

with regard to the executive, absolute. Hastings had only one vote in the Council, which became a casting vote in cases where the division was equal. He at once set about his work, looking into the modes in which the system of collecting revenue affected the people, abolishing many of the illegal or extra-legal demands or impositions termed cesses, leasing out the lands for five years at fixed rates, and establishing in each district a civil and a criminal court, in which the European collector sat as judge assisted by Mahometan and Hindu officials. By a strange custom in India, a fourth of the amount in dispute in all civil cases was invariably taken by the judge. Hastings abolished this practice, together with many other glaring abuses of the old system.

4. But he was more intent on destroying the double government which had so much charm for Clive. The Nuwab had already passed into the rank of *fainéant* or do-nothing princes. The Naib or deputy of the Nuwab was Muhammed Reza Khan, who had given twenty lakhs of rupees (200,000*l.*) for his high office. The government of Behar was in the hands of Raja Shitab Rai, a better and not less able man. Hastings had them both arrested and brought down to Calcutta for trial; but he was more anxious for the abolition of their office than for their punishment, and the change was quietly effected, while their trial was put off on a series of pretences. When there was no need for further delay they were tried. Shitab Rai, honourably acquitted, and clad in a robe of state, was sent back to his government at Patna; but his spirit was

broken by treatment which he felt that he had not deserved, and he went only to die. In the case of Rheza Khan the issue was the negative verdict of 'Not Proven;' but Hastings absolutely refused to restore him to office.

5. The Nuwab was now a mere pensioner, and his pension was fixed at one-half of the allowance thus far set aside for him. The yearly saving was 160,000*l*. But this was little in comparison with the needs and the liabilities of the Company. A steady pressure was applied to the governor from England, and it was applied in a way which led him into almost irresistible temptation. The despatches of the Directors were full of most excellent advice for the good government of India, or of any other country. They hated oppression, they desired no wrongful dealing with neighbouring powers. Good order and efficient justice were the great objects to be aimed at; but money was indispensable. These counsels resolved themselves into two distinct and contradictory precepts. One only could be obeyed, and it was for Hastings to determine which kind of obedience would be most to the liking of his masters. In the words of Lord Macaulay, 'he correctly judged that the safest course would be to neglect the sermons and to find the rupees.'

6. Some help towards this end was furnished by the flight of Shah Alam, the great Mogul, from Allahabad to Delhi. Besides leaving to him the districts of Allahabad and Korah, the Company had pledged itself to pay him yearly 300,000*l*. as tribute for the government of Bengal. But his departure to

Delhi was not a sign of his independence. He had sojourned at Allahabad, virtually as the pensioner of the English; he had gone to Delhi as, to all intents and purposes, the prisoner of the Mahrattas. To the Mahrattas, therefore, and not to the emperor, would the Company be paying their tribute; and this, Hastings declared, had never been a condition of the bargain. The decision was a bitter disappointment to the Mahratta chief, Mahadaji Sindia. He had seated Shah Alam on the throne of his forefathers, chiefly because he hoped to rule over Bengal in his name, and in his name to receive the tribute; and all that he had brought about by his act was the enrichment of a company of European merchants. He might treat the decision of Hastings as a declaration of war; but only by force could he recover the wealth which had passed away to another.

7. But the prospect of aggrandisement on a larger scale was furnished by a quarrel between Suja-u-Daulah, the Nuwab Vizir of Oude, and the Rohilla chief, Hafiz Khan. Vexation at the loss of the Bengal tribute led the Mahrattas to lay a pressure on the Nawab of Oude, since they dared not to attack the English. Their hands fell first on the Rohilla country on his north-western frontier, but they agreed to spare it if they should be allowed to march through it unmolested into Oude. Suja-u-Daulah anticipated them by making a treaty with the Rohilla chief, who promised to pay him 400,000*l.* for his aid against the Mahrattas. These, however, were drawn away by the internal disputes which ensued on the death of Mahdu Rao Peshwa at Poona. Freed from

the danger of Mahratta invasion, the Nuwab demanded the forty lakhs from Hafiz Khan, who denied the obligation.

8. The Rohillas were the descendants of some of the hardy Afghan mountaineers who followed the standard of Baber in his career of Indian conquest. They were rewarded with settlements in the rich plain through which flows the Ramgunga from the range of Kumaon, until it falls into the Ganges. Retaining their old bravery, they had learnt to value the benefits of order; and their country, free from the plagues of war and extortion, became rapidly more fertile and more wealthy. They belonged also to the pestilent sect of the Shiah; and this was a sufficient reason why this inviting region should be added to the domain of the orthodox Sonnite, Suja-u-Daulah. The refusal of Hafiz Khan to pay the forty lakhs set him free to act; but he dared not to enter on the contest single-handed. There was one power which could wrest for him all that he wanted, and that power was the British. It was true that the Rohillas had done him no wrong; but Suja-u-Daulah had an abundant revenue, and it was possible that his money might be of material importance to the English. The issue was what he had expected. Hastings agreed to lend him an English army for the purpose of enslaving a free and unoffending people, at a cost of 400,000*l.* to be paid down, in addition to the maintenance of the troops so long as they remained in the field (1773). He knew that the condition of the Rohilla government was fairly good, and that of Oude horribly bad. He

knew also the character of Eastern warfare, and he made no stipulations as to the mode in which this war should be carried on, nor did he warn the Nuwab that the troops should be withdrawn, if considerations of mere humanity should make it necessary to do so. The plea has actually been urged that Hastings was justified in making this compact because the Rohillas were not an Indian race, but invaders from lands beyond the border. So, too, were the English. The excuse is almost worse than the crime.

9. Then followed the terrible tragedy. Suja-ul-Daulah led a vast army into the Rohilla land, but in the bloody battle in which the brave Afghans were beaten down they took no part. The horrible work was all done by the troops of Hastings. The Rohillas had besought the English not to hurt them, and had offered large ransoms, and, when all was vain, defended themselves bravely. The English officer, Colonel Champion, declared that with a good share of military knowledge they displayed a more obstinate firmness of resolution, which it would be impossible to describe. When the battle was decided, the Nuwab let loose his dastardly rabble to plunder, torment, and murder men whom they had not dared to face in the fight. The whole country was abandoned to their brutal cruelty. The crops were destroyed, the towns and villages set on fire, the men, women, and children tortured, mutilated, or sold as slaves. The land was ruined, but the Rohillas were not wholly destroyed. The plain of the Ramgunga has recovered something of its

ancient richness; but the people still remember with bitter indignation the wrong done to them by the English.

10. The government of Bengal was now to assume a new phase. The president was to be entitled Governor-General, and Hastings was named to this high office. His Council was to consist of four members, the casting vote being with himself; and a Supreme Court, under a chief justice and three subordinate judges, was to be set up in Calcutta, independent of the Governor-General and his council. Of the four councillors one, Mr. Barwell, was already in India. The other three, sent out from England, were General Clavering, Mr. Monson, and Mr. Philip Francis, the last being (there can be little doubt or none) the author of the 'Letters of Junius.' The chief justice was Sir Elijah Impey, a man whom Hastings had known in England, and of whose character he may even then have taken the true measure.

11. Hastings had spoken in no approving tone of these changes, and with no cordial appreciation of his new colleagues, who landed with a prejudice against him,—a prejudice most persistently and sedulously fomented by Philip Francis. The agreement of the three left Hastings in a minority on every subject; and although their condemnation of the compact with the Nuwab, and of the way in which the Rohilla war had been carried on was fully justified, the division of the Council led otherwise to strange and disastrous consequences. The natives soon learnt that the sceptre had slipped from the hand of Hastings, that, in fact, he was powerless, and that

his downfall would be acceptable to his colleagues. In India, accusers are never wanting to a falling man. Charges of portentous gravity are forthcoming as at the wave of a magician's wand, and a crowd is ready to swear away his life. The colleagues of Hastings were probably not fully aware of this Eastern habit, and accordingly a more abundant banquet of false witness was provided for them.

12. Foremost amongst his accusers was the Maharaja Nundkomar, a man who had encountered Hastings during his sojourn at Murshedabad. There was a strong repulsion between the two, and in Nundkomar it was intensified into hatred when he found that Hastings had preferred Mahommed Rheza Khan to himself for the golden office of Naib of Bengal. He now, 1776, came forward to say that Mahommed Rheza escaped scathless from his trial, only because he had largely bribed the Governor-General, and moreover that Hastings had been in the habit of selling offices and allowing criminals to go unpunished, if they were but rich enough to pay him. Francis read the paper in Council, and when Hastings denied the jurisdiction of his colleagues and refused to be confronted with Nundkomar, he voted that the charges were proved.

13. Hastings could still appeal to the Court in England; but knowing that, if they failed to justify his conduct, his cause was lost, he placed his resignation in the hands of Colonel Maclean, under the condition that he was to produce it only in case of necessity. In the mean time Nundkomar appeared to be absolutely victorious; but he was not aware, or

he had forgotten, that there was in Calcutta a court with powers of life and death wholly independent of the Governor-General and his Council, and that his own past life rendered it at least prudent not to rouse the slumbering lions. Nundkomar was a Hindu, a Brahman of the purest descent, and the most rigid guardian of his caste. He was a man of marked ability ; but falsehood was to him the air which he breathed. He had tried to procure the condemnation of another Hindu by means of forged documents, and he had served as a go-between in communications between the French and the court of Delhi. But imprisonment had in no way lessened his reputation with his countrymen, who would look on forgery much as some regard a sharp bargain in selling unsound horses. Forgery to the Bengali is an offence, but it is an offence which would be classed with an act of trespass or a default in the payment of rent.

14. Hastings replied to the accusations of Nundkomar by bringing an action against him in the Supreme Court for conspiracy. The judges admitted the charge, but accepted bail. A few weeks later, Calcutta was startled by the news that Nundkomar had been arrested on a charge of forgery, and thrown into the common prison. He was brought before Sir Elijah Impey and a jury of Englishmen, and after a protracted trial was found guilty, condemned to death, and hung.

15. It is possible that the whole proceeding may have been illegal ; but we may accept its legality, and we may take the charge as fully proved. Even

thus the execution can be characterised as nothing less than a judicial murder. If it was legal, it was most unjust. The general sense of mankind has certainly not regarded forgery as a capital crime; nor do we Englishmen regard it as such now. The statute under which Nundkomar was convicted belonged strictly to English law, and, it may almost be said, to English law only; and this statute was now applied abruptly amongst a people in whose eyes the very theory on which it rested would be nothing less than an egregious absurdity. The Bengali may make too little of the crime, but it would perhaps be impossible to bring him to look upon it as a very serious one, or indeed as in any way worse than, or different from, common swindling and cheating. The charge in Hindu eyes was not rendered more impressive by the fact that the crime to which it referred had been committed six years before. Moreover, it was the forging of a bond, not of a paper by which the life of some innocent man was to be sacrificed.

16. The career of Nundkomar has shown that he was fully capable of the latter crime, even if he had not committed it; but his execution on the lesser charge would have been an act of undue severity even in England. In Calcutta it was a glaring iniquity. The guilt of it, some have said, must be distributed equally between Elijah Impey and Warren Hastings. But this is not the case. Hastings found himself in circumstances of almost unparalleled difficulty. He was outvoted at his own council board; his authority throughout his government, his influence beyond it, was shaken if not destroyed, and he

was assailed by accusers who would not scruple to employ the most infamous falsehood as their weapon. He resolved to strike a blow which should silence them all at once ; and he resolved that this blow should fall on one whose high descent, whose sacred caste and unspotted ceremonial purity, made him an object of reverence to millions. He was acting in self-defence, acting confessedly as a partisan, not as a judge.

17. But how stands the case with Impey ? He knew that he was administering a law bodily imported from a distant country ; he knew that he was applying a statute of that law, which would be wholly incomprehensible to all the inhabitants of the vast peninsula of India, that he was enforcing a penalty which, for the crime charged against Nundkomar, was not to be found in the codes of many nations in Europe, which Englishmen had arbitrarily affixed to it at one time, and which they might remove (as they have removed it) at another. Had Impey been a righteous judge, he would have respited the criminal, and reserved the case for the consideration of the crown ; but his object was to get rid of Nundkomar, and he would not hear of delay. Some years later Hastings wrote of Impey as the man 'to whose support he was at one time indebted for the safety of his fortune, honour, and reputation.' These words, as Lord Macaulay has justly urged, can refer only to the case of Nundkomar, the inference being that he hanged Nundkomar to support Hastings, and therefore was guilty of putting a man unjustly to death to answer a political purpose.

18. Hastings was to learn a few years later that the weapon which he had employed against Nundkomar might be turned against himself. The judges who administered the new law proceeded to treat not Calcutta merely, but the whole territory of the Presidency as subject to their authority. The forms and procedure of English law were applied to a people who had never heard of either, and for whom the process of arrest familiar to Englishmen involved an intolerable insult. No place was sacred to the retainers who did the behests of the English judges, and Hindu and Mahometan gentlemen even died at the threshold of their women's apartments in the effort to protect them from indignity. It was a reign of terror. Hastings and his colleagues saw the mischief and the dangers involved in it; but if servants of the Company, acting in obedience to their instructions, obstructed the new system, they were thrown into prison for what is technically termed a contempt. The opposition of the government became more marked. The chief justice issued writs summoning the Governor-General with his Council to appear before the court. Hastings was ready to resist the summons, if need be, by the sword; but he knew Impey, and hit upon an easier method of dealing with him. Impey received 8,000*l.* a year by his appointment from the Crown. Hastings proposed to give him 8,000*l.* a year more as a judge in the Company's service, removable at the pleasure of the Governor-General. Impey understood thoroughly the meaning of the proposal. The bargain was struck, and the conflict was ended; but the wealth

of the Chief Justice was not obtained without infamy (1781).

19. While Hastings was still thwarted by a majority in Council, a strong effort was made in England to remove him. Fearing the result, Colonel Maclean produced his resignation, and the Directors immediately appointed Mr. Wheler, one of their own body, to succeed him, and sent orders to General Clavering to act as Governor-General until Wheler's arrival. But before these orders could reach India, the death of Monson had given Hastings the majority in council through his casting vote. He had already reversed many of the measures carried by his opponents, when he learnt that he had been superseded. But circumstances were now changed. Hastings felt that there was nothing to hinder the great designs which he had long wished to carry out. Since he had sent the paper which Colonel Maclean produced, he had written many times to the Court of Directors, telling them that he had no intention of resigning. The imprudent vehemence of Clavering made it possible that Hastings might in the end appeal to force ; but Clavering accepted the proposal that the question should be referred to the Supreme Court, and the court decided that the paper produced by Maclean was invalid. All serious opposition to Hastings came to an end ; but the persistent animosity of Francis led at last to a duel in which he was wounded, and shortly after this he left India, bent still on bringing about the overthrow of the Governor-General.

20. Hastings was now free to turn his attention

to matters which might affect the very existence of the English in India. The anxieties which may have been felt about Mahratta inroads were as nothing in comparison with the danger which might be feared from the armies of Hyder Ali (p. 126), now the most formidable potentate in the whole Indian peninsula. These armies consisted of materials strangely assorted, amongst them being European deserters, runaways, and adventurers of every kind; but the whole made up a force which an enemy would do well to withstand effectually or to avoid altogether. The Madras government did neither. In 1778, they began the war against the French by the capture of Pondicherry. Their next step was to gain possession of Mahé, a place on the Malabar coast within the dominions of Hyder. Hyder had threatened that if Mahé should be attacked, he would carry fire and sword through the whole Carnatic; and from the Bhonsla Raja of Berar Hastings heard that Hyder, the Nizam Ali, and the Mahrattas had made a convention binding them to simultaneous attacks on the three English settlements in Bombay, Madras, and Bengal.

21. The threat of Hyder was soon carried out. The flames of burning villages might be seen from Madras and Fort St. George. A force under Baillie, surrounded by overwhelming numbers, was induced to surrender on a promise of quarter which was immediately broken. This disaster might have been retrieved or avenged by Sir Hector Munro, had he moved up promptly when he heard the cannonade. Hyder's army must in that case have undergone a

severe, if not a fatal, defeat ; but Munro, forfeiting the reputation which he had won at Buxar (p. 119), threw his heavy guns into a tank, abandoned most of his stores, and retreated hurriedly to Madras. Hastings set himself at once to meet and to break the Mysore confederacy. He detached the Nizam from it by informing him that Shah Alam had made a grant to Hyder of all the territories which he ruled as the Mogul viceroy. By a gift of money and by protracted negotiations he secured the neutrality of the Raja of Berar ; and Sir Eyre Coote, who had voted for immediate action at Plassy (p. 108), and had conquered at Wandiwash (p. 112), was sent with full powers to take the command of the Madras army. Age had in some degree weakened his military ability as well as his bodily powers ; but he was still a vigorous leader, and the progress of Hyder was arrested by Coote's decisive victory at Porto Novo, 1780.

22. Meanwhile Hastings was still followed by his old enemy,—lack of money. This dire want, not for himself but for the Company, had led him into injustice and cruelty against the Rohillas ; it now led him into acts against the Raja of Benares, which it is difficult not to condemn as also unjust and cruel. Cheyte Sing was one of the many princes who during the breaking up of the Mogul empire had made himself independent of the court of Delhi. He could not, however, shake off his subjection to his nearer neighbour, the Nuwab of Oude ; and the irksomeness of the yoke impelled him to invoke the aid of the English. The aid was cheerfully given,

and in due time Cheyte Sing acknowledged himself the vassal of the Company, agreeing to pay an annual tribute, while Hastings on his part pledged himself that no further demands should ever be made upon him. Cheyte Sing's engagement had been faithfully kept; and he naturally supposed that so long as his tribute was paid, the Company would, especially after the pledge which they had given, have neither the right nor the wish to impose any further exactions. Indeed, we might be drawn to the same conclusion ourselves. Cheyte Sing was either an independent prince or a subject. If he was the former, the question was settled; if the latter, it might be said either that the subject must not be taxed without his own consent, or at all events that he should be subjected to no exactions which are not laid in the same proportion on all others.

23. But in India the distinctions which may be drawn here were blurred and confused in the days of Warren Hastings. It was impossible to define exactly what any prince or chief might be; it was easy to find in his title or his position the justification of anything which a prince or chief of greater power might choose to do to him. When the Great Mogul grants away the revenues of a province, his word and his seal are invested with an inviolable sanctity. When he asks for tribute due to himself, he is a pageant or a shadow, and a sense of duty impels the tributary to withhold money which may either be squandered on unworthy favourites, or go to strengthen a formidable neighbour. The only

condition needed for thus turning words into wealth was the possession of power; and the power of the English was a fact which spoke for itself. Personally, Hastings had a further reason for laying his hand heavily on Cheyte Sing. While he was borne down by the majority of the Council at Calcutta, the Raja had paid his court to Clavering and Francis; and Hastings was not sorry to read through him to other princes a lesson as impressive as that which had been taught to men of lower station by the execution of Nundkomar. In 1778 Hastings demanded, in addition to the annual tribute, a sum of 50,000*l*. The same demand was made in 1779; and both demands were paid. When it was repeated in 1780, the Rajah tried to escape it by offering to Hastings a bribe of 20,000*l*.

24. Hastings took the money, and only after a time paid it into the Company's treasury. Having done so, he repeated the old demand yet again. Cheyte Sing protested his inability to meet it, and Hastings, adding 10,000*l*. as a penalty for delay, sent troops to enforce the exaction. These sums also were paid, and then Hastings candidly avowed his purpose of drawing from his guilt the means of relieving the Company's distresses. His guilt was to be brought into being by compelling him to do or to say something which might be construed as meaning rebellion; and the compulsion took the form of a demand that he should maintain a body of cavalry for the English service. The Raja remonstrated, and Hastings wanted nothing more. He announced his purpose of visiting Benares himself,

and when, in the interview which followed, Cheyte Sing attempted to excuse himself, ordered his arrest. The order was scarcely prudent. He had come with a small force, and he was in a city teeming with a population of myriads possessed by a dislike and suspicion of the English for which they had certainly some grounds. Like the Rohillas, they had no wish for a change of masters. Cheyte Sing had not been an oppressive ruler, and the condition of his dominions was very different from that of the British territory in Behar. The wrath of the rabble brought together a vast multitude, many fully armed. The English soldiers were attacked, their officers slain, and Cheyte Sing in the confusion let himself down the steep bank of the Ganges by a rope made from the turbans of his attendants, and escaped across the river. From the other side he sent messages craving indulgence and making large offers. Hastings, with only 50 men about him, but still thoroughly self-possessed, treated them with silent contempt, and sent some men who might be trusted, to summon help from the English cantonments.

25. Meanwhile an English officer with a small body of troops had made a rash attack on the other side of the river, and the almost complete destruction of his force was the result. Then followed that strange excitement and commotion of the population generally, which have been so often caused by even the least disaster to the English arms. Cheyte Sing, carried away by the torrent of feeling, began to talk foolishly about driving the white usurpers into the

sea. But the scene was soon to be changed. Major Popham, who four years before had won fame by his memorable capture of the Mahratta fortress of Gwalior, scattered his undisciplined troops, and Cheyte Sing fled from his territory, which was incorporated within the British dominions. The Company was the richer by 200,000*l.* a year; but the Raja's treasure was found to be barely more than a fourth of the sum at which it had been estimated, and the whole went as prize-money to the army (1784).

26. The sequel may be briefly told. Asof-u-Daula had succeeded Suja-u-Daula as Nuwab Vizir of Oude. His wastefulness, his vices, and his tyranny were alike horrible. He dreaded his neighbours, he trembled at the wrath of his subjects; and against both he prayed that he might be secured by English aid. It was agreed that a force should be sent, to be maintained and paid out of his revenues. Like the horse which in the fable accepts a rider in order to get the better of the stag, the Nuwab began to complain of the weight of the burden, and requested that the troops might be withdrawn. Hastings answered that the time during which the troops were to remain in Oude was not stated in the treaty, while their maintenance at his cost was set down most distinctly. He had further a conscientious scruple which withheld him from withdrawing them. A vast amount of money was yearly squandered by the Nuwab on the grossest pleasures and the basest favourites; if he were no longer called upon to pay for the troops, there would be so much the more money forthcoming for evil purposes. It was im-

possible therefore to accede to his request ; but some settlement might be arrived at in an interview.

27. Hastings and the vizir met in the fort of Chunar, and there they agreed to rob two ladies who were called the Begums of Oude, one being the mother of Suja-u-Daula, the other his widow, the mother of Asof-u-Daula. Suja had left them, it was said, a treasure worth about 3,000,000*l.* sterling ; and of this treasure Asof had already had some excellent pickings, when the Begums, appealing to the English, obtained a treaty which pledged them to make certain payments to Asof, and bound him in return to make no further demands on their resources. But the best intentions are often frustrated. The Nuwab felt the increasing pressure of the poverty which was the natural result of his own vices ; and Hastings, although for different reasons, was not less anxious to get money. The Begums were still supposed to be the possessors of vast wealth, and Hastings agreed that he would take the confiscation of the whole as a full discharge of all obligations on the part of the Nuwab to the Company. The princesses, however, were obstinate ; and Hastings sanctioned measures to subdue their resistance which cannot be thought of without a deep feeling of shame. The Begums were charged, without the faintest shadow of proof, with having brought about or promoted the insurrection of Benares ; and Sir Elijah Impey hurried from Calcutta to give his authority to falsehoods which convicted themselves. It is the last recorded act of his infamous career. In 1782 he was recalled to England.

28. Hastings remained in India three years longer, and they were years of singular quietness. Hyder Ali died in the same year which witnessed the departure of Impey. He had reached a great age, without bringing on himself the stroke of an assassin, although his one instrument for governing all ranks and classes of his subjects was the scourge. In 1784 Lord Macartney, Governor of Madras, made a treaty with Tippu Sultan, the son and successor of Hyder, which set free a large number of European prisoners who had struggled through a miserable captivity at Mysore. At the same time he brought to an end the farce which exhibited the Nuwab of the Carnatic as an independent ruler. It was arranged that one sixth part of the revenue should still be paid to him; and Muhammad Ali, the son of Anwar-u-din (p. 24), joined the ranks of the phantom princes, amongst whom might be seen the Nuwab and Nizams of Bengal. But Lord Macartney's measures were not approved in England. Muhammad Ali was loaded with debt, and his creditors had no chance of payment unless he remained master of all the revenues of the Carnatic. Orders therefore were sent out that the whole of the Carnatic should be restored to the Nuwab, and that all claims against him should be liquidated out of the revenues without any further inquiry. Unable to obey such orders, Lord Macartney resigned, 1785.

CHAPTER XIV.

Lord Cornwallis, and the Land Settlement of Bengal.

1. The treaty of Salbai, made in 1782 after the death of Hyder with Mahadaji Sindia and ratified by Nana Farnavese, the minister of the Peshwa, at Poona, pledged the English and the Mahrattas not to help the enemies each of the other. The great issue of supremacy in India now lay between these two powers and the successor of Hyder, under cover of whose influence the French were supposed to be aiming at the recovery of their lost ascendancy. But the great Mahratta houses of Sindia and Holkar, of the Gaekwar and the Bhonsla, were growing into powerful and virtually independent kingdoms; and of these, Sindia, the most powerful, was seeking to make himself master of Delhi as the nominal servant of the Great Mogul. He was aided in his scheme by intriguers in the imperial palace. The Amir of Amirs, the guardian of the Emperor, was afraid of being murdered, and invited Sindia to protect him; in other words, the Mahometan sought the aid of the idolatrous Hindu. Sindia came, but it was only to bring about the death of the Amir, and obtain for the Peshwa the title of deputy of the Padishah, and to exercise the real power himself as the deputy of the Peshwa. His object was to found a new Mahratta state between the Jumna and the Ganges, and the troops which he was raising were disciplined by the Frenchman De Boigne.

2. French influence was, indeed, still a cause of apprehension to the English.. A French agent was already at Poona; but the jealousy of Sindia was roused when he heard that Mr. Malet was to appear there as the agent for the English. It was arranged that the correspondence between the Peshwa and the Governor-General should pass through the hands of Mr. Anderson the resident in attendance on Sindia, and that the two agents should arrange matters together in Sindia's camp. In the midst of the ruined mosques and shattered palaces of Agra Mr. Malet was lodged in the Taj Mahal (p. 60), the only building which still remained uninjured. The phantom emperor welcomed Mr. Malet and received his presents with stately courtesy, bestowing on him in return a tiara of diamonds and emeralds, an elephant, and a horse; but the jewels were bits of glass, and the elephant and horse were worn out with old age or disease. It was the hope of Sindia that the English would aid the Mahrattas in the war with their great enemy Tippu. But this was forbidden by the treaty of Salbai, while the treaty of Mangalore, 1783, bound them not to help the enemies of Tippu, although from this they might be absolved by the fact of Tippu's alliance with the French, who were avowed enemies of the English.

3. After a short interval, during which Mr. Macpherson was acting governor, Lord Cornwallis (1786-1791), reached Calcutta as successor of Warren Hastings, and by his position was enabled to carry out many changes which his predecessors had failed to effect. The system of perquisites was brought to

an end by the bestowal of adequate salaries, while the tone of society at Calcutta, a matter of no mean importance, was greatly improved. The private life of Hastings had not set the best of examples, and the gambling of Francis and Barwell was on a prodigious scale. But the name of Lord Cornwallis is associated especially with the question of land settlement. As the scheme was set forth, it was one for abolishing leases and granting lands in perpetuity to the Zemindars, who had thus far been merely collectors of rent, middlemen, in short, between the government and the owners or cultivators of the soil. The reason for the change was not so much a disinterested regard for the well-being of the people as anxiety for the easier collection of the Company's revenue. As a servant of the Company, the Zemindar came under the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court at Calcutta. He could be sued there, and his person and movables seized; and great practical inconvenience had been found to result from such seizures. As a landowner he would be beyond that jurisdiction, although he would remain under the control of the district courts.

4. But why an experiment so momentous should be made for all time, it might be not easy to determine. Mr. Shore, who afterwards became Sir John Shore and finally Lord Teignmouth, urged earnestly that no change should be perpetual until the value of the land had been more accurately ascertained than it could possibly be in the course of a few months or two or three years, and until the nature of the different tenures, and the rights of

landlords and tenants according to existing customs should be fully and precisely known. His proposal was that the settlement should be for ten years, and then, if found satisfactory, should be declared permanent. But Lord Cornwallis and his supporters were carried away by the idea of the benefits which would accrue from their plan. That they looked upon the tax-collectors whom they wished to convert into landowners as having all along been landlords after the English type, the facts already stated sufficiently disprove. They thought that they were creating a landed aristocracy in India, and thought that this aristocracy would there have effects similar to those which it has in England, that it would apply capital to the land, clear forests, and raise the character of the peasantry, or ryots. This it failed to do. The position of the ryots was changed for the worse; that of the Zemindars was not improved. They were, in fact, quite unequal to the burden laid on them. They could not collect their rents, and they became bankrupts by hundreds. Their estates were sold, and purchased by land speculators, and in a short time two thirds of the soil of Bengal was, it has been said, in the hands of native bankers, native officials, and others, all absentees.

5. Hence arose the wretched system, known as the *ticcadaree*, or hire system. The absentee let his lands at a permanent quit-rent to anyone who might be willing to take them on the chance of squeezing a sufficient extra revenue out of the ryots. The Zemindar, who accounted to the government, was now an absentee who cared nothing for the soil and

its tillers so long as he received his quit-rent, and the real owners formed a class whose one object it was to make a profit over and beyond the sums which they paid to the absentee landowner.

6. The result has been a state of terrible oppression, reproducing all and intensifying some of the evils which the peasantry endured at the hands of their Mogul masters. The man who had to make a profit on his quit rent had no enterprise, and no capital which enterprise could turn to good account. He needed money; he could get money by imposing illegal cesses (p. 131) on his tenants, and he never scrupled to do so. The ryots were reduced to a state which threw large tracts out of cultivation, and left them to the possession of wild hogs. After the lapse of nearly a century, the condition of the average Bengal ryot is most pitiable. His expenditure is from three to six shillings a month; but there are not five out of a hundred who earn ten pounds a year. The question has been carefully considered of late years, and the wide extent of the misery is beyond all doubt. Behar is the garden of Hindustan; but in a recent report the magistrate of Patna declares that had he not seen it, he never could have believed the abject poverty of the peasantry in this favoured land which has its three harvests annually. For those who look the facts in the face it is not easy to withstand the conclusion that the perpetual settlement of Lord Cornwallis was unwittingly a gigantic act of confiscation, which has fallen most heavily on the government of India. Although the expenditure has increased, and the

demands on it are growing larger from year to year, the rental of land, 'the backbone of Indian revenue,' remains where it was. The government is poorer by a sum ranging from six to eight millions sterling annually. The condition of the peasantry, arising out of this settlement, scatters to the winds the notion that the people of India must be necessarily happy and prosperous under English rule, because their English rulers have acted with the best intentions. Mr. Shore saw the evils that must come of it, but his voice was raised in vain, and a system was set up which has left the ryot bound hand and foot at the mercy of the money-lender.

7. The results of the system carried out some years later by Sir Thomas Munro in Madras were not much more happy. It was impossible without much injustice and hardship to collect a revenue which was made to depend on the crops as they stood, and not on the land, and the amount taken was far too large. The old Hindu rate was one fifth or one seventh of the produce of each field; the new rate raised the demand to one third, and the whole arrangement interfered with or put out of sight the principle accepted in this part of India from time immemorial, that the land belonged to the people by right of occupation, subject only to the payment of taxes to the State. The province of Bombay was happier in having the assessment not on the crop but on the land; and the further changes introduced since the days of Mr. Elphinstone have brought about a state of things which presents a

favourable contrast to the position of the ryots in Bengal.

8. The intentions of Lord Cornwallis were good, and in the administration of justice he worked on the whole to excellent effect. Magistrates were appointed to towns and districts to deal with civil and criminal cases; and the English collectors, deprived of their judicial functions, were confined to their proper duties. Courts of appeal were established at Dacca, Patna, and Murshedabad with a final appeal to the Sudder Court at Calcutta, which was composed of the Governor-General and members of Council. Provision also was made for the speedy trial of all accused persons. It was unfortunate that with these changes the service remained closed to natives except in the most inferior positions; and the saying is but too true that 'reform in this material respect and others was only to come upon the bitter experience of years.'

9. In the regions over which the Great Mogul was still nominally ruler, things were going from bad to worse. The Mahometan party at Delhi persuaded Shah Alam that his majesty was dishonoured by his relations with Hindu Mahrattas, stirred up a revolt of Hindu Rajpûts, induced the Mahometans in Sindia's army to join the Rajpûts, and compelled Sindia himself to abandon all his acquisitions between the Jumna and the Ganges, and to fall back on the fortress of Gwalior. But Shah Alam had cause soon to rue the departure of his Mahratta protector. In 1788 Delhi was seized

by the Rohilla Afghan, Gholam Kadir, who behaved like a scourge in the imperial palace, and put out the eyes of the aged emperor. At the end of two months Sindia returned, to the great joy of the tormented people, with reinforcements which he had with difficulty obtained from Nana Farnavese and Holkar.

10. The power of Tippu was now becoming formidable to Mahrattas and English alike. His father, Hyder, had not been a strict Mahometan; he therefore let the Hindus alone. Tippu was a devout upholder of Islam, and therefore a zealous persecutor; but his orthodoxy in no way interfered with the denial of all vassalage to the Great Mogul, or the open assumption of the sovereign title of Sultan of Mysore. He was known to be in communication with the French at Pondicherry, and he now demanded the submission of the Raja of Travancore. Lord Cornwallis informed him that the English would protect the Raja; and hindered by the supineness and the underhand dealings of Holland, the governor of Madras, he resolved on an alliance with the Nizam and the Mahrattas against Tippu. Mr. Pitt's Bill of 1784 had forbidden alliances with native princes; and Lord Cornwallis, to respect its spirit, if he could not obey the letter, provided that the treaties should have effect only during the continuance of the war.

11. In this war, the campaigns of 1790 and the following year produced no substantial effects. The Nizam's forces were useless except for plunder, and Sindia made conditions with which it was impossible

for Lord Cornwallis to comply. The English could not guarantee to him his possessions in Hindustan, and aid him in the reduction of the Rajpûts. The campaign of 1792 was more decisive. The defences of Seringapatam were carried by storm; and Tippu, seeing that his only chance lay in immediate submission, agreed to the proposal of Lord Cornwallis that he should cede a portion of his territory, to be divided equally between the Peshwa, the Nizam, and the English, pay 3,000,000*l.* towards the expenses of the war, and surrender his two sons as hostages for his fulfilment of these conditions.

12. This war served to show the futility of the policy which enjoined on the English absolute isolation from all other powers in India. In place of this policy Lord Cornwallis thought that it would be wiser to apply the theory of a balance of power, in which the British Government should hold the scales between the Mahrattas, the Nizam, and the Sultan of Mysore. This scheme was almost as unpractical as the other. The native princes wished only to be protected each against the rest, while they insisted on enforcing their claims against them, if they should have any claims to urge; and the Mahrattas professed to have heavy claims against the Nizam, and even against the English. For the present the chief benefit seemed to be secured for Sindia, who held a strong military post in Agra, and had received from Shah Alam grants of land revenue in the Doab, the Mesopotamia or land between the two rivers, Ganges and Jumna, and had a large part of his army disciplined by the Frenchman De Boigne.

For thus extending the dominion of the Mahrattas, he demanded a payment for the costs to which he had been put. Nana Farnavese speedily silenced him by saying that his conquests had been in his hands for some time, that the territories were very fertile, and that he ought now to account for their revenues to his master, the Peshwa. In 1794 Mahadaji Sindia died, and was succeeded by his son Daulut Rao Sindia, a boy of fourteen.

13. Lord Cornwallis had returned to England the year before, and Sir John Shore had taken his place as Governor-General. War had been declared between England and France, and the English for the third time took possession of Pondicherry. Shore was scarcely equal to the difficulties of the task before him, and he candidly acknowledged the fact. The Mahrattas urged their claims on the Nizam with increasing importunity; the Nizam was, or professed to be, wholly unable to meet them. But, under the strict injunctions laid on him as to non-interference, Sir John Shore was unable to comply with his request for help, although he was well aware that the fall of the Nizam would give a most dangerous predominance to the Mahrattas. For the time the Nizam thought that he had sufficiently strengthened his position by obtaining the services of a French officer named Raymond, who disciplined for him twenty-three battalions of regular troops. But the high hopes thus raised were soon disappointed. In the battle of Kurdla, March 1795, the battalions disciplined by Raymond stood their ground; the rest were routed at the outset by the Mahratta rockets and artillery. The result was that the

Nizam ceded nearly half his territory, while he agreed to discharge all the Mahratta claims.

14. The triumph of Nana Farnavese was not much more lasting. The young Peshwa, Mahdu Rao Narain, rendered desperate by the restraint which reduced his sovereignty to a shadow, threw himself from a terrace of the palace and died in a few days; and the Nana, although unwilling to set up the nearest kinsman, Baji Rao, thought it prudent to do so on discovering that Baji was seeking to obtain Sindia's aid to seize the Peshwa's throne. The sequel brings before us a series of plots and counter-plots, ending in murder and massacre, which sufficiently showed that the Mahratta power was breaking up. The state of things in Oude was no better. Asof-u-Daula had squandered his revenues on infamous companions and infamous vices. His successor substituted hoarding for squandering, not much to the benefit of his kingdom.

15. The relations of the British power with the native states were not the only subjects for anxiety during the administration of Sir John Shore. The plan of amalgamating the local armies with that of the Crown was vehemently opposed by the officers of the Bengal army, who insisted on the re-establishment of all previous allowances. The danger was more serious than that with which Clive had to deal (p. 122). The result was regarded as showing Sir John Shore's weakness. The local regulations were modified to meet the necessities of the case; and the officers obtained even more than they looked for (1793).

CHAPTER XV.

Fall of the Mysore Sultan—Mahratta Wars—Battle of Assaye—Siege of Bhurtpore.

1. Lord Mornington, the successor of Lord Teignmouth, (Sir John Shore,) reached India, 1798, full of Lord Cornwallis's theory of the balance of power, and bent on reviving the alliance with the Nizam and the Peshwa against Tippu, and on driving the French out of India. The strong feeling which the horrible excesses of the French revolution excited in England was heightened in India by the knowledge that French officers were disciplining regiments in the service of the Nizam and of Sindia and were welcomed in the palace of Tippu. The idea of arrangements for securing a balance of power was found to be visionary. It seemed, therefore, the more necessary to carry out the other measures. A promise to mediate in the Mahratta claims, and, if need be, to protect him against them by force, removed all difficulties with the Nizam. But with the Mahrattas the Governor-General could do little or nothing.

2. This failure had no effect on the plans of Lord Mornington. Affairs with Tippu were coming to a crisis. It was known that he had sent envoys to the Mauritius, proposing to the French Government an offensive and defensive alliance against the English, and that Napoleon Bonaparte had landed

in Egypt. It was reported that a French fleet was sailing down the Red Sea on its way to the Malabar coast. Lord Mornington thus felt himself justified in demanding, by Colonel Doveton, a full explanation from Tippu. Tippu evaded the main point, refused to see Colonel Doveton, and contented himself with referring to existing treaties as providing means for avoiding difficulties in the future. While he was thus seeking to gain time by fruitless negotiations, he was still begging for the aid of the French Government, and inviting Zeman Shah, the Afghan prince, who had crossed the Indus and reached Lahore, to join him in a Jihad or holy war against the infidels. An intercepted letter from Bonaparte to Tippu showed at least the possibility of an understanding between the two. Lord Mornington sent him a final warning, assuring him that the French fleet had been destroyed in the bay of Aboukir, and sending him a letter in which the Ottoman Sultan of Constantinople advised him to keep clear of any alliance with the French.

3. Tippu was inflexible, and the war began. He had desolated the country across which he thought that the English might advance upon his capital; but after the victory gained, March 27, 1799, over Tippu's forces at Malavelli, the British army kept to the south and crossed the Cauvery by a hitherto unknown ford. Tippu was now invested in Seringapatam, and the siege was pushed on with the utmost vigour. On the third day he sued for peace. The English terms now were the half of his dominions, and the payment of 2,000,000*l.* sterling. With the

brief answer that it was better to die a soldier than to live as a pensioned Nuwab, Tippu prepared himself to fight to the death. After a terrible struggle the fort was stormed by the troops under General Baird, and by evening all resistance was overcome. It was not easy to repress a desire for indiscriminate vengeance on the part of the British soldiers, for Tippu had been in the habit of murdering his prisoners, and they had heard that twelve of them had been killed the night before. Tippu's body was found the next morning under a gateway, and buried amidst the crash of a fierce thunderstorm and the roaring of cannon in salute.

4. So ended after a duration of only forty years the dynasty which Hyder, the founder, forewarned his son that he would destroy. At least he died bravely in defending his inheritance; but he left behind him amongst his own people the memory of a ferocious tyrant, for whose execrable cruelties the only possible extenuation would be a plea of madness. How far the madness, if there were any, might be of his own causing, it is not worth while to ask, nor is it worth while to dwell on the details of his oppressions. Among the least of them was the system by which the richer inhabitants were compelled to buy, at the most exorbitant prices, goods which the tyrant, who had been a trader, had stored up in his warehouses. Bribery on a large scale was the only way of escaping from these forced purchases; and those who failed to bribe and would not pay were stripped of their property, and if then a balance remained, were written down as debtors for it to the

Sultan. Tippu's territory was partitioned, the nearer portions in each direction being reserved for the English, the Nizam, and the Mahrattas. The rest, forming the kingdom of Mysore, was made over to the lineal heir of the old Raja, a boy five years old, English commissioners being appointed to arrange the details of the administration during his minority, while Tippu's finance minister, Purnea, was left to carry them out.

5. The fall of Tippu involved a vast extension of British dominion. This extension included that portion of the Mysore territory which had been reserved for the Peshwa. He would accept it, he said, as a discharge for his claims of tribute on the Mysore kingdom; but he would not abate a jot of his claims on the Nizam, and his portion of Mysorean land was therefore forfeited. The other portion the Nizam ceded for the maintenance of eight battalions which by a new treaty the English agreed to provide for his protection. This treaty also bound them to defend him against all aggression, and therefore dealt a death-blow to the long-cherished schemes of Sindia. The Nizam had no reason to regret his bargain. He was safe from his ancient enemies, and he had obtained this freedom without the sacrifice of any part of his own possessions. the Raja of Tanjore and the Nuwab of the Carnatic still retained their titles, but passed into the rank of pensioners, and their domains henceforth were to be ruled by the English Company. The same fate befell Tinnevely and Madura, while the states of Coorg, Cochin, and Travancore were reduced to a

condition of dependence and tribute. The Presidency of Madras was now virtually confined to that portion of the Indian peninsula which lay between the Kistna and the Godavari rivers and the Cape of Comorin.

6. In truth, the policy of the English in India had undergone a vast and most momentous change. It remained to be seen whether the policy would be persistently and completely carried out. But for the present the Governor-General (who, after the fall of Seringapatam, had been created Marquis of Wellesley) was acting on the principle that all the native states must surrender their independence in return for British protection. They must enter into no alliances, and make no wars, nor have any Europeans not English in their service, without the consent of the British Government. Each of the larger states was to maintain a force under the command of British officers, and for their maintenance and pay a certain portion of territory was to be ceded in full sovereignty. We have seen that the Nizam accepted and that the Peshwa rejected the new system. Sindia also would have nothing to do with it, although Lord Wellesley sent him a letter in which the Afghan prince, Zeman Shah, prayed the English to help him in driving the Mahrattas out of Hindustan. His refusal caused more than vexation to Lord Wellesley. His singularly keen military insight led him to see the practicability and to imagine the execution of schemes, which needed for their accomplishment a greater genius or more continuous good fortune

than fell to the lot of any then living. He over-rated, and therefore unduly dreaded, the powers of Zeman Shah and of Napoleon Bonaparte, because he saw how much they could accomplish far more clearly than they could see it themselves. He feared the Afghans, because he knew that they had founded a great empire in Hindustan some centuries ago; but he gave no thought to the feuds and domestic wars which prevented them from repeating the exploit. So far as he knew, they might be ready to burst forth from their mountain homes, as they had done in days now long past. They might find Hindus and Mahometans ready to range themselves on their side, and Frenchmen eager to turn the tables on the English.

7. Nor were these fears altogether groundless. The Mahratta power alone was a matter for grave anxiety. It was perpetually shifting and changing its local position and its character. Tukaji Holkar, the master of Indore, died in 1797, leaving two sons, one an idiot. Sindia put the idiot on the throne and murdered the other. But there was another brother, or half-brother, who proposed to take the side of the son whom Sindia rejected; and when the latter was murdered, he betook himself to the jungles and gathered under his standard all who might be willing to join him, all who preferred war to peace, and plunder to honest industry. This was Jeswunt Rao Holkar. He soon had about him an army of 20,000 men, for whom he had no other means of subsistence than that which they might gain by violence and robbery. Meanwhile Baji Rao (p. 161) was exhibiting his profi-

ciency in tyranny at Poona. Among his victims was a brother of Jeswunt Rao, whom he bound to the feet of an elephant, gleefully listening to his shrieks as the huge beast trampled him to death. To avenge this deed Jeswunt Rao appeared at Poona, and crushed the armies of Sindia and the Peshwa. Baji Rao fled to the coast with the speed of despair, and was conveyed by an English ship to the port of Bassein. In his misery he resolved to accept the terms which the English had offered him. He declared his readiness to cede territory for the maintenance of a subsidiary British force, and bound himself to have no intercourse with any native princes, whether of the Mahratta or any other people, without the consent of the Governor-General. In short, to retain the name of Peshwa and a pension which might keep up the semblance of his ancient dignity, he yielded up all his authority, all his ancestral suzerainty over the great Mahratta houses, and brought himself to the level of men like Mir Jafir or Chunder Sahib. Baji Rao might agree to such terms in the hour of despair; it was not likely that he would adhere to them if the tide of fortune should turn.

8. It soon became clear that he had at least no wish to adhere to them. A British force brought him, in 1803, from Bassein to Poona; Colonel Arthur Wellesley, the future Duke of Wellington and brother of the Governor-General, was advancing from Madras to support him; and yet at this very time he was praying Sindia and the Bhonsla Raja to set him free from the English yoke. But these

chiefs were discouraged and perplexed by the treaty of Bassein (1802). They had no desire to join the English, and no love for the Brahman Peshwas. If Jeswunt Rao Holkar would throw in his lot with them they might see their way more clearly; but Jeswunt preferred to await the issue of the conflict and then take part with the winner.

9. The situation was grave enough; but Lord Wellesley's imagination foreboded dangers which only the same imagination in his enemies could have turned into realities. In 1800 he had sent an expedition to Egypt, which was prevented from coming into conflict with the French by the proclamation of peace between France and England. He now saw no reason why Napoleon should not again take up the design which for the time he had been compelled to abandon. French officers were collecting the revenues of the Doab (p. 159) to maintain French battalions for Sindia. The port of Baroche, at the mouth of the Nerbudda, belonged to Sindia. What was there to hinder the junction of a French army with Perron at Agra, and a French conquest of Hindustan, achieved in the name of the Great Mogul? To render such an issue impossible the English must on the declaration of war march on Delhi and occupy the country between the Jumna and the Ganges. This task Lord Wellesley intrusted to Colonel Lake; and Colonel Wellesley, having watched Sindia and the Bhonsla raja in the Deccan, and growing weary of protracted suspense, brought matters to a head by telling those chiefs that if they meant anything by their professions of goodwill to

the English they would show their sincerity by withdrawing their troops within their own borders, the English agreeing that in that case their army should be withdrawn also.

10. Sindia insisted that the English must set the example; but he forgot that only as yesterday he had threatened to invade the territory of the Nizam, and had declared himself unable to say whether there was to be peace or war between himself and the English. He was told that his refusal had broken the peace by his own act, and the second Mahratta war began. Colonel Wellesley first seized the fort of Ahmednágár as a basis of operation, and arranged with Colonel Stevenson, who commanded the new subsidiary force of Hyderabad, for a combined attack on Sindia and the Bhonsla. Sindia, it seemed, wished to get to Wellesley's rear and plunder the Nizam's land. But Wellesley's movements were too rapid. Without waiting for Stevenson to join him, he resolved to attack the enemy, whose camp lay between the villages of Bokerdun and Assaye. His whole force amounted to only 4,500 men. Sindia had 16,000 disciplined infantry, and 20,000 cavalry, without reckoning the irregular troops of the Bhonsla raja. The issue of the fight was as decisive as that of Plassy; but it was gained over an enemy vastly more formidable, and the English general lost more than a third of his army (1803).

11. By the middle of September the Deccan campaign was over; and before that time Lake, who had carried the fort of Alighur by storm, had

defeated the Mahrattas under their French leader De Bourquin near the walls of Delhi, and entered in triumph the city of the Great Mogul. Shah Alam, who had spent fifteen years in blindness (p. 158), received the conqueror, seated on the throne of Baber and Akbar. It was well that he could not see the faded finery which now did service for the magnificence of the ancient kings. Lake left the aged emperor in the palace, and set off to capture Agra and defeat the enemy at Laswaree. For these services he was raised to the peerage under the title of Baron of Delhi and Laswaree. The French battalions of Sindia were broken up, and their commander, Perron, invoking the protection of the English against his former master, was allowed to take up his abode in the French settlement of Chandernagore. The Mahratta rajas were compelled to enter into compacts based on the treaty of Bassein. Sindia resigned all pretensions to *chout*, or tribute, from any princes, gave up the Doab and all but two districts in Rajpútana, together with all claims on the Nizam, the Gaikwar, or the Peshwa. The Bhonsla raja ceded the province of Cuttack and all Berar to the west of the river Wurda, giving up also all claims on the Nizam. Lord Wellesley had achieved a splendid success; but he thought it necessary to throw a veil over these conquests, and to exhibit them to the people of England as measures needed to render French rivalry in India impossible. He therefore kept Cuttack as exposing the coast of Bengal to the danger of an attack by sea, and bestowed Berar as a free gift on the Nizam.

12. The English campaigns against Sindia and his ally furnished to Jeswunt Rao Holkar a golden opportunity for plunder, and he reaped the harvest in Malwa and Rajpútana. His marauding bands were swelled by deserters after the defeat of Sindia and the Bhonsla raja; but he felt that the good old days were gone, and that the English would interfere with a repetition of the exploits of Sivaji. It was needful to obtain their friendship or their countenance; it was still more necessary to maintain his own freedom. He thought that he should attain both, if he professed his goodwill and at the same time insisted on what he was pleased to call his right of levying *chout*, and of plundering the protected tribes in Rajpútana. On being told by General Lake that no aggressions could be allowed on the British Government or its allies, he insisted on an English guarantee for his territory of Indore, under a threat of indiscriminate ravaging and slaughter if his request were refused.

13. Jeswunt Rao, it was evident, must be put down. In 1804 General Lake moved into Rajpútana; and Jeswunt retreated southwards in the direction of Indore. Colonel Monson was despatched in the same direction to keep him in check, and, fully expecting the arrival of British reinforcements, advanced fifty miles to the south of the Mokundra pass. But his supplies were being exhausted, and Bapaji Sindia, the commander of one of his bodies of irregular horse, was inviting his kinsman to turn round and fall on the English. The tidings that he could look for no help from Colonel Murray, who

was retreating to Guzerat, and that Jeswunt was approaching him with an overwhelming force, made him resolve on returning to the Mokundra pass. Here Bapaji deserted him and joined Jeswunt Rao with all his horsemen; but even thus Monson beat off the whole body of the enemy, and all might have been well had he kept his ground. Unfortunately he continued his retreat. The rains had set in. His guns sank in the mud, and he was obliged not only to spike them but to destroy his ammunition. The commander of Sindia's detachment which had been sent to support him followed the example of Bapaji; and at the end of August, with a wretched remnant of his force, Monson reached Agra.

14. Lord Wellesley was astounded. The protected princes began to think that after all the English were not to be masters of India. Jeswunt Rao, whose glory was compared with that of Sivaji, hastened to Delhi with a huge throng of marauders and bandits. Foiled by Colonel Ochterlony in his attempt to seize the emperor, he sent his guns and infantry to Bhurtpore, the strongest fortress of Hindustan, which the Raja, breaking with the English government, had placed in his hands. With his horsemen he betook himself to harrying and wasting the Doab; but his bands were dispersed by General Lake, who unwisely, perhaps, laid siege to Bhurtpore, January 1805. Four months were wasted before its huge mud walls; but enough was done to counteract the efforts of Jeswunt's victory over Monson. For readmission to the number of protected princes the Raja of Bhurtpore paid 200,000*l.*;

and Jeswunt Rao was undergoing defeat after defeat in the field, when Lord Wellesley was recalled, and Lord Cornwallis was sent back to reverse his policy (1805).

15. The government of Lord Wellesley was a memorable one. He, and perhaps he alone, saw that peace in India was impossible, unless one paramount power prevented aggression, tumult, war, and anarchy among the rest. He saw that the notion of a balance of power as applied to such a country was sheer absurdity. He saw not less clearly that the continuance of anarchy and savage warfare beyond the territories of the Company must in the end and perhaps soon have a fatal effect on the interests and the existence of the Company itself; and thus seeing that of all existing powers the British alone could become paramount in India, he held it to be his duty to work for a consummation which would be an equal benefit to the English government and its new subjects. His mind was occupied with matters of wider importance than the commercial interests of a company of traders; and a consciousness of the inadequacy of merely mercantile training as an education for the administrators of a great country led him to found the College of Fort William for the special education of young civilians on their arrival from England. It was soon abolished by the Court of Directors; but the idea which suggested its foundation was carried out at Haileybury.

CHAPTER XVI.

**Administrations of Lord Minto and Lord Hastings—
Operations in Nepal and against the Pindharries.**

1. For the present it seemed that Lord Wellesley's schemes had been finally set aside. To the Directors of the Company in England extension of territory had no other meaning than that of increase of expenditure without any corresponding profit, and conquest was little better than a road to poverty. That India could be ruled to its own benefit, as Lord Wellesley held, only by reducing all its native states to dependence on one paramount power, was to them an incomprehensible and perhaps ludicrous idea; and if the native states could be fairly compared to those of Europe, their view would have been undoubtedly right. The kingdoms of Europe for the most part represented nations. Some of them were, nearly all would have wished to be, self-governing societies, in which the action of the rulers represents the will of the people. They may have had their origin in invasion and conquest; but they had assumed their present form by a slow process which had defined the functions of all classes and orders in the state, and made the executive magistrate strictly the representative of the nation. There was nothing of this kind in India; there never had been. The conquests of Baber were not yet 300 years old; and the empire which he founded had long since crumbled

into fragments. The ministers of the Mogul sovereign had become independent princes, and had in their turn been displaced by more powerful subjects. So the strange drama had gone on, not dragging its slow length, but with marvellously rapid changes of action and scenery, with this result that there was scarcely a native power in India which could boast an existence even of half a century.

2. In such a state of things the sudden and complete reversal of Lord Wellesley's plans might have involved serious dangers and disasters. It was the purpose of Lord Cornwallis to abandon Delhi and the Doab to Jeswunt Rao Holkar, removing the emperor and his family to Bengal, and to withdraw from the Rajpút chiefs the protective treaties which saved them from the ravages of the Mahrattas. But the carrying out of this purpose was prevented by his death. He was sixty-seven years of age when he landed at Calcutta to face the damp heats of a Bengal August. In September, the most trying of all months in the plains, he was journeying northwards, and in less than ten weeks from the time of his landing he died. His successor was Sir George Barlow, a civil servant of the Company, who had supported Lord Wellesley's policy. He now practically reversed it. The inconsistency seems strange; but he had no choice between this and resignation, and he may have regarded the reaction of public opinion as justified by the circumstances of the case. According to a treaty made by Sir John Malcolm, all the territories of Holkar, with the exception of the fort of Tonk-Rampoora, were restored to Jeswunt Rao, who now insisted again

on all his old claims. Dissatisfied with this treaty, Sir George Barlow ordered the restoration of Rampoora also. Jeswunt Rao felt himself like a prisoner set free, and he refreshed himself by levying enormous sums on the Raja of Jeypur, while Lord Lake, bound by the policy of non-intervention, was compelled to look on with folded hands. Lake had further cause for vexation. He had promised protection to the Jeypur raja, if he withstood the advance of Holkar. The raja had complied with this condition; but Sir George Barlow annulled the treaty, and Lake felt that his fair fame was tarnished in the eyes of the raja.

3. The Governor-General was soon to feel the difficulties of the new policy. The Court of Directors desired the restoration of all territories acquired during the Mahratta war. Barlow replied that such a course would be only to let loose Mahratta hordes to attempt the subversion of British power in India. Nor could the Mahrattas or other chiefs see why the measure dealt to Jeswunt Rao should not be meted out to themselves. The Bhonsla raja, now known as the Raja of Nagpore, demanded the restoration of Cuttack and Berar, although the latter had been bestowed as a gift on the Nizam (p.171), and Cuttack, in Sir George Barlow's judgment as in that of Lord Wellesley, was essential to the defence of Bengal.

4. It is possible that the mutiny of the two sepoy regiments left with the family of Tippu at Vellore may have been connected with the policy of non-intervention. There seem to be good grounds for thinking that it was encouraged, if not excited, by the Mysore princes. The mutiny, which involved

a horrible slaughter of the European part of the garrison while they were asleep, was promptly put down (1806); but it became known that the disaffection had spread through the sepoy of the whole Madras army, the cause assigned being the issuing of orders which interfered with national customs or religious prejudices. It was admitted that Lord William Bentinck, the governor, had forbidden the sepoy from appearing on parade with earrings or caste marks, while they were also ordered to shave their beards, and to exchange the turban for a head-dress with some likeness to the European hat, an object of great aversion to Orientals generally. The sepoy imagined, not unnaturally, that these orders were preliminary to their conversion by force to Christianity. The idea of forcible conversion was, of course, thoroughly familiar to their minds, and they could not see why this force should not be applied by an English governor as it had been applied by Tippu or Aurengzebe. It would have been well if the lesson taught by this mutiny had been more carefully remembered. Military necessities and the safety of the empire may justify interferences which would be otherwise unwarrantable; but it is not easy to see why a turban on a man's head or some streaks on his face should be a hindrance to the preservation of discipline, or how the prohibition of customs in themselves not wrong, and consecrated by religious usage from time immemorial, should render them more loyal.

5. The alarm caused by this mutiny led to the recall of Lord William Bentinck, Sir George Barlow

being sent to take his place, while Lord Minto was sent out to Calcutta. Lord Minto was more keensighted in discerning the results of the policy of conciliation. Bundelkund, a district lying between Behar and Malwa to the south of the Jumna, was infested with marauders who issued from its hundred and fifty fortresses to rob and murder. Lord Minto put aside the notion of non-intervention, and the country was soon brought into fair order (1807). Nor was Bundelkund the only region which sorely felt the lack of this great blessing. The daughter of the Rajpút chief of Udaipur was betrothed to the Raja of Jodhpur. The raja died, but his successor contended that the princess who had now been betrothed to the Raja of Jeypur was betrothed to the throne of Udaipur, and not merely to the temporary holder of it. On this followed a horrible and desolating war between the two rajas. The Raja of Udaipur in his distress prayed for British protection, urging, unwittingly, the very argument of Lord Wellesley, that without a paramount power there could be no peace or safety in India, that the English alone could act as such a power, and that it was therefore their duty so to act. His request was refused; but the war still raged on, and to bring its horrors to an end the innocent cause of it was compelled to drink poison. The tragedy stirred a deep feeling in Western India; but Lord Minto felt that in that part of the country he could not interfere. The Dutch settlements in Java had passed into the hands of Napoleon. Lord Minto himself accompanied an expedition to Java, which was occupied by the English to the end of the

war. On his return he found himself obliged to deal with the Pindharries.

6. The Pindharries were to the Mahrattas what the carrion crow is to the vulture. Of their origin nothing is known ; but a horde of them had fought as allies of the Mahrattas at the fatal fight of Panipat (p. 115). Entering the service of the great chiefs, they were known as the Pindharries of Holkar or of Sindia. But the only tie which bound them together was that of plunder. Their arms were opened to welcome Hindus or Mahometans, men of any caste or of none, so long as they were ready to leave all natural kindness and affection behind them. Wherever they went, they swept the land like a flight of devouring locusts. The names of their two most conspicuous leaders, Chetú and Khurím, became sounds of terror for all who heard them. At their approach the men of the wretched villages would set fire to their huts and die in the flames, and the women would throw themselves by troops into the wells. Methods of torture the most fiendish and the most ingenious were applied to compel their victims to disclose their little wealth ; and from their marvellous rapidity of movement they were far beyond the reach of pursuit soon after their murderous work was done.

7. The task of dealing with these loathsome savages fell to the lot of Lord Moira, better known as the Marquis of Hastings, the title which he received after the Nepalese war. Lord Minto had left India, having won the respect of the people generally ; and he deserved their gratitude for his efforts to

make their lives and property secure. The administration of police still remained very defective; but much was done to suppress the Dacoits or common thieves, whose gangs infested Bengal. The improvement in the public credit was shown by the fact that he was able to pay off loans contracted at an interest of twelve per cent. by others raised at six per cent. Lastly, his encouragement of native literature was greatly to his credit, at a time when the prevailing opinion was that India would be safe only so long as the people were kept in ignorance.

8. Lord Moira, or as he may be called at once by his more familiar name, Lord Hastings, was nearly sixty years of age when he reached India. He had left England strongly convinced of the wisdom of the non-intervention policy. But he was a man of no obstinate prejudices; and the evidence of Pindharrie barbarities, brought before him soon after his landing, opened his eyes to its weakness, and he frankly declared that good government in India could only be secured by a league, the forces of which could be set in motion by one paramount power. But the merits of Lord Minto's policy were to be tested first amongst the mountains of Nepal, a region which may be described as lying between Cashmere and Bhotan, on the southern slopes of the Himalayas. Down to the time of the battle of Plassy, Nepal belonged to a people known as the Newars. This race of Hindu Buddhists had found their way thither in all likelihood after the reaction which dealt the death-blow to Buddhism in the plains of India. Their traditions still went back to the glories of the time when Bud-

dhist monasteries studded the banks of the Ganges and the Jumna, and their scholars were taught that the land of their sacred cities of Magadha and Benares still bore the name of Behar (Vihara), or the monastery.

9. With this inoffensive people of farmers and traders the East India Company had long had profitable dealings, and the imports from Nepal included large quantities of gold from Thibet. But the year which saw the final departure of Clive from India came laden with disasters for the Newars. The Ghorkas of Cashmere, a fighting race of Rajpúts (p. 67), were drawn eastwards by their lust of land and conquest. The Newars can scarcely be said to have struggled against the invaders, and perhaps their lives and their habits rendered the task of resistance hopeless. Their raja abandoned the open country, took refuge in his capital of Khatmandu, and besought the aid of the East India Company. Captain Kinloch was sent to help them; but it was the season of the rains, which fall here with terrific force. He was therefore baffled in his attempt to cross the Terai, a broad malarious belt of almost impenetrable jungle, stretching along the base of the hills which form the vanguard of the snow-clad Himalaya. The Newars were thus left to their fate, and the Ghorka chief, Prithi Narain, parcelled out the land amongst his warriors as William the Conqueror parcelled out English land amongst his barons. This conquest was accomplished with horrors astounding even in the annals of Eastern cruelty. The chief among the Newars were massacred everywhere, and

mutilations on a vast scale were more appalling even than the massacres.

10. Prithi Narain died in 1771, and of his two sons the elder died four years later, leaving an infant son. The younger became the guardian of the babe, and purposely led him, as he grew up, into every species of vice and cruelty, to make his own power more sure. During these years the bands of the Ghorkas were never at rest, and their daring led them onwards to the highlands of Thibet and the plundering of the temples of Digarchi and Lhasa. To avenge this wrong, a Chinese army of 70,000 men approached Nepal, 1792, and the Ghorkas offered to enter into a commercial treaty with the English. A duty of two and a half per cent. was arranged for all goods imported on either side; but the Ghorkas were not thinking about trade. Soon after the treaty had been signed, the Ghorkas frankly asked aid against China, and received the natural reply that the English had no quarrel with the Chinese. But Lord Cornwallis could offer mediation, and Colonel Kirkpatrick was sent on the errand. Meanwhile the Ghorkas had been thoroughly routed by the Chinese, and bound to pay an annual tribute as well as to disgorge all their plunder; and when Kirkpatrick reached Khatmandu, he found himself courteously received, but in a way which showed him that the Ghorkas now cared nothing for the English or their treaty.

11. Three years later, 1795, a revolution sent Ran Bahadur, the grandson of Prithi Narain, into exile. It would be of little use to tell a horrible

tale of cruelties matching those of a Nero. It is enough to say that the tyrant made his way to Benares. Lord Wellesley, who was then Governor-General, can scarcely have been unaware of the infamy of his career; but policy seldom looks very closely into a man's private life and character. The presence of the Maharaja seemed to open a way for the revival of the extinguished trade between his country and Bengal, and money was advanced from the Calcutta treasury for his support. Time went on, and another revolution placed the infant son of Ran Bahadur on the Nepalese throne. The new government was lavish of promises to Captain Knox, the English envoy; but the promises came to nothing, and Lord Wellesley announced to them that the alliance with Nepal was dissolved.

12. The Ghorkas seem to have supposed that they were now set free to do as they pleased on English ground as well as on their own, and they used the licence so well that more than two hundred British villages were gradually included within the borders of Nepal. Thus far the English had held their peace; but the Ghorkas now seized two villages about the ownership of which there could be no doubt. After a long inquiry it was found that they had always belonged to Oude; but the Ghorkas maintained that this fact only proved their own right to them. Lord Hastings replied by saying that if the districts were not surrendered within a given time, they would be taken back by force. The time was allowed to go by, and English police took possession of the villages in dispute. The Ghorkas

had treated the threat of Lord Hastings with seeming contempt; but in fact they were sorely divided as to the course to be taken. Some talked loudly about their impregnable position. Not even Iskander (Alexander the Great), they said, could bring his arms into their mountains; and the English who had been foiled before the mud walls of Bhurtপুর could do nothing against fortresses which had been raised by the hands of God. The Ghorka barons resolved on war, and they made their purpose known not by the formal notice usual amongst European nations, but by slaughtering eighteen British constables at a police station (1813).

13. The Ghorkas had reckoned without their host. They might have thought at first that they had nothing to fear, for the English achieved but little in the campaign of 1814; but the prospect was changed when General Ochterlony, who had seated the blind Shah Alam on his ancestral throne at Delhi, dragged his artillery up the narrow zigzag mountain tracks, and stormed one hill fort after another, until the only one which remained surrendered when the English guns were about to open fire upon it. The Ghorkas, convinced now that prudence was the better part of valour, surrendered the whole of the Terai, and agreed to receive a British resident at Khatmandu. But the question rose whether the word Terai meant the slopes of the mountains, or only the marshy and fever-laden jungle land at their feet. The Ghorkas treated the question as an insult, and talked of resistance to the death in preference to disgraceful concessions. The matter was

soon decided. Sir David Ochterlony defeated the Ghorka army within fifty miles of Khatmandu, and the original treaty was signed. In justice to the Ghorkas it must be added that they have adhered with strict fidelity to the peace of 1816.

14. The British Government was now able to turn its full attention to the extirpation of the Pindharrie hordes. With such ruffians negotiations and treaties could answer no purpose. They were in no sense a nation; and a society of bandits cannot claim the benefits of international law. But these lawless thieves were convenient instruments or allies for such powers as Sindia and Holkar, which still retained not a little of their old marauding character; nor was there much doubt that with these powers the Peshwa was laying schemes for a general uprising against the English. He was still aiding and abetting his minister, Trimbukji Dainglia, whom he had been compelled to surrender as the murderer of an envoy from the Gaekwar, and who had escaped from imprisonment at Thanna. This man had assembled an army within fifty miles of Poona; but the Peshwa pretended to know nothing of the fact, while he himself was strengthening his forts and sending his treasures out of Poona. Mr. Elphinstone, the future historian of India, then the British resident at Poona, resolved to bring these treacherous plottings to an end; and a threat of immediate forcible interference on the part of the English extorted from the Peshwa three important forts as security for his good faith. By a new treaty, June 1817, the Peshwa bound himself to

hold no communications with any power except the English.

15. It remained now to deal with Sindia, who was living in a fool's paradise, dreaming of the signal retaliation which he should bring upon the English by means of the Pindharries. He knew that a British army was moving northward from Madras; but he expected that their mission was to defend the frontiers of the Nizam and those of the British territory, and thought that the Pindharries would have no difficulty in hiding themselves or joining his own army, while the British troops made, as he expected that they would make, some attempt to drive the freebooters out of their fastnesses and their homes. But he was not prepared for simultaneous and energetic operations from both north and south; and when he was requested to issue orders for the reception of the Madras troops advancing to expel the Pindharries from his territories, he was astounded. The plans of the Governor-General were laid before him in detail; and his confusion left him speechless when, in open durbar or council, the British resident placed in his hands his own intercepted letters to the Nepalese chiefs, telling him that they contained proposals for a combined attack on the English. Like the Peshwa, he agreed to a new treaty which placed the Rajput states under British protection and bound him to active measures for the suppression of the Pindharries.

16. The rooting out of these incurable ruffians was accomplished by the campaign of 1817. Terror-struck by the tidings that Sindia had been compelled

to abandon them and even to take active part against them, they strove desperately to escape without coming into conflict with British troops. They fled first with their wives and children northwards; but here the Bengal army hemmed them in. Some then turned to the south, and escaped for the time with the loss of nearly all their baggage, but were severely handled in many small encounters, and in the end completely dispersed. The rest, leaving their horses behind them, sought lurking-places in the jungle, where many or most of them came to a wretched end. Those who were found in the open country received but scant mercy at the hands of the villagers whom they had kept in constant terror. Some of their leaders submitted themselves to the English. Khurim, from their misplaced indulgence, received an estate on British territory. The body of Chetú was found in the jungle, half devoured by a tiger; and the few of his followers who still survived were mingled with the population. The Pindharrie raids were a thing of the past.

CHAPTER XVII.

The Dethronement of the Peshwa—Internal Administration of Lord Hastings.

1. When the Peshwa Baji Rao signed the new treaty at Poona, he never meant to keep it; but he thought that much might be gained by pretending

to do so. He disbanded large bodies of his cavalry ; but he paid their officers for half a year in advance, ordering them to appear with their men, when called for, at a moment's notice. Pointing to this proof of his fidelity, he complained bitterly to Sir John Malcolm, who was then at Poona making preparations for the Pindharrie campaign, of the unjust suspicions which had deprived him of his three fortresses. Malcolm, deceived by his falsehoods, advised and obtained the restoration of these forts, and Baji Rao, under the pretence of operations against the Pindharries, began to enlist horsemen far beyond the numbers which could possibly be needed for such a purpose ; but these troops, when enlisted, were not sent forward to the Nerbudda, where they were urgently wanted. He still corresponded with Sindia, Holkar, and other chiefs, and plotted the murder of Elphinstone, the British resident, who without making any comments brought up a European regiment from Bombay, the Poona subsidiary force having advanced under General Smith against the Pindharries. European troops were a terror to the Peshwa, who thoroughly understood the reason of their appearance, and declared that he would leave Poona if they were not sent back to Bombay. Elphinstone withdrew the British force to the neighbouring village of Khirki, and the very day on which he left the residency to join them, they were attacked by the army of the Peshwa. But the subsidiary force was now approaching under General Smith ; and without waiting to be attacked, Baji Rao fled from Poona, and his city was occupied by the enemy,

against whom he seemed to have no other weapon than that of treachery.

2. Treason was, in truth, a favourite weapon with all the Mahratta houses. Rughoji, the Bhonsla raja of Nagpore, died in 1816. His successor, an idiot, was murdered by the regent Appa Sahib, who made a subsidiary treaty with the English, and then proceeded to hatch schemes for their destruction with the Peshwa. To Mr. Jenkins, the resident at Nagpore, he dwelt on the impossibility of his following the evil example of Baji Rao in attacking the British troops at Khirki; but at the same time he and his ministers were found sending their treasure and their families out of the city, and Mr. Jenkins posted the troops on the Sitabuldi hill between the residency and Nagpore. These troops were merely 1,400 sepoys, three troops of Bengal cavalry, and four six-pounders. The army of Appa Sahib amounted to 18,000 men with thirty-six guns. The battle began in the evening, lasted through the night, and was decided the next day by the judgment and valour of Captain Fitzgerald, the commander of the Bengal horse (1817). Appa Sahib disavowed any share in the attack, and denied that he had ordered it. But even this excuse, hollow as it was, would have been taken, if he had disbanded his troops, and if it had not been discovered that he was the murderer of his predecessor. On this charge he was sent a prisoner to Allahabad; but he made his escape on the road, and having spent years among the Vindhya mountains (p. 9), found a refuge at last with the Raja of Jodhpur. An infant

grandson of Rughoji was placed on the throne; but Mr. Jenkins was charged with the whole administration during his minority, and Nagpore ceased to be a source of anxiety and annoyance.

3. In Holkar's state of Indore the disaffection of the unpaid troops had led Tulsi Bai, the queen-mother, and regent for the young son of Jeswunt Rao, to seek the protection of the English. But the troops were afterwards paid by the Peshwa, and Tulsi Bai, no longer needing their aid, openly declared herself on the side of Baji Rao. Her army encountered the forces under Sir John Malcolm in December 1817; and her officers, seeing her readiness to negotiate with the British commander, carried her by night to a neighbouring river, where they beheaded her and cast her body into the stream. The result was the destruction of the army in the battle of Mehidpúr, three days later.

4. After abandoning Poona to its fate, the Peshwa thought to strengthen his position by summoning from Satara the representative of the great Sivaji; but his hopes were fast dying away, and the splendid defence of Korygaum by Captain Staunton left him in despair. With a detachment not exceeding 800 men, the only Europeans being ten English officers and twenty-four artillerymen, Staunton defended the village until nightfall against the attacks of the Peshwa's army of 25,000 horsemen with about 6,000 infantry (January 1, 1818). The next day Baji Rao's troops refused to fight, and marched away. They were defeated again at Ashti, and the Peshwa became a fugitive.

5. The English had resolved that he should be the last of his line. The appointment of another Peshwa would only have been an encouragement to the revival of old intrigues and old pretensions: and a change of title would scarcely have extinguished in the Mahrattas the feeling that their allegiance was due to the chief who sat on the Peshwa's throne at Poona. The danger could be avoided only by having no Peshwa. In June of the following year, 1818, Baji Rao was caught in the toils of his pursuers. He might reasonably have looked for condign punishment; but he was sent to live near Cawnpore on a pension of 80,000*l.* a year. Indore was made a subsidiary state, and the British resident was the virtual ruler during the minority of Mulhar Rao Holkar.

6. The great task of Lord Hastings was thus successfully accomplished. From that day to this there has been no deliberate combination of native states against the British power. The great rising of 1857 was strictly a military mutiny, which assumed a form seriously affecting the whole country, only because it received the sanction of the Great Mogul. It is at the least likely that if the phantom prince at Delhi had shared the fate of the Peshwa in the days of Lord Hastings, that great convulsion might never have occurred, or would have done no mischief except to the rebellious soldiers.

7. But while Lord Hastings was thus compelled to extend the limits of English territory and dominion, he stood almost alone in his conviction that the real interests of the English government lay in the general well-being of the Indian people, and

more particularly in their education. He set up schools which were thronged by native children, established a society for making known to native scholars the literature and science of England and of Europe, and allowed the missionaries of Serampore to issue a newspaper which formed the foundation of the present native press. His wars against the Nepalese, the Mahrattas, and the Pindharries had been costly; but his budget nevertheless showed a surplus of two millions sterling annually, and there was always an ample reserve in his treasury. In the character and habits of the government officers, both civil and military, there was a vast change for the better. The old days of lawlessness and licence had passed away.

8. The difficulties of Lord Hastings arose not so much from Mahrattas and Pindharries as from the affairs of the Nizam, who left everything to his minister, who in his turn left everything to his deputy, Chunder Lal. Chunder was a Hindu, who thought that it was his wisdom to walk in the ways of Mahommed Rheza Khan (p. 131) in the days of Warren Hastings. He had contracted a loan of 600,000*l.* from the banking house of William Palmer and Co., which had been established at Hyderabad in 1814. Two years later an Act of Parliament declared all pecuniary dealings by Europeans with native powers illegal; but this Act was suspended in favour of Palmer's house by an order in Council which only required that they should communicate the nature of their transactions when called upon to do so. Mr. Metcalfe, the resident at Hyderabad, declared that this

loan of sixty lakhs was not straightforward ; that of the sum borrowed, 80,000*l.* went as a bonus to the partners of the banking house, the remainder being devoted to the paying off of loans granted to the Nizam without the knowledge of the British Government ; and that thus the real debts of the Nizam remained just where they had been before. The sanction of the order in Council seemed to implicate the Governor-General in the matter ; and it was resolved that the debts of the Nizam should be paid off, and his relations with the banking house brought to an end. This was accomplished by capitalising the annual rent of 70,000*l.* paid by the Company for the Northern Circars, at a sum which represented the purchase of twelve and a half years only. For the banking house the repayment of the loan was a heavy blow, as it knocked off the high rate of interest charged for it ; but at the same time all their other dealings were declared illegal, their outstanding debts, their advances for timber and cotton, and other assets were forfeited, and the house necessarily became insolvent. To Chunder Lal, also, the repayment of the sixty lakhs was no benefit. It drove him to the local banks and to money lenders whose charge for interest was vastly more extortionate. The comments on these occurrences threw a cloud over the last year of Lord Hastings's sojourn in India, which he left on January 1, 1823.

CHAPTER XVIII.

**Burmese War—Second Siege, and Capture, of
Bhurtpore.**

1. The evil habits of centuries are never got rid of at once : and in spite of the catastrophe which had overwhelmed the Pindharries and broken up the power of the Peshwa and the Nizam, of Sindia and of Holkar, there were still thousands, it may be hundreds of thousands, who would gladly have welcomed any reverse to the British arms which might hold out a prospect, if not of expelling the English altogether from India, yet of restoring the wild licence which had been put down by Lord Wellesley and Lord Hastings. Such a reverse it was hoped that the British arms would receive at the hands of the people of Burma.

2. The country known as Burma stretches along the eastern coast of the Bay of Bengal northwards from the river Pakshan, which serves as the Siamese frontier, until it touches Assam and Thibet. Through it the Irrawaddi flows from the Himalaya range in a southerly course until it empties itself into the sea through a vast delta stretching between Cape Negrais and Rangoon. The upper valley of this mighty river is known by the name Ava, the town as Pegu. It is a country of burning sunshine and an immense rainfall. The towns and villages are built chiefly on the banks of rivers, on piles ; and each village has at least one Buddhist monastery, which owns no lands

and has no endowments. The monks are supported wholly by the gifts of the people, and these gifts are never lacking, for in the popular belief they will secure to the donor a higher life in the series of transmigrations which await the human soul after death. The people have been described as Indo-Chinese. They have the slanting eyes and the features of Mongolians. As disciples of Buddha they have no caste, and with the exception of the king and his family they have no nobility which is not strictly personal and official ; and as all officials are removable at the will of the king, the people have no representation whatever. Seemingly they do not greatly feel the lack of it. They go through life with the placid contentment which is the natural fruit of the systems bearing the name of Buddha, and with some advantages which are beyond the reach of the Hindu and the Mahometan. With these the betrothal of children takes place almost in their infancy, and the future bride and bridegroom have little or no voice in the matter. Among the Burmese boys and girls grow up with a natural familiarity, and are left to the choice of their affections. Their festivals are scenes generally of much quiet gaiety, and their lives are spent in utter ignorance of the world beyond them.

3. In such a country we should scarcely look for cruel and desolating wars. Yet it has been overrun by tyrants, for whom the shedding of human blood is nothing more than the pouring out of water. The history of Burma, so far as it can be said to have any history, is a tale of sickening horrors. The narrative

of the siege of Martaban by the Burmese warrior, Byeen-noung, in the sixteenth century, with the catastrophe which followed it, can be surpassed in fearful colouring only by the doings of a Genghiz (p. 22) or an Attila. In the middle of the eighteenth century, the English in the factory of Negrais were massacred by Alompra the hunter, an adventurer, who shook off the yoke of the Talain kings, and made Rangoon his capital. Like him, his successors shed blood like water. But massacre provokes murder, and it is the common lot of Burmese kings to be slain themselves, and have their wives and children slaughtered with them. Hence the frequent movings of the capital from Amarapura to Ava, from Ava to Mandalay, and from Mandalay, it may be, back to Ava.

4. In the reign of Bhodau Phra, the third son of Alompra, some fugitives from Arakan, which he had conquered, escaped into British territory, and Sir John Shore gave them up on the request of the Burmese governor. Lord Wellesley was less complaisant. He refused to surrender political exiles who would only be tortured to death; but every effort was made to secure the friendship of the Burmese government, and to make a treaty with them. The offers were rejected with an air of immeasurable superiority; and the Burmese studied their dignity by claiming an island on the English side of the frontier, and threatening to invade Bengal if it should not be given up. The conquest of Assam and Muni pore by the Burmese general, Bundula, in 1822, was followed by an irruption into

Bengal, in which the Burmese cut off a detachment of British sepoy. Lord Amherst, who had succeeded the Marquis of Hastings, declared war, sorely against his will, and an expedition was despatched by sea to Rangoon.

5. The sight of the ships disconcerted Bundula, who was preparing to obey orders by setting off for Bengal and bringing back the Governor-General in golden fetters. The British forces on their side were not less astonished at the miserable materials which the Burmese dignified with the name of an army. The contest could not be called a war. The throwing up of a stockade summed up the whole military skill and science of the Burmese; and when, in December 1824, Bundula threw up stockades round the whole ground in which the English troops were encamped, he fled on the first onset of the enemy, and solaced himself by sawing one of his officers asunder for disobeying orders. Bundula was killed by a shell fired at the town of Donabew, to which he had retreated, and the advance of the British from Prome on Ava filled the king and his court with terror. But a peace was concluded in 1826, by which the territories of Tenasserim, Arakan, and Assam were ceded to the English, and the king pledged himself to pay a million sterling for the expense of the war, one fourth part of it being laid down at once. The cost of the war was not much less than 13,000,000*l.*; but the provinces gained have been estimated as cheap at the price. The tea of Assam is equal, perhaps superior, to that of China; its cultivation is capable still of being vastly ex-

tended; and the city of Moulmein, on the Tenasserim coast, has a trade of nearly a million sterling yearly.

6. But the war had never been popular with the Bengal sepoys. They had nothing to dread from the enemy; but the march of General Morrison with 10,000 men from Chittagong was accompanied by a terrible mortality from the pestilential fever of Arakan. Three sepoy regiments became disaffected; one mutinied openly. All three were paraded and ordered to ground their arms. On their refusal the artillery opened fire, and eleven men were killed. The mutiny was thus suppressed, and the name of the forty-seventh regiment was struck out of the list of the army. It may be some excuse for the sepoys that they dreaded the sorcery of the Burmese far more than they feared their muskets. For not a few of the natives of India the thought of the power of Burmese magic carried with it a strange illusion. The charms of the Burmese witches would, it was supposed, be fatal to the grasping conquerors who had crossed the water to Rangoon, or led their troops along the fever-stricken jungle-track to Ava. An omen of final victory for the natives of the peninsula, of final ruin for the strangers from the far west, was still to be seen in the virgin fortress of Bhurtpore. Its mighty ramparts rose as proudly as in the days which had gone before the unsuccessful assaults of Lake, and, if any parts showed signs of weakness, these had been diligently strengthened. In the belief of the Jats who held it, it would bid

defiance to all attacks as safely as the eternal bastions of the Ghorkas in Nepal (p. 185).

7. This proud vaunt was now to be put to the test. Here, as it so often happened at the most critical times in so many states, there was a boy raja, who was set aside and imprisoned by his cousin, Doorjun Lal, who usurped his throne and set himself at the head of the troops. But the boy, at the request of his father, the raja who had concluded the peace of 1805, had been recognised by the British Government, and Sir David Ochterlony issued orders for the immediate attack of Bhurtpore. The order was countermanded by Lord Amherst, and the indignity broke the heart of the old general, who, with a handful of men, had defended Delhi against a host of sixty thousand horse and well-nigh two hundred guns.

8. But Lord Amherst's eyes were soon opened to the fact that Ochterlony was as right in policy as he was in his strategy. The order which withdrew the troops from Bhurtpore convinced the natives that the English were afraid to attack it. The whole country was in commotion. The Mahrattas of Sindia and Holkar, the chiefs of Bundelkund and Malwa, the scanty relics of the Pindharries, all indulged in bright hopes that the old days of free-booting and private war would soon return. Sir Charles Metcalfe, the resident at Hyderabad, assured the Governor-General that it was fully as much his duty as his interest to scatter a delusion which might light a dangerous flame throughout the whole peninsula. Twenty thousand men, with a hundred

pieces of artillery, advanced under Lord Combermere to the attack of the mud walls, on which Lake could make but a feeble impresssion. The balls now, as in the former siege, buried themselves harmlessly in their sun-baked slopes, and it was resolved to try the effect of mining. Ten thousand pounds of powder were exploded under the main bastion and counterscarp of the ditch, and in a few hours the fortress was in the hands of the English. Their loss was 1,000, as against 6,000 of the enemy, who died defending the last stronghold of Hindu independence.

9. Under the care of Mr. Jenkins (p. 191), the territories of Nagpore had made a wonderful advance in prosperity and wealth. But the young raja was now of age, and the government was placed in his hands. The wealth which he thus attained seemed to furnish a reason for folding the hands in sleep, and in a short time things were as they had been of old. The fact was one which must be taken into account in answering the question whether, and how far, the evils under which India has suffered, or is suffering, are the necessary result of English conquest.

CHAPTER XIX.

Administration of Lord William Bentinck, 1827-1835.

1. Lord William Bentinck had been recalled from Madras after the mutiny which some ascribed to unwise acts of interference with the religious pre-

judices and customs of the sepoy (p. 178). Twenty-two years later he returned to India as Governor-General, and his second administration proved not only that the orders issued in Madras could have been prompted by no feelings of indifference for the population which he had to rule, but that no one had their well-being, in the highest sense of the word, more deeply at heart. His sojourn in Bengal was a time of comparative tranquillity between the rapid march of English conquest under Lord Wellesley and Lord Hastings and the fierce struggles which agitated north-western India after his departure. He had to deal with native states; and he dealt with them on a principle which he can scarcely be said to have carried out with complete consistency, and which in the opinion of many was the cause of grave evil and mischief. He had to deal with the condition of the people in British territory; and he dealt with it in a spirit of justice, generosity, and mercy, which rose higher even than that of Akbar, for the simple reason that he was not hampered by the system against which Akbar was driven to rebel. The inscription on the pedestal of his statue at Calcutta, written by Macaulay, speaks of him as one 'who, placed at the head of a great empire, never laid aside the simplicity and moderation of a private citizen, who infused into Oriental despotism the spirit of British freedom; who never forgot that the end of government is the welfare of the governed; who abolished cruel rites; who effaced humiliating distinctions; who allowed liberty to the expression of public opinion; whose constant study it was to elevate the

moral and intellectual character of the government committed to his charge.' Nor can it be said that this high tribute was undeserved, or that there is still no need for English rulers in India to keep steadily before their eyes the standard at which he aimed.

2. It was natural that the establishment of British sovereignty should carry with it for Indian princes a strong temptation to carelessness and inactivity. With many of them decent government, where decent government was found, sprang from the fear of rebellion on the part of their subjects. Now there was a power in the land which could put down such opposition, as it had already put a stop to the freebooting habits of their rulers. The succession of minors to a throne was one of the most fruitful sources of intrigue and violence. In most cases the British government found itself compelled to interfere when the evil became intolerable. Had it interfered at first the mischief might have been nipped in the bud. Thus in Gwalior Sindia's widow set her mind on retaining supreme power for life. The result was a civil war between those who fell in with her plans and the party of the raja her adopted son. The Governor-General visited Gwalior, but refused to interfere, although both parties professed their readiness to abide by his decision. The raja besieged the queen in the palace; the queen escaped and advanced at the head of another body of troops. A battle was prevented by the personal interference of the resident, who obtained from Lord William Bentinck the recognition of the raja. The step

which might have been taken at first was taken in the end. In Bhopal a like quarrel ended in bloodshed and anarchy; but the Governor-General held his peace, and order was restored by his successor, Sir Charles Metcalfe. In Jeypoor one of the two rivals for the office of minister laid a plot for the assassination of the British resident. The fact of this rivalry was well known; but nothing was done to repress it, and the unsuccessful competitor attacked the resident and his assistant in the street. The former was seriously wounded, the latter murdered. The Governor-General now interfered to inflict punishment, and the country soon became both peaceful and prosperous. Even in Oude he contented himself with warning the king that if the horrors of his misrule were suffered to go on unchecked, the British government would take the management of his dominions on itself.

3. In this unfortunate country the miseries which are the natural fruit of Eastern despotism were increasing in appalling measure, and the English were responsible for maintaining in his seat a profligate wretch who thought of nothing but his own vicious pleasures. By the instructions received from England the Governor-General was authorised, if he thought fit, to place Oude on the same footing with the Carnatic. Had he acted on these instructions, this harassed and exhausted land might soon have been made a flourishing and wealthy territory. The same results might have been obtained with equal ease in Mysore. Here Tippu's minister, Purnea (p. 165), failed in his efforts to make his position as minister

the foundation of an hereditary power like that of the Peshwa. The young raja was placed at the head of affairs, and it was his pleasure to live the life of Suraj-u-Daula (p. 101). Purnea had left in the treasury no less a sum than seven millions sterling. Within three years the resident reported that this vast sum had been squandered by the most disgraceful means. In a few years more the state was overwhelmed with debt; the army was unpaid; the land was let to the highest bidders, who ground the cultivators to powder, while the raja went on with his horrible debaucheries. At last in 1830 the people broke out into rebellion, and the English Government was compelled to interfere. The resident became a Commissioner, and Mysore was reduced virtually to the condition of a British province. The people breathed freely, and the revenue was more than doubled.

4. Two annexations only are recorded during the whole of Lord William Bentinck's government. The one was that of the little raj or state of Cachar, now a rich tea-growing district, on the north-east frontier of Bengal; the other that of a small territory which Hyder Ali and Tippu had vainly sought to conquer. The mountaineers of Coorg, whose little state on the western Ghats lies between Mysore and Malabar, had been ruled from the sixteenth century by the dynasty of the Vira rajas. To the demand of Hyder Ali for tribute the Vira raja of the day returned a refusal; but Hyder succeeded only in taking two or three forts and giving to Mahometans the lands of some whom

he dispossessed and carried away. Greater efforts to subdue this hardy people were made by Tippu, who brought the raja to Mysore. After four years the Coorg prince escaped, and during the wars which ended in Tippu's ruin remained in alliance with the English. Time passed on. His wife died, leaving some daughters but no son; and the raja requested that one of these daughters might be recognised by the British government as his successor to the exclusion of his brothers. The recognition was given under the impression that the raja, who was independent, had made the request merely as a matter of form, and from the wish of showing his loyalty to the English. It turned out afterwards that he had done so only in order to get their sanction for a breach of the immemorial custom which gave a preference in the succession to brothers over daughters. But a change had come over the raja much like that which came over Nadir Shah after his departure from Delhi (p. 90). He murdered one of his brothers, and would have murdered the other, had he not resigned all claim to the throne and professed to become an ascetic. At length the raja died, and the ascetic, who had been taken to be a fool, showed that he had sufficient wit and a superfluity of cruelty. He seized the throne and worked his will on the people for more than ten years. Then followed the reign of his son, whose actions were those of a tiger; and, like a tiger, he took care to hide them from those who were able and might be willing to punish him. But his sister escaped with her husband, and told the awful story

to the English, who warned him that his iniquities could not be allowed to go on. The raja bade them defiance as being an independent prince, insisted on the surrender of his sister and her husband, and, when this was refused, declared war. After overcoming severe resistance in the mountain passes, General Fraser occupied the capital, Merkara; the raja was sent to Benares; and the Governor-General desired that his subjects should choose a new ruler. The people declared unanimously that that ruler must be the British government, praying only that their raja might never be allowed to come back (1834).

5. The true glory of Lord William Bentinck rests on his internal administration. It was upright and it was fearless. He scorned the notion that reforms imperatively demanded on considerations of mere humanity were not to be made because they might offend certain classes of people; rather, he felt sure that in their moral sense he should have a power which would soon disarm all opposition. Whatever may have been the origin of the rite known as the Suttee, or Sati, it was beyond doubt maintained by the Brahmans on the authority of a text in the *Rig Veda*, which they gave forth in the following form:—

‘Om! let these women, not to be widowed, good wives adorned with collyrium, holding clarified butter, consign themselves to the flames. Immortal, not childless, not husbandless, well adorned with gems, let them pass into the fire.’

6. It has been said that this is perhaps the most flagrant instance of what can be done by an

unscrupulous priesthood. Lord William Bentinck did not know that the verse was garbled, and that it was addressed not to the widow but to the other women who are present at the funeral, and who have to pour oil and butter on the pile. The text really runs thus: 'May those women who are not widows but have good husbands draw near with oil and butter. Those who are mothers may go up first to the altar, without tears, without sorrow, but decked with fine jewels.' And it is actually preceded immediately by one which orders the widow to leave the body of her husband. 'Rise, woman, come to the world of life; thou sleepest nigh unto him whose life is gone. Come to us. Thou hast thus fulfilled thy duties of a wife to the husband who once took thy hand.' But to Lord William Bentinck it mattered nothing whether the authority alleged for it was real or fictitious. The practice was an abomination and must be put down. In 1829 an Act was passed which declared all who were implicated in the ceremony to be chargeable with murder, the assistants being liable to prosecution as accessaries. It was an Act which would have called forth the enthusiastic approval of the great emperor who mounted his horse and rode off to prevent the commission of one of these horrid crimes (p. 46). For righteousness and humanity the names of Akbar and of Bentinck may well go together. As we might expect, the Brahmans threatened resistance; but the moral sense of the country was against them, and the rite was soon a thing of the past.

7. Lord William Bentinck's legislation could not

indeed fail to bring into clear light the duty of statesmen in reference to religion. The Court of Directors had been nervously afraid of offending Hindu or other prejudices, and shrank with horror from anything bearing the most distant likeness to persecution; but they forgot that in order to appear forbearing and tolerant a man need not speak or act as if he were ashamed of his own faith. Thus far troops had been paraded and offerings presented to idols at great festivals in the name of the Company. This useless and most pernicious bowing down in the house of Rimmon went on until it was abolished by Lord Auckland in 1840.

8. From the days of the first Mahometan invasions, perhaps from times far earlier, India had furnished a congenial home for plunderers and marauders. The robbers on a large scale founded kingdoms like those of the Mahrattas; those who failed to reach this high eminence grew up into hordes like those of the Pindharries. There were lower ranks still which were not so prominent, but whose powers for mischief were sometimes vast. What the Pindharrie was to the Mahratta, that the dacoit and the Thug were to the Pindharrie. Roving bands of dacoits might swell almost to the size of an army, and were always prowling about in the hope of filching from villagers and reaping a richer harvest from wealthy travellers. Over the whole length and breadth of the Indian peninsula the secret society of the Thugs had flourished from times immemorial. The Thug looked down on the dacoit as a freebooter would look down on a burglar; but

both dacoit and Thug plied their task as a religious calling.

9. Banded together under a name which signifies deceit, the Thugs devoted themselves with solemn ceremonies to the worship of the goddess Bhowaní, in whose eyes the most proficient murderer was the greatest saint. The traveller, as he rode on horseback, or was borne along in his palanquin, fell in with a calvacade which accosted him with courtesy, and whose agreeable companionship made him grateful for the chance which on unsafe roads had given him the benefit of their protection. For two, three, or four days they might journey on together, each day being enlivened by recreations and entertainments more cheerful and light-hearted than those of the days preceding. For the traveller and his servants, or escort, there seemed to be not a cloud in the sky; but the graves were ready dug to receive their bodies, and as they sat in gay merriment eating the noontide meal in the shade of the mango grove, or resting by the banks of the nullah or stream, the handkerchief of each Thug was round the neck of his victim, and in a few seconds the grave-diggers were covering their corpses with the earth. No class among the people was safe from their artful toils. The rich bunnea, or banker, fell in with a company of merchants as rich, seemingly, and as well versed in business as himself. The merchants were Thugs, and his bills of exchange were soon in the hands of his murderers, who with unbounded assurance would present them for payment at the bank on which they were drawn. The

soldier going home on furlough met other soldiers who were full of the memory of exploits, in some of which he may perhaps have himself had a share ; but the military knowledge of his informants was got at secondhand, and their business was done when their fingers were griping his throat. On women they never laid hands, if they could help it ; and the men of some few trades, such as carpenters, tailors, oilmen, were forbidden prey.

10. To the English the existence of this system was scarcely known before the year 1810 ; but the disappearance of large numbers of sepoys absent on furlough gradually roused both anxiety and suspicion ; and possibly the consciousness that the eyes of the English were upon him may have supplied the motive to the leader of a band of Thugs, who on the evening of a day in 1829 saluted Major Sleeman, the deputy commissioner of the Saugor district, as he sat at his tent door. The man confessed his calling, and told him that the bodies of many murdered travellers lay in the grove in which his tent was then pitched. On the following day the bodies were found on the spots which he pointed out. The gang was taken, and a search was begun throughout the country which proved the wide extent of the league and the maintenance of a common system of signs and passwords from one end of India to the other. Lord William Bentinck at once organized a new department for its complete suppression, placing Major (afterwards Sir William) Sleeman at its head. Within six years more than three thousand Thugs were brought to justice ; many turned approvers,

and the system was brought to an end within the limits of British territory, although it is supposed still to linger on in some of the native states.

11. The Governor-General was as anxious to bring India nearer to England as the Court of Directors seemed eager to prevent it. It was his great wish to set up steam communication by way of the Red Sea; but the Directors vetoed the scheme on the score of its expense, and nothing more was done for twelve years. But steamers built at Calcutta and fitted with engines from England ascended the Ganges in 1830, and began a new era for river navigation in India.

12. Thus far India had been a sealed country except to the servants of the Company. But the Company's charter, extended in 1813 for twenty years, came to an end in 1833; and its renewal was obtained at the cost of some sacrifices. The Company was deprived of its monopoly of trade to China, and the Court of Directors became an administrative body, subject to the Board of Control in England. The prohibition which made it impossible for Englishmen generally to reside in India or to hold lands there was withdrawn; and it was now lawful for them to apply their capital and their enterprise to the development of its resources. A still more important change was the admission of natives of all castes and creeds (and this would, of course, include the native Christians) to the public service. Thus far it had been held that such admission must be fatal to English predominance in the country; but in spite of this notion native judges were appointed in 1831

with a primary jurisdiction in civil suits. The result of the experiment was found to be eminently satisfactory, although the regulation that Europeans as well as natives were to be subject to their jurisdiction was vehemently resented and reviled as the Black Act. At the same time the usage of Hindu law that no one abandoning the Hindu faith could inherit property was set aside. This usage had rested on the old Aryan idea which is seen in the legislation of ancient Greece and Rome as clearly as in that of Manu, and which regarded inheritance as depending on the discharge of the religious duty owed by the heir to his ancestors; and it was held that he could not discharge this duty unless he were the legitimate son and worshipped at the same hearth. A further reform of the greatest importance was the substitution of the vernacular dialects for the Persian in the law courts. The use of the Persian was a benefit to the Mahometans alone. But, while the use of the local dialects was permitted in judicial proceedings, the regulations which withheld from natives a knowledge of the language and literature of England were done away; and the school of the Scotch mission did much towards extending the benefit of this great change throughout the country. The last restrictions on the press of India were removed by Sir Charles Metcalfe during the brief interval between the departure of Lord William Bentinck and the arrival of his successor, Lord Auckland.

13. Another measure of the highest advantage was the land settlement of the north-western pro-

vinces, which was made in 1833. It is enough to say of it that it differed from Lord Cornwallis's settlement of Bengal in these special particulars, that all lands were surveyed and all fields defined according to their quality as tilled or as waste land, that the rights of all proprietors were registered, and that the lands were assessed at a rate which was to be maintained for thirty years.

14. Lastly, a medical college was established in Calcutta shortly before Lord William Bentinck left India. Thus far, apart from traditional theories, whether Hindu or Mahometan, there was no medical knowledge in the country. The anatomical study of the human frame was unknown. The physicians were no better than gatherers of simples, and, as in old English days, the barber was the surgeon. The college at once attracted a large number of students, and the whole range of European medical science was brought within the reach of the people of India.

15. When to all this it is added that successful measures were taken for reclaiming some of the aboriginal tribes (p. 11), who retained much of their ancient savagery, we shall see how impartially Lord William Bentinck's care was extended to every part of the country. The Kohls, who had been irritated into acts of rebellion by the operation of laws to which they had never been accustomed, were placed under a special commissioner with happy results. The Mairs became quiet cultivators of the soil, and the Khonds were made to give up their horrible human sacrifices to the great goddess of the earth.

CHAPTER XX.

The First Afghan War.

1. A magnificent spectacle was seen in 1831 at Roopur on the banks of the Sutlej. With a small escort Lord William Bentinck advanced to greet Runjeet Singh, who appeared at the head of a splendidly equipped force of 16,000 men. This chief, who had won for himself the name of the Lion of Lahore, had welded into a compact body the loose military confederacy of the Sikhs (p. 79). He was now in middle life, and the continuance of his marvellous energy was threatened only by his horrible vices. Of these, however, the world saw not much; and from the first stage of his career circumstances had made him a personage whose good will the British government thought it prudent to secure. In 1807, Runjeet was seeking to establish his supremacy over the Sikh chiefs of Sirhind, between the Sutlej and the Jumna; and these chiefs asked for the aid to which their compact with the English entitled them. But there was the fear that Napoleon might still attempt to carry out his gigantic schemes of Eastern conquest; and the dominions of Runjeet included the ground on which Alexander the Great had encamped his army, when he still hoped to find his way to the banks of the Ganges.

2. This difficult task of protecting the chiefs of Sirhind and of avoiding offence to Runjeet Singh was entrusted to Charles Metcalfe, by whose tact

Runjeet was led to withdraw his troops beyond the Sutlej. By the treaty of Amritsur this river became the boundary of British territory, and a small English force was stationed at Ludhiana. The compact may not have been altogether to the taste of Runjeet, but to the day of his death, a period of more than thirty years, he adhered to it with scrupulous fidelity; and only after his death was it known to how large an extent its maintenance had depended on himself alone. During these years he had succeeded in raising an army of 80,000 men, with 300 guns, under the discipline of two Frenchmen, Allard and Ventura, who joined him as military adventurers in 1822, and who in the work of training native soldiers proved to be officers more efficient and successful than the Frenchmen who had drilled the troops of Sindia, Holkar, and the Nizam.

3. The death of the great Afghan conqueror, Ahmed Shah Durani (p. 114), preceded the birth of Runjeet by six or seven years only. His grandson Zeman Shah thought it well to put a cloak over his own weakness by appointing the young Sikh leader viceroy of the Punjab; but the act converted Runjeet into a sovereign as really independent as the Nizams of the Mogul emperors or the Peshwas of the Mahratta kings. Henceforth the Afghans were kept more within the limits of the wild highlands which had been their ancient home. This region of rugged and savage mountains, enclosing some valleys of wonderful richness and fertility, contains four important cities, the westernmost being Herat, the easternmost Peshawur, Cabul to the north,

and Candahar to the south, with the celebrated fortress of Ghazni on the road between these two.

4. These cities, with their territories, have sometimes been united under a single head; more often they have been ruled by princes who spent their time in making war upon each other. The subjects of these chiefs have been described as hardy mountaineers, for whom freedom is of more value than life, and who have no favour to ask of other nations or powers but that of being left to themselves; or again as ruthless savages, delighting in the tortures and death of those who have been lured into their nets by falsehood and treachery. There may be truth in both these pictures; but their dealings amongst themselves must not be allowed to affect our judgment of the modes in which others with whom they had no quarrel, and to whom they had given no offence, have chosen to deal with them.

5. The two most prominent tribes among the Afghans are the Abdalis and the Ghilzais. The former are known also as Duranis, and thus Ahmed Shah is called indifferently the Abdali or the Durani. The Barukzais are, it is supposed, an offshoot of the Abdalis; but a common origin has not prevented the outbreak of feuds and wars amongst them. The story of the Mogul and the Mahratta is repeated here, as everywhere else in the East. On the assassination of Nadir Shah the Afghan Sirdars or chiefs resolved to throw off the Persian yoke and choose a Shah for themselves. After much strife and debate, Jemal Khan, a Barukzai dervish, brought about the election of Ahmed Shah Durani, and Ahmed Shah

chose the dervish as his hereditary minister. In a few decades of years the minister became the master, and the monarch the puppet of the minister. Ahmed's grandson was the Zeman Shah, who lost the Punjab by making Runjeet Singh its viceroy; and another grandson was Shah Shuja, who was appointed by his brother Zeman Shah governor of Peshawur.

6. To recount the feuds, fights, and massacres which kept the land in constant convulsion would be both wearisome and unprofitable. It may be enough to say that Mahmud, the son of Zeman Shah, was a mere instrument of his minister Futih Khan, the Barukzai, who had placed him on the throne, and that the course of events in the almost incomprehensible revolutions which were constantly taking place drove Shah Shuja into exile in 1809. Mahmud at length contrived to bring about the death of Futih Khan, whose brother, Dost Mahommed, advanced with an army from Cashmere to avenge him; and thus in Shah Shuja, the exile at Ludhiana, and in Dost Mahommed, the conqueror of Cabul, we have two of the most prominent personages in the terrible drama of our first Afghan war.

7. Dost Mahommed, elected Amir in 1826, found himself in a position which made the good-will of the English a matter of the first importance; and he was ready to enter into an alliance with them, if he could be assured, first, that they would not attempt to restore Shah Shuja to his throne, and secondly, that they would aid him in driving the troops of Runjeet Singh from Peshawur. In the issue the English refused this aid, and brought Shah Shuja

back to Cabul; and the issue was laden with disasters and woes of which, perhaps, we have not yet seen the end. In 1831, Alexander Burnes, the ablest of the Oriental linguists of his time, reached Cabul as the envoy of Lord Auckland. Dost Mahommed had found out that the English, who had been more than a match for all the princes of India, were terribly afraid of the shadow of the Russian Czar; and he resolved to make use of this fear to further his own purposes. He therefore put before Burnes wonderful pictures of subtle and widely spread Russian intrigues, in the hope that he should thus secure the English as his own permanent allies.

8. The fears of the English envoy were heightened when, towards the close of 1837, the Russian Captain Vicovich arrived at Cabul with a letter from the Russian ambassador at Teheran. To play off the two envoys against each other seemed the most obvious plan; and in proportion to the scant encouragement which Dost Mahommed received from the Englishman was the large encouragement which he gave to the Russian. His policy was followed by momentous results; but these results were precisely the opposite of those which he looked for or intended. In the long series of events which now follow we have to remember that the conduct of the English was determined by considerations of a very different kind from those which had generally shaped their policy in India. Thus far they had, rightly, dealt warily and boldly with problems arising out of the conditions of the several states and powers of India. Now they were about to enter upon undertakings which

would strain their resources to the uttermost, in order to baffle supposed schemes which might possibly be carried out some generations hence by a power separated from India by waterless deserts and impracticable mountains. With this end in view Lord Auckland resolved on the restoration of Shah Shuja to the throne of Cabul. It was necessary to have an independent, orderly, and friendly Afghanistan as a barrier between India and Muscovite aggression; and the bringing back of the Ludhiana exile seemed to be the best mode of obtaining it.

9. At the same time, without declaring war against Persia, he sent an expedition from Bombay to Karrack, an island in the Persian gulf. The Persian king understood and heeded the warning which it was intended to convey, and pledged himself to make no attempts upon Herat. The Russian scheme for the invasion of India, if there were any scheme, was thus foiled, for without the aid of Persia it could not be carried out; and as it was impossible that Dost Mahomed should fail to see this, it would be no hard matter to settle all difficulties by mediating between him and Runjeet Singh, nor could it be doubted that this friendly intervention would be welcomed by both. But Lord Auckland's mind was made up, and on October 1, 1838, he published at Simla a manifesto which, from its consequences, is one of the most important state papers of the present century. It has been described as being as weak in argument as untrue in its assumptions. It has been pronounced unfair to Dost Mahommed and unjust to the Afghan people, on whom it forced

a sovereign long since expelled from his kingdom and unsuccessful in all his attempts to regain it. The object of the expedition has been characterised as not less delusive than it was dangerous and inexpedient. By all statesmen in India whose judgment should carry weight it was steadily disapproved; by Lord William Bentinck, by the Duke of Wellington, by Lord Wellesley and Mr. Elphinstone, it was emphatically condemned; and as the ages pass along, that condemnation will not lose its force in the eyes of all who regard the question in reference to the eternal distinction between right and wrong.

10. To the army which was to execute Lord Auckland's orders Runjeet Singh refused a passage through his territory. It was compelled, therefore, to go through Sind to Quetta, where it was joined by the column from Bombay. A false step generally makes other false steps necessary; it was not otherwise in the present instance. Greatly against their will the Amirs of Sind had accepted the treaty of 1832, which prohibited the passage of troops and stores along the line of the Indus. They were now told not merely that this prohibition must be removed in favour of the English, but that they must pay arrears of tribute. This tribute had not been demanded of them for thirty years, and for the tribute itself they had the formal acquittance of Shah Shuja, who had released them from the obligation for a sum of 30,000*l.* paid to him some five years before. They were also compelled to choose between complete political extinction and the signing of a

subsidiary treaty binding them to pay 30,000*l.* annually for the maintenance of a contingent in their territory. By the same threat Sir Alexander Burnes wrested from them the fort of Bukkur on the left bank of the Indus. But if our military ascendancy in the country was thus secured, we can scarcely resist the conclusion that the means employed have, in the words of Colonel Meadows Taylor, 'left these transactions under a stigma which they will never recover.'

11. The difficulties of a British army will probably never begin with the actual invasion of Afghanistan. The whole difficulty lies in the task of permanent occupation. From Quetta to Candahar, and from Candahar to Ghazni, the capital of Mahmoud the idol-breaker (p. 20), the march was unopposed. The northern or Cabul gate of this great fortress was blown open by the explosion of 300 pounds of gunpowder; and the stronghold of the kings who conquered Hindustan was in the hands of the English. The approach of the invading army convinced Dost Mahommed that it would be well to make terms, and he offered to recognise Shah Shuja as king if he himself were permitted to retain the post of Amír or prime minister. The offer was refused, although the sequel proved that it would have been wise to close with it. Dost Mahommed fled, and Shah Shuja took possession of the throne after an exile of thirty years (1839).

12. At Calcutta and in England the prevalent feeling was that of satisfaction on achieved success. But the prospect was soon darkened. The Cabulense

began to complain that Shah Shuja was not an independent ruler, and to chafe under the restraints of British political and social order. The rise of prices caused ill-will and discontent among the poor; and the king himself was irritated by the relations of nominal superiority, but of real subjection, in which he stood to the English envoy. There were elements of disturbance and signs of danger everywhere. Kharrak Singh, a contemptible wretch, weak in mind and body, sat in the place of his father, the Lion of Lahore, while the state was administered by Nao Nihal Singh and Dhyán Singh of Jummoo. The effects of the change were soon evident. The passage of British troops and stores through the Punjab called forth expressions of strong resentment, and Afghan chiefs were consulted about schemes for the destruction of British power. A Russian expedition to Khiva was a cause of much deeper alarm, but no one cared to heed the lesson taught by its miserable failure. Dost Mahommed was labouring for the recovery of his lost dominion; but all anxiety on this score was removed by his voluntary surrender after the fight at Parwundarra to Sir Robert Sale. Little, however, seemed to be gained by the departure of the Amír to Calcutta. Shah Shuja, with strange blindness, had insisted on the surrender of the Bala Hissar to his own use. This fort and palace commanded the city, and here the British army had been posted; but the king wanted it for the reception of his harem, and the forces were sent to open cantonments some three miles distant from the city. More alarming than all was the cost of the

occupation. The revenues of Cabul were far from answering to the glowing descriptions given of them by Shah Shuja in the days of his exile. It was necessary to cut down subsidies and allowances, and the economy naturally excited deeper discontent. The Court of Directors urged that the scheme should be given up altogether; the counter argument was that Shah Shuja could not be abandoned without dishonour, until his authority had been established. The Ghilzai chiefs affected by the financial reductions proposed an attack on the house of Sir Alexander Burnes.

13. Burnes was entreated by his native friends to seek safety elsewhere; but he could not be convinced of his danger until his dwelling was surrounded by a furious mob. For six hours Burnes and his attendants held out, and then the crowd, bursting in, soon finished their work of slaughter. The whole country was now in insurrection. Armed men were swarming into the city. The Afghan winter had set in with its full severity. The roads, blocked with snow, were watched by the orders of Akbar Khan, the son of Dost Mahommed, who had placed himself at the head of the people. Cold, hunger, and want of food were arguments for retreat which were daily becoming more imperious. A treaty must at once be signed for the safe departure of the English troops, with the king if he chose to accompany them, and for the return of Dost Mahommed and his family from Calcutta. Sir W. Macnaghten met Akbar Khan for this purpose; but at the same time he was negotiating with the

Barukzai chiefs for the continuance of the British troops in Cabul, and of Akbar Khan as Amír on a British subsidy of 40,000*l.* a year. The victim had fallen into the trap laid by the wily Afghan; and the contradictory treaties were exhibited as a comment on the good faith of Englishmen. For himself Macnaghten could only plead that he had done the best he could for the lives which were at stake. It was necessary to have another interview with Akbar Khan. The envoy thought of signing covenants; the Afghan was intent on securing his prisoner. Macnaghten's companions were seized; he himself struggled with his captor, and Akbar drew a pistol and shot him (1842).

14. At length, after more negotiations with the chiefs who had now raised their terms, the army set out on its fatal retreat on January 6, 1842. At starting it numbered more than 16,000. Of all these, Dr. Brydon, a medical officer, was the only one who reached Jellalabad to tell the story of the terrible catastrophe. The Khúrd Cabul defile should have been passed before their first halt, but the snow and the cold made this impossible. On the next day they were unable to advance more than four miles, On the third morning they had scarcely moved into the pass, in many places a few feet only in width, when from the heights on either side the Afghan muskets poured down a murderous fire on the crowded throng beneath. Within four days there remained not one-third of the number which had left Cabul. At Gandamak these poor survivors were again attacked. A few were taken prisoners: the

rest were killed, except the solitary fugitive who told the tale at Jellalabad. The unspeakable horror of the woeful story becomes even blacker if it be true, as some good judges have thought, that had the troops remained in the Bala Hissar they might have undergone some privations, but could easily have been not merely safe but triumphant in the face of any local efforts to dislodge them.

15. The appalling tidings brought by Dr. Brydon failed to shake Sale's resolution to hold out in Jellalabad. He had taken possession of the place in the middle of November, when he had only two days' provisions left; he kept it, although he knew that the whole country was in arms against the English, and although demands for its surrender and for his return to British territory came not only from Akbar Khan but from Shah Shuja also. He could see before him nothing but signs of failure everywhere; but his spirit would not have been shaken had he known that the disaster of the Khurd Cabul pass had tempted the Emir or Amír of Bokhara to break the law of nations by slaying two English envoys sent to ask for his alliance and friendship. He had already thrown Captain Conolly and Colonel Stoddart into his dungeons; but when he learnt that things were going against the English at Cabul, he had them publicly beheaded in the market place.

16. But the direction of affairs at Calcutta had passed out of the hands of Lord Auckland into those of Lord Ellenborough, and Lord Ellenborough was resolved that no pains should be spared to repair the mischief of past crimes and blunders, so far as it

might be possible to do so. General Pollock was sent to the rescue of Sale and his men at Jellalabad; and in spite of the virtual mutiny of some of the native regiments, who refused at first to enter the Khyber pass, he reached it in the middle of April, 1842, to learn that Akbar Khan had been foiled in a determined attempt to take the city. The garrison had sallied out, had routed his forces, seized his guns, baggage, and ammunition, and burnt his tents.

17. Before Akbar returned to Cabul, Shah Shuja had been shot as he was going from the Bala Hissar to the city, to take the command of the army which was to drive the English out of the land. He had been writing to Sale, assuring him that his loyalty to the British had undergone no changes; but the readiness which he professed to the Ghilzais to take the field availed not to save his life. The Afghan chief who enters into alliance with the English is, it would seem, a doomed man. The murder of the old king greatly smoothed the way for Akbar Khan, who occupied the Bala Hissar, and then, having paid his homage to the son of Shah Shuja, ruled in his name as the Nizam ruled in the name of the Great Mogul.

18. The minds of the English generals were set on the reconquest of Cabul. But Akbar thought that they would give up the idea if he offered to restore the hostages which he had taken before the invaders set out on their fatal march through the Khurd Cabul pass. To his surprise the offer was refused, and Akbar had no choice but to march out

for the defence of the city. For a time it seemed as though the storm which he dreaded might be averted. Lord Ellenborough, who had said that the infliction of due punishment on those who break their word was the condition necessary for the evacuation of Afghanistan by the English, sent instructions soon afterwards for the direct withdrawal of the forces into India. It was natural that such an order should be in a high degree distasteful to officers like Sale, Nott, and Pollock; and their strong protests led to a modification which left the decision to their judgment, and therefore made them responsible for the result.

19. The English army encountered that of Akbar Khan at the pass which had witnessed the great catastrophe of the preceding winter. The tokens of that fearful massacre were still strewn about the ground, and the British forces, roused to fever heat by the sight, charged with an impetuosity which carried everything before them. The victory which scattered the army of Akbar Khan was won almost without loss on the English side. Two days later the British flag was again waving on the Bala Hissar. The only task now remaining was to rescue the hostages whom Akbar Khan had sent off to Bamian. Happily the officer in charge of them could not resist the seductions of an offer which guaranteed to him an immediate payment of 2,000*l.*, and a pension of 200*l.* a year; and the captives were soon brought back to Cabul.

20. If history be not a truthful record of facts, it is nothing; and if it would do its work, it must set

down the good and the evil on every side. The slaughter of the retreating army in the Khurd Cabul pass was indeed infamous, even for Afghans ; but it must be remembered that when the British force broke into the city, the requital was to the full as awful and merciless. The mangled body of Sir W. Macnaghten had been exposed to the public gaze on the walls of the Cabul Bazaar, one of the noblest stone buildings in all Central Asia. It was the act of savages. The British troops blew up the bazaar with gunpowder ; but it may be questioned whether magnanimity would not have been better shown by leaving the building in its ancient grandeur. From Ghazni General Nott brought away the gates which the idol-breaking sultan (p. 20) is said to have taken from the temple of Somnath. It was, perhaps, a matter of indifference where the gates might be ; but the interest of their recovery was somewhat lessened by the likelihood that the original gates had perished long ago, and that these were but imitations.

21. Unjust schemes seldom, perhaps, redound to the dignity of those who devise them ; and assuredly nothing was added to English dignity when the Governor-General welcomed the troops returning from Cabul with a procession of painted elephants, and issued a proclamation declaring that the bringing back of the gates avenged the insult of 800 years. The gates had been taken away by a Mahometan conqueror ; their restoration to an idol temple could not, therefore, be agreeable to Mahometans, and for the same reason the gates themselves would be

impure in the sight of the Hindus. But the recovery of some Hindu bronze gates was not the errand on which the British armies crossed the Afghan frontier; and it may have seemed, to say the least, prudent to hide the real issue from the public gaze. Twenty thousand lives had been sacrificed on the English side, and fifteen million pounds sterling had been spent in the effort to secure a barrier against Russian aggressions, without gaining an inch of ground, and at the further cost of stirring up in the breasts of all Afghans a deadly hatred of the English. Before the war the solitary English traveller might have moved with perfect safety from one end of the land to the other; after its close he would have been slain with as little compunction as men feel when they kill noxious vermin. But time has a marvellous power in quieting the most hateful passions; and as the years passed by, another generation grew up which had not the same temptation to keep up a useless feud. Not many, perhaps, would then have supposed that the wounds were to be torn open afresh just when they were healed.

CHAPTER XXI.

The Sikh Wars.

1. The fears of Russian invasion had already led to some injustice towards the Amirs of Sinde, when the British troops were on their way from Bombay to

Cabul. The injustice then done led to more injustice when the designs on Afghanistan came to nothing. It could not be supposed that the Amírs would feel much gratification in a treaty which had been forced upon them ; but they had done nothing contrary either to its letter or to its spirit. Their patience was now still further taxed by a demand for the surrender of a certain amount of territory in place of the annual payment for a subsidiary force ; and by a strange carelessness the amount of territory named in the new treaty was far larger than what was needed to raise the necessary revenue. They were charged with writing treasonable letters, and it was discovered that the letters produced by Major Outram were forgeries. They were prohibited from coining money, and enjoined to find wood from their plantations for steamers plying on the Indus. In most eastern societies there is a traitor. The traitor among these Amírs was Ali Murad, and this man extorted from the chief Amír, who was known as the Turban, lands to the value of 60,000*l.* yearly ; and this was done under the authority of the name of Sir Charles Napier.

2. The whole revenue of the Amírs' territory was twenty lakhs of rupees ; only six were now left to them. The Amírs complained ; but the only answer vouchsafed to their protests was the capture and destruction of the fort of Enamgurh by Sir Charles Napier without a declaration of war. The execution of the new treaty was still insisted on, and the Amírs signed it ; but the Beluchee chiefs, holding that their rulers had been dishonoured and disgraced ;

were irritated beyond endurance. This quarrel was decided, February 17, 1843, on the field of Meeanee, where the proportion of killed and wounded on the two sides was much as it had been whenever, from the days of Clive downwards, Asiatics encountered Europeans. The Amírs were now made poorer still. Their capital, Hyderabad, was taken; their treasures yielded prize-money to the amount of 70,000*l.*; but Outram refused to receive his share of 3,000*l.*, and relieved his conscience by declaring that the whole business was without excuse.

3. In truth here, as in Cabul, the British Government was not merely acting in a way unworthy of itself, but it was spending millions in a vain chase after thousands. Sind was conquered, but it was not worth a tithe of the money spent on its conquest, and the dearly bought acquisition led in no very indirect way to the great mutiny of 1857. Among the sepoys both of Madras and Bengal, service in Sind and service in Aghanistan were almost equally unpopular; and it was clear from their disposition and their language that they could not be trusted with the task of guarding the new territory. This task was therefore handed over to troops from Bombay. But the fire was not put out; it was only smothered.

4. The course of events seemed to show a widely extended antagonism between Europeans and Asiatics. The two races were oil and vinegar poured into one vessel. They might push the one against the other, but they would not combine. The death of Jankoji Rao Sindia without a male heir led to the

usual course of intrigue and rivalry. The queen-mother dismissed the minister recognised by the British Government, and in the present condition of things it was thought highly dangerous that such a slight, or rather such an insult, should pass unnoticed. The prospect in the Punjab was not encouraging, and there were reasons for suspecting that the Sikhs were plotting with the men of Gwalior. The conspiracy was effectually suppressed by the British victories of Maharajpur and Punniar. The Sikhs could have no further hope of help from Gwalior. The queen-mother was deprived of her regency. The splendid army which had been disciplined by De Boigne was reduced to 9,000 men, and, as in the dominion of the Nizam, a contingent force of 10,000 men was placed in the charge of officers from the British army, a certain portion of territory being set aside for their maintenance.

5. The settlement of the Gwalior Mahrattas came in good time. Had it been delayed, there might have been a very different issue for the struggle between the English and the strange military society set up by Guru Govind (p. 80). Sooner or later this conflict must come. The army of the Khalsa had grown into a power which overshadowed such civil power as could be said to exist in the Punjab; and as the rulers cared little for anything so long as they preserved their own powers, the result was virtual anarchy as soon as the strong hand of Runjeet Singh was withdrawn. The narrative of events after his death brings before us a series of plots, counterplots, murders, and revolutions, which are peculiarly base

and disgusting. His first successor, Kharrak Singh, died a few months after Runjeet; and Kharrak's son was killed by the fall of an arch as he came back from his father's funeral. Then came Shere Singh, another son, or supposed son, of Runjeet, who found the army so heavy in numbers that he besought English aid in the task of keeping it down. His request was refused. Shere Singh was shot on the parade-ground of Lahore, and the army, having executed his murderer, placed Dhuleep Singh, another son of Runjeet, on the throne. But Dhuleep was a child, and Heera Singh acted as regent. More murders followed, and more revolutions, and the army became from day to day a heavier incubus. Means were lacking for paying them; and it was impossible to provide them always with refractory governors, like Mulraj of Múltan, from whom they could extort huge sums as fines.

6. One desperate venture alone remained. The whole strength of the holy brotherhood of the Sikhs might be thrown upon the English. If the Sikhs were victorious, there would be nothing to prevent them from founding an empire more splendid even than that of the great Mogul; if they were defeated, still more if they were crushed, the dastardly representatives of Runjeet would be rid of their masters and left to the peaceable practice of iniquity. Such was the policy of the mother of Dhuleep Singh, and her colleagues, Lall Singh and Tej Singh; but their motives were too clearly seen by the army, and the Sikhs at first refused to stir. But the remonstrances of Sir Henry Hardinge, now Governor-General in

place of Lord Ellenborough, furnished them with the means for stirring up their military pride, and by the middle of December, 1843, the Sikh army, 100,000 strong, with 200 guns, had crossed the Sutlej, and was encamped at Ferozepur. The Sikhs were at war with the English; and nowhere in India had the English encountered such enemies as they were now to encounter in these hardy warriors. But they could face them with a clear conscience. The strife was none of their making, and it was forced upon them by a people whose peculiar organization made it impossible for them to remain at peace, unless a stronger power compelled them to do so.

7. It was manifest that the Sikhs must be rulers in India or subjects; but two wars were needed to decide the controversy, and each war was marked by terrific battles, in which they showed wonderful discipline, skill, and bravery. The discipline and the skill they owed in no small degree to European officers, like Allard and Ventura, Court and Avitabile; their bravery had been fostered into fearlessness by the institutions of Guru Govind. The records of these two campaigns are, down to their minutest details, full of interest and instruction for the students of military history; but we can do little more here than name the great conflicts which convinced the Sikhs that it would be no disgrace to them to obey an English master.

8. The battle of Moodkee, the first of these great struggles, was fought by the British army immediately after a march in which they had moved 150 miles in six days; and in it fell Sir Robert Sale, the

defender of Jellalabad (p. 226). From Moodkee Sir Henry Hardinge advanced to attack the Sikh intrenchments at Ferozeshahar. The arrangements for the assault might have been more judicious, and it was scarcely prudent to make it at a late hour in the afternoon of the shortest day in the year. Night had come before the camp could be carried; and it was remembered by those who had to go through it as the 'night of horrors.' For many hours they had had neither food nor water; and there was a hard frost. Early in the morning the battle began again, and the forces of Lall Singh had been defeated, when Tej Singh came upon the ground with another splendid army of horse and foot and seventy guns. The moment was critical; but the charge of Tej Singh's soldiers was suddenly arrested, and they drew back as quickly as they came. It was said that the leader had received an English bribe, but the story has never been proved; it is more likely that he saw that he had come too late to save his superior, Lall Singh, and that he felt bound to follow him. The combination of the two forces earlier in the day might have made things go very hard with the English. The next position of the Sikhs at Aliwal threatened the British outpost of Ludhiana; and here again after a fierce struggle they were defeated, multitudes being lost in the Sutlej as they hurried across the river on their bridge of boats.

9. But even after these three great blows the Sikhs were not subdued, and Gholab Singh, who had succeeded Lall Singh as minister, confessed himself helpless in their hands. Under the direction of a

Spaniard named Huerba some singularly powerful defences had been raised to cover a bridge of boats thrown across the Sutlej river at the village of Sobraon. From day to day the British army had to look on the progress of the work, while they were compelled to await the arrival of heavy guns and ammunition from Delhi. As soon as these were received, the preparations for the fight were made under cover of a fog. The battle began at seven o'clock, when the mists suddenly parted off; by eleven not a Sikh soldier, unless wounded or dead, remained on the south bank of the river. The fight had been fierce and the carnage fearful; and the horrors of the flight were made tenfold greater by the purposed or accidental breaking of the bridge by Tej Singh.

10. The road to Lahore now lay open to the conqueror; and the Governor-General, advancing to the capital of Runjeet, announced that a new treaty was being prepared which should secure the British from a repetition of outrages such as those which had provoked this war. The army was to be reduced to 20,000 foot and 12,000 horse; a fine was to be paid of 1,500,000*l.*, and the Sikh territory to the west of the Sutlej with the Jullunder Doab (p. 159) was to form part of the British dominions. The fine was raised partly by the sale of Cashmere to Gholab Singh, who had been the governor and who now became an independent prince. The sale seemed to be a necessity of the time; but it fastened on Cashmere a yoke which has bowed the necks of the people under a crushing weight. Two hundred and fifty magnificent guns

were carried away to Calcutta to convince the incredulous that the victories over the redoubtable Sikhs were not a fiction.

11. It had been arranged that a body of British troops should remain for one year only at Lahore, while the new government was taking shape; but the new shape gave no promise of improvement on the old, and as the year drew to its close, the Sikh chiefs besought the Governor-General not to leave them to themselves, and confessed their inability to control their soldiers. Nor could the Governor-General deny that the only alternative for anarchy was British prevention. The new covenant therefore placed the council of regency under the direction of the British resident, and fixed twenty-two lakhs of rupees, 220,000*l.*, as the yearly allowance for the maintenance of the British troops. When Lord Hardinge left India in 1848, he regarded the arrangement as in all likelihood a permanent one; nor did his successor, Lord Dalhousie, imagine on his landing that a second Sikh war was almost an immediate certainty.

12. The storm broke first in Multan, where with wanton and causeless perfidy Mulraj murdered two Englishmen who had been sent to take charge of the provinces, the government of which he had resigned. His resignation was a sham, a mere pretext for avoiding the payment of any portion of the fine imposed upon him (p. 234). To punish this great crime, Lieutenant Herbert Edwardes advanced with such forces as he could gather, and defeated Mulraj in the open field. With his army greatly increased

he appeared before Multan. General Whish soon arrived with large reinforcements, and with 32,000 Sikhs under the command of Shere Singh. But the task before them was scarcely less formidable than that of Lake at Bhurtpore; and the desertion of Shere Singh, who openly joined the enemy, made it necessary to interrupt the siege. It was resumed when fresh troops came up from Bombay, and on the 29th of January, 1849, Mulraj surrendered the fortress without conditions. He spent the rest of his life in imprisonment.

13. The Sikhs had been again seized with the spirit of the Jihad or holy war (p. 234). The Ranee at Lahore talked of a confederacy which should drive the English into the sea; and her intrigues in various courts were carried on with untiring zeal. Not a few of the chiefs were ready to break faith with the English; but the only one thus far in open revolt was Chutter Singh, the father of Shere Singh, and under his standard the soldiers of the old army hastened to take their places. It is hard to find any excuse for this wholly unprovoked defection; and it was not wonderful that Lord Dalhousie should with some vehemence declare that the Sikh people had called for war, and that they should have it with a vengeance.

14. The first action took place at Ramnugger on the south or right bank of the Chenab, November 1848. It was indecisive, and Lord Gough was scarcely warranted in claiming it as a victory, and certainly mistaken in saying that it had broken up the Sikh army. Shere Singh had crossed the river.

and taken up a far stronger position at Chillianwalla on the southern bank of the Jhelum, about thirty miles nearly due north of Ramnugger. In the awful battle which followed, January 1849, both armies assuredly encountered foemen worthy of their steel; and here, too, nothing more could be said than that the Sikhs were not the winning side. Night closed in before the wounded could be carried off the field. Under cover of darkness the Sikhs returned and murdered all whom they found alive; and in this fierce savagery lay their doom as an independent nation.

15. The battle which left the Sikhs hopeless of success was fought on the 27th of February, 1849, at Gujerat, a place which marks the apex of a triangle of which the line between Ramnugger and Chillianwalla is the base. In the previous fights Lord Gough had made so small use of his artillery as to excite the surprise of the enemy. At Gujerat, following with some reluctance the counsels of most of his brother officers, he placed eighty-four guns in the centre of his line. In less than three hours the enemy's guns were almost silenced, and the strength of the Sikh army was irretrievably broken. In this fight less than 100 were killed on the British side, and less than 700 wounded; at Chillianwalla the loss had been upwards of 2,400, including 89 officers killed and wounded.

16. At Manikyala, on the 12th of March, Shere Singh surrendered himself with the fragment which remained to him of his once magnificent army. They had fought with astonishing bravery for that which

to them may have been freedom or independence, but which really meant the right of conquering, slaying, and plundering others. But although they had done savage deeds, they were not savages; and from the day when they laid down their arms at the feet of General Gilbert, their good faith to the English has never failed. Had it been seriously shaken during the time of the great sepoy mutiny, the result might not impossibly have been the extinction of British power in India.

17. The conduct of the Sikhs had settled the fate of their country. They had provoked, and most wantonly provoked, two wars in which blood had been shed like water, and money thrown away like dust. The penalty was paid in the annexation of the whole Punjab, and the penalty has long since proved to be a blessing. Runjeet Singh, for instance, had extorted from his subjects one half of the produce of the soil; the exaction was now reduced to one fourth, and payment in money instead of in kind was rewarded with a further reduction of ten per cent. Runjeet's custom-houses faced the people at almost every turn; they were now all swept away. The country was cleared of robbers, and intersected with roads; slavery was abolished, and other causes of misery and suffering removed, which but for the white-faced strangers might have retained all their powers of mischief unimpaired for centuries.

18. The British power now embraced the whole peninsula of India, from the Indus to the Himalaya, and from the Himalaya to the ocean; and this mighty work, barely attempted by Alexander, and

scarcely half achieved by the Great Mogul, had been done by the servants of a Company of Merchants in less than a hundred years. With the completion of the century it was to undergo an ordeal, which was to tax its strength to the uttermost.

CHAPTER XXII.

The Policy of Annexation.

1. The dealings of Lord Dalhousie with the native states have furnished matter for controversies which can scarcely be said even at the present time to have died away altogether. The equity or the injustice of his acts can be measured only by examining impartially the circumstances which called them forth; it cannot be measured by the offhand application of principles which even in England have sometimes to be taken with limitations. These questions arose from disputed successions, from the exercise of the right of adoption, and more particularly from the excesses of a tyranny not more tolerable because in some cases it may have sprung from ignorance or recklessness.

2. At the close of the Mahratta war of 1819 the powerless representative of Sivaji was placed by British compassion on a throne at Satara. In a few years it became clear that the Mahrattas troubled themselves very little about the do-nothing prince, in whose veins the blood of Sivaji was flowing; it

was likely that they would care not at all for a boy, which this prince might adopt from another family to keep up an empty name. The state, moreover, was an English creation, and it was argued that the Raja had no right to adopt without the consent of the paramount power. In this case the necessary consent had not been obtained, and the territory had therefore lapsed to the giver. To such territories Lord Dalhousie held that the government was bound to extend the benefits of English sovereignty, present and prospective.

3. Questions of a more serious nature were connected with the abode of the Great Mogul at Delhi. The successor of Baber and Akbar was still in theory the sovereign of Hindostan ; the Nizam was still his viceroy, and the Nuwabs his viceroy's deputies ; and among these Nuwabs was the East India Company. The theory, it is true, was but an empty shell ; but so long as the shell remained, the hope that it might some day be filled again was cherished with stubborn pertinacity. The wretched intrigues of the palace were sometimes extended to distant lands, and the emissaries of a Ranee from Delhi might be found stirring up the Persian Shah to undertake or to join in the destruction of the English. The dreams of the palace became in like manner the excitement of the faithful who dwelt in the crowded alleys of the imperial city. The mob of Delhi had not lost the restlessness and violence which brought about the great catastrophe with the soldiers of Nadir Shah (p. 89). It would be well, therefore, if the imperial pageant could be placed elsewhere, and it

was arranged that on the death of the aged emperor, Bahadur-Shah, his successor should surrender his ancestral home at Delhi and spend his days in the palace named after the emperor Kootub (p. 21). But there were two or three claimants; and the heir with whom the covenant was made might disappear before the infirm old king should pass away. That the pageant would come to an end long before the death of this poor old man was known to none.

4. In the territories of the Nizam things were going from bad to worse. Chunder Lall had obtained loans at a high interest from the house of Palmer and Co. (p. 193). When that house was ruined, he obtained loans at a far higher interest from native bankers, and squeezed the wretched tillers of the soil in order to provide that interest. Talookdars indulged in the luxury of private war; thieves and bandits plied their craft on the roads and byways. Law and justice had disappeared; there was no police; and the state was loaded with debt, most of which was owed to the British Government. In 1853 Chunder Lall resigned, and for a time the Nizam pretended to carry on the administration with the help and advice of Suraj-ul-Mulk, the grandson of Mir Alam, a former minister. But Suraj was too tightly hampered to be able to do anything. He was put away, and the farce was carried on in other names, until the Governor-General demanded a cession of territory as an equivalent for the payment of debts and for the maintenance of the contingent force. The Nizam was sorely perplexed. He could not bear the thought of parting with the contingent,

which protected him from his mercenaries, and he had no means for maintaining them or paying his debt. Cession of territory was the only other course open to him. A new treaty, accordingly, assigned three districts, Berar being one, for the support of the contingent. This treaty was modified seven years later, 1860, not long before the death of Suraj-ul-Mulk, whose son, Sir Salar Jung, the appointed minister, had won for himself a high place in the ranks of European and Asiatic statesmen.

5. The year 1853 witnessed the extinction of two great historic names in the history of India,—the Nuwab of the Carnatic, and the Peshwa. The former died childless, and his uncle claimed the throne ; but the Governor of Madras opposed the succession as not within the terms of the treaty, and the claim was disallowed, although provision was made for the family of the prince whose title had passed away.

6. The case of Baji Rao, the last of the Peshwas, was perhaps the clearest of all which were submitted to the consideration of the British Government. The ex-Peshwa had been sent to Bithoor with a life pension of 80,000*l.* a year. He, too, died childless, having adopted an heir, Dhondu Punt, notorious and infamous subsequently as Nana Sahib, who inherited his personal property. Baji was a man of miserly habits ; his private hoards were acknowledged to exceed a quarter of a million sterling ; they amounted really to half a million. This vast wealth descended to Dhondu Punt, who also received for his life the town and territory of Bithoor. This, however, was nothing, unless Baji's pension were continued to him

also. He besieged the Indian government with complaints as one of the most injured of mankind; he sent an agent to London to obtain redress of his grievous wrongs. In each instance the result was the same. He had no case; but the rebuff, which he thoroughly deserved, led to serious consequences.

7. About the same time with Baji Rao died the Raja of Jhansi. The succession was claimed for his adopted son, a child of five years old; but the claim was disallowed, and the state was forfeited. Here the case was somewhat complicated. The claim was grounded on the alleged fact that Jhansi had been an independent state long before the coming of the English. The counter-argument denied the fact of its independence, and declared that it was strictly a dependency of the Peshwa, and that the forfeiture of the territories of the latter carried with it the lapse of the former, whenever the government chose to assert their right. But even if this view be taken (and it can scarcely be rejected), it was a blunder to sell the private property of the raja, in spite of the fact that the proceeds were funded for the benefit of his family. The property realised less than half the sum expected; and the interference excited a bitter feeling which brought about fatal results in the days of the mutiny.

8. The name of Rughoji, the Bhonsla Raja of Berar or Nagpore, must be added to the catalogue of princes who died childless in 1853. Nagpore, unlike Jhansi, was an important state with a population of not much less than six millions. Rughoji

died without having adopted anyone ; and the court determined that no one else should exercise the right for him. No choice, therefore, was allowed to his widow, who in this case could have brought forward only kinsmen on the female side. In law the decision held good ; but it created anxiety and alarm amongst the native princes generally.

9. Tired out with the monstrous abuses which rendered all idea of government a mockery in Oude, the Court of Directors resolved on the annexation of that kingdom, and Lord Dalhousie remained in India until this task should be done. The wretchedness of this country, which under any decent management would have been one of the richest in the whole peninsula, can scarcely be described ; nor is much gained perhaps by heaping up particulars of the great total of oppression, extortion, and ruin on the side of the people, and of foul vice and determined selfishness on the part of the ruler. The truth of the horrid picture is allowed by every one ; but it is still urged that in times past the princes of Oude had been the friends and benefactors of the English, and that the extinction of the dynasty came with an ill grace from those who but for the Oude princes might have failed to reach their present pre-eminence in India. The theory of gratitude is surely somewhat strained when it is argued that a wicked man should be allowed to inflict misery on all around him, because his ancestors had been decent men with a fair character in the eyes of their fellows. The Government failed to see the force of this plea, and the country was therefore annexed, the mistake made

at Nagpore of selling the private property of the prince being repeated. The king was sent to Calcutta, to live upon an allowance of 120,000*l.* a year (1856).

10. In March 1856, Lord Dalhousie returned to England. He was still only forty-four years of age, and he lived but four years longer. His toil had worn out a body physically not strong; and none can doubt that his toil from first to last was honestly given for the bettering of all classes and ranks in India. Beyond all question, the rule of the native princes was at that time at least miserably bad. The corrupt means by which power was acquired could be matched only by the extortion and tyranny with which it was abused. Lord Dalhousie felt very strongly that the British Government could not shake off all responsibility for the continuance of this terrible misgovernment or rather anarchy; and feeling this, he went on to the natural conclusion that the extension of British power was the greatest boon that could be conferred on the people of India.

11. It was no difficult task to represent the policy which sprung out of these convictions as one of systematic annexation; nor can we say that the picture so drawn was altogether a fiction. Lord Dalhousie saw that in many of the states the people might be vastly richer than they were, if placed under a system which would yield to the state thrice the revenue now drawn from them; and it might be urged that he had before him but the one object of using India as a field for reaping golden harvests,

In a certain sense the charge would be true ; but in that sense Lord Dalhousie might face it without fear and with the approval of the vast mass of his countrymen. He left India with the full assurance that, in spite of some disturbing causes, a steady growth in all the essential conditions of civil prosperity might fairly be looked for.

12. His successor, Lord Canning, on taking office, saw no reason for questioning the grounds of this assurance. But both these statesmen were mistaken ; and in the case of Lord Canning a heavy responsibility rests on those who saw the clouds gathering on the political horizon, and yet hesitated to point out to him the signs of a coming storm. The new Governor-General was, we are told, a cold and impassive man, little likely to suspect that an outward calm merely veiled a slumbering fire, and little likely to give credit to those who might bring before him the true state of the case. The people of India, we are also told, were carried away at this time by an excitement not very far removed from the borders of madness, and were eager to swallow down the most absurd reports and to accept the most monstrous falsehoods as indisputable truths. But the most ridiculous fancies, if they are turning the heads of a whole nation and driving them on into sedition and treason, become matters of the gravest moment ; and if the Indian people were in truth carried away with the idea that the British intended to make them sooner or later walk on their heads, and were becoming stubborn and rebellious in consequence of this idea, the absurdity of the

delusion could furnish not the slightest excuse for disregarding it. The great calamity was close at hand. That its approach should have been so dimly foreseen, and that so little should have been done to guard against or to prevent it, is one of the most astonishing features in the history of British India.

CHAPTER XXIII.

The Great Mutiny, 1857-58.

1. The rebellion which broke out the year after the arrival of Lord Canning has received its name from its military character. It is called a mutiny, because soldiers in the pay of the British Government were throughout the chief actors in it. But the disaffection which led to it was not confined to sepoys only. The changes introduced by Lord Wellesley, Lord Hastings, and Lord William Bentinck, had in most instances improved the condition of the people; those of Lord Dalhousie might possibly bring with them even greater benefits. But the sowing of the seed is not the same thing as the reaping of a crop; and for the natives of India the results of these changes were still in the future.

2. It was not, however, pretended that every act of the British Government was for their benefit only. The English found themselves charged with a gigantic task, which even in quiet times sufficiently taxed their powers; and in this work it was abso-

lutely necessary to avail themselves of all the resources which an advancing civilisation might place in their hands. These resources have during the present century been so multiplied as to astonish even the nations amongst whom they have been produced. To the natives of India this strange exhibition of new powers was simply bewildering. For centuries the Hindu had served a Mogul or a Mahometan master; but they had seen nothing in their sovereigns who ruled at Delhi but men who had vast armies and could use them at their will. Now they had to look on a very different sight. No human eye had before seen ships move without oars or sails and without heeding wind or current, or beheld the fire chariot speeding on its iron pathway. To minds full of superstitious fears it seemed that the English were a mysterious people endowed with unlimited resources which they kept hidden until the fit time for using them, and which were then applied to the conquest of Hindustan. What other purpose could there be for the poles and wires set up along the roads, which in some incomprehensible way revealed instantaneously to their rulers what was happening at a distance of hundreds of miles? These were all devices for fastening on the nations of India a yoke which they could never hope to shake off—a yoke which would compel them to yield up their ancient customs, their caste, and their religion. To this end everything seemed to be working. In the Government schools, it is true, nothing was said which directly assailed the hereditary faith of the pupils; but they were filled with

a learning which their parents could not understand, and which left them with impressions at variance with their old ideas. In addition to this there were now schools of missionaries, who went about with the avowed design of rooting out the religions of the land and of inducing or constraining all to become Christians. In short, everything was changed or changing. The English of to-day were not like the English even of the days of Warren Hastings. It was impossible to understand them; it was intolerable to live under their sway.

3. Such notions, expressed in the talk of villages throughout the country, could not fail to react on the sepoys, who had, or thought that they had, their own special grievances. They had never received with a good grace the orders which sent them to military service beyond the Indus. They had hated the thought of piercing the gloomy defiles and scaling the barren mountains of Afghanistan; and for following their British leaders into this unknown land they had been terribly punished. The bodies of thousands who were their kinsmen remained unburied on the soil of the infidel, where no son could perform for them the funeral rites needed for the repose of the dead; and for this tremendous sacrifice they were to have no recompense. The conquered country might be included within British territory, and thus for service in the Punjab they were to receive little more than for service on the banks of the Jumna or the Hugli. Of the existence of great discontent in the Bengal army Sir Charles Napier, who succeeded Lord Gough as commander-

in-chief, was thoroughly convinced. The Governor-General was more incredulous; and the result of this difference of opinion was that little or nothing had been done, when the year 1857 completed the century from the defeat of Suraj-u-Daulah at Plassy. For that year astrologers had long since announced a conjunction of planets which would be fatal to the British *raj*, or rule. For the year before they had predicted terrible outbursts of cholera and flood. The cholera and the floods came, and left assurance doubly sure of the speedy downfall of the English. Their power seemed indeed to be more firmly established than ever; but destiny was invincible, and their ruin was certain.

4. Still, means must be used for bringing about the end; and here the inherent weakness of all political movements in the East showed itself. In reality the genuine Hindu wished to return to the condition of things which marked the time of the Aryan conquerors of India. The Mahometan longed to revive the imperial magnificence of Baber and Aurengzebe. The great Mahratta princes were watching the opportunity for recovering the power which they had exercised as representatives of Sivaji, and the lesser rajas were anxious only for the overthrow of a system which checked them in their tyranny and deprived them of the luxuries of plunder. All could not have what they wanted, and some one therefore must give way. The greatest power in India had been that of the Great Mogul. What other standard than his could be held up as a rallying point for all who were determined to

shake off a foreign yoke? The Mahometans, no doubt, made it known that they would fight under no other. The fact is indeed proved by the speed with which the mutinous regiments at the outset of the revolt hurried to Delhi. For many years the princes of the imperial house had been wandering over India in the hope of rekindling the flame of loyalty to the old man who was in theory absolute master of Hindustan. The intrigues of the queen Zeenut Mahal were extended to distant countries; and proclamations from the Shah of Persia urging the people of India to revolt were scattered throughout the land. The agents of Nana Sahib (p. 245), who had his own special ends in view, returned from Europe with wonderful stories of the exhaustion of England in the Crimean war; and with some little inconsistency Mahometans exulted in this result of an enterprise which, as they said, the Queen of England had undertaken as the vassal of the Turkish sultan.

5. The whole country was infected with a fear which shut out all reason; and the English would have done well, if, when the signs of general disturbance became unmistakably clear, they had taken up strong positions throughout Bengal, and refrained from issuing proclamations which came too late to be credited. The passing of *chupaties*, flat cakes of flour, from village to village may have answered to the sending of the Fiery Cross over the Scottish Highlands; at the least it was a sign that grave troubles were impending, and almost every incident of the day added fuel to the smoking fires.

The cartridges of Enfield rifles are in England greased with beef and pork fat; the order was unfortunately given at Calcutta that they were to be greased in like manner in India. But the pig is an abomination to the Mahometan, and the cow is sacred in the eyes of the Hindu. The order involved defilement to both, and no further proof, it was thought, could be needed that the greased cartridges were to be the means of making everyone a Christian. At Barrackpore, a military station near Calcutta, a Lascar, it is said, asked a Brahman to let him drink out of his brass pot. The Brahman replied that he could not do so without defilement, and received the retort that he need have no scruple on that score, seeing that he was sufficiently defiled already by the touch of the new cartridges.

6. The retort was not true. The new cartridges had not yet been given out to the troops; and had this been made known at once, the horrors of the revolt might have been lessened, if, as is most likely, they could not even then be prevented. But nothing was said until the whole country was passing through a paroxysm of terror; and then the explanation, regarded simply as a trap for catching the unwary, could only increase the prevailing fever. Incendiary fires broke out at Barrackpore, and a detachment of native troops going from that place to Berhampore, near Murshedabad, served as a means of communication between the troops in Southern Bengal and the regiments of the interior. The sepoy at Berhampore made some attempt at open revolt; but their plans were not yet matured,

and they laid down their arms and were soon afterwards disbanded. A sepoy at Barrackpore wounded two officers, his comrades doing nothing to help them; but he was taken, convicted, and hanged.

7. The chief danger, it was now thought, had passed away; but the lull was only for the moment. Sir Henry Lawrence, residing at Lucknow as chief Commissioner of Oude, heard a few days later that some of the Oude irregular infantry were threatening their officers. With the European regiment then stationed there he quelled the mutineers; but he heard afterwards that but for these English troops the sepoys, whom he took with him, would have joined the rebels. The storm broke in earnest at Meerut. To the story of the greased cartridges was now added the more horrifying news, that the public wells, the *ghee* (clarified butter), and the flour sold in the markets, in short, everything, had been defiled by bone-dust, and that the salt had been polluted with the blood of swine and cows. The disposition of the sepoys became known to their officers, who called on them to use ungreased cartridges of the old sort. Many refused, and having been tried were sentenced to imprisonment. They were stripped of their uniforms, ironed, and placed in jail under the charge, strange to say, not of a European but of a sepoy guard.

8. The next day was Sunday (May 10, 1857). The native servants, it was noticed, disappeared from the English houses at an early hour; but between the European barracks and the sepoy lines lay a large tract of ground filled with houses

surrounded by gardens. The English, therefore, could not see what the sepoys might be doing. At five in the evening they were about to go to the evening service, when the native troops burst in upon them. With them were the convicted mutineers and the other prisoners let loose from the jail. They were in panic terror from the suspicion that the English troops were to be slipped on them like dogs from a leash, and resolved to anticipate imaginary onslaughts by real massacre. Every European whom they met, man woman and child, was shot at, struck down, wounded or killed; and when at length the English forces, after many unaccountable delays, reached the native lines, it was found that the sepoys were gone.

9. The mutineers had hurried off in hot haste to the old imperial city; and before the sun was up they crossed the river over which the road from Delhi to Meerut is carried. A telegraphic message had brought the tidings of their flight from the station. At this time Delhi had no English troops. It was held by three native regiments, one in the city where lay the magazine with its immense store of powder and ammunition, the other two in the cantonment on the Ridge which overlooks it. The officer in command of the place was Brigadier Graves. Lieutenant Willoughby had charge of the magazine.

10. Time had failed to place cannon on the bridge of the Meerut road before the mutineers reached it; but large detachments of sepoys were sent from the Ridge to aid the regiment in the city. The English officers, confident in the speedy arrival

of help from Meerut, ordered the sepoy's to charge. Some refused, others fired into the air; but still sepoy's and Englishmen both looked to the immediate coming of the European troops, and the former hesitated to rebel, while the latter were prepared to stand out to the last. The hours passed on and no succour came. At length the sepoy's joined the mutineers, shot down their officers, and went to salute the emperor, on whose behalf they had defied the English. The whole city was in revolt, and the temper of the populace was as furious as when they fell on the soldiers of Nadir Shah. The crowd surged about the magazine. For the maintenance and extension of the rebellion its contents were of priceless value; but it was in the hands of men who knew their duty and were ready to do it. Messengers, speaking in the name of Bahádur Shah, the pensioned Mogul, demanded its surrender but received no answer. The defenders held out as long as they could; and when their ammunition was exhausted, and none could leave the guns to bring more powder, Lieutenant Willoughby gave the command; the train previously laid was fired; and with the contents of the magazine some fifteen hundred rebels were blown into the air.

11. But the heroism of Willoughby and his companions could make no change in the lot of the English then at Delhi. Those who could fly fled; many more were shot down by the sepoy's or the populace; and those who were taken prisoners were put to death under an order bearing the king's name, but extorted from him in all likelihood by

the vindictive Zeenut Mahal. The rebels soon cut the telegraph wires; but these had carried the fatal story to many stations, and hampered or defeated the plans of the mutineers. There were vast magazines at Ferozepore and Phillour. The former was attacked, but the rebels, although defeated, were allowed to make their escape to Delhi; the latter, by timely precautions, was saved without a struggle.

12. The conflagration, repressed in one spot, broke out in another. The disarming of regiments in one place seemed to lead only to the revolt of more regiments elsewhere; but in the fact that these outbreaks came in succession lay the main hope of ultimate safety for the English. This running fire of mutinies had clearly been no part of the plan of the rebel leaders. The sepoy of Meerut threw down the gauntlet three weeks too soon. It was proved afterwards that a simultaneous rising over the whole country had been fixed for the last day of May. Had this intention been carried out, the crisis for the British government would have been well nigh desperate. The truth is, that almost from the first the most prominent actors in the horrid drama began to pull in different directions. There was no master-mind to direct the mass, and the plausible proclamation addressed to the whole world by Bahádur Shah was the work probably of some European renegade. This clever paper succeeded even in England in exciting some feeling of sympathy for a sovereign who professed to have set up his standard for the delivery of his country from an oppressive foreign

yoke, and to win for them the power of exercising their inalienable right of self-government. The claim was urged in language well fitted to describe the motives of Servians, Bulgarians, or Greeks; but in India it was nothing less than an impudent fiction. The Hindu sepoys had no wish to restore the Great Mogul to his ancient power. The Mahometans had no intention of extending to Hindus the benefits of an equal law. The Mahrattas had no thought of setting anybody free but themselves.

13. But so far as the movement was political, so far were its horrors aggravated; and the treachery of the soldiers was outdone by the treachery of princes. The Ranee of Jhansi held herself aggrieved by the decision which deprived her of all hope of ruling that state as regent for her adopted son (p. 246). Fifty-five Europeans were sojourning in the place with the sepoy garrison, and when the troops revolted, took refuge in the fort; but they had no store of food, and their surrender was a mere question of hours. Whether aware of this fact or not, the Ranee pledged herself by a solemn oath that she would have them all taken safely to some other station, and the soldiers joined in giving the same assurance. But they were to leave the fort, it was agreed, two by two. As each couple came out, they were murdered.

14. At Lukhnow Sir Henry Lawrence had an English force of 570 foot, with sixty artillerymen. But he had to keep down four native regiments and a civil population, of which the hangers on of the late court formed no small part. These Lukhnow conspirators kept their time. They rose on May 30,

and rushed to the bridges which they must cross from the city to reach the Residency, where Sir Henry Lawrence had placed all the English non-combatants. The steady fire with which they were received convinced them that their wisdom lay in flight, and they hurried off to Delhi. For the present they were safe, for pursuit was impossible.

15. At Bithoor the claimant of the Peshwaship was biding the time when he might strike a blow for himself; and it was perhaps owing to him that the sepoy regiments at Cawnpore remained quiet till the beginning of June. During the terrible days which had passed since the first great outbreak at Meerut Nana Sahib had been lavish in his professions of friendship. These protestations were received with a slight incredulity by Sir Hugh Wheeler, who of his threescore and ten years had spent fifty-four continuously in India. While others seemed to think themselves safe, he ordered that some barracks, then not in use, should be intrenched and filled with ammunition and stores for undergoing a siege. Unhappily his orders were very inadequately carried out, if they were not neglected altogether.

16. At length, on June 4, the sepoys broke into tumult, and having set the cantonments in flames, rode away for Delhi. But thither the Nana resolved that they should not go. He was but waiting for the collapse of British power, which he felt sure that the Delhi rebels would be able to bring about, and then he would seize the prize for which he had yearned since his childhood. The outbreak of the sepoys may have taken him in some measure by

surprise ; and he might have been better pleased if they had postponed it for some weeks. Now, however, there was nothing to be done but to bring them back ; and the bait by which he lured them was the abundant plunder which, according to his description, would be furnished by the sack of the British cantonments. The return of the sepoy disconcerted Sir Hugh Wheeler. Had he expected this change of plan on their part, he might have made a still greater effort to escape with the wives and children of officers and with the merchants of the place to Allahabad ; but there also a mutiny had broken out, and lack of transport would have made the flight a desperate enterprise. The siege for which he had wished to be prepared began on June 5, and for nineteen days the little garrison bore up against almost incredible sufferings. It was the hottest time of the year, and the heat was fearful. A barrack which sheltered the sick and the wounded was burnt, and day and night they were assailed by an incessant fire from the enemy. Their food ran short, and the hearts of the bravest failed as, helpless themselves, they looked on the misery of starving and fever-stricken women and children.

17. On June 25 Nana Sahib promised to convey safely to Allahabad all who should lay down their arms. It is hard to say that Sir Hugh Wheeler deserves blame for trusting his word. He might or might not have heard of the massacre at Patna by the orders of Mir Cassim (p. 119) ; but the loud professions of friendship which preceded the Nana's attack furnished sufficient proof of the traitorous

nature of the man. Still the lengths to which he could go could not be known beforehand; and the condition of the women and children seemed to leave no room for deliberation. Such precautions were taken as the circumstances of the case allowed. Each man was to go out with his arms and sixty rounds of ammunition; and the voyage to Allahabad was to be made in boats provided by the Nana, who had also given them safe conduct to the river's bank. The boats were filled and were ready to start, when a murderous fire was opened on them from both banks, and in a few minutes their thatched roofs were in flames. Many were murdered in the water or drowned. Of those who were dragged ashore the men were shot down at once, the women and children were carried off to a house near the Nana's quarters, June 27.

18. Dondhu Punt thought that his success was now assured. Hastening to Bithoor, he went through the coronation ceremonies which were to mark the restoration of the Peshwa's office, July 1, and then hurried back to Cawnpore, because the Mahometans were already plotting against him. Here, while he tried to bribe his opponents into submission, he won fresh fame by murdering all the men belonging to a party of English fugitives from Futtehgurh and by sending the women and children to share the captivity of those whom he had already seized. The number of his prisoners was now somewhat over two hundred.

19. In the hope that with strenuous exertions he might be in time to save these prisoners, General

Havelock was hastening on with a force of 2,000 Europeans and Sikhs, all included, from Allahabad. He won victory after victory on the road. On the afternoon of July 15, he had chosen his camping ground for the night, when he heard that the Nana's prisoners were still living. Rising instantly, he marched fourteen miles more, and was thus only eight miles from the city. But the tiger temper of the Nana was now roused to frenzy. That night his victims were hacked and hewn almost limb from limb; and in the morning the whole mangled mass, dead and dying together, were thrown into a well. At two o'clock in the afternoon of this fatal day Havelock came up with the army of the Nana. The battle was fiercely contested; but the terrible charge of the British bore the enemy down; and when they had once taken to flight, they were for the time safe, for Havelock had no cavalry. It was not until he entered the station the next morning that he saw the reason which had brought the Nana's forces away from Cawnpore. The signs of the great tragedy carried them step by step to the well, where all was still in death. The well is now enclosed within a rich screen carved in stone, and on it the figure of an angel in the attitude of perfect rest signifies the joyful hope of resurrection to eternal life.

20. Having destroyed the Nana's palace at Bithoor, Havelock left General Neill in command at Cawnpore, and hastened to the rescue of Sir Henry Lawrence and his beleaguered garrison at Lukhnow. Here, for nearly two months, the English had held out against an overwhelming host of rebels, whose

numbers had been swelled by troops of disbanded sepoys, and by crowds of marauders and thieves, who suddenly made their appearance like flies with the sunshine of spring. But the fearless and conscientious Sir Henry Lawrence had died, as he had lived, in the discharge of his duty. On July 4 he was killed by the bursting of a shell in the room where he was lying severely wounded. To the last his counsel was a strict charge that in no case should the place be surrendered. But the brave defenders may well have hoped, when they heard of Havelock's advance from Cawnpore, that they might soon be freed from a strain almost beyond the power of human endurance. Unhappily heat, fever, and cholera were enemies which fought against Havelock as fatally as against the English who were shut up in Lukhnow. On August 4 he had only 1,300 men and thirteen guns to face an army of 20,000. Even thus he won a victory; but six and thirty miles were yet to be traversed before he could reach the city, and without reinforcements the task was manifestly impossible. When Havelock returned to Cawnpore he had little more than 700 men fit for active service in the field.

21. But before the heroic defenders of the Residency at Lukhnow could be rescued from their peril, the issue of the great struggle had been virtually determined by the storming of Delhi and the catastrophe which ended the phantom empire of the Great Mogul. For nearly a month after the mutineers from Meerut had rallied round the standard of Bahádur-Shah, their prospects might have seemed

to them not altogether unhopeful. General Anson, the commander-in-chief, had hurried from Simla to undertake the siege of the imperial city; but nothing was ready, and much time was wasted before he could set out from Umballah with such forces as he could get together. At Kurnal he died of cholera. By June 4 his successor, Sir Henry Barnard, was within twenty miles of Delhi, and being joined by Brigadier Wilson from Meerut, had nearly 4,000 English soldiers under his command. Four days later (June 9) the English standard was again floating over the Ridge which overlooks the town.

22. The scene was one never to be forgotten by those who witnessed it. In the dazzling glare of the Indian summer sun, the city with its houses nestled amongst gardens, and the great structures which spoke of the grandeur of a fallen dynasty, rose from the vast plain on the right bank of the dark-watered Jumna. High above the other buildings, the massive walls of the imperial palace led the eye to the graceful minarets of the Jumma Musjid, or great mosque, a structure not unworthy to be compared, for the harmony of its forms and the majesty of its proportions, to all but the grandest works of European Christendom. In the rear of the English position the ground was covered with all the ammunition of war, baggage-waggons, artillery, camels, bullocks, and horses, while from the batteries within the walls wreaths of white smoke rose into the burning air, as the echoes from the shotted guns died away.

23. The weary soldiers who had gained the Ridge had little leisure, and could have but little

heart, for admiring the magnificent prospect before them. They were facing an enemy who had never withstood them in the open field, but who could now, if they pleased, stand on the defensive and fight under the shelter of bastions and ramparts. Against the 4,000 English under Sir Henry Barnard the Mogul king had 30,000 men, and the number of his followers was swollen almost daily by the arrival of sepoys from regiments tempted into rebellion by the comparative success of the mutiny. The city was amply supplied with food and with military stores of all kinds, and except on the side held by the small British army the country lay open to the rebels. To the English any serious prolongation of the war must in itself be a grave disaster; to the mutineers each day and each week, as it passed by without actual defeat, brought virtual victory. From one end of the land to the other the troops which had not yet broken faith were waiting with feverish impatience the result which would ensure their loyalty or justify their revolt. In the Punjab Sir John Lawrence had the bravery and the prudence to make use of the Sikhs in the furtherance of his own plans; but even these were intently watching the movements of the game, and could be trusted only so long as they saw that in spite of desperate difficulties the English were slowly but steadily gaining ground.

24. Still, though the mutineers were fully aware that the mere retention of the imperial city must tend to inspire the whole country with a confident hope of their ultimate success, they were not content to leave their enemies to themselves. Assault

followed assault on the English lines, and on June 23, the hundredth anniversary of the fight at Plassy, they attacked the British position with a pertinacity, bravery, and skill which they had not thus far displayed. But their utmost efforts were vain ; and they must have returned into the city with a gloomy conviction that the prophecy which had stirred them up to rebellion had not, to say the least, received a literal fulfilment.

25. For two months longer, however, the tidings might be carried over India that the imperial city had not fallen, and that the English would in the end be foiled in the attempt to storm its walls. But the long expected siege train arrived from Ferozepore on September 6, and on the following day the troops in the city learnt, not without misgiving, that the conditions of the conflict were changed. In spite of the incessant fire from the walls three batteries of heavy and light guns were brought to bear on the doomed city. But if the hopes of its defenders were damped, their courage was not shaken for a moment. All that brave soldiers could do they did unflinchingly ; but even the discipline of British-trained sepoys was of little avail in the long run against the sterner resolution and the unattainable military genius of those who had trained them. Within a week the English engineers reported that the breaches in the walls were practicable, and long before dawn on September 14 the assaulting columns were formed in the trenches.

26. Then began the fiercest struggle ever known in Indian warfare. The mutineers, however vague

might be their notions of the usages of Europe, yet knew that by the massacre of their prisoners they had furnished counts for a heavy indictment, and must expect to pay a heavy reckoning. Their assailants were roused to a deadly hate which cast all thought of mercy to the winds. The Kashmere gate was blown open ; but the stormers rushed in only to find themselves in narrow streets, exposed to the fire of sepoy posted on every house-top. Thus far the success of the English was but partial. They had failed to take the Jumma Musjid ; the right column had been compelled to retire, and the enemy still retained some of his strongest positions. But each day brought fresh disaster and discouragement to the revolted sepoys. The magazine was breached and stormed, the guns were turned against them, and the line of attack advanced steadily over the city. On the 19th Captain Hodson forced the gates of the palace ; but the vast building was almost empty. The mutineers had fled in two main bodies, of which one followed the line of the Jumna, while the other hurried to the Doab.

27. The orders given by General Wilson were that no quarter should be given to any who might be found with arms in their hands, and that no harm should be done to non-combatants. The former order was obeyed with sufficient strictness ; the latter, perhaps, was not disregarded. On the 21st the aged Bahádur Shah was found with his family in the tomb of the Emperor Humayun (p. 42) and brought into the palace. On the next day Captain Hodson arrested his two sons within its precincts.

As the carriage which was taking them to the city approached the gates, the mob gathered round with gestures which seemed to portend a rescue, and Hodson at once drew a pistol and shot them both. They had taken part in the murders of English prisoners, men, women, and children ; and he, therefore, ordered their bodies to be exposed to the gaze of the awe-struck crowd. It was said that Hodson had promised the princes their lives, and that only a very strong reason could justify the real or seeming breach of faith.

28. Some months after the great catastrophe the sovereign to whom the mutineers had plighted their faith was brought to trial before a military commission (January 27, 1857). He was charged with ordering the murder of English men and women within the walls of his palace, with issuing proclamations inciting the people to rebellion, and with levying war against the British Government. It was an indictment to which no answer could be made. Success might have placed him at the head of a splendid empire ; but failure left him to bear the burden of sins which perhaps were not his own. The massacres were the work of his vindictive wife ; the proclamations were certainly not drawn up by a hand trembling with age, nor could their stirring and dignified eloquence be ascribed to a mind already stupefied with the lethargy of second childhood. It was impossible for his judges to acquit him ; but his helplessness might be pleaded in mitigation of punishment. The sentence was banishment for life ; and Bahádur Shah, without

even the title of king, went forth as an exile to Burmah. So ended the great drama of Mogul sovereignty, magnificent even amongst the most splendid of earthly empires in the days of its glory, gaudy and flaunting in its season of decay, and despicable in the long ages of its impotent decrepitude.

29. On the very day on which the English soldiers burst open the gates of the royal palace at Delhi, Havelock crossed the Ganges into Oude. He had with him 2,500 men; and of these more than half had joined him four days before, under Sir James Outram, who, as senior officer, might have assumed the command. But the relieving of Lukhnow was the work which lay nearest to the heart of Havelock, and Outram generously refused to take it out of his hands. Two battles were fought before they could reach the city, and then they had to run the gauntlet of a deadly fire from loop-holed houses and garden walls as they struggled on towards the Residency, where for four months the beleaguered garrison had received from the world without no other tidings than that Havelock had already tried to rescue them, and had been foiled in his attempt.

30. On September 25 the mutineers knew that the delivering army was at hand, and they poured a still more furious fire on the besieged. But slowly and steadily, in spite of the desperate efforts of rebels fighting under the cover of narrow and crooked lanes and of houses turned into military strongholds, the English troops came on. At each step their numbers were thinned, and before they entered the British intrenchments Colonel

Neill was amongst the dead. With killed, wounded, and missing the numbers of the relieving force had been lessened by about one-fifth; but the great work was achieved, and Brigadier Inglis could feel thankful that he had been enabled to carry out the dying charge of Sir Henry Lawrence to hold his ground to the last.

31. The garrison was rescued, and the women and children were safe, but they could not yet be removed; and the rebels were not scattered, and perhaps not much disheartened. For two months longer the siege went on; but the English were no longer fighting at fearful and desperate odds, and they could await with confidence the more effectual succour which Sir Colin Campbell brought in November. But even with his larger force Sir Colin Campbell could not recover the city, and he resolved to abandon the position, and to carry the garrison with the women and children to Cawnpore. So skilfully was this work of evacuation done that the mutineers went on firing at the entrenchments long after they had been deserted. Outram remained in the neighbourhood with 4,000 men to act against them, whilst Havelock was to march with Sir Colin Campbell to Cawnpore. But the fervent spirit had in him outworn the body, and on the day after leaving Lukhnow he died, having won for himself a reputation as pure as it was glorious (November 24).

32. Even in the eyes of the revolted regiments and their supporters the tide had turned in favour of their English rulers; but there were yet to be two or three incidents answering to the Pretender's

victory at Falkirk after the retreat from Derby before the fatal catastrophe at Culloden. As Sir Colin Campbell approached Cawnpore, he heard the firing of heavy artillery, and soon received the astonishing tidings that the city was in the hands of the sepoys. General Windham, who had been left in charge of the station, had been out-manceuvred by the genius of Tantia Topi, the one general produced by this war on the side opposed to the English. The cold intellect of this wonderful Brahman exulted in the retrieving of the most terrible disasters by new and unlooked-for movements and combinations. In the greatest straits he was never at a loss; and though he never won a victory in the field, he prolonged for months a struggle which, if he had been dealing with better materials, might after all have ended in success. He might have been a rival of Moltke in the direction of campaigns from a distance; in India he failed because he lacked, not the military genius, but the personal bravery and audacity, of Clive.

33. Tantia Topi was now the leader of the Gwalior contingent (p. 233) which, having thus far held itself neutral, had at last openly joined the rebels under Nana Sahib and his brother Bala Rao. With this magnificent force of 20,000 men and 40 guns, Tantia outflanked Windham, seized his camp, his equipage, and his stores, and in a few hours more would have destroyed the bridge of boats, and thus cut off the retreat of his enemies across the Ganges. Sir Colin Campbell came up just in time to prevent this great disaster. The non-combatants and the wounded, whom he had

brought from Lukhnow, were sent on to Allahabad, and there was fought the battle of Cawnpore, which for the time frustrated the strategy of Tantia Topi. The Nana's army fled to a ferry twenty-five miles above Cawnpore; but before they could cross the river they were severely defeated by Brigadier Hope Grant, and the Gwalior contingent retained only six of its forty guns.

34. The memorable year, to which Hindus and Mahometans alike had looked forward with eager hope and expectation, was drawing to a close. Much still remained to be done; but this was chiefly owing to the vast extent of country over which the rebel forces were scattered, and the task of hunting them out was in many cases a work rather of vengeance than of warfare needing both skill and endurance. If the conquerors smote with a rod of iron, it may at least be said that they had received provocation of the most terrible and maddening kind. At their worst they must be judged as we judge Hastings for his dealings with Nundkomar (p. 139); but history may hereafter speak in sterner language of the furious cry for indiscriminate revenge raised in this country even by those whose duty it was to still the passion of natural resentment. Bishops and clergy were carried away by the storm of indignation which for the time hardened their hearts while it confused their minds. Of those who were charged with the work of suppressing the mutiny it may not be our duty to speak harshly; but assuredly it can never be said that they were too slack in the task of retribution. Rather, it may be feared that they were hurried on

into excesses, the memory of which may not yet have passed away. Happily, Lord Canning was not one who could ever be seduced or stirred into the temper of merciless revenge. He was assailed with virulent abuse by men who, if left to themselves, would have made the English name a byword in India and throughout the world; but he withstood the storm unmoved, and by summarily preventing the burning of towns and villages, and the slaughtering of a helpless and unarmed population, did as much to save and to strengthen our empire as was done by those who fought their way through the streets of Delhi and rescued the beleaguered garrison of Lukhnow.

35. The first month of the new year, 1858, was marked by a series of decisive victories at the Lukhnow suburb of Alumbagh, in which the body of Havelock was resting, and elsewhere in Oude and Central India. In March, with 16,000 English troops, the largest number ever brought together in India, and 9,000 sepoy, Sir Colin Campbell advanced to the final attack of Lukhnow. Here, as at Delhi, the defenders of the city may deserve to be called ruthless wretches; but it cannot be denied that they fought with desperate courage and unwearied energy. The struggle was as fiercely sustained as at Delhi; but at last the sepoy were beaten out of their fastnesses, and had to fight for their lives as they fled towards Sitapore, cast down indeed yet not utterly dismayed, and resolved that the English should hear of them yet again. But the toils of the hunters were closing round them,

and when they were gathered at Bareilly under Nana Sahib and Prince Feroze of Delhi, with the Rohilkund chief, Khan Bahádur Khan, the antagonism between Hindus and Mahometans was already leading the former to regard the latter as oppressors more hateful even than the English.

36. In spite of these evil omens, the Nana and his colleagues carried on their schemes with marvellous tenacity of purpose, and the siege of Jhansi by the Bombay troops and the Hyderabad contingent under Sir Hugh Rose called for efforts as severe as those which had brought about the fall of Delhi and Lukhnow. Within the walls was the Ranee, ready to fight and die as a sovereign at the head of her followers; and without them was Tantia Topi with 20,000 men, hoping to find the means either of entering the city or of compelling Sir Hugh Rose to raise the siege. In both these hopes he was doomed to disappointment. His army was routed, and the Ranee was left to her own resources. On April 3, the breach in the walls was stormed; and the undaunted queen, seeing that all hope of saving the city was gone, escaped by night to fight again on other fields. Six weeks later she fell, dressed as a man, in the battle of Morar. The trooper who cut her down knew not that he had slain the brave Lakshmi Bai, whose cruelty rivalled that of Zeenut Mahal (p. 259). During those few weeks she took part in every engagement which had been fought since her escape from Jhansi, and in the last she might have hoped that the genius of Tantia Topi was destined at length to achieve success.

37. The conquest of Jhansi, followed by another defeat of the rebels at Kurch, convinced the Mahratta Brahman that he must again change the scene of the struggle. Hurrying to the old rock fortress of Gwalior he stirred Sindia's men to revolt, and received their promise to join the rebels as they came in from Kurch. Sindia discovered the plot and against the earnest advice of his minister resolved to meet his enemies in the open field. He met them at the head of an army which would not fight or which went bodily over to the enemy, and his only resource was in flight. His city and fortress with all their contents fell into the hands of the mutineers, who once more proclaimed Nana Sahib under the title of Peshwa. The move was the most striking and able of all that had been made by Tantia Topi; but the splendid advantage which it seemed to insure to him was lost, when the Gwalior troops were surprised in the cantonments of Morar. It was but a passing gleam of success. In three or four days Sindia was again seated on his throne; but his treasury had meanwhile been plundered of property amounting to half a million pounds sterling. On the following day the Gwalior contingent underwent a crushing defeat at Jura Alipore, and Tantia Topi was once more a fugitive.

38. The rebellion had now assumed the character of intermittent outbreaks; but there were elements of serious danger still in some parts of the country, while others had passed through periods of the gravest peril. At Bombay, Poona, Kolhapur, and Kurrachee, regiments had shown signs of disaffection

or had mutinied openly. Symptoms of rebellion were seen also in a portion of the Nizam's cavalry; but his infantry and artillery remained faithful, and the efforts of Mahometan fanatics who strove to seduce the population of Hyderabad into insurrection were promptly repressed by Salar Jung, the eminent statesman who still administers the Nizam's dominions to the admiration of all who have seen the results of his wise and beneficent rule.

39. It was natural that the southern Mahratta country should share the disturbance of the rest; but the back of the rebellion was now broken, and though in November a sepoy army, numbering, it was said, 20,000 men, was still in the field, their dispersion was a matter rather of days than of weeks. Before the year was ended, Nana Sahib had taken refuge with his brother Bala Rao in the Terai jungles of Nepal; and here it cannot be doubted that they died, although the story went that the Nana was still living, and impostors were found willing to earn notoriety at the cost of their necks by representing one who could scarcely expect much mercy at the hands of English judges. The last dying embers of the mutiny were seen in the junction of the Mogul prince Feroze with Tantia Topi; but their condition was little better than that of the hunted hare. Tantia was caught during sleep in a Malwah jungle, April 1859. The remembrance of his schemes of subtle and consummate leadership might make us regret that he could not be treated as a prisoner of war; but he had placed himself in the ranks of murderers by superintending in person the massacre

of the English by the river side at Cawnpore. His trial and sentence were followed by immediate execution, April 1859; and so died the man who, had his schemes succeeded, would assuredly have taught Nana Sahib that the Peshwa must henceforth be the subject and puppet, if not the victim, of the Peshwa's minister.

40. If the British Government in India had been honestly bent on ruling the country for the good of its people, the great mutiny was a terrible breach in the orderly progress of their beneficent work. On the whole, the honesty and sincerity of their purpose cannot be doubted. The Governors-General had made some mistakes and blunders, and had been guilty of some wrong doing, into which they had been betrayed chiefly by idle and groundless fears. These terrors had led to the fatal enterprise which was to make the Afghan king the passive instrument of English policy; but the failure of that miserable scheme had been virtually admitted by the withdrawal of our troops from his barren and worthless mountains, and since that time it may fairly be said that in no country and in no age has the rule of foreigners ever been so beneficial to their subjects as was that of the English in India for more than thirty years after the disasters in Cabul. On the Sikh wars we may look back with a clear conscience; and the Sikhs themselves can look back upon them only with feelings of thankfulness that the victory remained with a people under whom they have been enabled to turn their spears into ploughshares and their swords into pruning-hooks.

41. But although the rule of the East India Company had been of immense advantage to the natives of India, the great rebellion of 1857 was held to furnish conclusive proof that it ought to give place to the direct government of the Crown. The Act which ordered the change became law in August 1858, and on November 1 the people of British India were informed by proclamation that they were henceforth subjects of the sovereign of Great Britain, who would respect all existing rights, titles, dignities, and treaties, and who would repress all attempts to interfere with their religion or their caste. The Company's *raj*, or rule, thus passed away, and in this sense only was the prediction which precipitated the mutiny fulfilled. It was well, indeed, for India that it should be so; but it is absurd to suppose that this fact really represented the meaning of the men in whose minds the prophecy had taken shape.

42. From that time to the year 1876 disturbing causes have from time to time interfered with the quiet advancement of the country in industry and wealth. There have been military enterprises some of which might by careful forethought have been avoided. There have been famines, some of which might by a more provident statesmanship have been prevented, or at the least, greatly mitigated. But, after all due deductions have been made, the fact remains that the country has been ruled steadily, wisely, and well. The civilisation of one nation is not necessarily fitted for another; and some mistakes have beyond doubt been made by bringing European

laws and customs to bear on a people who like the Hindus are now much what they were three or four thousand years ago. At the beginning of this prodigious period, when our forefathers were among the rudest of savages, the Hindus stood in the front ranks of mankind. With such a race sudden and trenchant reforms are likely to do far more harm than good; and summary interference with long-established usage can never be justifiable except where, as in the case of suttee (p. 207), the custom is in itself inhuman, and rests on falsehoods maintained from interested motives by a dominant priesthood.

43. But on the whole the work done by the Aryans from Europe (p. 1) among the Aryans of the East has been marvellously beneficial. The face of the land is changed. The plains of Bengal, the table lands of the Deccan, the hills and valleys of Mysore and Bombay, are no longer at the mercy of invaders following each the other in close succession, like flights of devouring locusts. We in our island of Great Britain, on whose soil no invader has set his foot for more than eight hundred years, can scarcely realise the condition of a country swept by storms of foreign enemies almost as frequently as by their physical tornadoes and cyclones. The history of the old Aryan dynasties in India, so far as it can be said to be known to us, is little more than a dismal catalogue of acts of aggression, violence and murder. The inroads of Turks, Saracens and Afghans brought into the land the more deadly and merciless fanaticism of Islam; and although one magnificent empire was established by men who called themselves followers



of the prophet of Mecca, we have seen how weak were its foundations and how loosely put together was its superstructure. It rose indeed to something like real greatness in the memorable reign of Akbar ; but it did so only because Akbar threw off the yoke of the Koran, and won from Mahometan bigots the evil reputation of an apostate. But even in the days of Akbar there was nothing which could fairly be called a national administration. The Great Mogul and his princely vassals might build massive forts and splendid palaces, and when they died their bodies might rest in sepulchres on which Eastern art lavished all its dazzling splendour and all its exquisite grace ; but with the wealth and resources of India at their disposal for six or seven centuries the Mahometan dynasties of India did little or nothing in the way of making roads, of forming harbours, of cutting canals and building bridges. They had wide and wealthy dominions ; but the arm of the law was not seldom powerless to smite down the wrongdoer, and side by side with their wealth and their glory was a grinding and crushing poverty to which they can scarcely be said to have paid any heed at all. There was, in fact, no real security anywhere. Mahratta and Pindharrie hordes might at any time sweep over the country like hailstorms across the sky ; while dacoits, Thugs, and other societies of robbers reaped their harvest under cover of the prevailing lawlessness, 'much as the lesser beasts of prey are supposed to follow in the track of the lion and the tiger.

44. The subject which these thoughts bring

before us is vast indeed, and may well be made the study of a lifetime. It is a matter of no slight moment to ascertain the relations of Mahometans and Hindus to the new system which with something like the rapid growth of tropical vegetation has sprung up in their midst, to mark the passive resistance of the Hindu and the fiercer and more determined bigotry of the Mahometan. It is a great but not an easy task to judge fairly of the capacities for self-government possessed by Hindus and Mahometans severally, and to measure the progress made by the native independent states as compared with the condition of the country under the immediate sovereignty of the British. It is useless to ascribe to them faculties for improvement if the signs of their existence are not forthcoming; it is unjust to deny or to keep out of sight the least evidence which shows that they are advancing in all that constitutes a well-ordered state; it is cruel to throw a veil over any wrongs which they may be suffering at the hands of their European masters. There is no reason for thinking that their English rulers are guilty of wilful and wanton injustice anywhere; there is every reason for believing that on the whole they are honestly striving for the good of the people everywhere. Twice within the last fifty years the British Government has allowed unreasonable fears to lead them astray from the path of their manifest duty; but between these two disastrous enterprises there was a long interval of conscientious administration on which we may look back with more than satisfaction. The

lesson taught by the results of these fatal schemes has been sharp and stern. It will be well for us if it be so taken to heart that the natives of India may see in our acts nothing but the evidence of a disinterested desire to promote their welfare in the highest and best sense of the word.

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