attach likelihood to doubt, and enforce authority, certainly on declaration.'



“ To which Mr. Hastings made almost verbatim the following answer :—

“ ‘ My Lords, I am come to this high tribunal, equally impressed with a confidence in my own integrity, and in the justice of the court before which I stand.’ ”

Thus was the tribunal opened, which was to decide concerning Warren Hastings, not whether he had earned and should receive high rewards from his King and country, but whether or not he were covered with such a load of obloquy and crime, as never before attached to any high functionary under the British crown. The ceremony was grave and solemn as became the occasion, neither can any blame attach throughout either to the illustrious court or its distinguished president. But the feelings of him are, I conceive, very little to be envied, who can think of the conduct of the parties by whom that most iniquitous prosecution was carried forward, without indignation.

The following letters give so vivid a description of the state of the writer's feelings at this period, that I cannot resist the inclination to insert them. They are very beautiful, both in their tone and composition, and do infinite honour even to Mr. Hastings.



To Mr. THOMPSON.

Beaumont Lodge, 2nd August, 1787.

My dear Thompson,—I have not heard from you by any of the late arrivals, nor indeed for some time past; and the Barrington is yet expected, not without some fears for her safety. I am unreasonable; but I feel the disappointment of every packet that does not bring me a letter from you.

You will suffer by all the past advices from England in your concern for me. As for myself, I have made up my mind for the worst that can befall me; and can with truth affirm that I have borne with perfect indifference all the base treatment which I have had dealt to me, except the ignominious ceremonial of kneeling before the House of Lords, though I think it a usage that reflects more dishonour on that assembly for permitting the continuance of so iniquitous a form, than on those who are compelled to submit to it, and on whom it is inflicted as a punishment not only before conviction, but even before the accusations against them are read. I am prepared for my trial, and hope (whatever may be the result of it, for I should not be too sanguine, if the only crime laid to my charge was that I was concerned in the revolt of America) that it will be ended before the end of the next sessions of Parliament.

I have written to Shore in duplicate, and addressed both letters provisionally to you upon a subject which has a near relation to my impeachment, or rather to the event of it. Let me know only if you have heard anything about them.

I have the pleasure to tell you that I pass the best months of the year in the place from which this is dated, with great comfort, and almost delight, and have the satisfaction of seeing Mrs. Hastings's health proceed in improvement, though it is yet delicate, and



subject to frequent and sudden ailments. She has suffered more than I have done from my prosecution, and I only from her sufferings (except the instances mentioned above).

I had the pleasure to see Mr. Anstey a few months ago in town, well, and cheerful, as I suppose he is always.

I can give you no news; I am not in the way of hearing any. I never see any official men who are concerned in affairs of India, nor know what they are doing. You will hear that we are likely to be engaged in the present contests of the Dutch, and in another war, the consequence of it, which, I believe, we are striving to avoid by, not the best of all expedients, negociation. If we fail, you will feel the first effects of it.

Mrs. Hastings always remembers you with affection, and desires me to tell you so. Adieu, my dear friend. Your affectionate.

Remember me kindly to Turner. I am too lately informed of this despatch to write to him. Make the same excuse for me, with the kindest remembrance of me to Colonel Kyd.

To the same.

London, 8th February, 1788.

My dear Thompson, — I hope to have sufficient leisure, before the last despatches of the season, to write to you with your unanswered letters before me. It would now take up more of my time than I could afford to select them; and you must be content to receive my annual report on the subject in which you will be most interested. Mrs. Hastings, in spite of some occasions on which she suffers her spirits to be affected more than they ought with the impending transactions, gains daily, though but gently, both in health and in the appearance of it; and I am well.



On Wednesday next, the 13th, I am to appear as a criminal before the first tribunal of the kingdom. How long the trial will last God knows; but I believe it is not yet in the power of man to conjecture. Sir E. Impey appeared on the 4th, and last night, at the bar of the House, and was allowed to defend himself on the charge of having deliberately murdered Nund-comar, which he did most ably, and with an effect that brought over every member of the House but his prosecutors, and confessedly some of them, though they will persevere. It is agreed to decide on this article immediately, and there is little doubt that it will be thrown out by a large majority, and without much delay, though it is probable that much art will be used to spin it out, and to afford time for the present impression to wear off, which it soon would do from minds so superficial and so finely polished as those of that House.

I wait with much impatience for the Ravensworth. Surely she will bring some materials that may afford me more service than the mere negative argument drawn from her producing no complaints against me, which, if the activity of my prosecutors could obtain them, I should not yet be surprised to see. I have but an imperfect recollection of my having mentioned in one of my letters to you, that I had written a letter to Shore in February, 1787 (I have not the copy, or any memorandum of the date by me), desiring him to collect authentic testimonies of the native inhabitants of our own provinces, and others in political connexion with our Government, respecting my conduct towards them. I did not then suppose it possible for him to execute this commission for the purpose of the present trial; neither do I now expect it, but that it may afford complete satisfaction to the world. Yet I sometimes persuade myself, that as I was never the per-



sonal enemy of any man but Nundcomar, whom from my soul I detested even when I was compelled to countenance him; and as no man in a station similar to mine, and with powers cramped and variable as mine were, ever laboured with so passionate a zeal for the welfare of a nation as I did to promote the happiness and prosperity of the people under our jurisdiction, the gratitude of some of them will have of itself suggested and produced the attestations which I wish. My own countrymen abroad, civil and military, have shown them, by two noble examples, what they might, I will not say what they ought, to do. I would rather have such testimonies, although the law should reject them, than any that could be offered here with its sanction for my acquittal. In the hours of solitude and secret reflection I have indulged myself with a number of fancies of what might have been done, and which I have almost wrought myself into the expectation of hearing that such had been done. It was not presumption to expect that that measure would be dealt to me which I have so often dealt to others; for what public merit has not had its due praise in various, and even some in lasting, means of publication?

I have desired Major Hussey to take charge of a small parcel, containing a few recent publications which may amuse you. One by Mr. Wilkes, published about eight months ago, is, I think, a most elegant as well as sensible composition. The others are all come out within these few days. Adieu. I am, my dear Thompson, yours ever most affectionately.



CHAPTER XI.

Results of the Impeachment—Specimens of Mr. Burke's Eloquence—Sir Gilbert Elliott a Manager—Proceedings at the India House.

THUS far the reader and I have journeyed onwards together, tracing the career of the subject of this memoir with strict attention to the chronological order of the events which, one after another, gave a colouring to his fortunes. It will be necessary that we deviate for a while from this course, because, however important to the individual the transactions of a strictly domestic life may be, they afford no materials out of which to construct a narrative calculated to arrest the attention of strangers. I must content myself, therefore, in reference to the impeachment, by stating, that for the space of seven entire years its issues hung in suspense; that every effort of Mr. Hastings and his counsel to obtain a speedy judgment was frustrated; that the three estates of the realm were repeatedly petitioned, sometimes conjointly, sometimes separately, but that no results followed favourable to the cause of justice and humanity. Long after it must have been apparent to themselves that they had failed in establishing their case, the managers persevered in attacks the very



tone of which sufficiently indicated the spirit in which they originated, for it was that of personal vituperation and malignity throughout. But the Lords did their duty, as they have always done when appealed to for the administration of strict and impartial justice. On the 23rd of April, 1795, Mr. Hastings was commanded to present himself in Westminster Hall, when the Chancellor (Lord Loughborough), no friend of his from the outset, informed him that by a large majority he had been acquitted, and that he was in consequence discharged.

It is a gratifying thing, doubtless, to be dismissed from a lengthened inquisition into character, with a reputation freed from reproach by the verdict of our judges; and this gratification Mr. Hastings experienced in no ordinary degree. For though the determinately prejudiced might still cling to their own views of his case, by the universal voice of the nation, his acquittal was greeted as a triumph. Moreover, the congratulatory addresses which poured in upon him, not from his friends and countrymen alone, but from strangers and foreigners, and above all from the inhabitants of British India, told of the general interest which his wrongs had excited, in language that was not to be misunderstood. Yet Mr. Hastings came not forth from the ordeal unscathed. His good name might be saved, but his worldly



prospects were blighted, inasmuch as the cost of the trial had swallowed up almost all the savings of a lifetime. Not less than seventy-six thousand five hundred and twenty-eight pounds were wasted in law charges alone; while the other expenses incident to such a protracted prosecution, during which it was necessary to communicate with all parts of the world, and bring witnesses from very distant quarters, reduced the party in whose favour sentence was given to a state of bankruptcy. Mr. Hastings, when for the last time he turned his back on Westminster Hall, could not tell whence the funds were to come by which the weekly bills of his household might be discharged; he was, as far as pecuniary matters were affected, a ruined man.

It was not, however, by these means alone that the impeachment operated with fatal effect upon the immediate condition and future prospects of Mr. Hastings. The doors of public life were, in a great measure, shut against him by it for ever. Acquitted he doubtless was, and society, in all its departments, from the palace to the cottage, hailed the event with joy; but as both the great parties in the state had united in carrying the prosecution forward, so they equally withdrew from the contest, as men are apt to do, when, in their efforts to accomplish some great purpose, they have been defeated. Mr. Burke and his friends continued to



hate the man whom, in the spirit of undisguised hatred, they had dragged before the highest tribunal in the land. Mr. Pitt, and the supporters of his administration generally, could not forgive the same individual, because, in spite of their influence exerted against him, he had established his own innocence. The very extent of Mr. Hastings's deservings became in their eyes a ground of hostility; and having failed to destroy, they determined, and adhered to their determination, to neglect him.

Of the existence of this feeling towards himself, on the part of the King's Government, Mr. Hastings was not destined to remain long in ignorance. After a day or two devoted to the exchange of visits of congratulation, and paying his court, as became him, both at the levee and in the drawing room, Mr. Hastings drew up a petition to the House of Commons, in which he set forth the heavy expenses to which, by the impeachment, he had been subjected, and prayed for remuneration. He took this step in despite of the remonstrances of his most intimate friends, who prognosticated that no good would arise from it; yet it was not taken unadvisedly. On the contrary, as he had more than once, in the course of the trial, been given to understand, that in the event of an acquittal, his expenses would be defrayed by the country, Mr. Hastings conceived that he was



entitled, both in law and equity, to the remuneration for which he applied. And he ventured to hope, in defiance of all apparent probabilities to the contrary, that the Chancellor of the Exchequer would himself see the matter in a similar light. He therefore commissioned his friend, Colonel Hastings, to carry the petition to Mr. Pitt, with a request that the right honourable gentleman would lay the case before the King, so that the application, when formally made, might carry with it the weight of a message from the Crown. Mr. Pitt seems to have taken a few days, and only a few, to deliberate on the proposition of Colonel Hastings. He returned the paper at their termination, with a short note to the effect, that, "under all the circumstances, he did not conceive that he should be justified in submitting the petition of the late Governor-general of India to the consideration of the sovereign."

To say that Mr. Hastings was either surprised or disappointed by the refusal of Mr. Pitt to interest himself in his petition, would be to advance an opinion for which I have no authority in fact. I am inclined, on the contrary, to believe, that the result of the application was scarcely different from that which he anticipated, because he seems, from very early times, to have counted little, if at all, upon the friendly disposition of the prime minister. How, indeed, could the case be otherwise? Mr.



Hastings was not ignorant that it was Mr. Pitt who stood between him and a peerage ten years previously; while the whole bearing of that right honourable gentleman, from the beginning to the end of the trial, had evinced towards him a feeling decidedly hostile. Still Mr. Hastings believed that there was a moral obligation upon himself to make the move, and he made it without much caring whether it might prove successful or the reverse. It was not successful, and the applicant felt chagrined for the moment. Nevertheless he found no reason in the end to regret having exposed himself to the repulse, because the fact of his having sustained one placed him in a better light towards the East India Company, and strengthened the hands of his adherents while appealing to that body for the justice (I cannot call it the bounty) which the Legislature refused to award.

Besides these more serious evils,—the loss of fortune, and the negation of merited honours,—Mr. Hastings was exposed, as well during the progress of the trial as after its termination, to annoyances which, by a finely tempered mind like his, are scarcely more endurable than the worst that can befall. He was prepared, as every man gifted with common sense must be against whom a criminal prosecution lies, to find his good name treated with little respect by those who might



undertake the conduct of such prosecution. But on the extreme lengths to which the leading manager carried the system of vituperation he had never counted.

"We know," said Mr. Burke on one occasion, "that as we are to be served by men, that the persons who serve us must be tried as men, and that there is a very large allowance indeed due to human infirmity and human error. This we know, and have weighed before we came to your Lordships' bar. But the crimes we charge are not the causes and effects of common human frailty, such as we know, and feel, and can allow for, but they are crimes which have their rise in the wicked dispositions of men; they are crimes which have their rise in avarice, rapacity, pride, cruelty, ferocity, malignity of temper, haughtiness, insolence,—in short, everything that manifests a heart blackened to the very blackest—a heart dyed deep in blackness—a heart gangrened to the core." . . . "We have not chosen to bring before you a poor trembling delinquent." . . . "We have brought before you the head, the chief, a captain-general of iniquity—one in whom all the fraud, all the tyranny of India are embodied, disciplined, and arrayed." . . . "I charge him," continued the orator, "with having taken away the lands of orphans, with having alienated the fortunes of widows, with having wasted the country and destroyed the inhabitants, after cruelly harassing and distressing them. I charge him with having tortured their persons and dishonoured their religion through his wicked agents, who were at the bottom and root of his villainy. I charge him in the name of the Commons of England." . . . "Now, my Lords, what is it we want? We want to have the cause of oppressed princes, of undone women of the first rank, redressed—of desolated pro-



vinces and wasted kingdoms redressed. Do you want a criminal, my Lords? When was so much iniquity charged against any one? No, my Lords, you must not look to India to furnish one, for Mr. Hastings has not left in India substance enough to furnish such another delinquent." . . . "I impeach Warren Hastings in the name of the people of all India, whose laws, rights, and liberties he has subverted. I impeach him in the name of the people of India, whose country he has destroyed. I impeach him in the name of human nature, which he has cruelly injured and oppressed in both sexes."

Such is a specimen of the style in which the leading manager judged it not inexpedient to clothe the harangue with which the proceedings against Mr. Hastings were opened. The charges, though general, are all of the most atrocious kind; the prisoner at the bar, ere the case against him has been so much as stated, is overwhelmed with invectives, which would have been misapplied had he stood there to receive sentence as a convicted criminal. Does the reader desire to know how the same orator expressed himself when the progress of events carried him forward to the discussion of particular acts? The following samples are taken at random from Mr. Burke's speeches in 1789:—

The prisoner is "eminent for the pillage and destruction of provinces." . . . His are "crimes of great enormity, the ruin and expulsion of illustrious families, the total ruin of villages, the total expulsion of the first houses in Asia." . . . He is a man "who in his



own person has done more mischief than all those persons whose evil practices had produced all those laws, those regulations, and even his own appointments." . . . "A corrupt, shocking arrangement was made, and Bengal saw a dancing girl administer its laws." . . . "He murdered that man (Nundcomar) by the hands of Sir Elijah Impey." . . . "He gorged his ravenous maw with an allowance of two hundred pounds a-day. He is not satisfied without sucking the blood of fourteen hundred nobles. He is never corrupt without he is cruel. He never dines without creating a famine. He feeds on the indigent, the decaying, and the ruined, and them he depresses together, not like the generous eagle who preys on a living, reluctant, equal prey; no, he is like the ravenous vulture, who feeds on the dead and the enfeebled; who destroys and incapacitates nature in the destruction of its objects while devouring the carcases of the dead, and then prides himself on his ignominious security; and his cruelty is beyond his corruption. At the same time there is in his hypocrisy something more terrible than his cruelty. For at the same time that he exercises a proscription that sweeps off the bread of thousands of the nobility, he turns the precious balm that flows from wounded humanity into deadly, rancorous, and mortal poison to the human race." . . . "His crimes are so multiplied, that all the contrivances of ingenuity to cover them are abortive."

Will these specimens of Mr. Burke's eloquence suffice, or shall we add to them one or two more? Let the following sum up our catalogue. They will at least show that it was not always in a spirit of generous indignation, because of wrongs done, or supposed to be done, to suffering millions, that



the manager indulged his taste and talent for invective of the grossest kind. It is thus that he speaks of Mr. Hastings, not as the governor of a province, but as a man :—

“This swindling Mæcænas—swindling of glory, and obtaining honour under false pretences—a bad scribbler of absurd papers, who could never put two sentences of sense together.” . . . “A man whose origin was low, obscure, and vulgar, and bred in vulgar and ignoble habits; more proud than persons born under canopies of state, and swaddled in purple.” . . . The proceedings of this man were, he says, “a traitorous and rebellious assumption of the power which belongs only to the King, as sovereign, with both Houses of Parliament.” . . . Again: “Such are the damned and damnable proceedings of a judge in hell, and such a judge was Warren Hastings.” . . . “Sir Walter Raleigh was called a spider of hell. This was foolish, indecent in Lord Coke. Had he been a manager on this trial he would have been guilty of a neglect of duty had he not called the prisoner a spider of hell.” . . . Finally, he is “a captain-general of iniquity, thief, tyrant, robber, cheat, swindler, sharper. We call him all these names, and are sorry that the English language does not afford terms adequate to the enormity of his offences.”

The freedom of speech claimed by every counsel, whether in the prosecution or defence of a prisoner, is doubtless very great; neither is he a friend to substantial justice who would desire to see it materially abridged; but I do not think that the wildest advocate of forensic licence will venture



to justify expressions like these, even if the case be one where, to save life, it is necessary to appeal, not to the reason, but to the passions of an ordinary jury. Mr. Burke, however, had not even this poor excuse to offer for his outrage on common decency. His own passions were not, or rather ought not to have been, enlisted either for or against the accused. His appeal was made to a court in which reason, and reason alone, might be expected to preside. What right had he to load with opprobrious epithets, and cover with unmitigated abuse, a great public servant, against whom he had been commissioned to conduct a great public prosecution? But this is not all. Far from desiring that his words should be received as the index of his own private opinion, no matter on what evidence formed, Mr. Burke had the audacity to drag the whole Commons of England at his chariot wheel; and to tell the Lords that as the libels which he had uttered were fully credited by the body which had commissioned him to speak in their name, so they must choose between the prisoner and the House of Commons, one or other of whom their sentence would overwhelm with disgrace. "Nothing," said he, "but the malice of the House of Commons could have instigated them to institute this prosecution if they had not been sure of his guilt. Nothing but a great party formed by his wealth could support him." . . . "I



tremble for the event, because, if the prisoner is innocent, the Commons are guilty."

Such was the temper and spirit in which, from first to last, Mr. Burke carried on the prosecution of Warren Hastings; and such the insults to which Mr. Hastings, throughout nine long years, found himself under the necessity of submitting. Moreover, the utmost pains were taken to induce a belief, both at home and abroad, that the object of all this obloquy was rolling in wealth; in wealth, wrung from the blood of oppressed millions, and now dispensed with a free hand, in order to corrupt the springs of justice, even at the fountain head. Among other ridiculous stories, which had their day, though a brief one, I may be permitted to specify two—both of which made some noise at the time, though they are long ago forgotten. It happened on the 2d of January, 1786,—the very day on which the Commons came to the resolution of impeaching Mr. Hastings on the Benares charge,—that Mr. Hastings received, through Mr. Richard Johnson, the Company's resident at the Court of Hyderabad, a letter from the Nabob Nizam Ally Cawn; which, together with a small bulze, containing a diamond, the Nabob requested Mr. Hastings to present to the King. The diamond and letter were delivered to Lord Sydney, who conveyed them, as in duty bound, to His Majesty; and they were both



graciously received. But the matter did not end there. In the House of Commons first, and afterwards in the newspapers, it was asserted, that the letter from the Nabob was an impudent forgery; and that the diamond, a jewel of incalculable value, had been given by Mr. Hastings himself as a bribe, wherewith to secure the royal countenance and support in his difficulties. It is scarcely necessary to add, that the caricaturists soon turned the story to account. The shop windows were almost immediately filled with representations of George the Third in a wheel-barrow, which Mr. Hastings trundled before him; while the legend ran thus:—"What a man buys he may sell." The good old King, it appears, was highly amused with the device. He laughed heartily when it was shown to him, and said, "Well, I have seen myself in many odd situations, but never in a wheel-barrow till now."

The story of the diamond was absurd and malicious enough; yet, in point of magnitude, it fell greatly short of another, which, a year later, obtained very general circulation. It was said that Mr. Hastings, finding it impossible to remit his enormous fortune by any ordinary means to Europe, had freighted several ships with the most valuable merchandise; and sent them to Amsterdam for the purpose of discharging their cargoes. So completely had this tale gained at



one time the ear of the world, that the French Government appointed agents to treat with Mr. Hastings for the purchase of his goods ; nor was it without some difficulty that Mr. Hastings could induce the French minister at the Court of St. James to mistrust the truth of a statement to which he had himself contributed to give circulation. At length, however, the French agents went to Amsterdam, where, sure enough, vessels lay to be unloaded ; and it was ascertained, that not only was Warren Hastings not the sole owner of their cargoes, but that he had in their cargoes no interest whatever.

I say nothing of the thousand and one stories that got afloat relative to the enormous sums disbursed by Mr. Hastings in hiring writers to plead his cause, and the editors of newspapers to give circulation to their essays. Neither is it worth while to dwell upon Mr. Burke's attempt, so early as the month of January, 1787, to have Mr. Hastings committed to close custody ; on the plea that three hundred thousand pounds had been sold out of the public funds, and that the owner of that enormous treasure was about to defeat the course of justice by fleeing from the country. The full disclosures which in due time came out, of the state of Mr. Hastings's pecuniary affairs, both at the commencement and at the close of his impeachment, set to rest these idle rumours for ever.



Yet they were sources of indescribable pain to him who was the object of them at the moment, because Mr. Hastings was sensitive of his honour to a degree which seldom consists with a long life spent in political warfare—more especially in political office; and being a poor man, he felt that his honour was compromised as often as his enemies spoke of him as the reverse. Moreover, they came not alone. Mr. Hastings was indignant with Mr. Burke, and scarcely less so with Mr. Pitt, who added this to his other acts of unkindness—that it was he, who, after sentence of acquittal had gone forth from the House of Lords, moved for a vote of thanks by the Commons to their managers in the impeachment. But a deeper and a more painful feeling possessed the subject of this memoir, when he beheld arrayed among the number of his most inveterate persecutors the brother of Alexander Elliott, on whom he had lavished so much kindness, and whose memory he continued to cherish with the fondest affection. Far be it from me to insinuate that Sir Gilbert Elliott would have been justified, had he, believing Mr. Hastings to be such as the articles of impeachment described him, stood forward from motives of personal gratitude or regard as his defender. But I cannot help thinking, and the world, I conceive, will go along with me, that at least it would have been more becoming, had he declined to appear as



one of the managers on the trial. For Sir Gilbert Elliott had been a frequent applicant to Mr. Hastings, while in power, as often as some relative or protégé of his own stood in need of an appointment; and not in a single instance do I find that his applications were rejected. Yet he, after largely benefiting by the patronage of his father's friend, and his brother's protector, did not hesitate to join eagerly in a cabal, which, had it succeeded, must have covered the name of Warren Hastings with disgrace, if indeed it left the bearer of that name any further place in the land of the living. Sir Gilbert Elliott may have been, for aught I know to the contrary, as amiable in private life as he was consistent in politics; but I deceive myself if his name will not go down to posterity with at least one deep stain upon its brightness from which it might have been saved.

The issue of Mr. Hastings's negociation with the minister no sooner became known, than his friends importuned him to lay his case before the Court of Directors; and to demand of them as a matter, not of favour but of right, that his expenses in the recent prosecution should be defrayed by the Company. Mr. Hastings positively refused to act upon this suggestion. "I feel," said he, "equally with you, that I shall suffer great injustice, if, after having been acquitted on every charge, I be left to pay my own costs during the trial; but my claim



lies, not against the Company but against the British nation. I have been subjected to a long, and, as the issue has proved, an unmerited prosecution, at the instance of the people of England, or at least of their representatives. It is for the country at large, not for any corporate body of its inhabitants, to replace me on the ground which I occupied ere the prosecution began; and if Parliament refuse this act of justice, I must submit. I can have no claim whatever upon the Court of Directors." His friends, however, thought differently. They argued that in his person the rights of the Company had been tried; and taking into consideration the eminent services which he had rendered, they came to the conclusion that the Proprietors would feel themselves bound to make good his losses during the trial, if, indeed, they went not further, by voting him a separate gratuity.

Foremost in the efforts to which a host of devoted admirers immediately gave themselves up, was Mr. Alderman Lushington; between whom and Mr. Hastings some interesting correspondence passed. It is highly honourable to both parties; for while, on the side of the Alderman, it abounds with reasons why Mr. Hastings should take the ground of one who has earned, and comes to claim his reward; on Mr. Hastings's part the tone is dignified and sober throughout. He is not too



proud to accept a favour; on the contrary, he acknowledges his great need, and is willing to be relieved by the bounty of his employers. But he abjures the idea of right, while at the same time he pays a becoming regard to his own position, by declaring, that unless he be placed on a footing of equality with Lord Cornwallis, to whom the Company were about to make a grant in testimony of their sense of his eminent services, no consideration of personal inconvenience should induce him to become their debtor for one farthing. Owing to some mistake, Mr. Hastings was a few days subsequently represented by his friend Mr. Vansittart as having, on this latter head, changed his opinion; and Mr. Lushington paved the way, in consequence, both with the Directors, and at the Board of Control, to obtain for him an annuity for life. But the question did not long remain in doubt. Mr. Hastings, informed of what had been done, wrote instantly to set himself right with Mr. Lushington; and it was finally settled that no more should be asked of the Proprietors, than a bare reimbursement of the expenses occasioned by the trial.

The first meeting of Proprietors especially called to take into consideration the case of the late Governor-general of India, occurred on the 29th of May, 1795. It was very numerously attended, and in all its proceedings evinced a



spirit decidedly friendly to Mr. Hastings; for a vote in acknowledgment of his distinguished merits passed without opposition, and stands, with many more of a like tendency, on the records of the Court. Others, which had for their object, first, a grant, in compensation for sums expended in the conduct of his defence; and next, the insuring to him out of the Company's land revenue an annuity of five thousand pounds, were not indeed so immediately adopted. Yet, though referred to the ballot, the reference was carried out in the best possible temper, and a large majority in both instances appeared favourable to the proposition. Unfortunately for Mr. Hastings, however, recent enactments had greatly modified the power of the Company to deal generously by their dependants. It was no longer competent for either the Proprietors, or the Directors, or both combined, to vote away sums of money, under the head of remuneration for services performed; they must first of all obtain the sanction of the Board of Control; and the Board when appealed to, in the case now before us, showed no disposition to go along with them. I must again refer my reader to the history of the trial, for the particulars of a transaction which reflects, I write it not without reluctance, little honour on Mr. Pitt's administration. Enough is done when I state, that, taking advantage of certain clauses in the Act of Parliament, under



which the Company's charter had been renewed, it was delivered as the opinion of the Attorney and Solicitor-general, that the obstacles in the way of the arrangement proposed were insurmountable. Thus the most pressing point of all—the act which was to relieve Mr. Hastings from a load of debt, under which he could with difficulty bear up—fell to the ground ; while of the proposed annuity it was shortly said, that the Board of Control entirely and unhesitatingly condemned it.

The mortification occasioned by this issue to their movements among the friends and admirers of Mr. Hastings (and in the Court of Proprietors they constituted a large majority) appears to have been at least as acute as that with which Mr. Hastings was himself affected ; neither were the Directors actuated by a temper different from that which swayed their constituents. They took the subject of his losses into consideration as often as they could find a pretext for doing so, and evinced throughout a laudable desire to discharge themselves of what they felt to be a moral obligation of the most pressing nature. Nor, indeed, was Mr. Hastings's case which admitted of a moment's unnecessary delay. He was not only penniless, but reduced so completely to the condition of a bankrupt, that the sale of all his property, supposing it to have fetched its full value in the market, would have scarcely enabled him to com-



pound with his creditors at the rate of ten shillings in the pound. Yet this was the man of whom his enemies declared that he had sucked the blood of fourteen thousand nobles, and never sat down to dine without causing a famine!

I am not sure that any good purpose would be served, were I to continue these details much farther. It is well known that, after much hesitation and delay—after frequent remonstrances from the two Courts, and a wavering resistance on the part of the King's Government—the question at issue between Mr. Hastings and the Board of Control ended in a sort of compromise. Instead of the immediate liquidation of his debts, and a pension of 5000*l.* for life, the Company was permitted to settle upon him, for the term of twenty-eight years and a half, an annuity of four thousand pounds; forty-two thousand pounds of which were paid in advance, while a further loan of fifty thousand, free from interest, was offered and accepted. Thus, after the most unreserved exposure of the state of his pecuniary affairs, which hopes, that were never realized, could have alone induced him to make, Mr. Hastings found himself benefited to a slender extent by the good will of his employers; inasmuch as the stream of their bounty was not only reduced to a very narrow volume, but the mode in which it was dispensed took away from its fertilizing influence to a degree which I

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shall take occasion by and bye to point out. Mr. Hastings never complained of having received harsh usage at the hands of the East India Company; but Mr. Hastings's contemporaries did—what posterity, I suspect, will continue to do. They considered that his eminent services scarcely met with the full measure of their reward, even from the body which had reaped from these services such unparalleled benefits. But I must turn to another page in my history.



CHAPTER XII.

Proceedings in Private Life—Familiar Letters.

So soon as it became apparent that the Government was determined to take part in the impeachment with which he was threatened, Mr. Hastings withdrew almost entirely from public life. He was too proud a man to solicit the favour even of the Crown, while the ministers of the Crown swelled the list of his enemies; he was too good a man not to find in the quiet pursuits of his own home a compensation for the loss of honours and high station abroad. Of his purchase of Beaumont Lodge, and of the zeal with which he applied himself to its adornment, notice has elsewhere been taken. There in dignified retirement he spent a considerable portion of his time, not unfrequently surrounded by the friends of his early days; and when he chose to vary the scene, he did so either by visiting London, in the season, or by passing to one or other of the watering places, which were then in fashion. Such migrations, however, like the habits of his domestic life, were all controlled and regulated by a principle of unpretending simplicity. There was nothing mean or sordid



about him; quite the reverse; but he was too poor a man to indulge in unnecessary luxuries; and he was by far too wise to find the smallest pleasure in ostentation.

Neither the possession of Beaumont Lodge, however, nor the pains which he took to improve it, withdrew Mr. Hastings's thoughts for one moment from the favourite dream of his youth. He still desired to be the proprietor of the Daylesford estate; and he ultimately succeeded. From an entry in his diary, dated the 26th of August, 1788, I find that he that day completed the purchase, and that the first costs, including an annuity of 100*l.* a-year to Mr. Knight and his wife, amounted barely to eleven thousand four hundred and twenty-four pounds. This may appear a trifling sum for a retired Governor-general of India to have expended in the attainment of an object on which he had long set his heart; yet the reader must not suppose that it received no increase. Daylesford, on the contrary, soon became to its new lord a fruitful source of expenditure. The mansion-house was old and in ruins; he caused it forthwith to be pulled down, and erected a new one in its place. The grounds, greatly indebted to nature, had received no improving touches from the hand of art. He set himself forthwith to the agreeable occupation of planting, levelling, turning various water-courses



into one channel, and otherwise embellishing with consummate taste the spot where he meant thenceforth to set up his rest. By referring to the statement of his accounts, which he in 1795 laid before the Chairman of the Court of Directors, it would appear that the total amount of outlay upon the improvements of Daylesford exceeded forty thousand pounds; and that before he had fairly established himself in his new home, Mr. Hastings was out of pocket little short of sixty thousand pounds by the purchase.

From the date of his final settlement at Daylesford, Mr. Hastings sank (if the expression be allowable when speaking of so great a man) into the condition of a country gentleman. In all the pursuits of an agriculturist he took the deepest interest. He bred horses, reared sheep, fattened bullocks, sowed and reaped corn, and exhibited in each of these occupations, as one after another they engrossed him, not less of knowledge than of enthusiasm. As a horticulturist, likewise, his name can never be mentioned without respect. His gardens were perfect models of that graceful style which, owing all its beauties to the skill of the artist, yet appears to be the production of untutored nature. He took infinite pains, moreover, to possess himself of the seeds of plants and herbs which he had admired in their native soil of India, and which he believed were not too delicate