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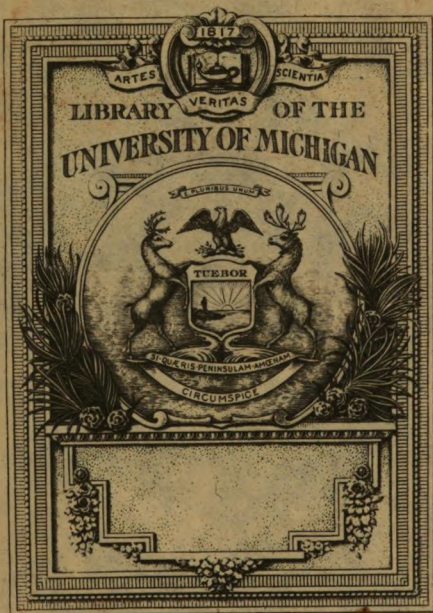
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THE HISTORY OF INDIA.

VOLUME III.

THE
HISTORY OF INDIA,

FROM
THE EARLIEST PERIOD TO THE CLOSE OF
LORD DALHOUSIE'S ADMINISTRATION.

BY
JOHN CLARK MARSHMAN.
=

VOL. III.



LONDON:
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1867.

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NOTICE.

THE small proportion of the present work which has been allotted to the Hindoo and Mahomedan period of Indian history has been the subject of remark by those who have honoured the previous volumes with their notice. The author would therefore embrace the present opportunity of explaining that it was intimated to him by the Syndicate of the University of Calcutta that they had adopted Mr. Elphinstone's standard work in reference to that early period, and desired the present work to commence where he had left off, with the history of the British Empire in India. He was happy to be relieved from the necessity of going over ground which had been so fully occupied by that eminent writer, and cheerfully reduced the volume he had already compiled to the dimensions of a simple introduction.

1st November, 1867.

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CONTENTS

OF

THE THIRD VOLUME.

CHAPTER XXX.

LORD WILLIAM BENTINCK'S ADMINISTRATION, 1828—1835.

Date.		Page
1828	Lord William Bentinck Governor-General	1
	Reduction of civil allowances	2
	The half batta order	2
1830	Arrangement regarding Malwa opium	5
1828	Resumption of rent free tenures	6
1832	The Cole insurrection	8
1831	Insurrection of Teetoo Meer	10
1832	Annexation of Cachar	11
1834	Reduction and annexation of Coorg	11
1828-34	Non-interference policy of Lord William Bentinck	14
	Remarks on our position in India	14
1799-1809	Affairs of Mysore	17
1811	The raja assumes the Government	19
1832	Lord William Bentinck assumes the entire management of Mysore	20
	Bhopal; the able administration of the ranee	21
1834	Joudhpore, misconduct of the raja and his submission	22
1835	Jeypore; disorders of the government	23
	Murder of Mr. Blake	25
1831-34	Oude; Lord William threatens to assume the government	26
1834	Hakim Mehdi; his extraordinary talents	26
	Orders of the Court of Directors to take over the management of the country	28
1833	Events at Gwalior on the death of Sindia	28
1830	First symptoms of Russophobia	30

Date.		Page
1809-22	Progress of Runjeet Sing : reform of his army	31
	His successive conquests	32
1822	Arrival of French officers at Lahore	33
	Character of the Sikh soldiery	34
1823	Battle of Noushera	34
1831	Syud Ahmed's insurrection and progress ; his death	36
	Dray horses sent to Runjeet Sing	36
	Lieutenant Burnes's mission to Sind and Lahore	37
	His reception by Runjeet Sing	38
	Runjeet Sing's power	39
	The Khalsa or Sikh commonwealth	40
	Meeting at Roopur between Lord William Bentinck and Run- jeet Sing	41
	Treaty with Sind	43

CHAPTER XXXI.

LORD WILLIAM BENTINCK'S ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS—MATERIAL
PROGRESS, 1828—1835.

1828-34	Remodelling of the judicial system	45
1833	Revenue settlement, north-west provinces	46
	Labours of Mr. Robert Bird	47
1831	Employment of natives in the Government	49
1830	The question of Suttees	51
	Lord William Bentinck's enquiries and his resolution	53
1830	Abolition of the rite	55
1832	Hindoo law of inheritance modified	56
1831	Admission of native Christians to office	57
1830	Suppression of Thuggee—labours of Major Sleeman	58
1830-34	Steam communication on the rivers, and between England and India	60
1842	Peninsular and Oriental Company	61
1813-33	Education ; orientalism	63
1835	Triumph of English	65
	Remarks on this policy	66
1833	The General Assembly's Institution in Calcutta	67
1835	The Medical College in Calcutta	68
1827	Sir John Malcolm, Governor of Bombay	69
1832	Collision between the Supreme Court and the Government at Bombay	70
	Conflict of the Court of Directors and the Board of Control ; Palmer and Co.	73
	Case of the Lucknow bankers	75
1834	The Nozeed affair	77
1835	Financial results of Lord William Bentinck's administration	78
1833	Fall of the great houses in Calcutta	79
1835	Remarks on Lord William Bentinck's administration....	80

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE CHARTER OF 1833—SIR CHARLES METCALFE'S ADMINISTRATION—
BENEVOLENT EXERTIONS OF THE COMPANY'S GOVERNMENT, 1833—1836.

Date.		Page
1833	The new charter; extinction of the China monopoly	83
1833	Government of India continued to the Company	84
	Modifications in the Government	85
	Europeans allowed to settle in India	86
	Character of the Company's Government	87
1835	Sir Charles Metcalfe Governor-General, <i>ad interim</i>	88
	Lord Heytesbury	89
	Liberation of the press	91
	Result of this measure	92
	Sir Charles Metcalfe Governor of Agra	93
1836	Displeasure of the Court at the liberation of the press	94
	Sir Charles Metcalfe resigns the service	96
	Remarks on his administration	97
	Benevolent efforts of the Company's Government	98
1784	Augustus Cleveland	99
1829	Civilization of the Bheels by Lieutenant Outram	100
1832	Civilization of Mairwarra by Captains Hall and Dixon	102
1833	Female infanticide	103
1834	Successive efforts to eradicate it	105
1835	Human sacrifices among the Khonds	108
1836-40	Efforts to eradicate it by Colonel Campbell and Major Macpherson	109

CHAPTER XXXIII.

LORD AUCKLAND'S ADMINISTRATION—THE AFGHAN EXPEDITION,
1836—1842.

1836	Lord Auckland Governor-General	112
1833	Shah Soojah's expedition; its failure	113
1835	Runjeet Sing's views on Sind	114
	Dost Mahomed at Peshawur	115
1837	Battle of Jumrood	117
	Rapid extension of Russian power	118
	Influence of Russia in Persia	119
1834	Persian expedition to Khorasan	120
1836	Failure of Mr. McNeill's negotiations	121
1837	Persian expedition to Herat	122
	Lord Auckland's advisers....	123
	Captain Burnes's mission to Cabul	124
	His negotiations with Dost Mahomed	125
	Arrival of the Russian envoy	127

Date.		Page
1838	Lord Auckland's haughty communication to the Dost	128
	Failure of Captain Burnes's mission	129
	Resolution of Lord Auckland to dethrone the Dost	130
	Mr. Macnaghten's mission to Runjeet Sing	131
	The tripartite treaty	132
	The grand expedition into Afghanistan	132
	Character of this expedition	134
	Lord Auckland's manifesto, October 1st	134
	First five months of the siege of Herat—Lieutenant Pottinger	136
	Battle of the 24th June—the siege raised	137
	Persistence in the expedition to Cabul	140

CHAPTER XXXIV.

LORD AUCKLAND'S ADMINISTRATION—THE AFGHAN EXPEDITION,
1838—1842.

1838	Strength of the British armies	141
1839	Treatment of the Ameers of Sinde	142
	Progress of the army	144
	Treaty with Mehrab Khan of Khelat	145
	Arrival at Candahar	145
	Capture of Ghuzni	146
	Arrival at Cabul	148
	Flight and pursuit of Dost Mahomed	148
	Progress of Colonel Wade and Prince Timur to Cabul	149
	Retention of the force in Afghanistan	150
	Capture of Khelat	151
	Honours bestowed on the conquerors	152
	Death and character of Runjeet Sing	152
	Hostility of the Lahore durbar	154
1840	Russian complaints against Khiva	155
	British diplomacy in Central Asia	155
	Object of the Russian expedition to Khiva	156
	Failure of the expedition	157
	The Bala Hissar and the cantonments	157
	Intrigues at Herat against the British Government	159
	Condition of the Government in Afghanistan	160
	Movements of Dost Mahomed	161
	Surrender of Dost Mahomed	162

CHAPTER XXXV.

LORD AUCKLAND'S ADMINISTRATION—THE AFGHAN EXPEDITION—
MISCELLANEOUS NOTICES, 1841—1842.

1841	Major Todd obliged to quit Herat	165
	General Nott and Major Rawlinson at Candahar	166

CONTENTS.

xi

Date.		Page
1841	Insurrection of the Eastern Ghilzyes	168
	Court of Directors anxious to quit Afghanistan—Lord Auckland resolves to remain	169
	Retrenchment of stipends ; revolt of the Ghilzyes	170
	Sir Robert Sale attacked in the passes	172
	Security of the Envoy	172
	Insurrection in Cabul ; murder of Sir A. Burnes	173
	General Elphinstone's infirmities	175
	Indecision and procrastination of the authorities	176
	Loss of the Commissariat fort and all the supplies	178
	Sir Robert Sale declines to return to Cabul	178
	General Nott sends a force to Cabul, which returns	179
	The question of assassination	180
	Brigadier Shelton united in the command ; his impracticable temper	181
	Action at Behmaroo	182
	Last action, 23rd November	182
	Despondency in the cantonment	183
	Negotiations with the enemy	184
	Arrival of Akbar Khan	184
	Treaty of 11th December	185
	Violation of the treaty by the enemy	186
	Assassination of Sir William Macnaghten	188
	Character of Sir William	189
	Energetic advice of Major Pottinger rejected	190
1842	Commencement of the retreat	192
	Disasters of the retreat	193
	Surrender of the ladies and officers	194
	Total destruction of the force	195
	Character and effects of the catastrophe	195
	Despondency and weakness of Lord Auckland	196
	Active exertions of Mr. Robertson and Mr. George Clerk	197
	Colonel Wild's brigade ; its disasters	198
	General Pollock's brigade	199
	Close of Lord Auckland's administration	200
	Connection with idol temples dissolved....	201

CHAPTER XXXVI.

LORD ELLENBOROUGH'S ADMINISTRATION—CLOSE OF THE AFGHAN WAR, 1842.

1842	Lord Ellenborough Governor-General	202
	Disaffected state of the troops at Peshawur	203
	General Pollock forces the Khyber	204
	Sir Robert Sale at Jellalabad	205
	Councils of war	206
	The succession of earthquakes	207
	Akbar Khan beleaguers Jellalabad	208

Date.		Page
1842	Defeat of Akbar Khan	209
1841-42	Transactions at Candahar	210
	Surrender of Ghuzni	211
	Conduct of Brigadier England at Hykulzye	212
	Lord Ellenborough's Proclamation, 15th March	213
	He determines to withdraw the armies at once from Afghanistan, 19th April	214
	Effect of the order on General Nott and General Pollock	215
	Lord Ellenborough's change of plan, 4th July	216
	Death of Shah Soojah	218
	Condition of the English captives and hostages	219
	Advance of General Pollock	221
	Battle of Tezeen ; re-occupation of Cabul	223
	Advance from Candahar	223
	The Somnath Gates	224
	Rescue of the prisoners	225
	Capture of Istaliff	227
	Destruction of the great bazaar at Cabul	227
	Return of the army of retribution	228
	Proclamation of Lord Ellenborough	229
	The Gates Proclamation	230
	Ovation to the returning heroes	231
	Remarks on the transactions in Afghanistan	233
	Colonel Stoddart and Captain Conolly at Bokhara	234
	They are executed in the market-place	236

CHAPTER XXXVII.

LORD ELLENBOROUGH'S ADMINISTRATION—SINDE AND GWALIOR WARS,
1842—1844.

1842	Conduct of the Ameers of Sind during the Afghan war	237
	Sir Charles Napier assumes the command ; his proceedings	238
	The new treaties	239
	Strange proceedings of Sir Charles	241
	Capture of Emamgur	244
1843	Conferences with the Ameers	244
	Conference with Major Outram at Hyderabad ...	245
	The Ameers sign the treaties	246
	Attack on the Residency	247
	Battle and victory at Meanee, 17th February	247
	Annexation of Sind	249
	Second battle, 22nd March	249
	Remarks on the conquest of Sind	250
1844	The mutinies	252
1843	Progress of Affairs at Gwalior	254
	Condition of the Gwalior army	255
	Dismissal of the Regent	256
	Confusion at Gwalior	257

Date.		Page
1843	Lord Ellenborough's Minute, Nov. 1	259
	Advance of the British force	262
	Battle of Maharajpore	263
	Battle of Punniar	265
	The new settlement at Gwalior	265
1844	Recal of Lord Ellenborough	266
	Improvements during his administration	268

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

LORD HARDINGE'S ADMINISTRATION, 1844—1848.

1844	Sir Henry Hardinge Governor-General	270
	His education Minute	272
	Restoration of flogging in the native army	273
1839-40	Revolutions in the Punjab	273
1842	Shere Sing's negotiations with the British Government	274
	Movement in Tibet	276
1843	Murder of Shere Sing	276
1844	Murder of Heera Sing and Pundit Julla	277
	Ascendency of the army	278
1845	Plunder of Golab Sing and Moolraj	279
	Preparations to meet a Sikh invasion	280
	Character of the Khalsa army	281
	The Sikh army crosses the Sutlege	282
	General Littler besieged in Ferozepore	283
1845	Confiscation of the Cis-Sutlege state	284
	Battle of Moodkee	285
	Battle of Ferozeshuhur	286
	Second engagement, December 22	289
	Remarks on these battles	290
	Pause for reinforcements	292
1846	Battle of Aliwall	293
	Battle of Sohraon	294
	The army enters the Punjab	297
	Settlement of the Punjab	298
	Sale of Cashmere to the Raja Golab Sing	299
	Treaty of 9th March, 1846	300
	Procession of the captured guns	301
	New arrangements in the Punjab, December, 1846	302
	Reduction of the Company's army	304
	Restoration of the Mogul canals ...	305
	Ganges Canal projected by Colonel Cantley	306
	Supported by Lord Hardinge	307
1848	Close of Lord Hardinge's administration	307

CHAPTER XXXIX.

LORD DALHOUSIE'S ADMINISTRATION—SECOND SIKH WAR, 1848—1849.

Date.		Page
1848	Lord Dalhousie Governor-General; his antecedents	309
	Proceedings of Moolraj at Mooltan	310
	Murder of British officers	311
	Indecision at Lahore	313
	Splendid exertions of Lieutenant Edwardes	314
	Battle of Kineyree	315
	Battle of Sudoosain	316
	Despatch of General Whish's force to Mooltan	316
	Intrigues and banishment of the ranees of Lahore	317
	Revolt of Chutter Sing	318
	Operations of General Whish's force	319
	Defection of Shere Sing	320
	The siege of Mooltan raised	320
	General revolt in the Punjab	320
	Shere Sing threatens Lahore	322
	Alliance of Dost Mahomed with the Sikhs	323
	Position of Major Lawrence at Peshawur	324
	Defection of his troops	324
	Advance of Lord Gough's army	325
	Action at Ramnugur	326
	Death of Havelock and Cureton	327
	Battle of Sadoolapore	327
	Noble efforts of the political officers	330
	Movements of the Sikh and British armies	331
1849	Battle of Chillianwalla	333
	Results of the battle	337
	Recal of Lord Gough	339

CHAPTER XL.

LORD DALHOUSIE'S ADMINISTRATION—THE SECOND SIKH WAR—THE SECOND
BURMESE WAR—THE SANTAL OUTBREAK, 1849—1855.

1848	The second siege of Mooltan	339
1849	Capture of the fort	341
	Shere Sing outmanœuvres Lord Gough	342
	Battle of Guzerat	343
	Remarks on the battle	346
	Pursuit and submission of the Sikh chiefs	347
	Incorporation of the Punjab with the Company's dominions	348
	Abdication of Duleep Sing; the Koh-i-noor	349
	Honours bestowed on the victors	350
	Close of the period of war of ten years	350

CONTENTS.

XV

Date.	Page
1849-54 System of government in the Punjab	352
The border ; disarmament ; the police	353
Finance and revenue	354
Slavery ; dacoity ; thuggee	355
Suppression of infanticide	356
Roads and canals in the Punjab	358
1854 Beneficial result of these measures	359
1852 The second Burmese war	361
Commodore Lambert deputed to Rangoon	362
Insult offered to Captain Fishbourne	363
Proceedings of the Commodore	364
Resolution of Lord Dalhousie	366
His exertions in fitting out the expedition	367
Organization of the expeditionary force	368
Capture of Rangoon	369
Co-operation of the Peguers	370
Close of the war	371
Annexation of Pegu	372
Happy result of the conquest	374
1855 The Santal émeute	376
1849-50 Mutinies in the Punjab	377
Dispute between the Governor-General and Sir Charles Napier	379
Decision of the Duke of Wellington	380

CHAPTER XLI.

LORD DALHOUSIE'S ADMINISTRATION—TRANSACTION WITH NATIVE PRINCES, 1848—1854.

1848 The Sattara question	380
1818 Origin of the principality ; death of the raja	381
1848 Question of adoption ; Sir George Clerk, Mr. Willoughby	383
Lord Dalhousie's researches	384
His conclusions	386
General principles laid down by Lord Dalhousie	387
1849 Decision of the home authorities	388
1853 Berar, death of the raja	388
1819-53 British and native administrations	390
1837-53 Anxiety of the people for British rule	391
Lord Dalhousie resolves to annex it	391
1853 Minutes of Colonel Low and Mr. Halliday	392
Sale of jewels	394
Jhansi	395
Remarks on the annexations	397
Extent of Lord Dalhousie's responsibility	399
Opposition to annexations	400
Arguments adduced against them	401
1801-53 Nabob of the Carnatic	402
Arrangements of Lord Wellesley	403
1853 Death of the Nabob ; Lord Harris refuses to maintain the succession	404

Date.		Page
1853	Lord Dalhousie concurs with him	405
	The Nizam and Berar ; the contingent	406
	Proceedings of Lord Dalhousie	408
	His Minute	408
	New treaty and its results	410
	Nana Sahib	412
	Mysore ; admirable administration of General Cubbon	415
	Lord Dalhousie refuses to restore the Government to the raja	416
	Reference to the original treaty	416
1867	Subsequent history of transactions regarding the raj	417

CHAPTER XLII.

**LORD DALHOUSIE'S ADMINISTRATION—OUDE—ADMINISTRATIVE AND
MATERIAL IMPROVEMENTS—CONCLUSION, 1848—56.**

	Chronic misrule in Oude	419
	Remonstrances of successive Governors-General	420
1851	Report of Colonel Sleeman	421
1855	Report of General Outram	423
	Lord Dalhousie's Minute	424
	Minutes of the Members of Council	425
	Decision of the home authorities	427
	Remarks	428
1848-56	Administrative reforms	429
	Military Board ; public works department	430
	Education	431
	Revenue, finance, commerce	432
	Steam communication	433
	Low and uniform postage	434
1848-56	Lord Dalhousie's journeys	435
	Roads and Canals	436
	Mr. Thomason's administration and character....	437
	Great system of Indian railways	439
	The electric telegraph in India	444
	Character of Lord Dalhousie's administration....	446
	Censured for not having foreseen the mutiny	448
	His anxiety regarding European troops....	449
	Censured for having caused the mutiny by his annexations	450
	Examination of the subject	450
	Assumed causes of the mutiny	451
	The greased cartridges the real cause	453
1853	Charter of 1853	454
	Reduction in the number of the Court of Directors	455
	Establishment of a Lieutenant-Governorship in Bengal	456
	Civil service thrown open to competition	456
1858	Close of the rule of the East India Company....	457

THE HISTORY OF INDIA.

CHAPTER XXX.

LORD WILLIAM BENTINCK'S ADMINISTRATION, 1828—1835.

Lord William Bentinck's Administration, 1828. THE claims of Lord William Bentinck were at length recognized by the Court of Directors, and the stigma which had been unjustly cast on his character by his abrupt and harsh removal from Madras in 1806, was effaced by the gift of the Governor-Generalship. He was sworn in at the India House in July, 1827, while his relative, Mr. Canning, who had promoted his nomination, was Prime Minister; but the lamented decease of that statesman a few days after brought into power those members of his party who had been opposed to his elevation, and Lord William suspended his departure till he was satisfied that they were not disposed to object to his appointment. He sailed in February, and reached Calcutta on the 4th July, 1828. His administration of seven years, which forms one of the brightest periods in the history of British India, commenced under the most unfavourable circumstances. The Burmese war had not only saddled the treasury with a loan to the extent of ten crores of rupees, but created an annual deficit of a crore; and the new Government was constrained at once to enter upon the unpopular duty of retrenchment.

Reduction of
Allowances,
1828.

Immediately on his arrival two committees were appointed to investigate the increase of expenditure in the civil and military establishments, and to suggest the means of bringing it back to the standard of 1822. The sweeping reductions which the Court of Directors had already made in the strength of the army left little for the military committee to do except to curtail individual allowances, though they were in no case excessive, and in many cases inadequate. In the civil departments the allowances of the civilians presented a more legitimate field for revision. During the previous thirty-five years the only two items which had never experienced any diminution, but on the contrary exhibited a constant tendency to increase, were the public debt and the pay of the civil service. To select one example by way of illustration: the remuneration of an opium agent, for duties which required no mind and little labour, had been gradually augmented to 75,000 rupees a-year. Lord William Bentinck cut it down to a level with the salary of the Chancellor of the Exchequer in England. Some offices were abolished, a few were doubled up, and the income of others was reduced, but the retrenchments did not affect the aggregate allowances of the service to a greater extent than six per cent. It was still the best paid service in the world, enjoying an annual income of ninety lacs of rupees, which, divided among four hundred and sixteen officers, gave each civilian, from the member of Council to the writer, an average allowance of more than 20,000 rupees a-year. But the reductions effected by Lord William Bentinck, combined with his stern resolution to constrain every man to do his duty, punctually and efficiently, created a feeling of irritation in the ranks of the service beyond all former example, and subjected him to insults which severely taxed his habitual equanimity.

The Half Batta
Order, 1828.

Of the measures of reduction which Lord William Bentinck was constrained to carry out, none was found to create so much animosity as the half batta order. Soon after the beginning of the century an arrangement had

been proposed which assured the officers of the army full batta in cantonments in the lower provinces. It bore the character of a compromise, and was considered by them in the light of a sacred compact. It did not, however, meet with the approval of the India House, and directions were issued successively to Lord Hastings and to Lord Amherst, to reduce the batta allowance by one half. Both the Governors-General deemed it their duty to suspend the execution of the order pending a reference to the Court of Directors, but they simply repeated their injunctions in more peremptory language. Their last despatch on the subject reached Calcutta soon after the arrival of Lord William Bentinck, who was then for the first time put in possession of their wishes, and issued an order in November, 1828, to curtail the batta allowance at all stations within four hundred miles of Calcutta. This measure kindled a flame throughout the army, which at one time threatened to consume the bonds of obedience. A word from the officers at that moment, and the whole Bengal army would, it was firmly believed, have risen to a man. One officer went so far as to declare on his honour that if an enemy were to appear in the field, he did not believe there was a single officer who would give, or a regiment which would obey the order to march. The statement was doubtless exaggerated, but it will serve to show the irritation which then pervaded the army, and which subjected Lord William Bentinck to such gross personal insults from the officers as no Governor-General had ever before experienced. An attempt was made to form representative committees in the army, on the principle which had been adopted by the mutineers in 1796, but it was peremptorily forbidden by the Commander-in-chief, Lord Combermere, though he did not hesitate to declare that he considered the order itself unjust, and inconsistent with the implied conditions of the service. The Court of Directors were exasperated by this expression of his opinion to such an extent as to intimate that he would have been immediately superseded, if he had not already resigned their service. Lord William Bentinck felt that it was

beyond his power to suspend the execution of the order, though he considered it unnecessary, impolitic, and unjust, but he transmitted all the memorials of the army to the Court of Directors, stating that "if it had been a new case, he would have assumed the utmost latitude of discretion; but, after the Court had for the third time reiterated their orders, no alternative was left to him but to obey them." Sir Charles Metcalfe, who was emphatically the friend of the army, had recently been raised to Council, and fully concurred with Lord William Bentinck that the order was one which could not have been disobeyed, under existing circumstances, without assuming that the executive Government in Calcutta was the supreme power in the empire. The Court of Directors denounced the tone and spirit of the memorials as subversive of every principle of military obedience. They asserted their right, in common with all Governments, to regulate the allowances of the public servants, and they signified their determination to enforce the order they had issued. This resolution met with the full concurrence of the Duke of Wellington. Considering the pass to which matters had arrived, it was necessary for the maintenance of discipline, to enforce the order, although it was an egregious blunder. At the period when it was first issued, the Indian treasury was full to repletion, and the saving created by these cheese parings would not have increased the surplus revenue by more than one per cent. The reduction was, under every aspect, impolitic; it affected the most expensive stations, and created an invidious distinction between the officers of different arms in the same service. Dumdum, the headquarters of the artillery, was within the fatal circle of four hundred miles, and the officers who had won their commissions after a severe scientific competition, and who formed the élite of the army, were condemned to reduced allowances; but those of the cavalry, filled with the relatives and connections of the Directors, which was never cantoned in the lower provinces, were exempted. The irritation, moreover, was annually revived, as each regiment was required in succession to take its turn, as a

matter of equity, at the penal stations. It appears strange that so astute a body as the Court of Directors should have risked the attachment and confidence of a noble army for a saving of less than two lacs of rupees a-year, but they were not exempt from the infirmity of occasional spasms of *zid*. It appears still more astonishing that during the thirty succeeding years in which they retained the government of India, they had not the magnanimity, if only as a graceful acknowledgment of the services of the army in twenty hard-earned victories, to rescind an order which created perpetual irritation. It was only after the government had passed into the hands of the Crown that this act of injustice and impolicy was redressed.

Opium, 1830. In the attempt to adjust the finances of India, the decrease of allowances afforded a larger scope for exertion than the increase of revenue; but it was not overlooked. Opium has always presented a very elastic source of wealth to the Government of India. The scheme of raising a revenue from the manufacture of it originated with Warren Hastings, and was matured by Sir John Shore, through whose diligent efforts the purity of the drug was improved to such a degree that a chest with the Company's trade mark and seal passed like a bank note, without question, in China and throughout the Eastern Archipelago. In the Gangetic provinces it was grown in Behar and Benares, under the restrictions of a close monopoly. It was also indigenous in Malwa, and, on the restoration of tranquillity to that rich and distracted province by the victories of Lord Hastings, the native capitalists eagerly embarked in the cultivation of an article which yielded colossal returns. The importation of Malwa opium into Bombay was strictly prohibited, but the interdict was evaded by conveying it across the desert to Kurrachee, in Sind, and thence to the Portuguese ports of Diu and Daman on the western coasts, and, eventually, in vessels under Portuguese colours to China and the east. The profits of the Company's monopoly were seriously affected by this competition, and various plans

were devised to check it, but they were chiefly remarkable for the absence of either wisdom or equity. The purchase of the whole crop in Malwa, which was adopted in one season, entailed a loss to the extent of more than half-a-crore of rupees. The restrictions, moreover, which it was sought to impose on the native states in Central India, regarding the culture of the poppy, were found to interfere unjustly with their independent action, and often to occasion serious conflicts. Lord William Bentinck put an end to the difficulty by establishing a system of licences for the direct conveyance of the opium from the provinces in Central India in which it was raised, to the port of Bombay, and a progressive revenue has thus been established, without annoyance either to prince or people.

Rent-free Tenures, 1828. The final and successful effort which was made to recover the land revenue which had been alienated from the state by fraudulent deeds, belongs to Lord William Bentinck's administration, though the regulation itself was passed immediately before his arrival. The native governments had been in the habit of making grants of land to individuals and to establishments, lay or ecclesiastical, free from the payment of rent; in other words, to bestow on them the public share of the produce of the lands. Some of these grants to charities and religious endowments were consecrated by time, but, generally, rent free tenures in the Deccan were resumed on every succession to the throne, and frequently more than once during the same reign. The same practice was common in Hindostan. Thus, the Nabob of Oude when constrained by Lord Wellesley in 1801 to commute his annual subsidy for a territorial cession, sought to compensate himself by resuming the grants which had thus been made by his predecessors. In the confusion occasioned by the dissolution of the Mogul empire this royal prerogative was usurped by the governors of provinces, and sometimes by their subordinate officers. On assuming the management of the revenue the Council in Calcutta announced that all grants made previous to the acquisition of the Dewanee in 1765, should

be deemed valid; but as there existed no register of these titles, the zemindars, farmers, and revenue officers set to work unscrupulously to fabricate and to antedate them. A tenth of the public revenue appears thus to have been alienated from the support of the state during the infancy and inexperience of the Company's administration. A vigorous native Government would have summarily resumed all such grants, but the Regulations of 1793 simply reserved the right of imposing the public assessment on them after their illegality had been established in a court of law. The laborious duty of conducting these investigations was imposed on the Collector, and neglected. A more stringent Regulation was passed in 1819, which empowered him to call for written documents, to examine witnesses, and to decide the validity of the title, with the approbation of the Board of Revenue, leaving the proprietor to make his appeal to the civil courts. But the Collector found himself thwarted at every step in the performance of this invidious task, by the mercenary officers of his own court, who were bribed by the holders of the lands, and he became lukewarm in the performance of it. Few cases were taken up, and the decisions of the courts on appeal were so dilatory and withal so contradictory, as to be equally unsatisfactory to the appellant and to Government. It became necessary, therefore, either to relinquish altogether the pursuit of this lost revenue, or to adopt a more vigorous course to recover it. Accordingly, three weeks before the arrival of Lord William Bentinck, a Regulation, long remembered as III of 1828, was passed, by which special Commissioners, selected from the ablest and most experienced officers in the judicial service, were appointed to hear and determine appeals from the decisions of the Collectors, who were stimulated to greater activity under the influence of the new system. These energetic proceedings produced great dissatisfaction among those who were affected by the resumptions. They pleaded that the difficulty of adducing evidence to establish the validity of their titles had increased with the lapse of time; that many

documents had disappeared through the humidity of the climate and the ravages of the white ants, and that in the course of several generations, lands, though originally obtained by fraud, had been purchased, *bond fide*, and at an enhanced value, by their present proprietors. There can be no doubt that the resumption of these lands, or rather of the rent of them,—as the parties were in no cases dispossessed, inflicted great unpopularity on the Government at the time, though by no means to the extent which has been assumed, but to affirm, as some have done, that it was one of the leading causes of the great mutiny of the sepoys thirty years after, is one of the most gratuitous of assertions. The natives of the country, though they had been accustomed to submit meekly to the wholesale and indiscriminate resumption of such lands by the arbitrary will of their native princes, resented the resumptions when made by a foreign Government which had never been popular, and they arraigned its justice and moderation; but the irritation did not outlive the generation affected by them, and had passed out of memory long before the crisis of the mutiny arose. The addition made to the rent-roll of the state by this procedure, amounted to about thirty lacs of rupees a year, while the machinery of investigation cost eighty lacs.

The Cole
Insurrection,
1832.

The political and military events of Lord William Bentinck's administration were of minor importance compared with those of a previous or a succeeding period, when thrones and dynasties were overthrown, and the map of India was reconstructed. There was the usual amount of chronic turbulence among the border tribes on the various points of our extensive territory, but it did not affect the stability of the empire. The Cole insurrection, however, involved operations of some magnitude. The Coles, the Dangars, the Santals, and other cognate tribes, the aborigines of the country are believed to have receded before the conquering Hindoos into the hills and fastnesses south-west of Bengal; and in that wild region they have continued for ages to maintain their primitive language, habits, and superstitions, as well

as their physical appearance and, in some cases, their wild independence. Their condition had been little affected by the political or religious revolutions in Hindostan. Of these forest tribes, some were under the loose authority of the Rajpoot zemindars who had gradually succeeded in obtaining a footing in their country. Some of them lived by the chase, but others obtained a subsistence by the rude cultivation of the open and fertile tracts embosomed in their hills. The zemindars endeavoured to improve their revenues by settling a more industrious class of farmers from Bengal and Behar on the lands, but the interlopers became an object of intense hatred to the aborigines. The cumbrous Regulations of the Bengal Presidency had unhappily been introduced into the province, to the great annoyance both of the zemindars and the ryots. The general feeling of discontent occasioned by these proceedings was exasperated by the insolence and rapacity of the Bengalee underlings who had flocked in with the establishment of our institutions, and monopolized every office. In 1832, the whole country was in a state of insurrection. The vengeance of the Coles was directed against the zemindars who oppressed them, and more especially against the foreign settlers. Their fields were laid waste, their villages given up to the flames, and more than a thousand were put to death before it was possible to assemble troops. A considerable force of horse, foot, and artillery was sent into the province. The insurgents assembled in thousands, but were armed only with bows, arrows, and axes, and the military operations were confined to scouring the country, burning down the hamlets, and endeavouring to apprehend the leaders. There was no real opposition, but great slaughter; and as none of the Company's officers were acquainted with the language of the Coles, not a few of them were cut down as they were thronging to the camp to implore mercy. All the tribes at length threw themselves on the consideration of the Government, and the troops were withdrawn. A chief of the Choars, a kindred race in the neighbouring province of Manbhoom, rose in revolt immediately after, but

an overwhelming force, consisting of no fewer than four regiments of infantry, besides irregular horse, and some guns, was poured into the country and speedily extinguished the rebellion. It was not, however, without its countervailing advantages. Lord William Bentinck was induced, in compassion to the people, to relieve them from the incubus of a code altogether unsuited to the simplicity of their habits, and he formed the districts into a non-regulation province, and placed it under the control of a Commissioner.

Insurrection of
Teetoo Meer,
1831.

Another insurrection attracted notice about the same time from the singular circumstances of its occurrence within fifteen miles of Government House in Calcutta. Syud Ahmed, a Mahomedan reformer and fanatic, of whom further particulars will be given hereafter, had collected numerous disciples in Bengal, and more particularly in the district of Baraset. The superior sanctity they assumed, the intolerance they manifested towards the Mahomedans who refused to join their sect, and their hostility to the Hindoos rendered them an object of general aversion, and some of their Hindoo zemindars had inflicted fines upon them. They made their appeal to the Magistrate, but the dilatory proceedings of his court exhausted their patience, and, under the direction of one Teetoo Meer, a Mahomedan mendicant, they took the law into their own hands. They proclaimed a religious war against the Hindoos, by the usual process of defiling a temple with the blood of a cow, and forcing its flesh down the throats of the brahmins, and constraining them to pronounce the formula of the Prophet's creed. They then proceeded to plunder and burn down villages and factories, and to put to death all who ventured to oppose them. The émeute gained strength from two ineffectual efforts on the part of the Magistrate to quell it, and in the peaceful province of Bengal, which had not seen the smoke of an enemy's camp for more than seventy years, two regiments of infantry with a body of horse and some guns were summoned to the field. They came up with the insurgents near Hooghly; a few rounds of grape

drove them into a stockade they had erected, where, contrary to all expectation, they defended themselves with great resolution for an hour, and put to death sixteen of their assailants. Many of the fanatics were slain, and the remainder made prisoners, and the insurrection subsided as rapidly as it had arisen.

Annexation of Cachar, 1832. Lord William Bentinck's administration was marked by the addition of two principalities to the Company's dominions, but of such insignificant extent as to escape observation and censure. The raja of the little province of Cachar in the hills on the north-east frontier of Bengal, had been rescued from the grasp of the Burmese in 1825, and restored to power. He was murdered in 1832, and, as he left no legitimate successor, Lord William Bentinck yielded to the general wish of the people, and gave them the benefit of the Company's government. This unnoticed nook of the great empire has since acquired a commercial importance by the application of British capital and enterprise to its improvement. The forests have been cleared, and the hills covered with tea plantations, on which large sums have been expended.

Reduction and annexation of Coorg, 1834. The conquest and annexation of Coorg was the deliberate act of the most pacific of Governors-General. This province lies on the Malabar coast, between Mysore and the sea, and comprises an area of about fifteen hundred square miles, no portion of which is less than three thousand feet above the level of the sea. The population is scanty, and the country itself had never been deemed of any importance; but circumstances have invested it with a peculiar interest. At the close of the last century, the raja was the most chivalrous character of his age in India, and defended his domains with such perseverance and gallantry against the overwhelming force of the Mysore rulers, as to obtain the hearty commendations of Lord Cornwallis and Lord Wellesley. From the latter he received the gift of a splendid sword, which was long preserved with pride among the family heir-looms.

His descendant, the princess Gourumna, came to England in company with her father, and embraced the Christian religion, the Queen standing her sponsor at the baptismal font. At the commencement of the war with Tippoo in 1791, it was deemed important by the British authorities to obtain a military position in Coorg, and a treaty was concluded with the raja, Vira Raja, which secured his assistance and the resources of his country, and granted him the guarantee of his independence on the part of the British Government. The arrangement was concluded by Mr. Taylor, the Company's agent at Tellicherry; and such were the lax notions of religion which prevailed at the Madras Presidency in those days, that he took God, the sun, the moon, and the earth to witness the execution of the deed. The raja died in 1809 and was succeeded by his brother, who bequeathed the throne to his son Vira raja in 1820. Few princes, even in India, have ever exhibited a more atrocious example of cruelty and ferocity. His first act was to put to death all those who had thwarted his views before he came to the throne. To prevent the possibility of being superseded, he directed all his royal kinsmen, twelve in number, to be taken into the jungle and decapitated. He never scrupled to take the life of any one who was obnoxious to him, and he became the object of universal dread to his courtiers and his subjects. He manifested a peculiar hatred of the British Government, and prohibited all intercourse between his people and Englishmen, which had the effect of concealing his conduct from observation. In 1832, his sister and her husband fled for their lives, and revealed the tale of his barbarities to the British Resident at Mysore, who proceeded in person to the capital, and endeavoured, but without success, to bring the raja to reason. A native envoy was then sent to remonstrate with him, but he was seized and placed in confinement. The raja, at the same time, addressed letters to the Governor of Madras, and even to the Governor-General, couched in terms of extraordinary insolence, and organized his little force for a conflict with British power. Lord William Bentinck, finding him deaf to all admonition,

resolved to treat him as a public enemy, and issued a proclamation, recounting his cruelties and oppressions, and announcing that he had ceased to reign. A force of about 6,000 men was directed to enter the country simultaneously from the east, west, north, and south, under the general command of Colonel Lindsay. Advancing from the eastward, he succeeded in penetrating the intricate and perilous defiles leading to the capital, where the mere interjection of felled trees from the neighbouring forest might have completely blocked up his path. He entered the capital and planted the British standard on its ramparts on the 6th April, 1834. But the Coorg troops resisted the divisions which were advancing into their country from other directions with the same energy and courage which had been exhibited in the defence of their independence against the veterans of Hyder and Tippoo. Two of the British columns were repeatedly repulsed by these gallant highlanders, and many officers and more than two hundred of the men fell beneath their weapons. If the generalship of the Coorg commander had corresponded with the valour of his men, the campaign might with ease have been protracted till the rains set in, in which case the British army would have been obliged to withdraw from a scene where disease would have annihilated their strength. But the raja was as cowardly as he was cruel, and surrendered to General Fraser, the political agent, who issued a proclamation, under the orders of the Governor-General, annexing the territory of Coorg to the Company's dominions "in consideration of the unanimous wish of the people." The General was an officer on the Madras establishment, and he took on himself to humour the religious notions of the Hindoos by prohibiting the slaughter of kine throughout Coorg, though he was not ignorant that the British Government—except in the fatal instance of Rangoon—had invariably refused to sanction so preposterous a concession to native prejudices. The country of Coorg was overlooked for more than twenty years, when it was discovered to be one of those mountain tracts suitable for the residence of Europeans and

the cultivation of coffee, and it has now become one of the most valuable and prosperous sections of the great national estate in India.

The policy of Lord William Bentinck in reference to the native states was regulated at first by the principle of non-interference, which was still in the ascendant in Leadenhall-street, and on which some brief remarks may not be redundant. For centuries, the idea of a paramount power in India had been so familiar to the native mind, that its existence came to be considered a matter of necessity. In his minute on the Bhurtpore crisis, Sir Charles Metcalfe had stated that the obligation to maintain the legal succession of the heir in that principality devolved on us as the supreme guardians of general tranquillity, law, and right in India. But the Court of Directors lost no time in repudiating this doctrine, and laid positive and repeated injunctions on the Government of India to abstain from all interference with the native princes, beyond what was indispensable to secure the punctual payment of their respective tributes. The British Government in India was thus placed in the unseemly position of a powerful and importunate creditor, instead of that of a beneficent guardian; and its interference with the princes had all the appearance of being regulated by its own pecuniary interests, and not by any regard for the welfare of the country. During the early period of Lord William Bentinck's government, his proceedings were shaped by the policy of the India House, of which he did not disapprove, and they form the least satisfactory portion of his administration. That policy was not, however, without an apparent justification, as a glance at the progress of events will show.

Remarks on
our position
in India, 1834.

To retain our standing in India, it was necessary to secure a position which should enable us to control the inherent elements of anarchy. There was no alternative between the decay and the aggrandizement of our power. If we had refused to advance we must have submitted to recede. This fact is clearly demonstrated in the

memorable remarks of Lord William Bentinck: "To the policy of Lord Wellesley succeeded other policy and other measures; the renunciation of conquests, the abandonment of influence and power, the maintenance of a system strictly neutral, defensive, not interfering, pacific, according to the full spirit of that enactment declaring that 'to pursue schemes of conquest and extension of dominion in India, are measures repugnant to the wish, the honour, and the policy of the nation. The impossibility of adhering to this beautiful theory was soon manifested, and subsequent events have all shown that, however moderate our views, however determined we may be not to extend our limits, it has been utterly out of our power to stand still. Such have been the restless, plundering habits which belong to this great Indian society, such its very natural jealousy and apprehension of our power, that, after a series of unprovoked aggressions, Lord Hastings at last, in 1817, brought to a completion that system of policy which the great genius and foresight of Lord Wellesley had originally planned, and would have probably accomplished twenty-five years before, had he remained in India." But it was found that the system of subsidiary and tributary alliances, while it secured our supremacy, had an inevitable tendency to render the native Governments weak and oppressive. The native prince became indolent by trusting to strangers for security, and cruel and avaricious from the assurance that he had nothing to dread from the hatred of his subjects as long as his protection was guaranteed by our irresistible power. From time immemorial the remedy for an oppressive government in India, when it had reached a point beyond the power of endurance, was a popular rebellion, the result of which was the subversion of the dynasty and the establishment of a new family on the throne. Any such remedy, however, was rendered absolutely impracticable by the presence of a British force, which supported the throne against every opponent, domestic as well as foreign. The dignity, the energy, and the capacity of the native princes withered under this parasitical connection with a paramount

power. The Court of Directors deemed it wise, if not also benevolent, to preserve these attributes of power, and to render the princes efficient instruments of Government. They considered that this object could be attained by a rigid system of non-interference in their affairs. But this theory was found as impracticable as the "beautiful theory" of Mr. Dundas, in 1783, which denounced all extension of the British dominions. During half-a-century, there was scarcely an instance of a prince, living under the safeguard of British protection, who rose above the debasing influences of the zenana, and showed any talent for governing. It was only when a native state happened to be blessed with the services of statesmen like Salar Jung, or Dinkur Rao, that the interference of the paramount power became redundant, except to defeat the intrigues for his dismissal. Circumstances were constantly arising to baffle this principle of non-interference. We found it often necessary to interpose our authority in a contest for the throne, or to prevent a course of action tending to produce a conflict of which we should have to bear the brunt. We were bound to correct a system of misrule which might lead to a failure of resources, and entail heavy responsibilities on us. Nor could we always forget that our protection of the prince from the indignation of his subjects, implied the obligation of protecting the subjects from the oppressions of the ruler. The rule of non-intervention was therefore, from the inexorable necessity of circumstances, almost as often in abeyance as in operation, and it was this vacillating policy during Lord William Bentinck's administration, which lowered the character, and diminished the usefulness of the British Government. In some cases he refused to interfere where he might have prevented disorder and misery; in others, he has been deemed to have interfered too far. At Gwalior, he declined to use his influence, and the state was brought to the verge of revolution and civil war. In Coorg, he extinguished the dynasty; in the case of Mysore, he assumed the government of the country.

Affairs of
Mysore, 1799—
1809.

The kingdom of Mysore, it will be remembered, was created out of the spoils of Tippoo by Lord Wellesley in 1799, and conferred on one of the descendants of the old royal family. This measure was strenuously opposed at the time by Sir Thomas Munro, one of the most profound statesmen the Company's service has ever produced. He advised the partition of the whole of the conquered country between the Nizam and the Company. He urged that the inhabitants had long been accustomed to the government of strangers; that they had no national spirit or antipathies to stir them up to resistance, and that they beheld a change of rulers with perfect indifference. He argued that no political advantage could be gained by dragging the descendant of the raja of Mysore from obscurity. "If," he said, "we had found a prince in captivity who had once enjoyed power, a proper regard for humanity, and the supposed prejudices of the nation in favour of one who had once been their sovereign, would no doubt have pleaded strongly for his restoration; but no such motive now calls upon us to invest the present raja, a boy of six years old, with royalty; for neither he nor his father, nor his grandfather, ever exercised or knew what it was; and long before the usurpation of Hyder, the rajas had been held as state prisoners by their delways or ministers. No attachment remains towards the family among the natives, for it has long been despised and forgotten." This communication did not reach Lord Wellesley till after he had made his arrangements for the elevation of the boy; but he did not hesitate to declare that "the territories thus placed under the nominal sovereignty of the raja of Mysore constituted substantially an integral portion of our own dominions." The treaty of cession was, therefore, made by the British Government alone, to the exclusion of the Nizam. It was, moreover, concluded with the raja personally, without that allusion to heirs and successors, which had been inserted in the treaties formed by Lord Wellesley with the Peshwa, the raja of Nagpore, the Nizam, and Sindia. This

significant omission in the case of Mysore was supplied, it has been said, by the clause which makes the treaty binding "as long as the sun and moon shall endure." This expression is employed in cases where treaties were made expressly to include heirs and successors. That portion of the conquered territory which was assigned to the Nizam and the Company was to "be held in full right and sovereignty for ever," whereas the raja of Mysore was simply "to possess the territory described." It was clearly intended by Lord Wellesley to be a personal and not an hereditary fief. The power of resuming the grant of the kingdom was reserved in the 4th article of the treaty: "Whenever the Governor-General in Council shall have reason to apprehend a failure in the funds destined for the maintenance of the military force—seven lacs of pagodas a-year—he shall have full power and right either to introduce regulations and ordinances as he shall deem expedient for the internal management and the collection of the revenues of the country, or to assume and bring under the direct management of the servants of the Company such part or parts of the territory as shall appear to him necessary to render such funds efficient and available either in peace or war." The object of this assumption was defined in the next article to be, not only "to secure the efficiency of the said military funds, but also to provide for the effective protection of the country, and the welfare of the people." In his memorandum explanatory of these two articles, Lord Wellesley said, "recollecting the inconvenience and embarrassment which have arisen to all parties concerned under the double Government and conflicting authorities in Oude, Tanjore, and the Carnatic, I resolved to restore to the Company the most extensive and indisputable powers of interposition in the internal affairs of Mysore, as well as an unlimited right of assuming the direct management of the country." The government of Mysore was placed under the management of the renowned brahmin, Poornea, the minister of Hyder and Tippoo, and he was supported by the able and active superintendence of Sir Barry Close, Mr. Webbe, and

Colonel Wilks. Under these favourable auspices the country flourished and a surplus of two crores of rupees was accumulated in the treasury.

Raja assumes the government, 1811. In 1811, the raja having attained his sixteenth year, proclaimed his own majority, and, under the

influence of his minions and flatterers, dismissed the faithful Poornea and assumed the charge of the government himself. The Resident reported that he was utterly unfit for the management of the country by the instability and the infirmities of his character, his utter disregard of truth, and his entire subservience to the influence of favourites. The government steadily deteriorated during the twenty years in which he held the reins. The accumulations of Poornea were dissipated, and all the establishments of the state fell into arrears. The administration became venal and corrupt; the highest offices were put up to sale; valuable crown lands were alienated, and new and grievous taxes were imposed. There was no security for property, and nothing worthy the name of a court of justice. This system of misrule was continued in spite of the admonitions of the Madras Government. Sir Thomas Munro, the Governor, paid a visit to Mysore in 1825, and, in a personal interview with the raja, gave him a deliberate warning that if the reform of the administration was not commenced forthwith, the direct interference of the British Government would be unavoidable. This remonstrance produced a partial improvement, but the raja soon relapsed into his old habits of prodigality and extortion. The Resident at his court subsequently renewed these expostulations, but finding them altogether unavailing, ceased to press them. Unable any longer to support the oppressions of the raja's administration, the people broke into open revolt, and in 1830 one half the kingdom was in a state of insurrection. Adventurers from the southern Mahratta country, and not a few of the Mysore constabulary, joined the standard of the insurgents and the peace and security of the Company's territories and of the Deccan were placed in jeopardy. It became necessary to send

a large British force into the field to quell the rebellion. A proclamation was issued inviting the cultivators to come into the British camp and peacefully state their grievances, with the promise that they should be redressed. The natives reposed entire confidence in the British officers, but none in those of the raja, and the insurrection at length died out.

Management of Mysore assumed by Government, 1832. Lord William Bentinck then informed the raja that though tranquillity was for the present restored, the British Government could not permit its name or its power to be identified with these acts of misrule, and was imperiously called on to supply an immediate and complete remedy. It became indispensable, therefore, with reference to the stipulations of the treaty, to interfere for the preservation of the state of Mysore, and to save the various interests at stake from further ruin. To accomplish this object he deemed it necessary to transfer the entire administration of the country to the hands of British officers, paying over to the raja the sum stipulated in the treaty, a lac of star pagodas, and a fifth of the net revenue. Under the able and honest management of those functionaries the revenues have been improved to such an extent as to give the raja, from both sources, an income of about fourteen lacs of rupees a-year. This decisive measure of Lord William Bentinck received the entire approbation of the Court of Directors. The raja entreated that the administration might still be carried on in his name, but the Court directed that it should be conducted in the name and by the sole authority of the Company. Soon after, Lord William Bentinck appointed a commission, composed of officers of high standing in the service, to investigate the causes of the outbreak which had been quelled by the British army, and he gathered from their report that the representations of oppression had been overstated. From this, among other considerations, he was led to express a doubt whether the entire assumption of the country was in strict accordance with the terms of the treaty, and he proposed to

the Court to take over in perpetuity a portion of the country sufficient for the payment of the subsidy, and to restore the remainder to the raja, subject however, to the condition that if he neglected the Government, and suffered any gross and general oppression to be practised, the Company should be at liberty to resume this portion also. But the Court of Directors refused to sanction the proposal, and decided that the assumption of the whole country was justified by the provisions of the treaty, and essential to the security of the people. The Ministry soon after confirmed and completed the arrangements by directing that the produce of Mysore should thenceforward be treated both in England and in India, as that of a British possession, and be relieved from the payment of differential duties.

Bhopal, 1833-35. In the principality of Bhopal the policy of non-intervention led to anarchy and bloodshed, which a word from the paramount authority would at any moment have prevented. About eighteen months after the alliance with this state was concluded in 1818, the amiable and accomplished nabob was accidentally killed by a pistol shot, and his widow, Secunder Begum, a woman of high spirit and great ability, assumed the responsibilities of the government, with a Christian for her prime minister, and a Mahomedan and a Hindoo as his assistants. She affianced her daughter to her nephew and adopted him as the heir to the throne; but she was unwilling to part with any portion of her power, and not only delayed the celebration of the nuptials, but refused him any share in the government after he had attained his majority. He appealed to Lord William Bentinck, who declined to interfere further than by insisting on the completion of the marriage. In the hope of strengthening her position she laid aside the restraints imposed on females by Asiatic custom, and held durbars without a screen, and appeared on horseback without a veil, to the great scandal of her people. The young nabob, finding himself still denied all authority, made his

escape from the capital and began to collect partisans. The two parties appealed to arms, and an action was fought in which the young nabob was defeated and the leaders on both sides were killed. Lord William Bentinck had by this time quitted India, and his successor, Sir Charles Metcalfe, considering that the principle of non-interference had been carried to an extreme, offered the mediation of the Government; tranquillity was immediately restored. The Begum retired to a jageer, and the youth ascended the throne. His reign however was brief, and the succession devolved on his daughter, then six years of age, who was invested with the supreme authority at the usual age, and has continued to govern the principality to the present time with extraordinary talent and success. She took great delight in manly sports, and speared and shot with all the ardour of the keenest sportsman. She was in the habit of working ten and often twelve hours a-day; she visited every district and attended minutely to the drill and discipline of her soldiers. She reformed her civil establishments, paid off the state debts, resettled her revenue, set up a new police, and organized a judicial system. Her energy is still the admiration of the country, and her administrative ability has seldom been surpassed in India. During the Mahratta and Pindaree war, her grandfather sold his jewels to maintain the contingent of troops with which he joined the British army. During the sepoy mutiny, the present Begum exhibited the ancient fidelity of her house to the British Crown, and she is the only Indian princess decorated with the Grand Cross of the "Illustrious Star of India."

Joudhpore, 1834. The same vacillating policy was exhibited in regard to the various principalities of Rajpootana, although the turbulent habits of the feudal nobles, and the vicious constitution of the government, rendered the interposition of the paramount power indispensable to their tranquillity. This will be illustrated by a reference to the transactions in Joudhpore and Jeypore. Maun Sing, the raja of Joudhpore, had been deposed by his "thakoors," or feudatory chiefs, before the Pindaree war, on account of his insanity, real or feigned; but

he recovered his power, if not his reason, in 1821, and immediately began to wreak his vengeance on them. A reconciliation was effected by the Resident in 1824, but it was of brief duration. The raja determined to retain the lands he had agreed to restore to them, and commenced a new course of spoliation. The chiefs again appealed to the British Government, but the non-interference policy was now predominant, and they were driven to seek redress by their own efforts. They raised an army of 7,000 men, and advanced to the capital with the determination to depose Maun Sing. He appealed in great alarm to Lord William Bentinck, who felt the necessity of interposition, and was disposed, for various reasons, to consider the case exceptional. The Resident was empowered to restore peace, which was effected with a stroke of the pen. But the insane violence of the raja's character broke forth afresh, and he had the temerity to insult the Governor-General by refusing, on a frivolous pretext, to attend the great durbar of all the Rajpoot chieftains, which was held at Ajmere in 1831. He allowed his tribute to fall into arrears; he gave encouragement to the robber tribes of the desert, and refused to apprehend the thugs, or to surrender the malefactors, who sought refuge in his country. A large army was, therefore, ordered to march into Marwar to bring the raja to reason, but the mere demonstration of force was found to be sufficient, and he hastened to send a deputation with his humble submission. The Rathores—the designation of this tribe—were accustomed to boast of the “hundred thousand swords” with which they had supported the throne of Akbar, and of the resistance they had offered for three years to Aurungzebe. But they quailed before the majesty of British power, and the raja's envoys meekly enquired what occasion there could be for an army when a single constable would have been sufficient to convey the commands of the Governor-General. Every demand was at once conceded.

Jeypore, 1835.

During the minority of the raja of Jeypore, his mother acted as regent, and resigned herself to the counsels of

Jotaram, a banker of the Jain sect. The haughty nobles expelled the money changer from the post of minister, and installed one of their own number, Bhyree Saul, a connection of the royal family. The regent mother embraced every opportunity of thwarting his measures and throwing the government into confusion, in the hope of embroiling him with the British authorities, and at length obtained the permission of Sir David Ochterlony to recall Jotaram. The nobles resented the indignity of having their renowned state subjected to the control of bankers and women, and a civil war appeared inevitable, when Sir Charles Metcalfe, who had succeeded Sir David, proceeded in person to Jeypore, and convened a meeting of the chiefs. The majority of them were found to favour the views of the regent ranee, and her authority was accordingly guaranteed with liberty to choose her own minister. A grand durbar was held, and the young raja, seated on the lap of Sir Charles, received the homage of the Jeypore nobility. Jotaram became the head of the administration, but it speedily fell into confusion. The revenues were misappropriated, the troops remained unpaid and became insubordinate, and the tribute to the Company was allowed to run into arrears. The Jain pursued the nobles who had opposed him with great vindictiveness, and a general spirit of disaffection pervaded the country. An appeal was made to Lord William Bentinck, to terminate the disorders of the state by the supreme authority of the British Government, but he refused to interfere. Emboldened by this reply, Jotaram attempted to confiscate the estates of Bhyree Saul. The regent ranee died soon after, having held the reins of power for ten years. Her death was followed, in 1835, by that of the raja, but not without such strong suspicions of poison that the minds of men became inflamed against Jotaram, and he was obliged to tender his resignation. The British Government accepted the guardianship of the infant heir, and the political agent who was sent to the capital was just in time to prevent a conflict between the party of the exasperated nobles and of Jotaram. The banker was directed to remove to a

distance from the capital, and as he attributed his disgrace to the Resident, he, or his partisans, hired men to assassinate him. He was assailed and wounded as he was leaving the durbar, and barely escaped with his life, but his assistant, Mr. Blake, was barbarously murdered in the streets. This attempt to apply the principle of non-interference to Jeypore kept the country in commotion for a long period, and eventually resulted in the appointment of a British agent to reside at the court, and in the establishment of a stringent control over the affairs of the state.

Oude, 1831-34. The most strenuous efforts had been made by successive Governors-General, Lord Wellesley, Lord Minto, and Lord William Bentinck, to prevail on the king of Oude to reform the administration of his country, but with little appearance of success. The king who was seated on the throne during Lord William Bentinck's government, had been brought up in the zenana, and possessed no aptitude for business; his ideas were altogether effeminate and puerile, and his life was devoted to indulgence. He entertained the deepest aversion to his father's able minister, and would have taken his life but for the protection of the Resident, Mr.—afterwards Sir Herbert—Maddock. In an able and exhaustive report upon the state of the country, Mr. Maddock represented it as in a state of decay. There was no security either for life or property, and the administration presented a constant scene of violence and oppression; scarcely a day passed in which he did not hear from his own residence in Lucknow the booming of artillery employed in the siege of forts, or in the coercion of zemindars, who never paid their rents without compulsion. The character of the native Government of Oude had, however, become the subject of party feelings, and there were not wanting men who maintained that it was cultivated like a garden, and presented a flourishing appearance. But Lord William Bentinck in his despatch to the India House, assured the Court that the representations of Mr. Maddock were corroborated by the testimony of all the officers civil or military

who had traversed the province, and that during his own journey from Lucknow to Rohilcund the whole country exhibited a melancholy picture of desolation and misery. Some of his predecessors had questioned the right of the British Government to interfere with the administration of the country, but he considered it the bounden duty of the Company to interpose for the protection of the wretched inhabitants, and constrain the king to put a stop to the arbitrary and tyrannical proceedings of his officers. He accordingly proceeded to Lucknow in 1831 and transmitted a written communication to the king, in which he insisted on the adoption of reforms, and distinctly announced that if he continued to withhold them, the entire management of the country would be taken over by the British Government, as in the cases of Tanjore and the Carnatic, and an annuity assigned for the support of the royal family.

Hakim

Mehdi, 1834.

Before this remonstrance was delivered, the king had reappointed Hakim Mehdi to the post of minister. This extraordinary man was the son of a Persian gentleman of Sheraz, who emigrated to India in search of political employment, and entered the service of Oude, in which he rapidly rose to distinction. He was one of the ministers who in 1801 vigorously but ineffectually opposed the cession of territory demanded by Lord Wellesley. He identified the prosperity of his adopted country with his own happiness, and devoted his splendid talents to the improvement of the administration, though thwarted at every step by his sovereign. During successive reigns he had amassed a princely fortune, which he expended with unbounded generosity in the town of Rampoor in the British territories, to which he had retired. It was gracefully remarked of him that the poorest man never entered his house without a welcome, or departed without relief. His liberality was not confined to his own neighbourhood. In the remote region of Cashmere, he contributed bountifully to rebuild a town, on hearing that it had been overthrown by an earthquake. There was no ostentation in his charity and no bigotry

in his creed. Lord William Bentinck pronounced him one of the ablest men in India, and as a revenue administrator unsurpassed by any officer, European or native. Having resumed charge of the government of Oude, he introduced important reforms with a vigorous hand; he reduced the amount of the assessments, organized a police, and established courts of justice. He retrenched the profligate expenditure of the zenana, curtailed the allowances of the parasites who thronged the court, and had the courage to reduce the lavish stipends of the king's uncles. But he was too radical a reformer for the meridian of Oude. The ear of the king was filled with complaints and calumnies, and he began to withdraw his confidence from his able and virtuous minister. Hakim Mehdi implored the support of the British Government, pleading the terms of the treaty of 1801, which bound the Nabob Vizier "to advise with and act in conformity to the counsel of the Company's officers," and he maintained that they were under a solemn obligation to afford it. But Lord William Bentinck, acting upon the principle of non-intervention, refused to make use of his authority, and the king soon after dismissed the minister, on the frivolous pretence that he had used disrespectful language towards his mother, and had insulted the portrait of his father. In a despatch which the Court of Directors sent to Calcutta in the early period of Lord William Bentinck's administration on the subject of Oude, they remarked that "had it not been for their connection with the country, although misrule might have attained as great a height, it would not have been of equal duration. It was the British Government which, by a systematic suppression of all attempts at resistance, had prolonged this disorganization, which became permanent when the shortsightedness and rapacity of a semi-barbarous government was armed with the military strength of a civilized one." In reply to Lord William Bentinck's minute representing the deplorable condition to which the country had been reduced, and the heavy responsibility which was thus entailed on the Company, they authorized him at

once to assume the government of Oude, if circumstances should appear to him to render it necessary. But, under the menace which Lord William Bentinck had formally administered to the king, and under the influence of some of Hakim Mehdi's reforms, the country began to present an improved appearance. The Governor-General, moreover, when he received the order of the Court to take over the administration of the country, was on the eve of quitting India, and he contented himself with communicating the substance of their instructions to the king, and with intimating to him that the execution of this order would be suspended in the hope that a spontaneous adoption of improvements would render it altogether unnecessary.

Sindia, 1833. No event of any moment occurred at the court of Sindia after the conclusion of the Mahratta war in 1818, in which he alone escaped the fate of the other princes, and retained his possessions and his power. He expired in peace and honour at Gwalior on the 21st March, 1827, at the age of forty-seven, having reigned thirty-four years. During this long and eventful period, he had witnessed a stupendous revolution of political power in India. At his accession, the Mahratta empire had reached the zenith of its glory, and he was the most powerful member of that great commonwealth, as well as the most influential and important chief in India,—second in military strength and resources only to the Company. At the time of his death, the Mahratta empire was extinct; the Peshwa, a captive, though treated with all the honours of royalty, and his kingdom, a British province. The Guickwar, the Nizam, Holkar, and the raja of Nagpore were divested of all political power, and controlled by subsidiary armies, and he himself was entirely subordinate to British authority. On his death-bed, he sent for Major Stewart, the Resident, and in reference to the future government of his kingdom, said "I wish you to do whatever you think proper." He left no son, and had invariably refused to adopt one. His widow, Baeza-bye, without whose advice he is said never to

have formed any determination, was the daughter of the famed Sirjee Rao Ghatkay, the most accomplished villain of his age. She was a woman of imperious disposition, masculine character, and inordinate ambition. She inherited all the violence of her father's temper, but was not like him either cruel or vindictive. She was constrained by the voice of the chiefs to adopt a son, and her choice fell on Junkojee, a near relative of her deceased husband, but, in the hope of prolonging her own authority, she neglected his education, and studiously withheld from him all those advantages which might prepare him for his important station. To every remonstrance on this violation of her duty she replied, "no one ever wished to qualify another for the exercise of that power which he himself wished to retain." Fretting under the restraints which she continued to impose upon him after he had attained his majority, he appealed to Lord William Bentinck, who relaxed the principle of non-interference to the extent of insisting on his being furnished with a separate seal, with which every public communication addressed to the British Government was to be authenticated. But he was still kept under the most galling control within the precincts of the palace, from which he at length succeeded in making his escape. He took refuge with the Resident, through whose mediation a reconciliation was effected, though not without great difficulty. Soon after this event, Lord William Bentinck visited Gwalior, when both parties pressed their claims on his attention, but he declined to afford any authoritative expression of his wishes, and advised the raja to be content with his present position, and await the course of events. The belligerents were, in fact, left by the Governor-General to their own exertions; the bye to retain her power as long as she was able, and the raja to wrest it from her whenever he could. The breach was thus widened, and the raja, having at length gained over some of the disciplined battalions, beleaguered the palace on the 10th July, 1833. The bye, alarmed for her personal safety, fled to her brother, Hindoo Rao, and

summoned the Resident to her assistance, but he declined to attend her. She then called up one of the brigades and was proceeding towards the Residency, when she was met by a body of the young raja's troops, and a deadly conflict would have ensued if the Resident had not hastened to the spot and interposed to prevent it. The interference of the supreme Government now became imperative, and the Resident received instructions to exercise his power and influence to compose these differences, and to prevent a civil war. He endeavoured to ascertain the state of public feeling, and finding the chiefs and other influential men of the durbār anxious to support the cause of the raja, threw the weight of his authority into that scale, and Junkojee received a letter from the Governor-General congratulating him on his accession to the throne. The bye was permitted to retire with the wealth she had accumulated to Agra, only sixty-five miles from Gwalior, but as she continued to disturb the peace of the country by her incessant intrigues, she was required to remove to Furruckabad, where she encamped with an army of followers. At the instance of the Governor-General, the Government of Gwalior agreed to allot her a large annuity, on condition of her retiring to her jageer in the Deccan, and the rapid desertion of her retainers constrained her, however reluctantly, to accede to these terms.

First symptoms
of Russophobia,
1830.

While the Government of India thus adopted the principle of non-interference in reference to the states of India which were dependent on it for support and guidance, attempts were made to establish a connection with the independent states beyond the Company's territories. The cycle of alarm had come round again. In 1808, Napoleon had obtained a paramount influence at the court of Persia, and was supposed to entertain designs on India, which the Government in London sought to counteract by forming alliances with Persia, Cabul, and Lahore. Russia had now secured the same ascendancy in Persia which the French had formerly enjoyed, and was believed to cast a hostile glance at the Company's dominions in India. The Government therefore

deemed it advisable to open up the navigation of the Indus, and obtain a commanding influence on that river, by forming defensive alliances with the independent princes on its banks, the Ameers of Sind, the Khan of Bhawalpore, and Runjeet Sing.

Progress of
Runjeet Sing,
1809—1822.

To elucidate the intercourse now established with Runjeet Sing, it is necessary to resume the narrative of his progress since the mission of Mr. Metcalfe in 1809. His government was founded on the principle of conquest, which became the vital element of its growth. Ambition is inherent in all Asiatic powers, but with Runjeet Sing the increase of territory was the one object of his life, and the improvement of his army, and the acquisition of the sinews of war, absorbed his attention to the neglect of every other branch of government. To restrain his army from turning upon himself and creating internal disturbances, it was kept in constant employ. Scarcely a year passed without some military expedition, and his troops were assembled for action at the close of the rains with the regularity of the season.

Reform of his
Army.

The wealth and energies of the Punjab were concentrated on military objects. This system was exactly suited to the martial character of the Sikh population, whom it furnished with congenial occupation, and likewise gratified with the submission of province after province to the supremacy of the Khalsa, as well as with the means of acquiring wealth. Glory and plunder thus became the chief sources of their fidelity to the crown. Runjeet Sing had been struck with the discipline and efficiency of the small escort of sepoys which accompanied Mr. Metcalfe in 1809, when they successfully repelled an assault of the Sikh fanatics, of whom he himself stood in awe, and he immediately commenced the formation of regular battalions on the model of the Company's army, by means of deserters whom he allured from its ranks. His soldiers at first manifested great reluctance to abandon their old national mode of fighting on horseback with matchlocks,

for which they had long been renowned through India; but Runjeet Sing succeeded in overcoming it by the encouragement of higher pay, by incessant attention to their drill and equipment, and by going through the military exercises in person. Through these unremitting exertions the Sikhs were at length converted into regular infantry soldiers, and admirable artillerymen, and contracted the Indian feeling of adoration of their guns.

Conquests of
Runjeet Sing,
1810—22.

Runjeet Sing, having completed the subjugation of all the Sikh chieftains who were once his equals, and brought the whole of the Punjab under one dominion, led his army in 1810 against Mooltan, which was still bound by allegiance to the throne of Cabul, but he was obliged to content himself with the exaction of two lacs of rupees. Three years later he entered into a convention with Futteh Khan, the vizier of Cabul, for a joint expedition to Cashmere, but the vizier outstripped his army, and having obtained possession of the principality, refused to share it with his ally. While the Afghan troops were thus employed in Cashmere, Runjeet Sing surreptitiously obtained possession of the district and fort of Attock on the Indus, esteemed the eastern key of Afghanistan. A battle ensued, in which Futteh Khan was completely overpowered, and the authority of Runjeet Sing was permanently extended up to that river. Soon after, Shah Soojah, the exiled monarch of Cabul, who had been for some time a captive in Cashmere, was persuaded to seek refuge with Runjeet Sing. He brought with him the far-famed diamond, the Koh-i-noor, or mountain of light, which, according to the Hindoo legends, originally belonged to the Pandoos, the mythological heroes of the Muhabharut. In the last century it was the chief ornament of the celebrated peacock throne of Delhi, which was carried away with other trophies by Nadir Shah, in 1739. On the murder of that prince and the plunder of his tents, Ahmed Shah Abdalee obtained possession of it, and it descended with his throne to his grandson, Shah Soojah. He was now within the power of Runjeet Sing, who was equally avaricious of jewels and of horses, and who subjected the Shah and his

family for several days to the torture of hunger, till he surrendered the gem. Runjeet Sing was anxious to avail himself of the name of the Shah for his own designs, and not only detained him in close custody but treated him with the greatest indignity. He succeeded at length in eluding the vigilance of his guards, and made his escape in disguise to Loodiana, where the British Government generously allowed him a pension of 50,000 rupees a-year. In 1818, Runjeet Sing led his army a second time against Mooltan, and, after a futile siege of four months, obtained possession of the citadel by a happy accident, through the temerity of one of his fanatic soldiers. It was in this year that Futteh Khan, the vizier of Mahomed Shah, the ruler of Cabul, whose energy and talent alone had kept the Afghan monarchy from dissolution, was first blinded and then barbarously murdered by the execrable Kamran, the heir apparent of the throne. Mahomed Azim, the governor of Cashmere, and one of the twenty brothers of Futteh Khan, hastened to Cabul with a large army to avenge his death. The king was obliged to fly to Herat, the only province which now remained to him of all the vast possessions of the Abdalee dynasty, and the Barukzyes, Futteh Khan's tribe, became supreme in Afghanistan. Runjeet Sing took advantage of the confusion of the times to obtain possession of Peshawur, the capital of the Afghan province lying between the Khyber pass and the Indus, but it was speedily recovered by the Afghans. The loss, however, was more than compensated by the conquest of Cashmere in the following year, with which he was so elated, as to celebrate it by illuminating Lahore and Umritsir for three successive nights. During the next two years his army was employed in wresting from the throne of Cabul the Derajat, or strip of territory, about 300 miles in length, lying between the right bank of the Indus and the Soliman range, and stretching down southwards to the borders of Sinde.

Arrival of the
French Officers,
1822.

In March, 1822, two of the French officers of Napoleon's army, Colonel Allard and Colonel Ventura, who had left Europe on the restoration of

the Bourbons, and had subsequently obtained employment under the king of Persia, made their way through Candahar and Cabul to Lahore, and after some hesitation, were received into the service of Runjeet Sing. The Sikh soldiery were distinguished by their indomitable courage, their alert obedience, and their endurance of fatigue. They were animated by a strong feeling of national enthusiasm, strengthened by a high religious fervour, every regiment having its own *grunthee*, or expounder of the sacred book, a copy of which was usually deposited near the regimental colours. Runjeet Sing had already succeeded in bringing his army up to a high standard of efficiency by his personal exertions, and by constant employment in expeditions in which they were accustomed to victory. From these French officers, and from Generals Court and Avitabile who followed them, that army now received the further improvement of European discipline and tactics, though not without exciting murmurs of discontent among the old Sikh officers, who resisted all innovations under the plea that they had conquered Cashmere, Peshawur and Mooltan without any of these new fangled manœuvres. Under the instruction of these officers the Sikh army became more effective and powerful than even the battalions which De Boigne had created for Sindia, and Raymond for the Nizam. Thus, the important design, which was sedulously pursued by Lord Wellesley, of breaking up the armies of native princes disciplined by European officers, and of providing in treaties against the renewal of the system, was completely frustrated. In a kingdom which could scarcely be said to have an existence during his administration, an army trained and commanded by European skill, more formidable than any of those which had created anxiety in his mind, arose on our northern frontier, within two hundred miles of Delhi.

Battle of Noushera. In March, 1823, Runjeet Sing advanced against
4th March, 1823. Peshawur with an army of 24,000 men, and was met at Noushera by a body of Eusufzye highlanders not exceeding 5,000, who had raised the cry of a religious war against the

infidel Sikhs. The Sikh fanatics—the Akalees, or immortals—were thus brought into conflict with the Mahomedan fanatics, and the Sikhs were completely defeated with the loss of their leader. Fresh troops were brought up, and two charges of cavalry were made, but repulsed by the Mahomedans, who were not dislodged from their position before night-fall, notwithstanding the utmost efforts of Runjeet Sing. This battle became memorable from the fact that a body of mountaineers and villagers, without any support from regular troops, but frantic with religious fanaticism, succeeded in baffling the exertions of more than four times their own number of the well-trained and disciplined Sikh troops. Runjeet Sing was ultimately left master of the field, and sacked Peshawur and plundered the country up to the mouth of the Khyber. His troops, however, had a superstitious aversion to any expedition beyond the Indus, and he did not consider it prudent, at the time, to occupy a province which would entail harassing duties on his soldiers, without contributing anything to his treasury. It was accordingly left in the hands of Yar Mahomed, the brother of Dost Mahomed, on the simple condition of his paying tribute to Lahore. In 1827, the tranquillity of the province was disturbed by Syud Ahmed, a Mahomedan fanatic, who was a petty officer of horse ten years before, in the service of Ameer Khan, the Patan freebooter, and on receiving his discharge when the army was broken up, turned reformer and pretended to have special revelations from heaven. By denouncing the irregularities which had crept into the Mahomedan ritual, and professing to restore the creed to its original simplicity and purity, he kindled into a flame that feeling of fanaticism which is always inherent in a Mussulman population. During a visit to Calcutta in 1822, he made many disciples, and then proceeded on a pilgrimage to Mecca, the centre of Mahomedan unity, and the perennial fountain of Mahomedan enthusiasm. He returned from the tomb of the prophet with feelings still more excited, and proceeding to Afghanistan proclaimed a religious war against the Sikhs. In 1827, he raised the green standard

of Islam in the Eusufzye mountains, and came down on Peshawur, but was defeated with ease by the disciplined battalions of Runjeet Sing. Two years after he repeated the invasion, when Yar Mahomed, who held the province under Runjeet Sing, was overcome and slain, but the opportune arrival of General Ventura dispersed the fanatics and saved Peshawur. In 1830, Syud Ahmed attacked Sultan Mahomed, to whom Peshawur had been granted as a fief by Runjeet Sing, and drove him out of the province, which was occupied by his followers. Elated with his success he proclaimed himself Caliph, and struck coin in the name of "Ahmed the Just, the Defender of the Faith," and not only demanded a tithe of all their property from the Eusufzyes, but began to interfere in their matrimonial arrangements. The rude inhabitants of the mountains resisted this assumption of authority, and expelled him from the country, when he retreated to Cashmere, where he was overtaken by the troops of Runjeet Sing and killed in May, 1831,—six months before his followers rose in insurrection, at a distance of fifteen hundred miles, in the neighbourhood of Calcutta.

Lord Amherst
and Runjeet
Sing—Cart
horses, 1827—
1831.

In 1827, Lord Amherst took up his residence at Simla which has now become a great and popular sanitarium. It lies within a hundred and fifty miles of Lahore, and Runjeet Sing embraced this opportunity of sending a complimentary mission, together with a magnificent tent of shawls for the King of England, which was duly presented to His Majesty by the Governor-General on his return to England. Runjeet Sing had a strong passion for horses, and thought little of despatching a military expedition to secure any of extraordinary beauty of which he might happen to receive information. Lord Ellenborough, who was then President of the Board of Control, resolved to present him in return with a team of stalwart English dray horses, and to make the conveyance of them the ostensible motive of exploring the Indus. That river was then not more known than in the days of Alexander the Great, and all our

knowledge of it was derived from the authors of antiquity. Instead, therefore, of despatching the horses by the more obvious route of the Ganges, it was determined to send them up the Indus, and to make an attempt at the same time to establish friendly relations with the chiefs on its banks. On the arrival of the horses at Bombay, Sir John Malcolm selected Lieutenant—afterwards Sir Alexander—Burnes to take charge of the mission, a duty for which he was peculiarly fitted by his knowledge of the native languages and character, his intelligence, and his ambition. Sir John also furnished up one of his old state carriages, to be presented, along with the Sinde, 1830. horses to the ruler of the Punjab. At the mouth of the Indus Lieutenant Burnes entered the territory of Sindé which had become tributary to Cabul, on the decay of the Mogul empire, but was subjugated in 1786 by the Talpooras, a tribe from Belochistan, beyond the Indus. The conquering chiefs, who were designated the Ameers of Sindé, partitioned the country among themselves, and an independent prince presided over each of its three divisions. Like all new dynasties in India they had been incessantly engaged in encroaching on the territories of their neighbours, the Afghans and the Rajpoots, and had at length succeeded in extending their sovereignty over a hundred thousand square miles. From their first establishment in the government of the country they had manifested an inveterate jealousy of the English, and rigidly prohibited all intercourse with them, as the most effectual means of securing their own independence. They had broken up the Company's factory which they found established at the ancient emporium of Tatta, and treated with invariable insolence every envoy sent to them from Bombay. The arrival of Lieutenant Burnes with the avowed design of traversing the length of the country was considered an event of evil omen, and one Beloch chief, as the mission advanced up the river, exclaimed "The mischief is done; the English have seen our country." The Ameer of Hyderabad, the capital of lower Sindé, exhibited great

hostility to Lieutenant Burnes, who was subjected to gross indignity, and twice constrained to retire from the country. The energetic remonstrance of Colonel Pottinger, the Resident in the neighbouring British province of Cutch, at length procured him a suitable reception at that court, and the means of transporting his convoy up the Indus.

Lieut. Burnes
at Lahore,
1831.

On quitting Sind he entered the territories of the khan of Bhawalpore, who welcomed him with much cordiality, and exhibited with a feeling of pride the testimonials which Mr. Elphinstone had given his grandfather, on his way to Cabul in 1809. The principality of Bhawalpore was limited in extent and far from fertile. Runjeet Sing had despoiled the prince of all his territory north of the Sutlege and would long since have absorbed the remainder, but for the restrictions of the Metcalfe treaty of 1809. On entering the Punjab, Lieutenant Burnes was met by the officers deputed to wait on him and escorted through the country with great pomp, and received at the court with ostentatious courtesy. Runjeet Sing gave him a warm embrace as he entered the durbar, and on the production of the letter with which he said he had been entrusted by the minister of the King, his master, touched the seal with his forehead, while the whole court rose to honour it. In this communication Lord Ellenborough stated that the King of England, knowing that his highness was in possession of the most beautiful horses of the most celebrated breeds in Asia, had thought that it might be agreeable to him also to possess horses of the most remarkable breed of Europe, and that his Majesty witnessed with sincere satisfaction the good understanding which had for so many years subsisted, and which God ever preserve, between the British Government and his highness. While the letter was read a salute of twenty-one guns was fired from each of sixty pieces of cannon drawn up for the occasion. During his residence at Lahore, Lieutenant Burnes was treated not only with distinguished honour in public, but with great personal kindness both by the genial

chief himself, and by all his officers, European and native. He then proceeded to Simla, where Lord William Bentinck was residing, and submitted the information he had collected respecting the commerce, the politics, and the military strength and organization of the provinces he had traversed. The Governor-General was highly gratified with the talent, zeal, and enterprize which he had exhibited in his arduous task, and directed him to return to Bombay through Afghanistan, Balkh, and Bokhara, and to explore the routes and resources of these unknown regions.

Power of Runjeet
Sing, 1831.

The greatness of Runjeet Sing had been steadily on the increase for twenty years, and the power he had now attained exceeded that of any of the native princes who had successively succumbed to the strength of our arms. The small body of cavalry, armed only with matchlocks, which was bequeathed to him by his father, had been gradually improved and expanded into a grand army, which, including the contingents of his jageerdars, consisted of no less than 82,000 men, animated by the successes of a dozen campaigns, and in part, disciplined and commanded by European officers. His artillery consisted of 376 guns, and an equal number of swivels. His annual revenue was estimated at two crores and a half of rupees, and he had accumulated ten crores in the vaults of the fortress of Govindgur, which he had erected in the neighbourhood of Umritsir, to curb the Akalees, the armed and fanatic guardians of that national shrine. Though unable to read or write, the habit of listening to papers in Persian, Punjabee, and Hindee, had given him great facility in comprehending whatever was brought before him by the able secretaries whom he had selected with great judgment, and who were obliged to be in attendance, by night as well as by day. He was the most extraordinary man of the age between Constantinople and Peking, and with the command of such an army and such resources as he had created, and with the animation of a lofty spirit of ambition, would doubtless have founded another empire in Hindostan, but for the treaty dictated by

Mr. Metcalfe in 1809, which confined him to the right bank of the Sutlege. It was this restriction which constrained him to direct his views of aggrandizement to other quarters. He had accordingly conquered Cashmere and the territories to the north of it up to the confines of Tartary; he had rendered Peshawar tributary, and extended his power up to the Khyber pass. Across the Indus he had taken possession of the Derajat, which brought him to the borders of Sinde, on which he cast

a longing eye. But though he had reached the summit of power, and was absolute throughout the Punjab, he never arrogated the invidious distinction of an independent sovereign, but both in speech and writing represented himself as the head of the Sikh Khalsa, or commonwealth, which was regarded with a feeling of superstitious devotion by the chiefs, the people, and the soldiery of the Punjab. His noble army was the army of the Khalsa; and the shout of triumph was "Victory to the Khalsa," not to Runjeet Sing. All the grand achievements of his reign were performed for the sake of Gooroo Govind, the founder of the community, in the name of God, and for the glorification of the Khalsa. There was no apprehension of any revolt against his authority during his lifetime, but it was doubtful whether the same allegiance would be paid by the Sikh barons and their followers to his son, who was utterly deficient in talent and energy, a mere purple-horn prince. In these circumstances, he considered it important to secure for his throne and his dynasty all the strength and prestige which a close alliance with the British Government, and his own recognition by the Governor-General as the chief of the Khalsa, were calculated to impart. On the other hand, Lord William Bentinck deemed it politic to manifest to the princes of India, who regarded the progress of Runjeet Sing's power with exultation and hope, that a feeling of cordiality existed between the two Governments; and it was arranged that a meeting should be held at Roopur, on the banks of the Sutlege.

The Khalsa,
1831.

Assembly at Roopur. 1831. This assembly was the most brilliant in which the representative of the Company had participated since the first establishment of their power in India. Lord William was distinguished by the simplicity of his habits, and his sincere aversion to the pageantry of power; but he considered it important on this occasion to give éclat to the meeting in the eyes of all India by a grand military display, which should likewise enable Runjeet Sing's generals to appreciate the efficiency of the various arms of our force, and gratify his own curiosity regarding their organization and equipment. He accordingly ordered up two squadrons of European lancers with their mounted band, two battalions of native infantry, two squadrons of irregular horse, and eight horse artillery guns. He descended from Simla to the encampment at Roopur on the 22nd October, and Runjeet Sing, accompanied by his brilliant court, arrived at the opposite bank of the Sutlege three days later with 10,000 of his best horse and 6,000 selected infantry. But as the time for the meeting approached, his habitual mistrust led him to entertain suspicions of treachery, and he sent for General Allard late overnight, and informed him that he could not venture to proceed across the Sutlege on the morrow. The general endeavoured to remove his apprehensions, and offered to stake his own head that there would be nothing disagreeable. The Maharaja was not satisfied with this assurance, and directed the astrologers to consult the Grunth, or sacred volume. They reported that the result of the meeting would be auspicious; but they advised him to take two apples, and present one to the Governor-General and the other to his secretary: if they were received without any hesitation it might be considered a favourable omen. Runjeet crossed the Sutlege on a bridge of boats, and in the middle of the street formed by British troops was met by Lord William Bentinck, to whom he presented the apple, which was cheerfully accepted, and all his fears were at once dissipated. He occupied the centre of the cavalcade; his nobles mounted on elephants, and decked in gorgeous

apparel, preceded and followed him, while a body of 4,000 horsemen, uniformly dressed in yellow, whom the Maharaja had cautiously brought over with him, formed the wings of the procession. He directed every movement himself with the eye and confidence of a soldier, and even in this holiday ceremonial exhibited the activity of his mind, and his wonderful talent for command. Presents of every variety, and of the most costly description, had been collected by the order of Lord William Bentinck from various parts of India, sufficient in value to efface the remembrance of Lord Ellenborough's cart horses, and Sir John Malcolm's old state carriage. Runjeet examined every article minutely with the curiosity of a child, and saw it carefully packed up under his own eye, by his master of the jewel office. The following day the Governor-General returned the visit. The spectacle was one of extraordinary splendour. Seventy elephants, richly caparisoned, advanced with the principal Sikh chieftains to meet him. The royal tents exhibited a scene of magnificence which had not been witnessed in India since the days of Aurungzebe, and which was little to have been expected among the rough soldiers of the Punjab. After passing through two triumphal arches Lord William Bentinck was conducted to a splendid pavilion, where the courtiers, resplendent with silk and jewels, were individually introduced to him. The court was shaded by a lofty arcade of yellow silk, and the floor was covered with the richest shawls and carpets which Cashmere could produce. The spacious tent behind, in which the Governor-General was received, composed of crimson velvet, yellow French satin, a sheet of inlaid pearls, and jewels of immense value, realized the highest visions of oriental grandeur. The frank manners, the free enquiries, and the lively conversation of Runjeet Sing gave an air of ease and cheerfulness to ceremonials which were usually stately and stiff. He called up and paraded before the Governor-General his favourite horses, announcing their names and their virtues with great animation. One of the dray horses was likewise brought

forward, but his huge and shaggy legs and coarse appearance formed a strong contrast with the glittering gold and crimson velvet with which his back was ornamented. A week was passed in reviews, entertainments, and displays, recalling to mind the days of Mogul magnificence, and the parties separated with an increased appreciation of each other's power. Before the encampment was broken up Runjeet Sing prevailed on Lord William Bentinck to affix his signature to a pledge of perpetual friendship, which, "like the sun, was to shine glorious in history."

Treaty with
Sinde, 1831.

Runjeet Sing had long been eager to add Sinde to his dominions, and more especially to obtain possession of Shikarpore, a commercial mart on the right bank of the Indus, of such magnitude and importance that the bills of its bankers pass current from Astracan to Calcutta. But he began to suspect that the British Government entertained designs regarding that province in opposition to his wishes, and that the transmission of the horses up the Indus, when they might have been sent with greater ease up the Ganges, was not without some political object. In a private interview with the secretaries before the Governor-General's departure, he endeavoured to sound them on the subject, and hinted at a joint expedition against the Ameers, and a partition of their dominions. Sinde, he remarked, was a rich country; the wealth accumulated in it for a century was immense; and the treasury at the capital, as Lieutenant Burnes told him, contained twenty crores of rupees; on the other hand, there was no standing army, or indeed any troops at all beside the Beloch militia. But no intimation could be extracted from their official lips of the intentions of the Governor-General, although on the very day of his arrival at Roopur he had instructed Colonel Pottinger to proceed on a mission to Sinde, for the double object of concluding a commercial treaty with the Ameers, and of watching the movements of a Persian envoy who was at the capital negotiating a matrimonial alliance with the Talpoora family, as the extension of Persian influence to the banks of the

Indus was already beginning to be identified with the progress of Russian power in the east. Colonel Pottinger reached Hyderabad in February, 1832, and found that the Ameers recoiled from the idea of a connection of any description with the Company's Government. The opening of the Indus to British trade and enterprise appeared to them fraught with indefinite danger to their independence, and they apprehended that it would not be long before the factory, as in other cases, was transformed into a cantonment. They yielded at length to the pressure of the envoy, and a treaty of commerce was concluded, the most memorable article of which was that "the contracting parties bound themselves never to look with the eye of covetousness on the possessions of each other." Within eleven years Sind was a British province. A request was at the same time made to Runjeet Sing to co-operate in opening the Sutlege to trade, which he was assured would afford him the gratification of seeing a steamboat. To this proposal he consented with great reluctance, remarking that these commercial projects of the British Government on the Indus had snatched Shikarpore from his grasp, and defeated all his views on the kingdom of Sind.

CHAPTER XXXI.

LORD WILLIAM BENTINCK'S ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS— MATERIAL PROGRESS.

Administrative Reforms, 1828—34. THE government of Lord William Bentinck stands forth in high relief in the history of British India as the era of progression. It derives its lustre from his enlightened views of domestic policy, his vigorous administrative reforms, his intrepid philanthropy, and his spirited efforts to promote the material interests of the empire. Lord Cornwallis had given form and consistence to our institutions in 1793, but there had been little attention to their improvement

since the days of Lord Wellesley, and they were daily becoming more and more effete. Great changes had taken place in the European service, and in the native community, and the whole system of judicial administration required to be recast and adapted to the progress of circumstances. For this task Lord William Bentinck was particularly adapted by the clearness of his perceptions, his freedom from traditional prejudices, and his inflexible resolution ; and he was happily aided by the counsels and co-operation of three of the ablest men whose services the Company had ever enjoyed, Mr. Butterworth Bayley, Sir Charles Metcalfe, and Mr. Holt Mackenzie. He found the course of civil justice blocked up by the lumbering waggon of the provincial courts, which he justly characterized as "resting places for those members of the service who were deemed unfit for higher responsibilities." The judicial character of the judges was, with some exceptions, the object of general contempt, and their decisions in appeal, only served to bewilder the judges of the courts subordinate to them, and to disgust the community. In regard to criminal justice their agency was simply a national grievance. They proceeded on circuit to hold the sessions twice in the year, and prisoners were kept in confinement for months before they were brought to trial. The prosecutors and witnesses were detained all this time at their own expense, and subjected to such intolerable inconvenience, while awaiting the arrival of the judges, that the concealment of crime became an object of universal solicitude throughout the country. Lord William Bentinck earned the gratitude of the public by sweeping away a class of tribunals, which combined the three great evils of delay, expense, and uncertainty. The duties of the session were, at first, entrusted to the officers he appointed Commissioners of Revenue, but finding the functions of tax-gatherer incompatible with those of a criminal judge, he transferred the duty to the judge of the district, with instructions to hold a monthly jail delivery. He entirely remodelled the system of civil judicature. A separate sudder or chief court was likewise established in

the north-west provinces, and the natives of Delhi were no longer constrained to travel a thousand miles to Calcutta to prosecute an appeal. A similar boon was likewise conferred on those provinces by the erection of a separate Board of Revenue at Allahabad, and the control of the fiscal interests of twenty-five millions of people was established in the most central position. The value of these and all the other judicial reforms of Lord William Bentinck was indefinitely enhanced by restoring to the people the inestimable boon of the use of their own vernacular language in all the courts, civil, criminal, and fiscal, to which they were amenable. The Mahomedans had imposed their own court language, the Persian, on the conquered people of India in every transaction with the state. The Company's functionaries, who had from the first manifested a strong predilection for everything that was Mussulman, retained this language in the courts, although the anomaly and the incongruity was thereby increased, inasmuch as justice was now dispensed in a language foreign not only to the parties and the witnesses, but also to the judge himself. Lord William Bentinck substituted the vernacular for the Persian in all tribunals, though not without a strenuous opposition from the conservatism of the civilians.

Revenue settle-
ment, N. W.
Provinces, 1833.

The merit of the settlement in the north-west provinces belongs to Lord William Bentinck's administration. On the acquisition of those provinces, consisting of the districts in Oude ceded by the Nabob Vizier, and the districts in the Dooab conquered from Sindia, Lord Wellesley pledged himself to grant them a permanent settlement of the land revenue, but it was repudiated by the Court of Directors, who ordered it to be limited to five years. This was a death blow to all agricultural improvement. Any attempt by the landlord to improve his estates only exposed him to the risk of an increased assessment, and as the period of revision approached he felt it to be his interest to fill up wells, and to neglect cultivation. An effort was at length made by Mr. Holt Mackenzie, the secretary to the Government

in the territorial department, a man of broad and liberal views and great earnestness, to grapple with this large question, and he produced the celebrated Regulation VII, of 1822, a monument of skill and industry, of which any statesman might justly be proud. It was based on mature knowledge and sound and equitable principles, but it was unfortunately too complicated in its details to work well, and it imposed unlimited duties on a limited agency. The collectors disrelished the laborious task imposed on them, and performed it in a perfunctory manner. Some of them affirmed that a period of twenty years, and others that a whole century would be necessary to complete the settlement in the mode required. The Board of Revenue when asked what progress had been made in it, replied that they knew nothing about the matter. At the end of ten years it was found that the work chalked out by the Regulation was scarcely begun. Lord William Bentinck was resolved to remove the opprobrium of this neglect from our administration, and after a residence of two years in Calcutta, made a tour of the north-west provinces, and during his progress invited the revenue officers of the various districts to his tents to discuss the question of the settlement. After obtaining all the information within his reach, he examined the subject in all its bearings during his residence at Simla, and on his return to Calcutta held a meeting at Allahabad of the Revenue Board and the most eminent officers in the department, when the question was fully discussed and finally settled, and the Regulation which resulted from these consultations was passed in Council, after his arrival in Calcutta, in March, 1833.

The new settlement possessed the great merit of simplicity. It dispensed with many of the elaborate enquiries of the former Regulation, which, however useful, were not deemed essential to a fair adjustment of the claims of the state. The area of each village was to be surveyed by European officers and recorded in a map, while each individual field was measured by native officers and entered in the village register. Without a minute

Plan of settlement—Robert Bird, 1833.

classification of soils, the proportion of cultivated, culturable, and waste lands, together with every circumstance which could affect the cultivation, was duly recorded. The Collector was required to decide all questions of disputed boundaries on the spot, with the aid of native assessors, and the most prolific source of litigation and misery in India was thus dammed up. All judicial questions which might arise in the course of his proceedings were determined with the aid of the punchayet, the ancient and time-honoured jury of five, in which the natives reposed such unbounded confidence as to believe that "where the *punj* is, there is God." The assessment was fixed by the Collector, after an impartial investigation, and a free and friendly communication with the people, and the settlement was then made for a period of thirty years, either with the ryots individually, or with the landholder, or with the village community, as the case might be. The Collector was assisted by a body of uncovenanted deputies with liberal allowances, and their office was thrown open to the natives of the country, without reference to caste or creed. The general control of these operations was committed to Mr. Robert Bird, the ablest financial officer in the service since the days of Sir John Shore. He possessed a large grasp of mind, and combined an intimate knowledge of the system of land tenures in the north-west, with indomitable energy, and that sternness of purpose which is indispensable in any great and difficult undertaking. He was allowed to select his own subordinates, and the zeal and ability they displayed did no little credit to his discernment, while the honour of having served under him was considered a distinction for life. Under such auspices, and with such instruments, the settlement was brought to a termination within ten years. It embraced an area of 72,000 square miles, and a population of 23,000,000. It was the greatest fiscal achievement of the Company's Government. The first settlement had ruined those for whose benefit it was devised, the last saved millions of much enduring men from misery and ruin. The labours of the renowned Toder Mull, under the

illustrious Akbar, in the department of revenue settlements which historians have never ceased to applaud, were rivalled, if not eclipsed by those of Robert Bird; but there was no public recognition of the services of one who had conferred such inestimable blessings on a country as large and populous as Great Britain. He was only a Company's servant, and the scene of his duties lay in India, and he was allowed to pass into obscurity on his return to his native land, and sink into the grave without the slightest mark of distinction.

But the measure which above all others has endeared the memory of Lord William Bentinck to the natives of India, is that which he inaugurated of introducing them to honourable employment in the public service. Allusion has been made in a former chapter to the cardinal error of Lord Cornwallis's policy, that of excluding them from every office except the lowest and the worst paid. This exclusion was fortified by the peculiar constitution of the Company, which remunerated the Court of Directors for their labours in the government of India by patronage, and not by money, and thus created a strong tendency to secure the monopoly of offices to their nominees. It would be difficult to discover in history another instance of this ostracism of a whole people. The grandsons of the Gauls who resisted Cæsar became Roman senators. The grandsons of the Rajpoots who opposed Baber in his attempt to establish the Mogul power, and at the battle of Biana all but nipped his enterprise in the bud, were employed by his grandson Akbar in the government of provinces and the command of armies, and they fought valiantly for him on the shores of the bay of Bengal and on the banks of the Oxus. They rewarded his confidence by unshaken loyalty to his throne, even when it was endangered by the conspiracies of his own Mahomedan satraps. But wherever our sovereignty was established in India, the path of honourable ambition and every prospect of fame, wealth, and power was at once closed on the natives of the country. This proscription was rendered the more galling by comparison with the practice of the native

courts around, where the highest prizes of power were open to universal competition. The contrast was, moreover, aggravated by the fact that the native princes themselves, the Nizam and Tippoo, Sindia and Holkar, and Runjeet Sing, adopted a more liberal policy, and freely entrusted offices of the highest responsibility, both military and political, to European foreigners. No benefit which we might confer on the country could be deemed an adequate compensation for the loss of all share in the government, one of the highest and most honourable aspirations of humanity. It was vain to expect any attachment to our rule when even the best affected of our native subjects could see no remedy for this degradation but in the subversion of our government. The enlargement of the native mind by education only served to augment the evil, by sharpening expectations which could not be gratified. The argument for this policy was based on a notion of the administrative superiority of Englishmen, and a persuasion of the utter unfitness of the natives for any of the functions of government, mingled with a dread that their venality would be injurious to the administration. It seemed to be forgotten that it was idle to hope for any improvement in the character of the natives while they were excluded from all places of trust and influence, and left without any object of pursuit but the gratification of their own passions. Some feeble attempts had been made in preceding administrations to modify the system, but they were not based on any broad and generous principle, and were intended simply to relieve the labours of the Company's favourite officers of the civil service. Lord William Bentinck brought with him to India a deep conviction of the viciousness of this policy, and a determination "to throw open the doors of distinction to the natives, and grant them a full participation in all the honours and emoluments of the state." As far back as 1824, the Court of Directors had expressed their conviction that to secure promptitude in the administration of justice, native functionaries must be employed to dispose of all suits, of whatever description and amount.

The leading members of Government were fully prepared to abandon the Cornwallis doctrine, and to give the natives an interest in the stability of our government by giving them a share in the management of it. But it required an intrepid reformer like Lord William Bentinck at the head of the government, to carry out these large views. This liberal policy was inaugurated by the Regulations of 1831, which completely reconstructed the legal establishments of the Bengal Presidency, and entrusted the primary jurisdiction of all suits, of whatever character or amount, not excluding those instituted against Government, to native agency. The new system provided for three grades of native judges, the highest that of Principal Sudder Ameen, on 500 rupees a-month, subsequently raised to 750, which is still egregiously inadequate to the position and responsibilities of the office. The principle of employing natives in important offices was gradually extended to other departments, and it has resulted in imparting a degree of vigour and popularity to the British administration which it never enjoyed before. So greatly indeed has this privilege been appreciated by the natives, that there is some risk of their losing the manly feeling of independence in their great eagerness for public employ. The policy introduced by Lord William Bentinck has been zealously and nobly followed up by his successors. New paths of distinction have been opened to native ambition, and a native judge now sits on the bench of the highest court in Calcutta, and natives of rank and influence occupy seats in the Legislative Council.

Suttees, 1830. The most benignant and memorable act of Lord

William Bentinck's administration was the abolition of Suttees. Some have questioned whether this atrocious rite could be traced to a religious origin, but it was always consecrated by the solemnities of religion, and it has been practised for twenty centuries, in a greater or less degree, wherever Hindooism has been professed. Even in Bali, one of the remote islands of the Eastern Archipelago, where the Hindoo faith still lingers, no fewer than seventy widows were burnt alive

towards the close of the last century, with the body of one of the rajas. It was discouraged and sometimes prohibited by the Mahomedans, and Akbar himself on one occasion, issued from his palace on horseback and rescued a victim from the pile. The first effort to interfere with it under the Company's Government was made by Mr. George Udny, the friend and associate of Sir John Shore, and by Dr. Carey. Lord Wellesley to whom they presented an address, was then on the eve of quitting the Government, but he recorded a minute in favour of abolishing the rite, stating "that it was one of the fundamental maxims of the British Government to consult the opinions, customs, and prejudices of the natives, but only when they were consistent with the principles of humanity, morality and reason." The Sudder Court, however, put back the cause of abolition in 1810, by issuing a Circular Order setting forth the circumstances in which the act was to be considered illegal, on which Mr. Courtenay Smith, one of the greatest men who ever adorned the bench of that court, asserted that "these orders had only served to spread and confirm this execrable usage." On this and every subsequent attempt to lessen the evil by regulating it, the Court of Directors justly remarked that such measures tended rather to increase than to diminish the practice, and that, by prohibiting it in certain cases, the Government appeared to sanction it in all others, and was thus made an ostensible party to the sacrifice. The Bombay Government committed a still more fatal error in employing one of its European officers to construct the pile in order to give the unhappy victim an opportunity of escape, if she was unable to sustain the torture of the flames. Subsequent to 1820 the question was discussed with increasing earnestness in England and in India, but some of the most distinguished of the public officers, Mr. Colebrooke, Mr. Mountstewart Elphinstone, and Colonel Sutherland, shrunk from the bold proposal of a direct prohibition, and some went so far as to assert that it would violate the rule of toleration to which our Government owed its stability. In 1823, the Court of Directors sent a

despatch to India, in which all the arguments which had been adduced against the abolition were earnestly and sincerely combated, and the question was referred to the consideration of the local Government, with an implied expression of the gratification it would afford them to learn that the rite could be safely abolished. Lord Amherst consulted the most eminent of the Government servants, but the diversity of the opinions they expressed only served to increase his embarrassment. Mr. Courtenay Smith and Mr. Alexander Ross boldly urged the immediate and peremptory prohibition of the rite. Mr. Harington, who had been for a quarter of a century a great authority on all local questions, and who was withal a man of strong religious feelings, considered that the rite could be extinguished only by a gradual improvement among the people through the dissemination of moral instruction. Lord Amherst was obliged to inform the Court that he could not, in such circumstances, recommend the absolute interdiction of it under legal penalties, but he trusted to the diffusion of knowledge then in progress for the eventual suppression of "this detestable superstition." In July, 1827, the Court placed the question in the hands of the Governor-General, requesting him, after serious deliberation, to determine in what degree the ordinary course of civilization could be accelerated by a judicious and seasonable interposition of authority.

Lord William
Bentinck's
enquiries, 1829.

Such was the position of this question when Lord William Bentinck landed in Calcutta, feeling, as he said, the dreadful responsibility hanging over his head, in this world and the next, if, as the Governor-General of India, he was to consent to the continuation of this practice one moment longer, not than our security, but than the real happiness and permanent welfare of the native population rendered indispensable. He resolved to take up the question without any delay, and "come to as early a determination as a mature consideration would allow," and "having made that determination, to stand by it, yea or no, and set his conscience at rest." Immediately after his arrival, he

circulated a confidential communication among fifty or sixty of the chief military and civil officers of Government, requiring their opinion as to the effect which the abolition of "this impious and inhuman sacrifice not of one but of thousands of victims," was likely to produce in the native community generally, and on the minds of the sepoys in particular. The majority of the officers in the army asserted that the immediate and peremptory abolition of the practice would create no alarm among the native troops. Of the civil functionaries, three fourths advocated its positive prohibition. The most strenuous advocate for non-interference was the eminent orientalist, Dr. Horace Wilson, whose literary pursuits had imparted a strong oriental bias to his sympathies, and who was the great patron, and the idol, of pundits and brahmins. He affirmed that the practice could not be abolished without doing violence to the conscientious belief of every order of Hindoos; that it would be a direct interference with their religion, and an infringement of the pledge we had given them to support it; that it would diffuse a detestation of British authority, create extensive dissatisfaction and distrust, and alienate the affections of the people. The warmest advocate of abolition was Mr.—afterwards Sir William—Macnaghten, second, as an orientalist, only to Dr. Wilson. He admitted that, according to the notions of the Hindoos, the sacrifice of suttee was a religious act of the highest merit, and that it was unjust as well as unwise to interfere with religious creeds, however absurd. "Let the Hindoo," he said, "believe in his three hundred and thirty millions of gods until it may please the Almighty to reclaim him from his idolatry; but let him not immolate thousands of helpless females on the altar of fanaticism, in defiance of the eternal laws of nature and the immutable principles of justice." He ridiculed the phantom of danger: "Under the Mahomedans, the Hindoos tamely endured all sorts of insults to their religion and violation of their prejudices. Their temples were polluted and destroyed, and many were constrained to become Mussulmans, yet there

was no general organized disaffection. The rite was not respected by the hardy and warlike Hindoos of the north-west, but by the sleek and timid inhabitants of Bengal, the fat and greasy citizens of Calcutta, whose very existence depended on the prosperity of the British Government."

Abolition of
Suttee, 1830.

Fortified by the opinion of the most experienced and the most liberal minded men in the service, and confident of the support of the Court of Directors, Lord William Bentinck and his two counsellors, Mr. Butterworth Bayley and Sir Charles Metcalfe, on the 14th of December, 1829, passed that celebrated Regulation which "declared the practice of Suttee illegal and punishable by the criminal courts as culpable homicide." Thus by one bold and resolute effort, a practice which had polluted India from the remotest antiquity, was extinguished under the flag of England, and for the first time since the introduction of Hindooism, "the Ganges flowed unblooded to the sea." Twenty-five attempts at suttee were made after the passing of the Regulation, but they were prevented by the simple interposition of the police. Not the slightest feeling of alarm, still less of resentment, was exhibited in the army, or in the country. In the course of a few years, the practice became a matter of history like the sacrifice of children at Saugor, and the enlightened Hindoo of the present day looks back on this barbarous custom with the same feelings with which Englishmen look back on the human sacrifices of the Druids. Lord William Bentinck was enabled within a twelvemonth to assure the Directors that there never was a greater bugbear than the fear of revolt. The only circle in which the abolition created any sensation was that of the rich and orthodox baboos of Calcutta, who resented the decision of Government, and more especially the promptitude with which it had been carried into execution, as it deprived them of the gratification of obstructing it. They drew up a petition to the Government in which the fine Roman hand of their European counsellor was distinctly visible, demanding the restoration of the rite as part and parcel

of Hindooism, with which Parliament had pledged itself not to interfere. The native organ of the party in his weekly journal affirmed that the signatories to the petition for restoring the "sacred rite of Suttee" included "the learned, the wealthy, the virtuous, the noble, the polite, and the mild." But Lord William Bentinck turned a deaf ear to every remonstrance, and refused to suspend the Regulation for a moment. A memorial was then drawn up to the Privy Council in England, appealing against the proceedings of the Government of India, because they contravened the Act of Parliament which ordained that "nothing done in consequence of the rule of the caste should be held to be a crime though not justifiable by the laws of England." The appeal was taken into consideration in June 1832, and the venerable Lord Wellesley, the first Governor-General who had recorded his condemnation of the rite, had the high gratification of assisting in dismissing the petition, and in giving to this sublime act of humanity the sanction of the highest tribunal in the British empire.

Hindoo Law of
Inheritance,
1832.

To Lord William Bentinck is also due the merit of having established the rights of conscience in India.

To prevent defections from Hindooism, the Hindoo legislators had enacted that ancestral property should descend only to those who performed the funeral obsequies of a deceased parent or relative, according to the rule of the shasters, and the man who renounced the Hindoo creed, was thus consigned to poverty. The Mahomedans, who were enjoined to propagate their religion by the sword, treated this injunction with profound contempt. No Hindoo was ever permitted to occupy a seat on the bench during their supremacy, and the Mahomedan judges, who rejected Hindoo law, were not likely to deprive a proselyte to their own creed of his patrimony. Mr. Hastings, in a spirit of liberality, guaranteed to the Hindoos and Mussulmans the enjoyment of their own laws of inheritance in his first code of 1772. This equitable rule was subsequently re-enacted both in England and in India, by those who were as ignorant as Mr. Hastings was of the intolerant

character of the Hindoo law of property to which they were giving a British sanction. Lord William Bentinck resolved to relieve the Government from the odium of countenancing this illiberal law and, to avoid a fanatical opposition, took advantage of the occasion of remodelling and re-enacting several existing regulations, quietly to introduce a clause which provided that "the Hindoo and Mahomedan law of inheritance should apply only to those who were *bond fide* professors of those religions at the time of its application." The law was passed without observation, and the tendency of it to restore liberty of conscience was not discovered by the bigoted Hindoos till it came into operation, when it was found to be too late to demand its repeal. In the same spirit of liberality he abrogated another rule, equally unjust, but of our own

Admission of
native Christians
to office, 1831.

creation. The Mahomedans had encouraged proselytism by the bestowal of honours and estates and titles, and some of the most eminent of their provincial governors—among others the great Moorshed-kooly-khan, the founder of Moorshedabad—were converts from Hindooism. The Company and their servants in India, from that dread of offending native prejudices, which, though in some cases judicious and prudent, too often led to the toleration of evil, had run into the opposite extreme, and expressly debarred native converts to Christianity from holding any post, however humble, under their government. Lord William Bentinck was determined to extinguish this disreputable anomaly, and in the same Regulation which threw open the public service to the natives of the country, ordained that there should be no exclusion from office on account of caste, creed, or nation. The publication of this enactment demonstrated the egregious error into which the Government had fallen by supposing that the unnatural stigma they had cast on their own creed, would tend to conciliate and gratify the Hindoos. Those who had been most clamorous for the restoration of suttee were the first to come forward and applaud this act of liberality and justice.

Suppression of Thuggee, 1830. It was during the administration of Lord William Bentinck that the first energetic measures were adopted to extirpate the Thugs, a fraternity of hereditary assassins, who subsisted on the plunder of the victims they strangled. Few districts were without resident Thugs, but they generally adopted the occupation of agriculturists to conceal their nefarious profession, and no district was free from their depredations. They were in the habit of quitting their homes in a body, leaving their wives and their children in the village. They generally attached themselves, as if by accident, to the travellers they met, from whom they obtained such information as they required, by a free and cheerful intercourse. On reaching some spot suited to their purpose, a strip of cloth, or an unfolded turban, was suddenly thrown around the neck of the victim, the ends of which were crossed and drawn tight till he ceased to breathe. His body was then rifled and thrown into a pit hastily dug with a pickaxe which had been consecrated by religious ceremonies. The Thugs were bound to secrecy by solemn oaths, and recognized each other by peculiar signs and a slang vocabulary. They considered themselves as acting under the immediate auspices of the deity, and had a special veneration for Doorga, the tutelary goddess of vagabonds, thieves, and murderers. They observed her festivals with superstitious punctuality, and presented offerings at her most celebrated shrines in various parts of the country. They had a firm confidence in signs and omens, and endeavoured through them to ascertain her pleasure regarding their expeditions, and considered themselves as acting under a divine commission when they were favourable. The gangs were recruited with juvenile apprentices, who were gradually and cautiously initiated into the mysteries of the profession by one of the elders, who was ever after regarded in the light of a spiritual guide. The number of their victims in the year was counted by thousands. The subordinate native chiefs and officers in Central India, as well as the zemindars and policemen in our own provinces, to whom they were well

known, connived at their practices on the condition of sharing their plunder. The establishment of British functionaries in the native states first brought this atrocious system to light, and some feeble and ineffectual efforts were made to eradicate it. Lord William Bentinck was resolved to spare no exertion to deliver India from this scourge. With this view, he created a special department for the suppression of Thuggee, and placed it under the direction of Major—afterwards Sir William—Sleeman, whose name is inseparably associated in the annals of British India with this mission of humanity. He threw his whole soul into the work, and organized a comprehensive system of operations, which embraced every province; by means of approvers who turned king's evidence, he obtained a complete clue to the proceedings and movements of the whole fraternity, as well as the means of identifying its members, and was thus enabled, with the efficient staff of officers whom he had the discernment to select, to take the field simultaneously against the various gangs in every direction. It was not among the least important results of the establishment of one paramount authority throughout the continent of India, that the officers in this department were enabled to hunt the Thugs without impediment from province to province, whether under British or native rule, and to leave them no prospect of shelter in any district. In the course of six years, two thousand of these miscreants were arrested and tried, and three fourths of them sentenced to imprisonment, transportation, or death. The confederacy was effectually broken up, and travelling in India ceased to be dangerous. These efforts were crowned by the establishment of a school of industry at Jubbulpore, for the Thugs who had turned approvers, and for the children of convicted offenders. The men were ignorant of any trade save robbery and murder, but in the factory they were instructed in every branch of manufacture, and became skilled artisans, capable of earning an honest livelihood by their labour. The children, instead of being trained to crime, were taught the rudiments of learning

and trade, and fitted to become useful members of society. The scene of cheerful and industrious activity which the institution exhibited, viewed in contrast with the former occupation of its inmates, was calculated to afford the most grateful reflections to the mind of the philanthropist.

Steam communication, 1830-34. The attention of Lord William Bentinck immediately after his arrival was devoted to the establishment of steam communication on the Ganges, and between India and England. Under his directions two vessels were built in Calcutta and fitted up with engines imported from England, and they performed in the brief period of three weeks the distance of eight hundred miles between Calcutta and Allahabad, which had ordinarily occupied three months. The success of this experiment induced him to press the completion of a steam fleet on the Court of Directors, and they responded to his wishes with a laudable alacrity. The system of steam navigation on the rivers in Hindostan was thus fully established under the auspices of Government, and eventually transferred to private enterprise. A still more important object with the Governor-General was the abridgment of the voyage between England and India, which he endeavoured to promote with untiring ardour. A considerable fund had been raised for this object in Calcutta as early as 1823, and a premium was offered for any steamer which should perform the voyage between the two countries within seventy days. The "Enterprise," commanded by Captain Johnson, was the first to compete for the premium, but she was a hundred and thirteen days in reaching Calcutta from Falmouth. The route by the Cape was consequently considered unsuited to the object. An attempt was then made by the King's Government, under the direction of Colonel Chesney, to open a communication by way of the Euphrates and the Persian Gulf, but the obstacles were found to be insuperable. It remained therefore to make an experiment by the Red Sea, and Lord William Bentinck directed the "Hugh Lindsay," a small steamer of four hundred tons, built for Government at

Bombay, to be despatched from that port on the 20th March, 1830, to Suez which she reached in a month. Three other voyages were subsequently performed by that vessel, and it was clearly demonstrated that, with suitable arrangements in the Mediterranean, the voyage from Bombay to England might be accomplished with ease in fifty-five days. But the Court of Directors raised an objection to these experiments on the score of the great expense they entailed. Lord William Bentinck replied that the revenues of India could not, in his estimation, be appropriated to any object more conducive to the good of both countries than that of bringing them into close communication with each other. The Chairman of the Court, however, questioned whether the end in view would be worth the probable expenditure, and the India House at length positively prohibited any further employment of the "Hugh Lindsay" for the conveyance of mails. The subject was soon after brought before the House of Commons, and the committee appointed to investigate it reported that a regular and expeditious communication by steam between England and India was an object of national importance, and that measures ought to be immediately adopted to establish it by way of the Red Sea, at the joint expense of the Company and the Crown. The indifference of the India House was overruled by the higher authority of Parliament, and the "Hugh Lindsay" was again put in requisition and despatched with the mails to Suez, but the Court of Directors were lukewarm on the subject, and the enterprise, conducted without spirit, fell again into abeyance. A subscription was likewise raised at the three Presidencies to the extent of three lacs of rupees for the promotion of this object, but the plans which were devised proved abortive.

The Peninsular and Oriental Company, 1842. It was reserved for the Peninsular and Oriental Company to carry to a successful issue the comprehensive views to which Lord William Bentinck had devoted his attention, both in India and after his return to England. This Company, which was originally established for service to the ports in the Peninsula, was encouraged by a

Royal charter to extend its labours to India. Commencing with a small capital and a limited object, it has gradually grown up, by a rare combination of enterprise, prudence, and perseverance, into a great national undertaking. During the quarter of a century which has elapsed since its first vessel was despatched to Calcutta in 1843, the sphere of its operations has been expanded till it embraces the whole of the eastern hemisphere. Its fleet, second only to the navies of England, France, and America, now comprises more than sixty steamers, aggregating 100,000 tons, with 20,000 horse-power. By these powerful vessels passengers, letters, books, and merchandise are conveyed, week after week, over 11,000 miles of sea to the extreme points of Sydney in Australia, and Yokohama in Japan; and the voyages are performed with a degree of speed and punctuality which would have appeared fabulous half a century ago. Mails starting from different and distant extremities have traversed half the globe and reached their destination in England, simultaneously, within an hour and a half of their appointed time. The importance of this enterprise of a private company to the interests of the mother country, and her eastern dependencies, it would be difficult to overrate. It has given a character of solidity and compactness to the British empire in the Eastern world, which enables us to contemplate its expansion without any feeling of apprehension. It has linked the most distant countries of the east with the European world, and for the first time after the lapse of more than twenty centuries, given full effect to the views of Alexander the Great when he founded Alexandria, and destined it to be the highway between Europe and Asia. It has covered the Red Sea with steamers, and converted it into an English lake. It has given a political importance to the land of the Pharaohs, which constrains England to consider the maintenance of its independence, even at the hazard of war, an indispensable article of national policy. The empire of India belongs to the nearest European power, and it is the enterprise of this Company which has conferred the advantage of this position on

England. Our base of operations in Asia is the sea, but while transports were four or five months going round the Cape, our interests were always exposed to adverse contingencies. It is the spirited exertions of this Company which have brought the ports of India within four weeks' reach of the resources of England, and completed our ascendancy in the east.

Education;
Orientalism,
1813—33.

The cause of education received a fresh impulse as well as a beneficial direction during Lord William Bentinck's administration. The earliest movement of Government towards the intellectual improvement of India dates from the year 1813, when on the motion of Mr. Robert Percy Smith, who had been Advocate-General in Calcutta, and, as usual, obtained a seat in Parliament on his return, a rider was added to the India Bill, directing that a lac of rupees should be appropriated "to the revival and promotion of literature, and the encouragement of the learned natives of India, and for the introduction and promotion of a knowledge of the sciences among the inhabitants of the British territories out of any surplus which might remain of the rents, revenues, and profits of our territorial acquisitions." This vote was interpreted both in Leadenhall Street and in Calcutta to apply chiefly to the revival and encouragement of Hindoo and Mahomedan literature; and, considering the brahminised feelings of the period of Mr. Smith's residence in Calcutta, there can be little doubt that the grant was intended primarily, though not exclusively, for that object. During Lord Minto's administration, the only public money expended in education was devoted to the establishment of Hindoo colleges, with the view, as the Government stated, of giving the people the benefit of the beautiful morality embodied in the shasters. Mr. Dowdeswell, the superintendent of police in the lower provinces, had stated in his report, that he could not expect to obtain credit for his narrative of a thousandth part of the atrocities of the *dacoits*, but the only remedy he could propose was that the institutions of Mahomedanism and Hindooism should be revived, and gradually moulded into a system of

instruction for these banditti. The fund voted by Parliament was allowed to accumulate for ten years, when Mr. Adam distinguished his brief tenure of office in 1823 by appointing a Committee of public instruction to suggest measures for the better education of the people in useful knowledge, and the arts and sciences of Europe, and for the improvement of public morals. This enlightened movement was soon after strengthened by the receipt of an unexpected despatch from Leadenhall Street. Seven years before this period, Lord Hastings had suggested to Mr. Charles Grant the propriety of appropriating the Parliamentary grant to the support of schools rather than of Hindoo colleges. Mr. Grant replied that there had always been in the Direction men of influence opposed to the intellectual improvement of the natives; they were gradually dying out, but it would still be premature to urge the course which the Governor-General proposed. But Mr. James Mill, the historian, the advocate of all liberal principles, now occupied an important position in the India office, where he had acquired that influence which is naturally exercised by a great mind. A proposal had been received from the Government of India to improve the Hindoo college at Benares, and the Mahomedan college in Calcutta, and to add to them a Hindoo college in the metropolis. It fell to Mr. Mill to draft the reply to this despatch, and he stated that "in professing to establish seminaries for the purpose of teaching mere Hindoo or mere Mahomedan literature, the Government bound itself to teach a great deal of what was frivolous, not a little of what was purely mischievous, and a small remainder indeed in which utility was in any way concerned. The great end of Government should be, not to teach Hindoo or Mahomedan learning, but useful learning." But Orientalism was still supreme in Calcutta. High attainments in Sanscrit and Arabic formed the surest road to promotion and honour in the public service, and the leading members of Government were naturally partial to the cultivation of those studies which had raised them to distinction. The education department, more-

over, was under the absolute control of Dr. Horace Wilson, the great champion of native literature and institutions. The Parliamentary grant was accordingly—with some trifling exceptions to save appearances—devoted for ten years longer to the promotion of studies, of which the mode, the medium, and the scope were altogether oriental in their character, and designed to conciliate old prejudices, and to perpetuate old ideas.

Meanwhile, a predilection for English was rapidly spreading among the natives in and around the metropolis, and a demand for instruction in that language, and the acquisition of European science, was pressed with increased earnestness on the attention of the Board of Education. The Board itself was divided into two hostile parties; the Orientalists, headed by Dr. Wilson, who deprecated any interference with the patronage of Hindoo literature, and the Anglicists, as they were termed, the advocates of a European education through the medium of English, who were animated by the energy and the counsels of Mr.—now Sir Charles—Trevelyan, to whom the country is under lasting obligations for his untiring zeal at this critical period in the cause of sound and liberal education. The division in the Board brought its operations to a dead lock, and an appeal was made to Government. Mr. Macaulay, the greatest English classic of the age, was now a member of the Supreme Council, as well as President of the Board of Education, and he denounced with irresistible force the continued promotion of Orientalism, as tending, not to support the progress of truth but to delay the death of expiring error. “We are at present,” he said, “a Board for printing books which are of less value than the paper on which they are printed was when it was blank, and for giving artificial encouragement to absurd history, absurd metaphysics, absurd physics, and absurd theology.” The question was brought to an issue on the 7th March, 1835, by the resolution of the Governor-General in Council, that “the great object of the British Government

ought to be the promotion of European literature and science among the natives of India, and that the funds appropriated to education would be best employed on English education alone." No college or school of oriental learning was, however, to be abolished, while the natives were inclined to avail themselves of it; the stipends to the teachers and students were to be continued, but not renewed; and the publication of oriental works and of translations of medical and mathematical works into Arabic, which neither the teachers nor pupils could comprehend, was at once discontinued.

Remarks on this measure, 1834. This resolution encountered a stern opposition, and the Asiatic Societies in Calcutta and in London,

as well as on the Continent, came forward to deprecate it as a severe discouragement of the cultivation of oriental literature. The design of these associations was to prosecute researches into the history, antiquities, and literature of the east, and to unfold the ancient records of Asia to the European world. It was the unquestionable duty of a liberal Government to patronize such labours, and to make suitable provision from the public funds for the preservation of the ancient monuments of Indian civilization, whether in stone or manuscript; but it was a dereliction of duty to divert to the promotion of this object the scanty funds allotted to the education and improvement of the people. Nor was the patronage of the state necessary to the maintenance of Hindoo learning. It had continued to flourish for centuries without any succour from the Mahomedan princes, and there were ample funds in the country for its support, apart from those of the Treasury. To prevent the settlement of the interlopers whom the Directors could not entirely exclude from the country, they had adopted and rigidly enforced the principle, altogether novel in the history of conquest, of prohibiting their own countrymen from acquiring an interest of any description in the soil. With the exception of the estates held by Mahomedans, which were comparatively few, the whole rental of the Gangetic valley was in the hands of Hindoos, and available for the

encouragement of their institutions. The celebrity of all religious, social, and family festivals, in popular estimation, depended on the entertainment of brahmins, and the gifts bestowed on them were proportioned to their literary reputation. Hence it was impossible to discover how the withdrawal of Government aid from the two or three colleges it had established could affect in any perceptible degree the cultivation of the sacred language of the Vedas. The encouragement of English was, on the other hand, one of the highest blessings which could be conferred on the country. It unlocked to the natives all the stores of European knowledge and science, and brought them into association with the highest civilization in the world. It shook the fabric of error and the empire of superstition which had survived the lapse of twenty-five centuries. It introduced a flood of light into the minds of the natives upon every object of human enquiry, and communicated to them the secret of our own greatness. The judicious resolution of Lord William Bentinck has been followed by a degree of success which exceeds the most sanguine expectations, and the language and literature of England have now become as familiar to the upper ten thousand, as ever the language of Rome was within the sphere of her conquests. The only drawback connected with it has been the neglect of vernacular education, through which alone the great body of the people can receive the elements of mental improvement. But public measures in every department in India depend so greatly on the idiosyncracies of those who happen, for the time, to be in power, that there is no reason to despair of seeing this error remedied at some future time, and the million rescued from the barbarism of ignorance.

The cause of sound and enlightened education
General Assembly's institution, 1833. was materially promoted during this period by

the efforts of the General Assembly, under the superintendence of the Rev. Dr. Duff. He proceeded to India in 1830, with the view of establishing an institution which should combine secular instruction of the highest order, through

the medium of English, with an unreserved communication of the doctrines and morals of Christianity, which were altogether excluded from the Government colleges. The tuition imparted in the institution he founded embraced every branch of a liberal education, and was in no respect inferior to that which the colleges supported by the state professed to bestow. He and his colleagues made no secret of the fact that their system of education was inseparably associated with Christian instruction, but their rooms were soon crowded with twelve hundred scholars, and the teachers were regarded with feelings of distinguished confidence. The eminent success of this institution is to be traced to the sturdy energy, and the classical endowments of its conductors, who are entitled to public gratitude for their exertions to elevate the native character, and to give the country the benefit of a complete education, in every department of human pursuit.

The Medical
College, 1835.

No attempt worthy of the Government had been made before the time of Lord William Bentinck to supersede native quackery by the cultivation of medical science. In the Sanscrit and Arabic colleges the systems of Galen and Hippocrates were taught in combination with a smattering of European ideas; and a public institution existed, though of a very inferior description, for training native doctors, as they were called, but they never rose above the dignity of apothecaries. As the crowning act of his administration, the Governor-General founded a medical college in Calcutta in the month of March, 1835, to afford, through the medium of English treatises and English lectures, a professional education to the natives in every branch of the science, as cultivated in Europe. The most eminent medical officers in the service were placed in the professors' chairs; a library and a museum were established, and every appliance necessary to place it on the same footing of efficiency as European colleges was furnished with a bountiful hand. Sage men of long experience and reputed wisdom confidently predicted the failure of the experiment. Contact with a dead body had for twenty centuries

been considered a mortal pollution by the Hindoos, and it was traditionally affirmed that native prejudices were invincible. But these anticipations, when brought to the test of actual practice, proved, as usual, to be the phantoms of a morbid imagination. Natives of high caste were found to resort freely to the dissecting room, and to handle the scalpel with as much indifference as European students. In the first year they assisted in dissecting sixty subjects, and the feeling of ardour with which they entered on these studies, and the aptitude for acquiring knowledge which they exhibited created a universal feeling of surprise. The downfall of one prejudice paved the way for the removal of others. In 1844, Dwarkenath Tagore, one of the most liberal and enlightened native gentlemen of the time, offered to take two of the students with him to England, and complete their professional education at his own expense. His views were cordially seconded by Dr. Mouat, the secretary of the college, to whose ability and energy the infant institution was indebted in no small measure for its efficiency, and he persuaded two of the most advanced pupils to accept the offer and cross the "black water," though at the risk of forfeiting the privileges of their caste. They entered the medical schools in London, and successfully competed with the best scientific students in England.

Sir John Malcolm
Governor of
Bombay, 1827.

The eminent services of Sir John Malcolm during a career of forty years in India, were tardily rewarded in the year 1827 with the Government of Bombay. His political opinions carry little weight in comparison with those of Munro, Elphinstone, Metcalfe, and others, but no officer of the Company ever possessed in a higher degree the happy art of conciliating the attachment of the people. He did not, like too many of his countrymen, keep himself aloof from the natives, but associated with them with all that freedom and ease, and that genial humour for which the French in India have always been more distinguished than the English. In the provinces of Central India he was

remembered with the same feelings of affectionate veneration which Bussy had excited in the Deccan, of whom it was remarked, that fifty years after he had left Hyderabad, the highest honour which the common people could pay to a European was to address him as Mons. Bussy. In the peaceful condition of Western India at the period of Sir John's appointment there was little scope for the exercise of his political or diplomatic talents, and his administration might have passed almost without observation, but for the collision which took place between the Supreme Court and his Government.

Collision of the
Supreme Court
and Gov., 1832.

For a quarter of a century Bombay had been content with the court of a Recorder for the administration of English law, and the bench had been adorned with the genius of Sir James Mackintosh. In 1823, the growing importance of the town and port rendered it advisable to establish a Supreme Court of Judicature, with three judges, as at Calcutta and Madras. The recollection of the unseemly and perilous struggle between the Court in Calcutta and the Government, in the days of Hastings and Impey, might have suggested the necessity of preventing a similar conflict by a clear definition of the powers and jurisdiction of the new court. But the same error was repeated, and with the same mischievous results. The new judges gave the utmost latitude of construction to the indefinite powers conferred on them by their charter, and manifested the same disposition to treat the Government of the Company with contempt, and to encroach on its authority, which had been exhibited in Calcutta fifty years before. In their "thirst for jurisdiction," as the great historian of India remarked of the Supreme Court of Bengal, "they availed themselves of the hooks and handles which the ensnaring system of law administered by them afforded in abundance, to draw within their pale the whole transactions of the country." It was in reference to these remarks of Mr. Mill, that the Bombay Chief Justice went out of his way to assert that "if the whole of what

Mr. Mill had said about judges and law had been inserted in the 'Bombay Courier,' he knew where the editor of that paper would be now, or in a day or two." The conflict between the two powers was brought to an issue in 1829. A Mahratta youth of fourteen, Moro Roghoonath, was left at the decease of his parents under the guardianship of his uncle, Pandoorang, a man of the highest family connections, and a kinsman of the late Peshwa. A near relative of the girl to whom Moro had been affianced, was anxious to obtain the wardship of the wealthy minor, and was advised by the lawyers to prefer his suit to the Supreme Court. He accordingly proceeded to Bombay, and under their directions made affidavit that the youth was compulsorily detained by Pandoorang at the risk of his life, and a writ of habeas corpus was immediately granted to bring him up to the Presidency. Under the instructions of Government, the Magistrate resisted the execution of the writ, alleging that neither the uncle nor the nephew had ever resided, or been possessed of property, within the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court, and were not therefore amenable to its process. The judges maintained on the contrary, that their Court had been invested with all the powers of the Court of King's Bench, and was bound to watch over the liberty of the King's subjects to the farthest limits of the Presidency. Sir John Malcolm addressed a temperate and conciliatory letter to them, pointing out the injurious consequences of a contest between the Royal Court and the Company's Government, and proposing the suspension of all proceedings pending a reference to England. This communication was treated as an unconstitutional and a criminal proceeding, and denounced as an insult to the majesty of British law. During these discussions two of the judges died, but Sir John Grant, who was left alone on the bench, continued to multiply the issue of writs. A criminal, who had been sentenced to imprisonment for two years by the Sessions Judge of one of the districts in the interior, was released by order of the Supreme Court. The Quikwar

refused the payment of a loan due to the Company, under the impression that the Supreme Court had power to release him from the obligation. The authority of Government was shaken to its foundation, and it became necessary to vindicate it in the eyes of the natives. Sir John Malcolm deemed it his duty to resist the encroachments of the Court with the same vigour which Warren Hastings had exhibited under similar circumstances in Calcutta. He placed a guard at the door of Pandoorang's residence to prevent the entrance of the constable, and he issued a circular to all the Company's Judges and Magistrates directing them to make no return to any of the writs of the Court. Sir John Grant, finding the Government immovable, closed the doors of the Court, and they remained shut for two months. The question was referred to the Privy Council in England, and his proceedings were pronounced to be utterly repugnant to law. Lord Ellenborough, the President of the Board of Control, in his private letter to Sir John Malcolm, also expressed his strong disapprobation of the measures of the Court, and informed him that he had appointed two other judges, one of whom was the Advocate-General at Bombay, and that no further mischief was to be apprehended, as "Sir John Grant would be like a wild elephant led away between two tame ones." Elated with this communication, Sir John Malcolm read it aloud at his own breakfast table, amidst the acclamation of thirty or forty guests. A copy of it found its way—it was said mysteriously—into the Calcutta newspapers, and created a profound sensation throughout the country. The Governor was chagrined at the position in which he was placed by this disclosure of a private communication, but instead of ascribing his mortification to his own indiscretion, attributed it to the liberty which Lord William Bentinck had given to the press, which was to him an object of abhorrence. Sir John Grant immediately retired from the Bombay bench.

Conflict of
the Court of

The current of Indian affairs in England at this period, presented some singular exhibitions, both

Directors and the Board, 1832. at the Board of Control and in Parliament. It has been already noticed that the debt due by the Nizam to the banking house of Palmer & Co. was liquidated in 1823, and that they became insolvent within a twelve-month, when their affairs were placed in the hands of trustees. During the discussions on this subject at the India House, the Court of Directors had solicited the opinion of three of the most eminent counsel in England whether British subjects in India were not debarred by Act of Parliament from enforcing claims for interest beyond twelve per cent., and they affirmed that such claims could not be sustained. Soon after, Lord Hastings brought the question forward in the House of Lords and it was referred to the decision of the twelve judges, who decided that the limitation of the rate of interest by Parliament did not apply to loans made to the subjects of independent princes by British subjects residing in their dominions. The opinion of counsel was sent out, forthwith, to India from the India House with alacrity, and the Resident at Hyderabad was directed to give it all due publicity. This notification ought, in all fairness, to have been withdrawn as soon as the judges had pronounced that opinion illegal, but it was allowed to continue in force, and the trustees of Palmer & Co. complained, not without reason, that under these circumstances they found it impossible to realize the debts due to the estate. The chief debtor was Moneer-ool-moolk a near relative of the Nizam, and the ostensible prime minister. He had made over some of his jageers to Palmer & Co., and the rents had been duly collected and regularly applied to the liquidation of his debts, which had been fully effected, together with interest, at the rate of twelve per cent. The remainder of their demand consisted simply of a balance of interest beyond that rate. Decrees had been obtained for this claim in the local courts, but it was difficult to execute them against one who occupied so high a position in the state without strong external pressure. Application was accordingly made on the subject to the Court of Directors, who drafted a reply in July, 1830, in which the

Resident was forbidden to interfere in the matter. But the President of the Board of Control took a different view of the case, and returned the draft with this material modification, that the Resident was directed not only to inform the Nizam that the Government would hear with much satisfaction that the house had recovered their just claims from their private debtors, but also to adopt measures to promote this object. The Court remonstrated against these alterations, which reversed the policy they had resolutely maintained for ten years, of refusing the influence of their Government in reference to the private debts of the firm. They justly argued that the exorbitant interest which constituted the present claim arose from the risk with which the transaction was originally attended, and from the uncertainty of payment, both of which ceased to exist with the interposition of Government. The remonstrance was not without effect, and the despatch was withheld.

Writ of Mandamus, 1832.

The question slumbered till the beginning of 1832, when the Whigs being in office, the Court of Directors were desired by the Board to prepare a despatch in the room of that to which they had formerly raised objections. But when it arrived in Cannon Row, the President of the Board drew his fatal pen across thirty-three out of its thirty-seven paragraphs, and substituted ten of his own. In this amended despatch the Court were required to declare their conviction that the joint interposition of our Government and that of the Nizam would be requisite to bring the matter in dispute to a final settlement. The Nizam was to be allowed the alternative of an arbitration, with an umpire nominated by Government, or a commission appointed by the Governor-General. The Court declined to sanction the authoritative interference of their Government in the adjustment of a debt which they considered unjust, and they refused to adopt the amendments. The President disclaimed any idea of bringing the authority of Government to bear on the case, and made some trivial alterations in the despatch; but the Court justly remarked that in the relative position of the

parties at Hyderabad, no interference of the head of the Government of India could be divested of the character of authority; and they proceeded to cancel both the amended and the original despatch. The correspondence on this subject was extended over eight months, but nothing could shake the resolution of the Directors. They persisted in refusing to sign and transmit the despatch, and at length informed the President that "they had nothing to do but to leave the law to take its course." He immediately applied to the Court of King's Bench for a writ of mandamus to compel the Directors to adopt the despatch as dictated by the Board, and they were constrained to yield to this irresistible argument; but at the same time they recorded their solemn protest against the orders which they had been compelled to sign as their own act and deed. The debt of the minister was settled by Mr. Macleod, the umpire appointed by Government, but upon the preposterous principle of allowing interest against the debtor to the utmost farthing, and refusing interest on the payments which had been successively made by him; and the transaction ended with the same disregard of justice with which it had been commenced and carried on.

The Lucknow Bankers, 1832. During these transactions, a still more objectionable case was brought under discussion in England. Between the years 1792 and 1797 the Nabob of Oude had borrowed large sums of money from Europeans and natives for his voluptuous pleasures. The chances of repayment were very remote, and altogether uncertain; and the charge for interest was proportionately high. He was at length awakened to a sense of his increasing embarrassments by the representations of the Resident, and began in earnest to compound with his creditors. The Europeans were offered better terms than the natives; but all parties were prevailed on to accept the composition, with the exception of the eminent banking firm of Monohur Doss, from whom he had borrowed about eleven lacs of rupees for the support of his wild beasts, and for the "cattle department." Soon after

the king died, and his successor repudiated the debt. The bankers eventually engaged the services of a Mr. Prendergast who had amassed a fortune as a trader at Lucknow, and, like Mr. Paull, obtained a seat in Parliament on his return to England. He brought the claims of his clients before the House for the first time in 1811, but though he met with no success, he continued for twenty years to make the most strenuous efforts in a spirit of indomitable perseverance to promote their suit, both in Parliament and in the courts of law. But the Court of Directors invariably refused to enforce an unacknowledged and unproved claim against one who had not contracted the debt, and whom they recognized and treated as a sovereign prince. In this equitable decision they were fully supported by Lord Hastings, who, though he had on one occasion directed the Resident to mention the claim to the Nabob, yet, finding him determined to resist it, at once decided that it was not a case in which the British Government would be warranted in affording any official support. Mr. Canning went still further, and directed the Court to inform the Governor-General that they were so clearly aware of the difficulty of divesting a friendly communication to a weaker power of the character of authority, that they positively forbade the subject to be brought again before the Nabob by any of the officers of Government. But in 1830 the President of the Board of Control was persuaded to lend a favourable ear to the demands of Mr. Prendergast's clients, now swelled, by the accumulation of interest, to a crore of rupees. He affirmed, that while he duly honoured the principle of non-interference, he considered the present an exceptional case, and that it was his determination to make our representations to the king of Oude, "direct and formal." It was the day after the Court had refused to adopt the obnoxious despatch to Hyderabad, regarding the claims of Palmer and Co., that they were desired by the Board to prepare a despatch to the Governor-General directing him to use his utmost efforts to procure the payment of the alleged debt from the king of Oude. The Court felt that any expression

of the wishes of Government could only signify compulsion, either by intimidation or by force, and, instead of drawing up a despatch, prepared a vigorous remonstrance, in which they pointed out the impolicy and the injustice of a course which would open the door to endless claims, not only at Lucknow, but at every durbar in India, and beggar half its princes. A despatch was then drawn up in the office of the Board of Control, and transmitted for the acceptance of the Directors, but they passed a resolution, without a single dissenting voice, that this interference with the king of Oude was unjust, inconsistent, and mischievous, and they refused to act, though only ministerially, on the orders of the Board, until compelled to do so by process of law. Mr. Tucker, the deputy chairman, and five of his colleagues, went so far as to declare that even under the pressure of a mandamus they would not consent to affix their signature to an order which was nothing less than "an act of spoliation towards an ancient and prostrate ally." They felt that in India, where the intricate machinery of the home Government was not understood, the act would be regarded as emanating from them, and that the odium of it would be attached to their administration. The steady resistance of the India House produced the happy effect of inducing the President to pause on the threshold of a conflict, which must have been damaging alike to the Ministry and to the Government in India, and the question was allowed to die out.

The Nozeed
affair.

The anomalous proceedings of the two Houses at this period in what was termed the "Nozeed affair," exhibited a very disreputable abuse of Parliamentary influence. In 1776, Mr. Hodges, a member of the council at Masulipatam, lent money to the zemindar of Nozeed without the knowledge of the government of Madras, and in direct contravention of the orders of the Court of Directors. In June, 1777, in a communication to Madras, the Court renewed in more peremptory language their former injunction that none of their servants should advance loans on mortgage of lands. Two years after, Mr. Hodges presumed to take a mortgage

of a portion of the zemindar's estate for his debt, and the transaction received the support of the Governor and Council of Madras. The whole zemindaree was soon after taken over by Government for arrears of revenue, and an application was made in 1784 to Lord Macartney, then Governor of the Presidency, on the subject of these loans. He considered that the whole transaction was in every respect unwarranted in principle and pernicious in its tendency; but out of delicacy to the preceding Government, which had sanctioned this infraction of the Company's rules, recorded his opinion that the creditors were entitled to some consideration on resigning the district they had so long and so irregularly held on pledge. The Court of Directors, however, resisted every solicitation to entertain the claim. A permanent settlement of the estate was made in 1803, when it was restored to the zemindaree family, leaving them to make any settlement they could effect with the creditors. Nothing further was heard of the claim for nearly thirty years, till the grandson of Mr. Hodges, having some influential friends in Parliament, induced them to bring in a bill to compel the Company to make good the whole demand, which was stated to amount to two lacs of rupees. It will be remembered that when the claims of the nabob of Arcot were introduced to the House, fifty years before, a commission was appointed to investigate their validity, and that ninety per cent. of the amount turned out to be fictitious; but in the present instance, the House passed the bill enjoining the Court of Directors to pay the full amount of this private and illegal claim, without enquiry, from the revenues of India. In the House of Lords it encountered the most strenuous opposition from Lord Ellenborough, and from the Lord Chancellor, Lord Brougham, who deprecated the interference of the Legislature to enforce a claim, "contaminated in its origin, and illegal in its prosecution;" but it passed with a majority of two to one.

Financial Results
of Lord William
Bentinck's ad-

With the exception of the Coorg campaign, which was concluded in ten days, the administration of

ministration, Lord William Bentinck was a reign of peace, and
1828-1835. it produced the usual result on the finances of

India. The reductions which he effected in the various departments of expenditure, combined with an improvement of the sources of revenue, extinguished the deficit of a crore of rupees which he found on his arrival, and enabled him to leave a surplus of a crore and a half on his departure in 1835. The magnificent expectations with which the trade of India had been thrown open to the nation in 1813, were but partially realized in the following twenty years, and the returns during Lord William Bentinck's administration exhibited a decrease

both of exports and imports. This was to be
Fall of the great attributed, in a large measure, to the great crisis
Houses in
Calcutta, 1833. of 1833, which brought down the whole commercial fabric of Calcutta.

During the administration of Warren Hastings some free mariners, as the licensed interlopers were designated, opened houses of business in Calcutta on a humble scale, and gathered up the fragments of the trade to England, which dropped from the great monopoly of Leadenhall street. They embarked, moreover, in the country trade, as it was called, from one Indian port to another, and from Calcutta to the eastward, as well as in the internal traffic of the country. The famine on the Coast occasioned by Hyder Ali's irruption into the Carnatic in 1780, created a large demand for freight and the new houses commenced shipbuilding, first at Sylhet and Chittagong, and eventually in Calcutta. They established indigo factories in the interior of the country and drove the drug which had hitherto been furnished from other countries out of the European markets. Their transactions expanded and their prosperity increased with the growth of British power. They acquired the confidence of the native and the European community, and became the bankers of the civil, military, and medical services, whose savings were transferred, month by month, to their coffers, and whose balances were annually augmented, through the process of compound interest. A desk at one of those firms was considered more

valuable than a seat in Council, and the retiring partners drew out colossal fortunes, with which, on their return to England, they bought boroughs, and seated themselves in Parliament. The opening of the trade in 1813, brought out to Calcutta a bevy of new adventurers, who were regarded at first with a feeling of contemptuous indifference by the stately old houses. But they were animated with the vigour of youthful enterprise, and gradually undermined the established firms, drawing away the most profitable branches of their business, and leaving them saddled with their old factories and ships which were not worth a fourth of their original cost. The confidence of the public, which had continued unshaken for half a century, received a rude shock in 1830 by the unexpected collapse of the great firm of John Palmer & Co., usually styled the prince of merchants. The other houses, five in number, continued to struggle with increasing embarrassments, and were enabled to remain afloat as long as the credulity of their constituents provided them with deposits sufficient to meet the withdrawal of funds. But the candle at length burnt down into the socket, and they went one by one into the Insolvent Court, which engulfed sixteen crores of rupees. A large portion of this sum consisted of the savings of the services, and the extent of the calamity may be estimated from the remark of Lord William Bentinck, who had heard, he said, to his utter surprise, that a civilian, when pressed to make a purchase after the failures, had actually replied that he could not afford it.

Remarks on Lord W. Bentinck's Administration, 1835. Lord William Bentinck was residing at the sanitarium of Ootacamund, in the Neelgerree hills, when the new charter reached India, but his health had been so seriously impaired by a constitutional malady, that his physicians considered it unsafe for him to descend into the plains till the cold weather had set in. Sir Frederick Adam, the governor of Madras, and Mr. Macaulay and Colonel Morrison, who had been appointed members of the Supreme Council, were accordingly summoned to join him in the hills, where the first Council under the new Act was

held, and the new Government constituted. These proceedings were unavoidably deficient in legal form, but the defect was covered the next year by an Act of indemnity. Lord William Bentinck returned to Calcutta in November, and embarked for his native land in March, 1835, after having held the reins of Government for nearly eight years. His administration marks the most memorable period of improvement between the days of Lord Cornwallis and Lord Dalhousie, and forms a salient point in the history of Indian reform. He repudiated the stationary policy of the Government, and introduced a more liberal and progressive spirit into every department of the state. With the intuition of a great mind, he discovered the weak points of our system of administration, which was becoming effete under the withering influence of routine, and the remedies he applied went to the root of the disease. He infused new blood into our institutions, and started them upon a new career of vigour and efficiency. The marked difference which they presented in the thirty years succeeding his Government, as compared with the thirty years which preceded it, was due entirely to the impulse of his genius, which became the main spring of a long succession of improvements. He was not less bold in the conception of his plans than resolute in the execution of them, to which he was sometimes obliged to sacrifice the amenities of life. He earned the gratitude of the natives by opening an honourable career to them in the government of their own country, and he was rewarded with the gratitude of Christendom for the moral courage he evinced in putting down Suttees. He has been charged with a love of innovation; but, even if the imputation be correct, such an error is far less injurious to the interests of society than the dull stagnation into which the Government was sinking, and which was an unerring symptom of decay. The great defect of his administration was the fluctuation of his political policy; but, the renewal of the non-intercourse system was ordered from England, and though at first supported by his own views, it was gradually modified, as the exigency of circum-

stances appeared to demand the adoption of another course for the protection of the people, as in the cases of Coorg and Mysore. The natives vied with the European community in commemorating the blessings of his administration, and united in raising a subscription for the erection of his statue in Calcutta. The pedestal was enriched with groups representing the great and good features of his government, and bore an inscription from the classic pen of Mr. Macaulay:—“This statue is erected to William Cavendish Bentinck, who during seven years ruled India with eminent prudence, integrity, and benevolence; 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;—this monument was erected by men who, differing from each other in race, in manners, in language, and in religion, cherish, with equal veneration and gratitude, the memory of his wise, upright, and paternal administration.”

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE CHARTER OF 1833—SIR CHARLES METCALFE'S ADMINISTRATION—BENEVOLENT EXERTIONS OF THE COMPANY'S GOVERNMENT, 1833-1836.

The New Charter; Extinction of the China Trade, 1833.

THE period of twenty years for which the commercial and political privileges of the Company had been renewed in 1813, being about to expire, Lord

Ellenborough, the President of the Board of Control, moved for a Select Committee in 1830, to collect information regarding the finances, trade, and revenue, and the judicial administration of the Indian empire. The report was presented in August, 1832, and, including the oral and documentary evidence, filled nine closely printed quarto volumes. The Tory Ministry having been displaced by their rivals, it fell to the lot of Mr. Charles Grant, the new President of the Board, to introduce to the notice of the House the question of the new Charter, as it was inappropriately designated. With more than the talent of his father, who was for twenty years the presiding genius of Leadenhall Street, though with less than his industry, he inherited all his zeal for the moral and intellectual improvement of India.

The two principal questions which demanded the attention of the House were the continuance of the China monopoly, and of the Government of India, in the hands of the Company. The merchants and manufacturers of England demanded with an irresistible voice that the trade to China should be thrown open to the enterprise of the nation, and the first line of "hints" for the new Charter drawn up by the Board of Control contained the ominous words "the China monopoly to cease." The Company strenuously resisted the extinction of their only surviving commercial privilege, and endeavoured to show that without this monopoly they would be unable to carry on the government of India, inasmuch as it was the profits of their trade which had supplied the deficiency of their territorial revenues. On the other hand, it was as resolutely affirmed that the trade had resulted in a loss, and had been sustained by territorial funds. It was, however, beyond the power of any Ministry, Whig or Tory, to prolong the monopoly in the face of universal opposition, and the Court of Directors were obliged to submit to the extinction of it. The Company was thus finally divested of its commercial character, and the last remaining monopoly of the reign of Queen Elizabeth was extinguished, after a duration of nearly two centuries and a half. The

Company was required to dispose of its magnificent fleet, to the great chagrin of the old civilians, one of whom was heard to enquire "of what use it was for their honourable masters to send them out to India to make fortunes, if they did not send ships to take them home when the fortunes were made?" The assets of the Company after a faithful scrutiny were estimated at twelve crores of rupees; they realized within a tenth of that sum, and were applied to the objects of the Government in India, with the exception of two crores appropriated to the formation of a guarantee fund. The capital stock of the Company amounted to six crores, and the new Charter Act ordained that interest at the rate of ten and a half per cent. on this sum should be provided from the revenues of India for a period of forty years. The intrinsic value of the stock in the market was consequently doubled. The guarantee fund was to be invested in Government securities, to accumulate at compound interest, till it amounted at the end of that period to twelve crores, with which the proprietors were to be paid off.

The India Bill proposed that the government should be entrusted for twenty years longer to the Company, and it was passed without any difficulty. The nation, having secured its own pecuniary interests in regard to the China trade, treated this imperial question, though it involved the interests of a hundred millions of the subjects of the Crown, with profound indifference. The House of Commons exhibited unequivocal signs of impatience and disgust whenever it was brought forward. During the discussions the benches were never as full as during a turnpike debate, and Mr. Macaulay truly observed that a broken head in Coldbath Fields excited greater interest in the House than three pitched battles in India. The Court of Directors made a strong effort to obtain the privilege of an appeal to some higher authority in cases of a difference of opinion with the Board of Control, but the attempt was successfully opposed, and the writ of mandamus was still suspended over their heads.

Continuation
of the Govern-
ment of India
with the Com-
pany, 1833.

On the other hand, the Ministers endeavoured to obtain a veto on the power vested in the Court by former Acts of recalling the Governor-General, the Governors, and the Commander-in-chief, but the India House resisted the proposal with such pertinacity that it was at length abandoned. Several important changes were likewise made in the constitution and policy of the Government in India. A fourth Presidency was constituted to embrace the north west provinces. A commission was also appointed to consist of men of experience in the administration of justice in India, and one or two English barristers, to report on the practicability of establishing a uniform system of law and judicature throughout the Indian empire. The power of legislation was now for the first time conferred on the Government of India, and the enactments which, under the advice of Sir William Jones in 1790, had been modestly designated Regulations, were now, under the advice of Mr. Macaulay, dignified with the name of Acts. At the same time the privilege of enacting laws was withdrawn from the subordinate Presidencies, and the Governor-General in Council was invested with power to legislate for the whole empire, including all persons, British, foreign, or native, all places, and all things, as well as all courts, whether created by the local Government or established by Royal charter, but with certain necessary reservations touching the prerogatives of the Crown and the authority of Parliament. A fourth member was added to the Council, who was to be an English jurist of reputation, and the office was rendered illustrious by the genius and labours of Mr. Macaulay. Two of the provisions of the Bill afforded an index of the growth of liberal principles in England,—the admission of natives to all offices, and the permission granted to Europeans to hold lands. Forty years before this period, Lord Cornwallis had pronounced the natives unfit to take any share in the government of their own country, and resolved to work the machinery by European agency alone. The Charter of 1833 enacted that no native of India, nor any natural born

subject of His Majesty, should be disabled from holding any place, office, or employment by reason of his religion, place of birth, descent or colour. To this liberal measure the Court of Directors gave their unqualified consent, but the clause which sanctioned the purchase of land by Europeans and which contained the germ of colonization was introduced and passed in direct opposition to their wishes. The power to exclude interlopers from the sphere of their operations was among the earliest privileges conferred on them by Queen Elizabeth, and it was confirmed to them by various statutes for two centuries. It was designed at first only to protect their commercial enterprises, but was made applicable to their territorial possessions when they had become sovereigns. It was the most cherished privilege of Leadenhall Street, and the Directors clung to it with unabated tenacity, even after they had consented to relinquish their trade. The Charter of 1813 had permitted the free resort of Europeans to India, but excluded them from forming any settlement in it, by the purchase or lease of lands. Meanwhile, the cultivation of indigo by European capitalists, under cover of fictitious leases which were winked at by the local authorities, had increased to such an extent as to enrich the maritime trade with an additional article of export of the value of a crore and a half of rupees a-year. Lord William Bentinck was anxious to relieve this enterprise from the restraints imposed upon it by the prejudices of the India House, and to legalize these leases for the culture of indigo, as well as for other staple products, but this slight relaxation of the old system of restriction was peremptorily negatived by the Court of Directors. The arguments of Lord William Bentinck, however, and of his liberal colleague, Sir Charles Metcalfe, carried more weight with the Ministry, and a clause was introduced into the bill which granted permission to Europeans to settle in the country and acquire unrestricted rights and interests in the land.

Character of
the Company's
government,
1823.

The separation now effected of the functions of state from all commercial speculations served to give a more elevated tone to the views and policy

of the Court of Directors, and to impart a more efficient character to their administration. The feelings with which they entered on the imperial duties to which their attention was now to be exclusively devoted were eloquently expressed in a despatch to the Government of India, which was drawn up by Mr. Mill: "In contemplating the extent of legislative power thus conferred on our supreme Government, and in the second instance, on ourselves, in reflecting how many millions of men may, by the manner in which it shall be exercised, be rendered happy or miserable, in adverting to the countless variety of interests to be studied, and of difficulties to be overcome in the execution of this mighty trust, we feel the weight of responsibility under which we have been conjointly laid. . . We feel confident that to this undertaking your best thoughts and care will be immediately and perseveringly applied, and we invite the full, the constant, and the early communication of your sentiments in relation to it. On our part we can venture to affirm that no endeavour shall be wanting in promoting your views and perfecting your plans. . . . And we trust that by the blessing of God on our united labours the just and beneficent intentions of this country in delegating to our hands the legislative as well as executive administration of the weightiest, the most important and the most interesting of its transmarine possessions will be happily accomplished." These enlightened sentiments were faithfully reflected in the correspondence and the proceedings of the Court of Directors during the twenty-five years they continued to administer the government of India. Relieved from the management of a large mercantile establishment and the influences inseparable from it, their minds rose to a level with the great political trust confided to them by their country, and it may be affirmed without the risk of contradiction that, notwithstanding an occasional outburst of traditional and narrow-minded prejudices, the principles and the measures they inculcated on their servants in India were marked by a degree of moderation, wisdom, and beneficence

of which it would not be easy to find another example in the history of conquered dependencies.

The Act of 1833 erected a fourth Presidency
Sir C. Metcalfe, Governor-General, 1835. in the north-west provinces, and the distinguished services of Sir Charles Metcalfe were rewarded by his appointment to the governorship of Agra, and likewise to the still more dignified position of provisional Governor-General. He proceeded to the upper provinces in December, 1834, but he had no sooner held his first levée than he was required, in consequence of the premature departure of Lord William Bentinck, to return to Calcutta and assume the charge of the Government of India, which he continued to hold for a twelvemonth. When a youth of sixteen in the college of Fort William he had avowed to one of the professors that he would be satisfied with nothing short of the Governor-Generalship, and he had now reached the summit of his ambition, after a career of thirty-four years. With the exception of Warren Hastings, no member of the Indian civil service had ever been more eminently qualified for this imperial trust, by his natural genius for administration, his sound judgment and large views, as well as by his long and universal experience. He began his political career in Lord Wellesley's office, and received the first rudiments of statesmanship under his tuition. He was entrusted with the management of important diplomacy before he was twenty-five, and he had subsequently taken a prominent part in the political movements of every court, from Hyderabad to Lahore. There were few important movements of his time which had not enjoyed the benefit of his co-operation, or advice. His experience had not been limited to a single province, but embraced the entire range of the empire, and he was thus enabled to take the same interest in the development of every division of it. The new character which the growth of British ascendancy had gradually imparted to the policy of the various native courts had been moulded, for the most part, under his eye, and there was no other officer in

India who possessed the same extensive knowledge of the antecedent as well as the existing feelings and aspirations, the fears, and cabals of the native courts, or who enjoyed in the same degree the respect and confidence of the native princes.

On receiving the resignation of Lord William Bentinck, the Court of Directors requested Lord Heytesbury and Lord Auckland, 1835. Mr. Mountstewart Elphinstone to allow himself to be put in nomination for the Governor-Generalship, but he declined the honour on the ground of his feeble health. They then proceeded to pass a resolution, by a majority of fifteen to two, to the effect "that adverting to the public character and services of Sir Charles Metcalfe, it would be inexpedient at present to make any other arrangement for supplying the place of Governor-General." But the Whigs who were then in power, were little disposed to confirm this choice. Mr. Canning, when President of the Board of Control, had recorded his opinion in December 1820 that "the case could hardly be conceived in which it would be expedient that the highest office of the government of India should be filled otherwise than from England, and that one main link at least between the system of the Indian and the British Government ought for the advantage of both to be invariably maintained." Mr. Charles Grant, the President of the Board at this period, informed the Court that His Majesty's Ministers saw much to enjoin the continuance of this general practice, and nothing to recommend a departure from it. The Court of Directors remonstrated with great warmth against the adoption of a principle which involved the wholesale exclusion of their servants from the highest prize in their service, and there was every prospect that the unseemly contest between the Court and the Ministry in 1806 would be renewed, when the Whigs were obliged to give place to a Tory cabinet. Lord Ellenborough who succeeded Mr. Grant lost no time in offering the post to Mr. Mountstewart Elphinstone, and laid claim to the merit of having exhibited a more

liberal spirit than the preceding administration. The flourish would have been more legitimate if the offer had been made to Sir Charles Metcalfe who would have welcomed it, and not to Mr. Elphinstone who it was well known would decline it. The vacant office was conferred on Lord Heytesbury, a diplomatist of European reputation. He was sworn in at the India House, received the prescribed allowance for his outfit, and the usual farewell entertainment at the London Tavern, but on the eve of his embarkation, Sir Robert Peel's Ministry was subverted, and the Whigs again came into power, with Sir John Hobhouse as President of the Board. The Tory Government which succeeded to power in 1807 had refrained from interfering with the appointment of Lord Minto by their Whig predecessors, though he had not left the shores of England when they came into office. In like manner, the Duke of Wellington had not thought fit to disturb the appointment which Lord William Bentinck had received from his political opponent, Mr. Canning, when it was in his power to cancel it. But one of the first acts of the Whigs when they returned to Downing Street was to revoke the appointment of Lord Heytesbury, and the exercise of his power was limited to the bestowal of the writership, which was courteously placed at the disposal of each newly appointed Governor-General, on his nephew, Mr.—now Sir Cecil—Beadon. The Court protested with great vehemence against a proceeding which made the vital interests of the British empire in India subordinate to the interests of political partizanship in England; but Sir John Hobhouse replied that what he had to consider was merely whether the Ministry would become responsible for Lord Heytesbury's administration of the government in India, and, not wishing to assume this responsibility on themselves, they had taken the simple and obvious mode of cancelling his appointment. The explanation was more plausible than satisfactory, inasmuch as it has always been considered a principle of vital importance to protect the government of India from the disturbing influences of party politics in

England. Lord Auckland, who had been the Whig first Lord of the Admiralty, was nominated Governor-General.

Liberation of the press, 1835. The great measure which has rendered the administration of Sir Charles Metcalfe memorable in the history of British India was the liberation of the press the position of which at this period was altogether anomalous. At Madras, there was no legal restriction on it. At Bombay it was free at the Presidency, and fettered in the provinces. In Bengal the illiberal and stringent law passed by Mr. Adam was still on the statute book; but after two or three journals had been suppressed, and two refractory editors had been expelled the country, it was found impossible to enforce it without inflicting great embarrassment and odium on the Government. During the last five years of Lord Amherst's administration, and the whole period of Lord William Bentinck's government, the law remained a dead letter, and the press was practically as free as in England. The Charter Act of 1833 had conferred the power of legislating for all India on the Supreme Council, and a law on the subject of the press which should embrace every portion of the empire, and establish uniformity of practice at all the Presidencies, became a manifest necessity. The power of deportation had been withdrawn from the Government. Europeans were, moreover, privileged to settle as colonists in India, and they naturally expected to enjoy the same liberty of giving expression to their opinions which their fellow countrymen possessed in other dependencies of the Crown. Lord William Bentinck had acknowledged that it would be impossible to leave the question of the press as it stood. A few weeks before his departure, the inhabitants of Calcutta had petitioned for a repeal of Mr. Adam's Regulation, and he assured them that the unsatisfactory state of the laws relating to the press had not escaped his notice, and that he trusted a system would be established at no distant period, which, while it gave security to every person engaged in the fair discussion of public measures, would effectually secure the Government against sedition, and individuals against

calumny. Sir Charles Metcalfe had always been an ardent advocate of the liberty of the press, and had declared five years before his elevation "that if he were sovereign lord and master he would give it full swing." He remarked that it was clear the liberty of the press would come, that Government could not prevent it without a despotism and an oppression contrary to its own disposition, and totally opposed to British institutions, and that it would be better to give it with a good grace than to wait till it was extorted. It was with these sentiments he entered on the duties of Governor-General, and he lost no time in bringing in a Bill for carrying these liberal views into effect. The Supreme Council had recently been strengthened by the accession of Mr. Macaulay, who gave his cordial support to the measure, and recorded his opinion in a masterly minute worthy of the author of the *Essay on Milton*. An Act was accordingly passed in September, 1835, which repealed all the Regulations by which the press had been muzzled, and established its freedom upon the solid foundation of law.

Result of the
liberty of the
press, 1835.

The Act was received with feelings of enthusiasm by the European community in India, and the principal inhabitants of Calcutta, including the native gentry most eminent in rank and accomplishments, met and voted an address of thanks to Sir Charles Metcalfe for the boon he had conferred on the country, and raised subscriptions to commemorate it by the erection of a noble hall, which bears his name. In his reply to the address he said that "the Act evinced to the world that the government of the Company desired no concealment, that it was happy to have the most minute particulars of its Indian administration scrutinized, and displayed to the gaze of the universe, that it sought information and instruction wherever they could be found, and did not wish to rule India as a conquered, ignorant, and enslaved, but as a cherished, enlightened, and free country." The experience of thirty years has proved that the apprehensions of those who objected to it on the ground of

public safety were without any foundation. At the India House, however, the highest authority in the Court, Mr. Edmonstone, maintained that "the unrestricted discussion of public subjects and public measures, and the latitude of observation on the Directors and persons high in office, must necessarily diminish that deference and respect in which it is of so much importance that the Government should be held." But no one will question the fact that Lord Dalhousie obtained as much "deference and respect" when the press was free, as Lord Wellesley received when its voice was stifled. The press has, in fact, been found to be rather the handmaid than the antagonist of Government, and the efficiency of the public administration has been indefinitely promoted by the freedom and independence of its remarks. It has placed the salutary check of exposure on the subordinate functionaries of the state, and given the Government the eyes of Argus to watch the working, and to detect the deficiencies of its vast and complicated machinery. By permitting a more unrestricted publication of opinions in a conquered country than is enjoyed in many of the European states, the ruling power has afforded an unequivocal proof of the benevolent spirit of its intentions and measures. No occasion has since arisen to call for the interference of the public authorities except during the great crisis of the mutiny of the sepoys in 1857, when the liberty of the press was suspended, just as the Habeas Corpus Act would have been suspended in England on a similar emergency.

Reduction of
the Government
of Agra, 1835.

While Sir Charles Metcalfe was officiating in Calcutta as Governor-General, an important change was made in England in the character and position of the Government of Agra which had been conferred on him. The Court of Directors had always been opposed to the establishment of a fourth Presidency upon the model of those already existing at Madras, Bombay, and Calcutta. They considered that the exigencies of the public service might be fully provided for by the more modest and less costly machinery of a Lieutenant-Governorship. The Board of Control, who had

taken a different view of the subject, were at length brought to concur with the India House, and an Act was accordingly passed in Parliament, in 1835, empowering the Court to cut down the scheme to a subordinate lieutenancy. Sir Charles Metcalfe felt a natural repugnance to descend to the inferior position of a lieutenant of the Governor-General, after having himself occupied that supreme post, and he formed the determination to retire from the service; but the chairman of the Court intimated to him that it was their unanimous wish and hope, that, acting on those high and patriotic principles which it was well known had always governed his conduct, he would be disposed to retain the office on the reduced scale, and thus enable them to secure his highly valuable services at Agra, and, should the contingency happen, at the head of the Supreme Government. In the hope of inducing him to accede to their wishes, he was named a third time provisional Governor-General, and decorated with the Grand Cross of the Bath. Lord Auckland, who had assumed charge of the Government, joined his own solicitations to those of the Court, and Sir Charles Metcalfe yielded to the kindness of this importunity, and took his departure for Agra, after a continued residence of eight years in Calcutta, during which he toiled seven and eight hours daily, without any interval of relaxation.

But he was not destined to remain there long. Displeasure of the Court, 1836. Soon after his arrival, he learned that the press law had exasperated the India House and produced a complete revulsion of feeling regarding him and his merits. For two centuries the Company had been nurtured amidst the sensibilities which the despotism of a monopoly always begets. During the past ten years in which the press had been practically without restraint in India, its remarks on the Court of Directors had not been sufficiently deferential, and its tone was not likely to improve after it had become legally free. The East India Company now governed an empire as large as that of the Cæsars, but it was not easy for them entirely to

shake off the old associations of the counting-house. They looked upon the freedom of the press with the same aversion which they had formerly felt regarding the freedom of trade, and the free admission of Europeans into India; and it was not long before an opportunity occurred of giving the author of this measure an indubitable token of their displeasure. The Government of Madras had unexpectedly become vacant, and Sir Charles Metcalfe reasonably expected that it would have been conferred on him, more especially as he had consented to sacrifice his own feelings, and accept an inferior appointment at Agra, out of deference to the wishes of the Court. But although they had been ready a twelvemonth before to do battle with the Ministers of the Crown to secure him the Governor-Generalship, they would not now condescend to mention his name in connection with the Government of that Presidency. Lord William Bentinck generously came forward, and urged his claims with great zeal on the India House, but found, to his mortification, that while there was a ready and universal acknowledgment of his great services and his pre-eminent qualifications, there was also a general avowal that his late proceedings regarding the press had cancelled all claim to their consideration. Lord William then appealed to the justice of Lord Melbourne, the Prime Minister: "Let the worst possible construction," he said, "be put on this act and the motives of it, it surely ought not to have cast into the shade the thirty-six years of uninterrupted service in the highest appointments in which no man ever bore a higher character for high mindedness, usefulness, and ability. . . . Pray excuse this long appeal. We served together for seven years. His behaviour to me was of the noblest kind. He never cavilled on a trifle, and never yielded to me on a point of importance." But this appeal was equally unavailing. Sir Charles Metcalfe had always manifested the utmost loyalty and devotion to "his Honourable Masters" in Leadenhall Street, and he looked for their approbation and confidence in return. He therefore lost no time in writing to Mr. Melvill.

the Secretary of the India House, stating that reports had been for some time in circulation that he had fallen under the displeasure of the Court, and had lost the Government of Madras in consequence of the law he had passed as Governor-General in Council legalizing the liberty of the press. If this misfortune had befallen him, he had no wish to retain by forbearance an office conferred on him when he was honoured with their confidence; if that confidence was gone, it was his earnest entreaty that they would withdraw from him the provisional appointment of Governor-General, or otherwise intimate their pleasure that he might retire from their service, as he could not reconcile it to himself to hold his office on mere sufferance, or to serve in any capacity under the stigma of displeasure and distrust. The Court kept the letter four months without acknowledgment, and then sent him a curt and contemptuous reply. Mr. Melvill was "commanded to express the Court's regret that he should have made a communication which appeared to them to have been altogether unnecessary, as the continuance in him, provisionally, of the highest office which it was in the power of the Court to confer, might have satisfied him that their confidence had not been withdrawn." The day after the receipt of this letter, he tendered his resignation to Lord Auckland, and his connection with the Government of India was brought to an abrupt termination by treatment similar to that which had been inflicted on his great predecessors who had been instrumental in building up the empire, but had incurred the displeasure of the Court of Directors. The services which the Company thought fit to discard were fully appreciated by the Crown, and Sir Charles Metcalfe was entrusted, successively, with the government of two of the most important of the Crown colonies, and raised to the peerage.

Remarks of Sir
C. Metcalfe's
administration,
1836.

Since the departure of Warren Hastings, no Indian ruler has been overwhelmed with such a profusion of honorable testimonials from all classes, European and native, as Sir Charles Metcalfe. He was the

pride and ornament of the service; his hospitality was princely, and his generosity almost without bounds, while his genial temper created a perpetual sunshine around him. But it is to be regretted that with all his high qualifications, he took little, if any, interest in the establishment of steam communication, or the opening of the Indus to commerce, or, indeed, in any of the plans for the promotion of material improvements in India which distinguished Lord William Bentinck's administration. This was the natural result of his long residence in India. An ardent zeal for such improvements is scarcely to be expected from those whose habits have become reconciled to the stationary associations to which they have been accustomed. With an occasional and rare exception, the government of any local functionary who has been raised to supreme power, however beneficial in the various departments of administrative reform, has been marked by the dulness of material progress. It is to a European mind like that of Lord William Bentinck or Lord Dalhousie, fresh from scenes of activity in Europe, and imbued with the animation they inspire, that we must look for a spirit of enterprise in this important department of government. On the other hand, a Governor-General coming direct from England, is generally apt to be more sensitive to the political dangers of the empire, than an Indian Governor-General who has been accustomed to contemplate them as the normal condition of our rule, and to hold himself ever ready to encounter them. Lord Wellesley and Lord Minto were more vividly impressed with a sense of these perils than Sir John Shore or Sir George Barlow. But in the case of Sir Charles Metcalfe and Lord William Bentinck, this feeling was reversed. Lord William Bentinck always expressed the strongest confidence in the security of the empire, while Sir Charles Metcalfe asserted that our government, which was one of conquerors and foreigners, was always precarious, and that as it arose, so to say, in a day, it would disappear in a night. "My notions," he said, "of Indian policy begin and end in a powerful and efficient army; our real strength

consists in the few European regiments, scattered singly over a vast space of subjugated territory. My general creed is confined to two grand specifics—army and colonization.”

Benevolent
efforts of the
British Go-
vernment.

The suppression of barbarous rites, and the introduction of the blessings of civilization and knowledge, are among the most important functions of European power in Asia; and as this narrative draws to the close of a period of peace which lasted twelve years, and approaches a period of war, of nearly equal duration, a fitting opportunity is presented of adverting to the efforts made by the Government of the East India Company to fulfil these noble obligations. The early proceedings of British agents in India, however, were not, it must be admitted, marked by that spirit of humanity which has since pervaded them. The first rough code of Regulations promulgated by Mr. Hastings in 1772, embodied the recommendation of the Committee of Circuit, and ordained that every convicted dacoit should be executed in his own village, and that his entire family should be sold as slaves. For twenty-five years, moreover, after the establishment of the Company's authority in Bengal, the barbarous practice which had previously prevailed of punishing criminals by mutilation was perpetuated in the courts over which European and Christian gentlemen presided, and it was distinctly authorized by the Regulations of 1787. It was not till 1791 that Lord Cornwallis suppressed this revolting custom, and enacted that the offender should be subjected to fourteen years' imprisonment, where he had formerly been deprived of two limbs, and to seven years with hard labour where the loss of a single limb had been usually inflicted. But the growth of benevolent principles in the administration of India steadily kept pace with their development in the government of England, and rendered the supremacy of the Company a blessing to tribes which had been for ages immersed in barbarism. The prohibition of human sacrifices at Saugor, the abolition of Suttees, and the extinction of Thuggee have been

already noticed, and we now proceed to narrate the labours of the public servants of the Company in other spheres of philanthropy.

In the van of those who have shed a lustre on Augustus Cleveland, 1784. the British administration by their earnest efforts to civilize barbarous and predatory tribes stands Augustus Cleveland of the Bengal Civil Service. The hills and forests of the Rajmahal district were inhabited by a race of men of wild habits and savage disposition, who had been accustomed from time immemorial to make raids on the lowlands lying between their hills and the Ganges. Soon after the establishment of the Company's government their feelings appear to have been exasperated by the treacherous slaughter of some of their chiefs by the neighbouring zemindars, and they avenged themselves by depopulating the villages and rendering all travelling by land or by water impossible. To check their inroads a corps of light infantry was stationed at the foot of the hills under Captain Brooke, who pursued them into their fastnesses, and created a salutary dread of British power. He was succeeded by Captain Brown who endeavoured to reclaim the savages by kindness and laid the foundation of that system of conciliation which was subsequently completed by Mr. Cleveland, when placed in charge of the district. His benevolent labours were gracefully commemorated by the elegant pen of Warren Hastings in the inscription on the monument erected by Government, "in honour of his character and for an example to others" — "To the memory of Augustus Cleveland, Esquire, who without bloodshed or the terror of authority, employing only the means of conciliation, confidence, and benevolence, attempted and accomplished the entire subjugation of the lawless and savage inhabitants of the jungleterry of Rajmahal, inspired them with a taste for the arts of civilized life and attached them to the British Government by a conquest over their minds, the most permanent as the most rational mode of dominion." Mr. Cleveland died in 1784 at the early age of

twenty-nine, and the zemindars erected a monument to his memory, which is still held in the highest veneration by the inhabitants both of the hills and the plains.

The Bheels, 1790. Candesh, in Western India, watered by the Taptee, was a great and flourishing province under the Moguls, covered with rich cultivation, and studded with prosperous towns. But the tide of Mahratta desolation passed over it, and the extortions of the Peshwa's officers, more especially of his Arab mercenaries, combined with the ravages of the Pindarees completed its ruin, and left it almost without inhabitants. On the downfall of the Peshwa it was brought under British rule, and one of its districts, inhabited chiefly by Bheels, was formed into a separate collectorate. They are usually considered one of the aboriginal tribes, driven to seek refuge in the hills by the progress of Hindoo invasion. It was at a fountain in this wild region that Kishnu, the deified hero of the great Sanscrit epic, was slain. The Bheels were a race of unmitigated savages, without any sense of natural religion, violating all law, defying all authority, and habitually indulging in drink, licentiousness, and murder. They eschewed all honest labour, and lived by the chase or by plunder. From their mountain fastnesses they poured down on the plains, sacked the villages, drove off the cattle, and carried away the chief men whom they held to ransom. By the former rulers of the country they had been hunted like wild beasts, and as every man's hand was against them, their hand was against every man. The measures which were at first adopted by the British functionaries to reclaim them were marked by an excess of severity which defeated its own object, and demonstrated that the gibbet was not the fittest instrument of civilization. The task was at length confided to the late Sir James Outram, then a lieutenant of Native Infantry, a man of benevolent sympathies, sound judgment, and unflinching perseverance. The lawlessness of the barbarians when he took charge of the agency had risen to a pitch which was found to be unsupportable and he

considered it necessary to teach them the power of Government as a preliminary step towards enabling them to appreciate its kindness. He pursued them into their rugged hills with the greatest vigour, and defeated a large body which had assembled for a foray. The captives he made were treated with kindness, and sent back with conciliatory messages and offers of employment to the chiefs. It was the first act of kindness the wild men had ever experienced from the rulers of the country, and they responded to it with cheerfulness. A friendly intercourse was gradually established with the chiefs; Lieutenant Outram listened to their tales, joined in their pastimes, feasted them when well, and prescribed for them when ill. Having succeeded in gaining their confidence, he proceeded to organize a Bheel corps, which was filled up by degrees and served to diffuse a principle of order and obedience throughout the tribe, and enabled him in the course of a twelvemonth to report that not a single case of robbery had occurred within a circle of thirty miles. To carry forward the work of civilization, special European officers were appointed as Bheel agents, with instructions to mix with the people and settle their disputes, to encourage industrial pursuits and to reward the deserving with a grant of land rent free for a season, as well as to supply them with a plough and bullocks and a small advance of money. By these efforts, the object of converting them into agriculturists was accomplished, and little colonies of husbandmen sprung up in every direction in these primeval forests. A Bheel police was established to maintain the peace of the country, and a province which had hitherto been desolated by gangs of marauders, was in 1829 pronounced by the Collector to be in a state of profound repose. The Court of Directors expressed their cordial commendation of this happy conversion of a predatory tribe into useful and obedient subjects of the state, and a prosperous agricultural community: "This signal instance," they wrote, "of what we have so often impressed on you—the superior efficacy of conciliatory means in

reducing uncivilized and predatory tribes to order and obedience—is one of the most gratifying events in the recent history of British India.”

Mairwarra, 1832. In the year 1818 Sindia ceded to the Company the province of Ajmere in Rajpootana which included the hill tract of Mairwarra, about ninety miles in length, and from six to twenty in breadth. It was inhabited by the Mairs, an aboriginal race, living in their native hills almost in a state of nature, the boys tending their flocks of goats, and the men, mounted on their diminutive ponies, passing their time in plunder. They murdered their female offspring, and committed every kind of atrocity without remorse. Captain Hall, who was placed in charge of the country, found it swarming with banditti who set the public authority at complete defiance. He put down all opposition by the strong hand of power, and then determined to make the Mairs the instruments of their own civilization. A Mair battalion was formed, by which suitable employment was provided for the highland chiefs, who proved to be good and loyal soldiers, and contributed essentially to the suppression of crime and the maintenance of the public peace throughout the hills. Courts were established for the adjudication of rights, and the punchayet, or Indian jury, superseded the barbarous ordeal which had hitherto been practised of grasping red-hot shot, or dipping the hand in boiling oil. The Mairs were also in the course of time prevailed on to relinquish the two barbarous customs of female infanticide and the sale of women. The failure of his health obliged Captain Hall to quit his post after he had been employed for fourteen years without intermission in endeavouring to introduce the arts of civilization into this wild region, but happily his mantle fell on Captain Dixon, an officer animated with the same benevolence of heart, who entered upon the duties of his office with a feeling of enthusiasm. He felt that to render his labours successful he must be continually out in camp, in fervid heat or drenching rain, and that he must become a slave to his task.

until it was fully accomplished. To this honourable bondage he consecrated his official life. He lived among the people, and made himself acquainted with the condition of every village, and often of every household in it. He was without any European assistance, but under his training and discipline his native establishment became thoroughly efficient. To accustom the wild highlanders to habits of agricultural industry, it was above all things necessary to secure a supply of water for their fields. But the fall of rain in that hilly region was very capricious, and when it came could with difficulty be retained for continuous use. He accordingly prevailed on Government to make advances for works of irrigation, and dug reservoirs and wells, and formed embankments to husband and distribute the water. He covered the slopes of the hills with terraces, and by these appliances gave the waste jungle an aspect of luxuriant cultivation. The financial result of this improvement was encouraging in no ordinary degree. The sum advanced by the state for these waterworks—and in India they always return cent. per cent.—was a little above two lacs, while the augmentation of the revenue through the increase of the assessment, exceeded four lacs. The moral result of these labours was seen in the transformation of a wild and predatory tribe into an orderly, docile, and industrious population, with unbounded confidence in their European benefactors. To encourage the resort of traders, Captain Dixon erected a town in the district, and surrounded it with a wall, to give a feeling of security to the immigrants. It appeared to rise in the wilderness with the wand of a magician, and in a short time was filled with two thousand families engaged in mercantile and manufacturing pursuits. In all the annals of the India House there is no record more grateful than that of the energetic and successful labours of these two officers in the civilization of Mairwarra.

Female

Infanticide, 1833.

In the year 1789, Mr. Jonathan Duncan, the Resident at Benares, discovered for the first time that the custom of destroying their female offspring was

prevalent among the Rajpoots. After his appointment to the government of Bombay, in 1800, he found that the same barbarous custom existed also to a great extent in the west of India among the Rajpoot tribes, and especially in the Jharajah families of Cutch and Kattiwar. The lowest estimate of victims in these two provinces reached 3,000 a-year; and in the household of the raja not a single female infant had been spared. It was subsequently ascertained to prevail also among the Rajpoots of Joudhpore and Jeypore, and, indeed, throughout the whole extent of Malwa and Rajpootana. The number of victims was computed without exaggeration at 20,000 annually. Throughout a territory 700 miles in extent, stretching from Cutch to Benares, two thirds of the female offspring of the tribes were systematically put to death. These murders were committed generally under the directions of the father, either by starvation or by the administration of drugs; in some cases the mother became the murderer of her own offspring by rubbing her nipples with opium, which speedily extinguished infant life. There was no evidence to show that the custom had a religious origin; it was traced exclusively to the pride of caste. To maintain the honour of his family connections was the one paramount object of the haughty Rajpoot, but owing to the manifold and complicated gradations of rank within the tribe, and the limited number of families with whom a matrimonial alliance could be contracted without dishonour, it was difficult to obtain suitable matches, and for a girl to remain unmarried after she had reached the age of maturity, was regarded as an indelible disgrace. It was likewise considered indispensable that weddings should be celebrated on a scale of magnificence fixed by prescriptive and inexorable usage, and any attempt to abridge it was supposed to indicate the declension of the family. The expense of weddings arose chiefly from the exorbitant demands of the *bhats* and *churrans*, the bards and genealogists of the Rajpoot races, who exercised a more tyrannical influence in the tribe, than the priesthood. They employed themselves in

composing ballads which celebrated the antiquity and renown of the family, and its fame throughout the tribe was dependent on their eulogy. They kept the pedigrees and recorded the alliances of the family, which regulated its social position. Their presence was considered indispensable at every marriage festivity, and on some occasions they had been known to flock to a wedding to the number of two or three thousand. To conciliate their good-will, it was necessary to regale them with profusion, and to load them with gifts. If they were satisfied, their ballads traced the family up to the race of the sun or the moon; if otherwise, they revenged themselves by holding it up to the contempt of the country in ribald songs. To avert the disgrace to which the Rajpoot was exposed from these causes, he was prepared to submit to any sacrifice, and to incur any amount of debt, though it might inflict a permanent incumbrance on his property. But every difficulty arising from the risk of mésalliances, and from the extortion of the bards and genealogists was at once removed by extinguishing the life of his female offspring.

Efforts to
eradicate the
practice, 1834.

The officers of the Company resolved to make a vigorous effort to eradicate this infamous custom.

Mr. Duncan took the lead in this benevolent crusade, and exacted a solemn pledge from the Rajpoots, who were British subjects, to relinquish it for ever, and it was soon after prohibited under severe legal penalties. Colonel Walker, the Resident in Cutch, spared no labour to eradicate it by personal importunity and by a judicious exercise of authority, and at length prevailed on the Jharijah chiefs to bind themselves by a written engagement to renounce it, and to expel from the caste any who should be found to practise it. On the strength of these documents it was believed that this inhuman practice had become extinct, and Colonel Walker and the Court of Directors received the hearty congratulations of the benevolent in England and in Europe on the result of their labours. But in the course of time this conclusion was

found to be premature; the success which had attended these labours was partial and transient, and in all the provinces in which the practice was supposed to be extinguished, it was discovered to be almost as prevalent as ever. Renewed efforts were made to suppress it, but it was painfully felt that so long as the feelings and the interests of the people indisposed them to aid in the detection of delinquents, our exertions must be impotent; and the public officers appear at length to have resigned themselves to despondency. But in 1834 Mr. Wilkinson, one of the ablest and most philanthropic servants of the Company, and Mr.—the late Sir John—Willoughby, determined to adopt the most vigorous measures to root out the crime. Mr. Wilkinson assembled the chiefs of Central India, who were our allies and not our subjects, and through his personal influence prevailed on them to affix their seals to deeds abandoning the practice, and then issued a notification denouncing it. Lord William Bentinck addressed letters of congratulation, written, as well as signed, by himself, to the Rana of Oodipore and the other chiefs who had thus pledged themselves to the abolition of the practice, and the Court of Directors ordered special messages of commendation to be conveyed to them. But the chiefs signed the agreement only to deprecate the displeasure and to court the favour of the paramount authority, not from any motives of humanity, and Mr. Wilkinson had the mortification to learn that one of the number had put his own female children to death within two months of signing the deed. A general census of the province of Kattywar was likewise obtained, which revealed the melancholy fact that although the practice had unquestionably diminished, only one girl was to be found to three boys even in the most favourable places, and that in others five-sixths of the female infants had perished by the hands of their own unnatural parents. This discovery only led him to redouble his exertions. He insisted on a periodical census of the inhabitants. He issued fresh proclamations announcing the unshaken determination of Government to exterminate the

custom. He offered rewards to informers, and bestowed gifts on those who preserved their offspring. One chief was fined 12,000 rupees, and another sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment for having practised infanticide; but this procedure was openly resented as arbitrary and unjust by the other chiefs who still clung to the practice. In these benevolent labours Captain—now Sir Philip—Melvil took a prominent and active part, but he was likewise doomed to disappointment. The nobles of Cutch were successful in resisting the order for a census of the population, which they considered derogatory to the honour of their families. The benevolent efforts of Willoughby, Wilkinson, Melvil, and others were followed by only partial success, because they were not backed, as might have been hoped, by the natural feelings of the people. Humanity has been a plant of slow growth even in England, but in India it can scarcely be said to exist, either among the high caste Rajpoot or the savage Khond. Tribes which professed to be so tender of life as to call on their chiefs to prohibit the slaughter of sheep, were resolutely opposed to the preservation of their own female offspring. This humane work has proved to be the most difficult task we have ever undertaken in India. It was easier to subdue the country than to conquer the blood-thirsty prejudices of its inhabitants. The efforts which have thus been made by a succession of philanthropists for more than half a century to preserve life, and to make the triumphs of humanity co-extensive with the triumph of British arms, have secured to them the gratitude of their own country, though India be not able to appreciate their value. These benevolent labours, notwithstanding every disappointment, must be pursued without relaxation, and they will eventually be crowned with complete success; but this happy consummation is necessarily dependent on the continuance of British power in India, the extinction of which would be followed by the revival of those atrocities which the Company has been employed in putting down.

Human sacrifices The tract of country in the province of Orissa

among the
Khonds.

lying south of the Mahanuddee in the belt of hills facing the bay of Bengal, is inhabited by the Khonds, an original race which from time immemorial has maintained its primitive language, habits, and superstitions. Some of the tribes have successfully resisted every effort to reduce them to subjection, while others have paid a nominal allegiance to the neighbouring rajas. The revolt of the raja of Goomsur in 1835 determined Government to incorporate his territory with the Company's dominions, and their officers were then for the first time made acquainted with the existence of this singular people, though they dwelt within a few miles of one of the oldest British stations. Their fields were found to be in a high state of cultivation, and their villages swarmed with bullocks, goats, swine, and poultry. The normal pursuit of agriculture was diversified by the chase and by incessant conflicts among the tribes. To such an extent did they pride themselves on the virtue of hospitality that any man who could once make his way to the hearth of his deadly foe, considered himself in perfect safety. The government was patriarchal, hereditary in the family, and elective in the individual. Each tribe possessed a distinct portion of territory which was parcelled out among the different families, and the descent or sale of which was regulated by prescriptive custom. The women were held in high esteem, and no measure was completed without their advice. The men were brave and resolute, but revengeful and the slaves of drink. Of the different tribes in the hills, some abhorred human sacrifices, but practised female infanticide; others were the votaries of the "earth goddess," and firmly believed that the fertility of their fields depended on her favour, which could be secured only by the sacrifice of human life. The victims were called *meriahs* and, though generally obtained by purchase, were often acquired by violence, through the agency of two of the hill tribes, who gained their livelihood by procuring them from the low countries. When it was intended to perform a general sacrifice the villagers within the circuit

assembled in the first instance for the performance of religious rites. The three days preceding the sacrifice were spent in frantic dances and drunken revelry. On the last day the associated tribes proceeded with loud huzzas and barbaric music to consummate the act. The *meriah* was in most cases bound to a stake, and the priest inflicted a slight wound with his axe, when the excited crowd rushed forward and cut off slices of flesh from the writhing victim. The villagers then hastened home with the share of flesh they had been so fortunate as to obtain, carefully wrapt up in leaves. The village priest divided it into as many particles as there were heads of families, and the flesh was then buried in the favourite field with the firm conviction that it would ensure a good crop.

Efforts to
eradicate the
practice,
1829—34.

On the discovery of this infamous custom the Government of Madras resolved to adopt immediate measures to suppress it, and committed the duty to Captain Campbell, who proceeded to summon the chiefs and their followers to his encampment. After dwelling on the atrocity of the practice, he exacted an oath from them to abandon it, the immediate effect of which was the surrender of two hundred victims who had been procured for sacrifice. For four years he continued thus to labour in the cause of humanity till he was obliged to quit the country from the failure of his health; but the good he effected was found to be transient. His course of action was described by the Governor of Madras to consist in entering the hills with an armed force, calling together the influential men of each tribe, denouncing the practice, and demanding delivery of the victims which had been collected. The elders and priests who had taken an oath to abstain from the practice, relapsed into it as soon as they were relieved from this pressure, and for every victim they gave up, another was procured from the plains. It was felt that the partial success of Captain Campbell was delusive, and that no permanent benefit was to be expected from compulsory measures. This was

evidenced by the fact that on a subsequent festival no fewer than two hundred and forty victims were collected for sacrifice in one small portion of Khond land. The Marquis of Tweeddale, the Governor of Madras, deemed it indispensable to permanent success to obtain an influence over the hill chiefs, and while they were impressed with a just but favourable opinion of our power, to prevail on them by moral suasion to renounce the rite. Major Macpherson, who had previously been employed in surveying the country, and had accumulated much knowledge of the people, and of their character and circumstances, was intrusted with this duty, and likewise invested with the office of Judge, Magistrate and Collector. His first object was to establish the supremacy of Government throughout the country. He then visited tribe after tribe, entered into free and friendly communications with the people, and by the employment of reason more than of authority, induced a determination to abandon the practice. In return for this concession he offered them the inestimable boon of an authoritative settlement of their mutual disputes, which had never before been decided without bloodshed. With one hand he distributed justice and established tranquillity, with the other he rescued the victims and exacted pledges of discontinuing the rite. The result of these efforts was the extinction of the practice throughout the whole province of Goomsur. These labours were followed up by the establishment of schools, for which he caused suitable books to be compiled in the Orissa character. It was the firm belief of the Khonds that their priests alone could cure their diseases, and the priests had but one prescription—a human sacrifice—for all complaints and wounds. Send us, said the barbarians to the Major, a doctor, and we will make him a god; the request was complied with, and a new and powerful influence was established over them. In the course of time they found that their fields yielded an abundant harvest without human blood, and they concluded that the “earth goddess” had lost her power, and they ceased to pay her homage. Dr. Cadenhead, the

energetic assistant of Major Macpherson, was likewise sent into the adjacent district of Boad to put down the rite. The Khonds delivered up more than a hundred victims at his requisition, but not before they had put to death a hundred and twenty as the last act of sacrifice. The uncle of the raja, instigated by one Sam Bisoye, who, while eating the salt of Government, was secretly counteracting all its benevolent efforts, raised an opposition to the British authorities, which was joined by the raja of Ungool, and ripened into an insurrection. The camp of the agent was attacked, and it became necessary to call out a military force. Violent prejudices were excited against Major Macpherson, and the Vice-President in Council allowed himself to be persuaded that the rebellion was directed against him, and not against the authority of Government. The Khond agency became, in fact, a party question, and truth and justice disappeared. While Major Macpherson was engaged with great success in quelling the revolt, he and his assistants were summarily dismissed from their appointments. Mr.—now Sir John—Grant was sent to investigate the charges which had been brought against him, and, on receiving his report, Lord Dalhousie assured Major Macpherson that nothing could in his opinion compensate for the treatment he had received, but that he still enjoyed the undiminished confidence of every member of Government. The Court of Directors pronounced the most favourable judgment on his proceedings and ascribed the extinction of this crime to the judicious and conciliatory measures he had adopted, and to the admirable power of his individual character. After his removal, Colonel Campbell was reappointed to the charge of the district, and completed the work which had been so happily begun. The entire number of victims rescued from death exceeded fifteen hundred; and this atrocious rite, which had probably been practised by the Khonds for as many centuries as the immolation of widows had been practised by the Hindoos, was finally extinguished under the auspices of British humanity.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

LORD AUCKLAND'S ADMINISTRATION—THE AFGHAN
EXPEDITION, 1836—1842.

Lord Auckland
Governor-
General, 1836.

LORD AUCKLAND was sworn in as Governor-General on the 20th March, 1836. He entered upon his duties with the most pacific and benevolent intentions. At the farewell entertainment of the Court of Directors at the London tavern he assured them that "he looked with exultation to the new prospects before him as affording him an opportunity of doing good to his fellow creatures, of promoting education and knowledge, and of extending the blessings of good government and happiness to millions in India." For such labours he was eminently qualified by his clear and enlightened views of domestic policy, as well as by his amiable disposition and his active habits. But before he had been six months in Calcutta he perceived a storm gathering in the north-west, and expressed his apprehensions that we might at no very distant period be involved in political, and possibly in military, operations on our western frontier. The complications which arose brought on a great political crisis with which he was not qualified to deal, either by his previous experience, or his mental calibre. He had little reliance on his own judgment, and acted for the most part, under the influence of those who surrounded him, and so the vessel of the state rapidly drifted among the breakers. His administration is almost exclusively comprised in the fatal expedition to Afghanistan, the inception of which may be dated in July, 1837, while the catastrophe occurred in January, 1842, a few weeks before his return to England. To form a correct idea of this momentous transaction which has exercised a powerful influence on the interests and progress of the British empire in the east, it is necessary to trace the convergence of events in Afghanistan and the Punjab, in

Persia and in Russia to the point at which it was determined to despatch that ill-starred expedition.

Shah Soojah's attempt, 1833. Shah Soojah, the exiled monarch of Cabul and the British pensioner at Loodiana, was encouraged

by the treachery of Dost Mahomed's brothers to make a second effort in 1833 to recover the throne of Afghanistan. He endeavoured to raise funds by pawning his jewels, but the bankers demanded extravagant security for a very considerable advance. He then applied for aid to Lord William Bentinck, who replied, "My friend, the British Government religiously abstains from intermeddling with the affairs of its neighbours when it can be avoided; to afford you assistance for the purpose you have contemplated would not consist with that neutrality which on such occasions regulates our conduct." The only aid he was enabled to obtain was the payment of his pension four months in advance, to the extent of 16,000 rupees. He invoked the assistance of Runjeet Sing, who proposed various conditions which appeared preposterous and impracticable; and among others the restitution of the sandal-wood gates of the ancient temple of Somnath, which were attached to the tomb of Mahmood at Ghuzni. The Shah replied that the removal of them would cover him with eternal disgrace in the eyes of the faithful, and he referred, likewise, to a current prophecy that whenever the Sikhs obtained possession of them, their government would immediately be overthrown. The surrender of them was not pressed. The ruler of the Punjab was at length induced to countenance the undertaking on condition that the Shah would guarantee to him all the possessions he had acquired in the provinces beyond the Indus. He started on the expedition in February 1833, crossed the Indus without opposition, and reached Shikarpore, where, in the following January, he defeated the Ameers of Sinde, and constrained them to make an immediate payment of five lacs of rupees, and to enter into an engagement to pay an annual tribute for that town. He then pursued his route without interruption to Candahar, and

maintained his position before that fortress for a few months, till Dost Mahomed marched down from Cabul, and crushed his army and his hopes. In July, 1834, he fled from Afghanistan to Belochistan, and, in the extremity of his distress, received a generous hospitality from the ruler, Mehrab Khan. He then retraced his steps to his old asylum and his pensionary position at Loodiana in March, 1835. While the Afghans were occupied in repelling the invasion of Shah Soojah at Candahar, Runjeet Sing availed himself of the opportunity to send a large army across the Indus, and definitively incorporated the province of Peshawur with the Sikh dominions, placing it in charge of General Avitabile.

**Runjeet's views
on Sind, 1835.**

It has been stated in a former chapter that the design on Sind which Runjeet Sing had long cherished was thwarted by the resolution of Lord William Bentinck to open the navigation of the Indus to commerce, which required the establishment of a preponderating British influence on its banks. At this juncture, a wild and predatory tribe on the right bank of the river made repeated inroads into the Huzara districts which Runjeet Sing had conquered, and his son, Khurruck Sing, and his gallant grandson, Nao Nihal, were sent with a large force to chastise them. But as these attacks were traced to the instigation of the Ameers of Sind, two of their forts were occupied by the Sikh army, which had been largely reinforced with a view to the conquest of Shikarpore, and the entire subjugation of the province. The Ameers organized their forces for the conflict, and it required all the tact and energy of Colonel Pottinger at Hyderabad, and a strong pressure on the part of Captain Wade at Lahore, to prevent a collision between the two powers which must have resulted in the discomfiture of the Ameers, and the extension of Runjeet Sing's authority throughout the country down to the sea. Captain Wade was obliged to enforce his representations by a prominent allusion to the risk which Runjeet Sing would incur if he pursued these designs in opposition to the wishes of the British

Government. On the other hand, his own gallant officers importuned him to resist, at all hazards, the restrictions which were thus imperiously placed on the extension of his territories by the British authorities, but he shook his venerable head and asked them where were now the two hundred thousand Mahratta spears which had once bid defiance to the Company. The feeling of awe which he entertained of the strength and resources of the British Government had recently been heightened by a circumstance which enabled him more fully to appreciate them. Lord William had determined to adopt the policy of substituting English for Persian as the language of diplomatic correspondence with the various native courts in India. Runjeet sent the son of one of his chiefs to Loodiana to master the English language, and on his return to the court caused the map of India one day to be spread out before him, and required the lad to point out the position and boundaries of the Lahore dominions. But what, he asked, are all these red circles which I see spread over the map from the Himalaya to Cape Comorin. They mark the British possessions, replied the youth. In a fit of vexation Runjeet kicked the map away, exclaiming, "it will all become red." On the present occasion, he bowed to the majesty of British power, and relinquished his designs on Sinde; and had the magnanimity to invite the Governor-General and the highest British functionaries to Lahore to the nuptials of his grandson whom he had destined as the conqueror and the ruler of that province.

Dost Mahomed
at Peshawur,
1835.

The loss of Peshawur rankled in the bosom of Dost Mahomed, and he determined to make an extraordinary effort to recover it. For this purpose he assumed the character of a *ghazee*, or champion of the faith, and proclaimed a religious war against the infidel Sikhs. The Mahomedan world in Central Asia was immediately in commotion, and from the regions of the Hindoo Koosh, from the wilds of Toorkistan, from the orchards of Kohistan, and from the remote recesses of the mountains

thousands poured down on the plain of Peshawur to join the standard of the Prophet, some on horseback, others on foot, promiscuously armed with sword and shield, with bows and arrows, with matchlocks and with spears. The spirit of Runjeet Sing appeared to quail before this host of infuriated fanatics, and, while he advanced to the defence of the province with a large army, he determined also to try the effect of intrigue, and despatched one Harlan, an American adventurer, ostensibly on a mission to Dost Mahomed, but in reality to sow dissensions in his camp. "I divided the brothers," said the unscrupulous envoy, "against the Dost, excited their jealousy of his growing power, and induced one of them, Sultan Mahomed, to withdraw himself suddenly from the encampment with 10,000 of his soldiers. . . This unexpected desertion threw the Afghan camp into a state of inextricable confusion and dismay, and resulted in the total defection of the Dost Mahomed's army, which melted away in the stillness of night. At daybreak not a vestige of the Afghan camp was to be seen where six hours before 50,000 men and 10,000 horse were rife with the tumult of wild emotion." Dost Mahomed returned with deep chagrin to Cabul. On hearing of the arrival of Lord Auckland in the spring of 1836, he addressed a letter of congratulation to him, and in allusion to the unhappy state of his relations with Runjeet Sing, begged him "to communicate whatever might suggest itself to his mind for the settlement of the affairs of the country." Lord Auckland returned a friendly reply, and announced his intention shortly to depute a gentleman to the Ameer's court to discuss questions of commerce, but in reference to the Sikh quarrel remarked, "My friend, you are aware that it is not the practice of the British Government to interfere with the affairs of other independent states." The truthfulness of this declaration was singularly exemplified two years later by the expedition which Lord Auckland sent to Cabul, in conjunction with Runjeet Sing, to dethrone Dost Mahomed. Despairing of any aid from the British Government, the Dost applied at the beginning of 1837 to the

Shah of Persia as the "King of Islam," or head of Mahomedanism. In the language of oriental compliment he stated that "his country belonged to the kingdom of Persia, yet disturbance and misery were caused throughout it by the detestable tribe of Sikhs; the misery or welfare of these countries cannot be separated from the interests of the Persian Government. If I am unable to resist that diabolical tribe I have no choice but to connect myself with the English, who will thus obtain complete control over the whole of Afghanistan." Impatient to wipe out the disgrace inflicted on him by the cowardice of his troops at Peshawur, the Dost soon after sent his son, Akbar Khan, with a large army through the Khyber to Jumrood, where a battle was fought on the 30th of April, 1837, in which the Sikhs were completely defeated, and their ablest general, Huree Sing, was killed. Runjeet Sing was at the time engaged at Lahore in celebrating the nuptials of his grandson, and in instituting an order of knighthood, which he styled the order of the Auspicious Star of the Punjab, and of which the first decoration was conferred on Sir Henry Fane, the Commander-in-chief, who had accepted the invitation to be present at these magnificent festivities. They were rudely interrupted by the disaster at Jumrood, but Runjeet Sing made every effort to retrieve his loss. Reinforcements were pushed forward with a degree of promptitude and speed which had never been witnessed before. Colonel Steinbach, one of his European officers, marched with a large body of troops three hundred miles in twelve days, and it is affirmed that field guns were actually dragged from Ramnugur on the Chenab to Peshawur, a distance of two hundred miles, in twelve days. The Afghans gained little by their victory; they were unable to master either Jumrood or Peshawur, and after ravaging the country around returned to Cabul on the approach of the Sikh force. It was at this critical juncture that Lord Auckland's envoy, Captain Burnes, made his appearance at the capital to discourse about trade and manufactures, but the fermentation in Central Asia soon gave a character of political importance to his mission.

Progress of
Russia.

The Russians, like the Romans, have systematically devoted themselves to the extension of their dominion and power, and for more than a century have prosecuted schemes of aggrandizement in Europe and in Asia, without any relaxation, and without a single failure. "In the course of sixty-four years, dating from 1772," as Mr. McNeill remarked, in the memorable pamphlet he published at this time, "she has advanced her frontier in the west eight hundred and fifty miles towards Vienna, Berlin, Dresden, Munich, and Paris; she has approached four hundred and fifty miles nearer to Constantinople; she has possessed herself of the capital of Poland, and has advanced to within a few miles of the capital of Sweden; and the territories she has acquired during this period are greater in extent and importance than the whole empire she had in Europe before that time." Peter the Great, the founder of Russian greatness, was the first to contemplate the establishment of a great empire in the east. During his reign the old Russian boundary eastward was defined by the celebrated line, called the Orenburg and Siberia line, stretching from Orenburg on the Ural river up to the borders of China, a distance of 2,200 miles. South of this range down to the Jaxartes, or Syr, the steppes of the nomad race of Kirghis Cossacks extended 2,000 miles in length and 1,000 in breadth, through a region impassable except to well-appointed caravans, and at particular seasons of the year. It required a hundred years to bring these hordes in some measure into subordination to the imperial authority, and it was not till the year 1830 that the Russians in their progress southward took up their position on the Syr. On that river they have gradually established a chain of forts, extending from the estuary of the river in the lake Ural, to Fort Vernoe eastward along seven hundred miles. The truth of the assertion made by Sir Robert Peel in 1844, "that when civilization and barbarism come in contact the latter must inevitably give way," has been fully verified in the progress of Russian power in Asia. The same irresistible impulse which

has carried the English standard, in the course of a century, from the Bay of Bengal, over subverted thrones, through fifteen hundred miles of territory, up to Peshawur, has brought the Russians down from Orenburg to the Jaxartes and the Ôxus, both of which must at no distant period become Russian rivers, navigated by Russian steamers, and subservient to Russian interests. Already are the resources of Khiva, Bokhara, and Kokan, the three kingdoms of Toorkistan, within the grasp of Russia, and her influence must inevitably be extended to the Hindoo Koosh, which is evidently destined to be the snow-clad boundary of the two great European empires in Asia.

Influence of
Russia in
Persia, 1836.

Before the development of Russian power in the north along the line of the Jaxartes had been completed, an attempt was made by the ambition of her diplomatic agents to take advantage of the ascendancy she had acquired at the court of Persia and push her influence in another direction, up to the banks of the Indus. At the beginning of the century the Russians wrested the province of Georgia from the crown of Persia, and although the political relations of the two powers were for many years as pacific as could be expected where the one was domineering, and the other impatient of control, there was a latent feeling of irritation among the Persians which only required a spark to kindle the flames of war. It was reported that the Russians had done violence to the religious feelings of the Georgian Mahomedans. The Persian mollahs, or priests, raised the cry of a religious war, and the Russians in the garrisons and outposts were indiscriminately massacred. Under the threat of forfeiting his seat in paradise, the king was constrained by the fanaticism of the priesthood to send his son Abbas Mirza with 40,000 men into the field to combat the Russians. The fourth article of the treaty of Teheran, concluded in 1814, pledged the British Government in case of a war between Persia and any European power to aid the Shah with a force, or to grant him an annual subsidy during its continuance. It was mainly

in reliance on this engagement that the Persians embarked with eagerness in this war with a superior power. But a strong pressure of male, and more especially of female, diplomacy in London was brought to bear on the British Ministry, and hints were conveyed that any attempt to carry out this article of the treaty would lead to a rupture with Russia. All assistance was therefore refused under the convenient pretext that Persia was the aggressor, though she had been goaded into the war by the constant encroachments of her imperious neighbour. The Persian army, though a portion of it had been disciplined by English officers, was completely routed, and the Shah was obliged to submit to the humiliation of ceding two of his finest provinces to Russia, and indemnifying her for the expenses of the war. The Persian court was driven to extremity by this pecuniary mulct when the English Ministry came to its relief with a large ready money payment on condition that the inconvenient article in the treaty of 1814 should be abrogated.

Persian expedition to Khorasan and Herat, 1834.

The Persians sought to indemnify themselves for these losses by the conquest of the province of Khorasan, lying to the east of their dominions, which they were enabled to accomplish in 1832 by the aid of English and Russian officers. The next year Mahomed Shah, the grandson of the reigning prince, proceeded on an expedition to Herat; but he had made little progress in the siege before he was obliged, to his great chagrin, to return to Teheran, in consequence of the death of his father. Futteh Ali, the old king who had welcomed Captain Malcolm in 1802, and had always been favourable to an alliance with England, died in the following year. Mahomed Shah, who now ascended the throne, evinced a strong disposition to fraternize with Russia, more especially as the result of the late war had inspired him with a lively dread of her power. Since the first mission of Captain Malcolm, the British Government had expended a sum of no less than ninety-three lacs of rupees in embassies and subsidies to Persia. British officers had been sent to discipline her armies, and her arsenals had been filled

with the munitions of war by British treasure, with the object of establishing a preponderant sway at the court which might serve as a bulwark of the British empire in India. The Ministry had now the mortification of seeing this expenditure and labour neutralized, and British influence completely overpowered by that of Russia. The expedition to Herat, which was the favourite project of the young and impetuous monarch, became the test of the strength of these rival influences at Teheran.

Negotiations
regarding
Herat, 1835.

Kamran, the ruler of Herat, had openly violated the treaties subsisting between him and Persia, and had, likewise, made repeated inroads into the territories of the Shah, and kidnapped his subjects to the number, as the Persians affirmed, of 12,000, and sold them into slavery. In the opinion of the British Minister, Mr.—now Sir John—McNeill, these atrocities fully justified the Persians in resorting to hostilities; but he did not fail to represent to the Ministry that, in the present state of the relations between Russia and Persia, the advance of the latter into Afghanistan, of which Herat was considered the gate, was tantamount to the progress of the former towards the Indus, and ought to be counteracted by the British Government to the fullest extent which the obligations of public faith would permit. He affirmed that the influence and intrigues of Russia would thus be extended, through the conquests of Persia, up to the threshold of India, the public mind in the north-west provinces unsettled, and the tranquillity of the British empire disturbed. Mr. McNeill used every argument to dissuade the Shah from the prosecution of the enterprise, which he affirmed would compromise him with the British Government, and advised him to seek a redress of grievances by an amicable arrangement with Herat. At the same time, he recommended Kamran to avoid the risks of a second invasion by making suitable concessions to the Persian monarch. A conference was accordingly held, but the Persian representative made the most arrogant demands, claiming the whole of

Afghanistan up to Ghuzni as Persian territory, and Herat as a Persian province. The attempt to reconcile differences proved abortive, but Mr. McNeill did not the less endeavour to dissuade the Shah from the expedition, while, on the other hand, the Russian minister, Count Simonich, encouraged him to persevere, and offered him every assistance. The question was then referred to the Ministry in London, and a remonstrance was addressed to the Russian authorities at St. Petersburg, who replied that the Count had exceeded his instructions, and that the Emperor entirely disapproved of the expedition. The Count was not recalled, and his proceedings at Teheran were so completely in unison with the national feeling in Russia, if not likewise with that of the public functionaries, that the Moscow Gazette threatened to dictate the next treaty with England in Calcutta.

The Herat expedition, 1837.

The Shah set out for Herat in the month of July, with 50,000 troops and fifty pieces of cannon, dwelling with delight on the facility with which his disciplined infantry and artillery would overturn the Sikhs, and pursue the course of Nadir Shah to Delhi. The expedition was regarded as the triumph of Russian over British influence, and created an extraordinary impression in Central Asia. Throughout India the sensation was greater than had been felt since the invasion of Zemaun Shah at the beginning of the century. The native princes again began to speculate on the downfall of the Company's supremacy. Threats of invasion were muttered in Nepal and in Burmah. The native journals fanned the excitement to such a degree as to bring in question the wisdom of having bestowed freedom on the press, but happily no attempt was made to bridle it. Inflammatory papers which were traced to Persian agency were diligently scattered through the country. The Mahomedans looked for the advent of a countless host of the faithful, backed, it was believed, by two hundred thousand Russians, to wrest the country from the hands of the Company. The country was agitated with the report of great movements in Central Asia,

the cradle of revolutions for eight centuries, and men in the remote districts of the Deccan began to bury their money and jewels in the earth. The fall of Herat under these circumstances would, in the opinion of Mr. McNeill, have inflicted a blow on the prestige of the Indian Government which would be felt throughout the east.

Lord Auckland's advisers, 1837.

At this juncture Lord Auckland left Calcutta and proceeded towards the sanitarium of Simla, with Mr. Macnaghten, as the public secretary in attendance on him, and Mr. John Colvin as his private secretary. The north-west provinces were at the time visited with a more severe famine than had been known since they came under British authority, and which was calculated to have swept away half a million of the inhabitants. The Governor-General's camp consisted, as usual, of more than 20,000 men, and its progress tended to aggravate the general distress. On reaching Cawnpore, Mr. Macnaghten advised Lord Auckland to return to Calcutta, and if the advice had been followed, the Government would probably have been spared the disasters of the Afghan war, but it was determined to push on to Simla. Mr. William Hay Macnaghten had been for several years a cavalry officer in the Madras army before he entered the Bengal civil service. In the college of Fort William he had carried away the highest prizes, and he was one of the most profound oriental scholars in India. After having risen to great distinction in the judicial branch of the service, he entered the political department during the administration of Lord W. Bentinck, who formed a high estimate of the soundness of his judgment and the sobriety of his opinions. Mr. Colvin, the private secretary, was a man of considerable abilities, and lofty bearing, with a spirit of greater resolution than his master, over whom he exerted a paramount influence. On these two officers, but more especially on Mr. Colvin, devolved the duty of giving advice to the Governor-General at this momentous crisis, when he was separated from the constitutional advice of his Council. The under-secretary, Mr. Henry Torrens, whose

influence in the Simla cabinet, was altogether secondary, was an accomplished scholar, a man of great parts and versatile genius, but too volatile to be a safe political guide. The home Government, seeing in every direction the indication of a restless and aggressive spirit, directed on the part of Russia and her political agents, against the security of the British empire in India, had instructed the Governor-General to adopt vigorous measures for its protection. Mr. McNeill, who had already sounded the note of alarm in his pamphlet on the progress of Russia in the east, which produced a profound sensation in England, advised Lord Auckland to meet the crisis by raising up the barrier of a friendly power in Afghanistan, and recommended that Dost Mahomed should be subsidized and strengthened.

Captain Burnes at Cabul, 1837. It was at this period of fermentation that Captain Burnes made his appearance at the court of Cabul, to work out the policy of opening the Indus to commerce, but he found himself at once in the very vortex of political complications, and his character of mercantile agent was speedily merged into that of diplomatist. Native courts are accustomed to measure the esteem and respect in which they are held, and the importance of a political mission, by the character of the presents which accompany it, and the Afghans had a vivid remembrance of the magnificent gifts brought by Mr. Mountstewart Elphinstone thirty years before. Captain Burnes was escorted to the durbar by Akbar Khan, at the head of a fine body of Afghan cavalry, on the 20th September, and honoured with a splendid reception, but when he came to exhibit the presents with which he was charged, a pistol and a telescope for the Dost, and some pins and needles for the ladies of the zenana, he and his embassy sunk at once into contempt in the eyes of the court. The first glance at the state of affairs convinced him that Afghanistan was ready to throw herself into the arms of Persia, and he considered it fortunate that he should have arrived at the nick of time to counteract the hostile projects of the Persian court. The

brothers of Dost Mahomed at Candahar, partly from hatred of Kamran, the ruler of Herat, with whom they had a blood feud for the murder of their father, and partly from a dread of his aggressions, had made proposals for an alliance, offensive and defensive, with the Shah of Persia. These overtures were heartily encouraged by the Russian minister, who did not fail to perceive that the extension of Persian influence in Afghanistan would essentially promote the views and interests of Russia. The Persian envoy who was sent to complete the negotiations arrived at Candahar as Captain Burnes entered Cabul, where he learnt that the Shah had readily responded to the advances made by Dost Mahomed after he had met with a repulse from Lord Auckland, and that an ambassador with robes and presents had arrived at Candahar.

In his intercourse with Captain Burnes, the Dost dwelt exclusively on the subject which had led him to open communications with the courts of Persia and Russia, the loss of Peshawur and the encroachments of the Sikhs. He was ready, he said, to break off all connection with Persia, and to dismiss the envoy with his presents from Candahar, if he were permitted to entertain any hope of assistance for the recovery of the province from the British Government. But Lord Auckland entertained a morbid dread of giving offence to Runjeet Sing, whom he termed our ancient and faithful ally, and was loth to entertain any proposal regarding Peshawur. Yet that province had always been a source of anxiety to him, and not only a burden on his treasury, but an object of insuperable aversion to his troops. Before Captain Burnes's mission to Cabul, he had offered to restore it to the Afghans, on condition of their paying tribute; but Dost Mahomed disdained the idea of a Mahomedan becoming tributary to an infidel. This feeling was, however, eventually overcome by his passionate desire to recover the province, and he at length assured Captain Burnes that if Runjeet Sing would restore it, he was ready to hold it as a fief of the Punjab, and to transmit the customary presents. There can be little doubt that if Lord Auckland had

Negotiations
with Dost
Mahomed, 1837.

boldly faced the question, and entrusted the solution of this difficulty to Captain Burnes at Cabul, and to Captain Wade at Loodiana, it would have been brought to an early and satisfactory issue. The overtures of Persia and Russia would in that case have been definitely rejected, and Dost Mahomed, secured as an ally, would have become an effectual barrier against any encroachments from the west. But, from first to last, there appears to have been a fatal infatuation in our Afghan policy, and the whole transaction stands forth in the annals of British India, as that in which it is difficult to discover a single step that was not marked by folly. Soon after his arrival at Cabul, Captain Burnes endeavoured to dissuade the Candahar chiefs from the Persian alliance, and threatened them with the severe displeasure of the British Government if they persisted in it. This communication produced a salutary result, and induced them to dismiss the Persian envoy without the usual ceremonies. But on farther reflection, they began to entertain an apprehension that the Shah would take vengeance on them for the rejection of the alliance, and endeavour to annex Candahar to his dominions, which, indeed, he had from the first fully intended to do. Captain Burnes therefore despatched an officer to Candahar in December, to assure them that if the province should be invaded by the king of Persia, he would proceed thither himself, and support them by every means in his power, even to the extent of paying their troops. Lord Auckland severely reprimanded Captain Burnes for having thus exceeded his instructions, and directed him to inform the chiefs of Candahar that he had held out expectations which his Government was not prepared to sanction. Yet the measure which Lord Auckland now reprobated was pronounced by the Ministry in England to be the wisest which could have been adopted. The Candahar rulers, finding that the engagements of the British envoy at Cabul were not to be depended on, immediately entered into a treaty with Persia, which was guaranteed by Count Simonich, who engaged to defend Candahar against an attack from whatever quarter it might come.

The Russian
Envoy, 1837.

After the receipt of Lord Auckland's unfavourable reply in 1836, Dost Mahomed despatched an envoy to St. Petersburg to solicit the interposition of the Emperor. He alluded to the dissensions between his own tribe and the Suddozyes, and stated that the English were rather disposed to give their support to Shah Soojah. He expressed a hope that his imperial majesty would permit him to be received, like the Persians, under the protection of Russia, and would condescend to arrange matters in Afghanistan, and protect him from Sikh encroachment. Captain Vitkewich, an officer on the staff of the Governor-General of Orenburg, was sent to Cabul with presents of considerable value, and a reply from the Czar, the authenticity of which has been questioned, but never disproved. His credentials, like those of Captain Burnes, were ostensibly of a commercial character, but in both cases were doubtless intended to cover political negotiations. He arrived at Cabul on the 19th December, and the Dost immediately visited Captain Burnes, and assured him that he desired no connection except with the British Government, and was prepared to turn the Russian officer summarily out of Cabul; but Captain Burnes succeeded in dissuading him from this imprudent measure. In communicating to Lord Auckland the fact that a Russian envoy had arrived at Cabul with the most tempting offers to Dost Mahomed, Captain Burnes urged the necessity of immediate and decisive action, in this neck to neck race between Russia and England in Afghanistan. But Lord Auckland persisted in refusing the Dost any hope of his good offices with Runjeet Sing, and intimated that he must waive all claim to Peshawur, and remain content with any arrangement the Sikh ruler might think fit to make with Sultan Mahomed regarding it. The Dost replied that he bore no enmity to his brother, notwithstanding his incessant treachery and his rancorous hostility, but he could never consider himself secure at Cabul, if Sultan Mahomed held Peshawur. In subsequent interviews with Captain Burnes, he went so far as to say that his fears would be allayed if Peshawur were made

over conjointly to him and to his brother. Captain Burnes importuned Lord Auckland to give a favourable ear to these representations, stating, that while he himself had been in constant and friendly communication with the Dost, the Russian envoy had been kept aloof, and the Emperor's presents had been contemptuously left at Candahar, and that he himself entertained the fullest confidence in the sincerity of his declaration of attachment to the British alliance, so long as there remained any hope of securing it.

This hope was effectually quenched by the letter which Lord Auckland was advised to address personally to the Dost in the month of February, in which the refusal of his request was wantonly embittered by the supercilious tone in which it was conveyed. He was told that Runjeet Sing, whom the Afghans regarded as the incarnation of evil, had from the generosity of his nature acceded to the wish of the Governor-General for the cessation of strife, if the Dost would engage to conduct himself with propriety; that it was British interference which had hitherto protected the Afghans from the continuance of the war which must have ended in their ruin; that the hopes he cherished, which could never be realized, must be abandoned; that he must seek a reconciliation with the Maharaja, who was the firm and ancient ally of the English, and that the establishment of peace would give him a degree of security in the territory actually under his government to which he had long been a stranger. The British Government would labour to secure this object, but only on condition that he abstained from forming any connection with other powers without their sanction. Every sentence in this scornful communication was calculated to kindle a flame of indignation in the Afghan nobles and chiefs, and Captain Burnes's mission became hopeless from the day it was delivered. In the last resort, Dost Mahomed addressed a friendly letter to the Governor-General imploring him in language bordering on humility "to remedy the grievances of

Lord Auckland's
haughty com-
munication, 1838.

the Afghans and to give them a little encouragement and power." Lord Auckland and his Simla cabinet of secretaries were deaf to every representation. They demanded the largest concessions from Dost Mahomed and required him to reject the alluring offers which other powers were pressing on him, while they themselves offered him nothing in return but political sympathies, and their good offices to protect him from the further encroachments of Runjeet Sing in Afghanistan, when it was well known that the mere mention of the Khyber pass, as General Avitabile affirmed, gave his soldiers the cholic, and that Runjeet Sing had no more idea of marching to Cabul than to Pekin. Lord Auckland required him to break with Persia, with Russia, and with Turkistan, but would not engage to protect him from the hostility which he must inevitably have incurred thereby. After the Government had thus treated him with studied indignity, and addressed him as though he had been some petty dependent Indian raja, and extinguished every hope of a British alliance, it was no matter of surprise that he should have welcomed the Russian envoy, who was accordingly conducted through the streets with great parade, and received with distinction at the court. Captain Burnes continued to linger at Cabul for another month, and did not take his departure till the 26th of April. The Russian envoy promised everything which the Dost was most anxious to obtain, and immediately opened an official correspondence with Runjeet Sing, but met with no encouragement to visit Lahore. He then proceeded to Candahar and completed the treaty with the chiefs, which was soon after ratified by the Russian minister at the Persian court, though it contained stipulations hostile to the British Government, with whom Russia was at peace.

Resolution of Lord Auckland, 1838. The object of the public authorities both in England and in India at this difficult conjuncture was the same as that which had led to the despatch of Mr. Mountstuart Elphinstone's embassy in 1809, "to interpose a friendly power in Central Asia between us and any invading

power from the west." Mr. McNeill and Captain Wade, the political agent at Loodiana, though they differed on several points, concurred in recommending that this object should be pursued by strengthening the actual rulers of Cabul and Candahar, and binding them to British interests. Captain Burnes on his return from Cabul enquired why we could not act with Dost Mahomed. "He is" he said "a man of undoubted ability, and has at heart a high opinion of the British nation, and if half you would do for others were done for him, he would abandon Persia and Russia to-morrow;" but Lord Auckland and his advisers appear from the first to have regarded the Dost with feelings of mistrust as well as aversion. They were evidently chagrined that, instead of submitting with grateful humility to whatever terms they might think fit to dictate, he should be sitting at the gate of India, apparently debating whether he would accept their offers, or those of their opponents. They may also have considered it a point of national honour to secure a footing in Afghanistan by their own swords rather than by subsidizing the Dost, and they determined, therefore, to depose him. On the 12th May, 1838, Lord Auckland drew up an elaborate Minute in which he reviewed the whole question, and enumerated three courses as being open to us. The first was to confine our defensive operations to the line of the Indus and abandon Afghanistan to its fate, but this, he remarked, would be absolute defeat, and leave a free opening for Persian and Russian intrigue on our frontier. The second was to secure Afghanistan by granting succour to the Dost and to his brothers at Candahar, but this would be giving power, as he thought, to those who would probably employ the means placed at their disposal against our allies the Sikhs. The third alternative and that which Lord Auckland resolved to adopt was, to permit, or to encourage, the advance of Runjeet Sing's armies on Cabul, under control and restriction; and, as subsidiary to this movement, to organize an expedition, headed by Shah Soojah, to enable him to establish his authority in eastern Afghanistan,

and to aid him by contributions in money, and by the presence of an accredited agent, together with a sufficient body of officers to discipline and command his troops.

Mr. Macnaghten was despatched to Lahore to obtain the concurrence of Runjeet Sing in this project. His instructions, dated three days after the Minute, were drawn by Mr. Torrens in a very bombastic style; and embraced a far more extended and a more perilous scheme than that which was contemplated in the Governor-General's Minute—that while the Sikhs advanced cautiously on Cabul, a division of the British army should accompany Shah Soojah across the Indus, and occupy the town of Shikarpore, for a time. Mr. Macnaghten entered the Punjab on the 30th May, and was received with great cordiality by Runjeet Sing, then in the last year of his existence, who tottered through the whole length of the audience chamber to embrace him, and then hastened to inspect the trays of presents with a feeling of childish delight. When they met to discuss the object of the mission, Mr. Macnaghten asserted, with diplomatic assurance, that the failure of Captain Burnes's mission to Cabul arose from the unwillingness of the Ameer to break off negotiations with other powers. He then launched out into a transcendental panegyric of the resources of the British empire, and affirmed that 200,000 soldiers could at any time be brought into the field to resist an invasion from the east, west, north, and south. There was nothing, he said, of a palpable character to be apprehended from the movements of Persia and Russia, or the hostility of the Sirdars at Cabul, or Candahar, but as they must tend to unsettle the minds of men, it was desirable to concert measures to suppress all disturbing influences. He then alluded to the treaty which Runjeet Sing had entered into with Shah Soojah in 1833, and enquired whether it would be agreeable to his wishes that it should be revived, and that the British Government should become a party to it, assisting Shah Soojah with money and officers. "That," replied Run-

jeet, "would be adding sugar to milk." But he demanded that Shah Soojah should confirm his right to the territories he held beyond the Indus, and that, if he were required to renounce all claim to Sinde, he should receive one-half the sum which the Shah might succeed in extorting from the Ameers. He also hinted a wish to be put in possession of Jellalabad, but as he well knew that his own troops were not to be trusted in the passes, the request was evidently advanced to cover a demand for more money, and it was eventually arranged that the Shah should pay him an annual subsidy of two lacs of rupees. The treaty to which Runjeet Sing affixed his seal, was in fact a simple revival of the compact concluded five years before between him and Shah Soojah and to which the British Government now became a party, with the addition of four articles, none of which, however, created any obligation to send a British force across the Indus. Mr. Macnaghten then proceeded to Loodiana to obtain the concurrence of Shah Soojah in these arrangements, and, as he had everything to receive, every difficulty was speedily removed. It was clearly understood by both parties in the conference at Loodiana that the assistance to be given by the British Government was to be limited to the appointment of a representative at Cabul, and officers to discipline and command the Shah's army, and an advance of money to pay it; and he repeatedly expressed his fervent hope that the immediate operations for regaining his kingdom should be conducted by his own troops.

The Grand

Expedition, 1838.

Mr. Macnaghten returned with the tripartite treaty to Simla on the 17th of July, and found that during his absence there had been a further development of the expeditionary project. It was argued—and nothing could be more palpable—that unless the British Government engaged as principals in the expedition it must end in a disgraceful failure. It was therefore resolved to send a large British army across the Indus into the unexplored regions of Central Asia, and to plant it in the centre of Afghanistan. To reach that isolated position all convoys

of provisions and munitions of war were required to traverse the states of doubtful allies, and to thread long and dangerous mountain defiles, beset with wild and plundering tribes. This perilous expedition was undertaken by Lord Auckland without the concurrence of the Supreme Council, then sitting in Calcutta. The Whig Ministry did not, however, shrink from sharing the responsibility of it with their colleague in India. Sir John Hobhouse, the President of the Board of Control, when interrogated on the subject by a Committee of the House of Commons, said, "Alone I did it," which simply signified that he had authorized it without any reference to the Court of Directors. He affirmed that Lord Auckland was not to bear the blame of this measure; it was the policy of the home Government, and he might mention that his despatch stating his opinion of the course which ought to be taken to meet the exigency which had arisen, and that written by Lord Auckland informing him of the arrangements made for the expedition, crossed each other on the road. Sir John Hobhouse's communication has never been permitted to see the light and appears still to be considered a state secret, and it is therefore difficult to estimate its bearing on the movements of the expedition. But beyond the ministerial circle in Downing Street, and the secretaries at Simla, this preposterous enterprise was universally condemned as soon as it was announced. Mr. Elphinstone stated that, "if 27,000 men were sent up the Bolan pass to Candahar, and we could feed them, there was no doubt that we might take Cabul, and set up Shah Soojah; but it was hopeless to maintain him in a poor, cold, strong, and remote country, among a turbulent people like the Afghans." Lord William Bentinck considered the project an act of incredible folly. Lord Wellesley regarded this wild expedition, eight hundred miles from our frontier and our resources, into one of the most difficult countries in the world, a land of rocks and deserts, of sands and ice and snow, as an act of infatuation. The Duke affirmed with prophetic sagacity that the consequence of once crossing the Indus to settle a

government in Afghanistan would be a perennial march into that country.

Character of the Afghan expedition, 1838. With the exception of the brief campaign of a week in Coorg, the Company had enjoyed the unexampled blessing of repose for twelve years ; but India now resounded with the din of preparation for a war in Central Asia, hundreds of miles beyond the Indus, which was not even yet our geographical boundary. The expedition was not more remarkable for the region into which it was to be launched, than for the people against whom it was to be directed. For five centuries the barren mountains of Afghanistan had poured down a continued stream of needy adventurers on the rich plains of India, who had established powerful principalities and kingdoms in every part of the continent from Rohilcund at the foot of the Himalaya to the banks of the Kistna in the Deccan. They had founded two imperial dynasties at Delhi, and their aristocracy had taken root in India, which was dotted with Afghan colonies in every direction. The tables were now to be turned upon them, and the new masters of India were about to roll back the tide of invasion, and assail them in their own mountain fastnesses. The general feeling of the European community in India, both lay and official, inclined rather to the able and gallant Dost Mahomed, than to the imbecile Shah Soojah, who had twice been ignominiously expelled from the country he was about to enter for the third time with the aid of British troops. There was also a strong English feeling against the deposition of the Dost, who was considered the victim of an unjust policy ; but there was, on the other hand, the charm of romance associated with an expedition to the scenes of Mahomedan glory, renowned by the exploits of Mahmood and Jenghis Khan, of Timur and Nadir Shah.

Lord Auckland's
manifesto,
Oct. 1st, 1838.

On the 1st October Lord Auckland issued a declaration from Simla, setting forth the grounds of the expedition. It is one of the most remarkable state papers in the records of British India, whether con-

sidered with reference to its glaring misstatements, the sophistry of its arguments, or the audacity of its assertions. It affirmed that the army of Dost Mahomed had made a sudden and unprovoked attack on our ancient ally, Runjeet Sing, whereas it was Runjeet Sing who had made repeated and unprovoked attacks on the Dost. It stated that he had urged the most unreasonable pretensions with regard to his misunderstanding with the Sikhs, whereas the only proposition he had made was one which Runjeet Sing himself would have been readily inclined to accept. It accused the Afghan ruler of having avowed schemes of aggrandizement and ambition injurious to the peace and security of the frontiers of India, and of having openly threatened, in furtherance of those schemes, to call in every foreign aid he could command, and ultimately given his undisguised support to the designs of the King of Persia on Afghanistan; but it withheld the important fact that he had accepted the Persian alliance only after the most strenuous efforts had been made for five months without success to obtain a British alliance, and that he was driven into the arms of Persia, against his own will, solely by the perversity of the Indian Government. It affirmed that the orders for the assemblage of a British force were issued in concurrence with the Supreme Council, whereas the Council, when required to place the manifesto on the public records, remonstrated against the consummation of a policy of such grave importance without their ever having had an opportunity of stating their opinions regarding it. The general object of the expedition was described to be to secure on our western frontier an ally who was interested in resisting aggression, in the place of chiefs ranging themselves in subservience to a hostile power; the immediate object was "to succour the besieged garrison of Herat, who had behaved with a gallantry and fortitude worthy of the justice of their cause." To that memorable siege we now turn.

Siege of Herat
for five months.

The territory of Herat is the only route by which a large and fully equipped army can

advance towards India from the north-west, and the city is therefore considered the gate of Afghanistan. So exuberant is the fertility of the plain in which it is situated that it is usually styled the granary of Central Asia. All the materials for the organization of an army and the formation of depôts are to be found in the neighbourhood in great abundance. Its mines furnish lead, iron, and sulphur, the surface of the country is covered with saltpetre, and the woods afford abundance of charcoal. The population is hardy and docile. The king, Shah Kamran, was one of the worst specimens of an oriental voluptuary and despot. His minister, Yar Mahomed, though not devoid of courage and abilities, was justly described by Lieutenant Pottinger as "the greatest scoundrel in Central Asia." The government was an execrable tyranny, and derived its chief support from the sale of the wretched beings who had been kidnapped and reduced to slavery. The King of Persia sat down before the city on the 23rd November, 1837. The fortifications were crumbling to pieces, and it might have been carried by a vigorous and scientific assault on the first day. The practice of the Persian artillery which had been trained by British officers was superb, but the ignorance of the Persian officers in charge of it completely neutralized its value. A few days before the commencement of the siege, Lieutenant Eldred Pottinger, a young officer of the Bombay Artillery, who had been sent by his uncle, Colonel Pottinger, the Resident in Cutch, to make researches in Central Asia, entered the city in the garb of a *syud*—a descendant of the Prophet—and took up his residence at the caravansary in common with its other inmates. In the true spirit of English adventure, he resolved to remain and take a share in the approaching struggle, though not also without the hope of promoting the interests of his country in the defence of the city. His services were offered to the king and his minister and readily accepted, and the natural ascendancy of genius speedily gave him the chief direction of operations. The garrison was animated by a spirit of great resolution and

perseverance, and under his guidance succeeded in baffling for five months the repeated assaults of the Persians, though aided by a regiment of Russians, who were styled deserters to save appearances. Mr. McNeill, the British minister at the Persian court, joined the royal encampment on the 6th April, to the great annoyance of the Shah, who considered that his presence would not fail to give encouragement to the Heratees. He was received, however, with due ceremony, and lost no time in making an effort to reconcile the belligerents. He found both parties inclined to accept his mediation. The Shah was disheartened by the protraction and the expense of the siege, and authorized him to offer whatever terms he might consider reasonable, and Kamran was equally prepared to accede to any conditions he might recommend. He proceeded to the city and opened negotiations with every prospect of a favourable issue; but the Russian minister at Teheran followed him in all haste, and, having met with an accident, drove in his carriage from Teheran to Herat and reached the camp during Mr. McNeill's absence. His arrival completely changed the aspect of affairs. He urged the continuance of the siege, advanced funds for the Persian army, and engaged, if Herat were captured, to remit the whole of the instalments still due by Persia to Russia. Mr. McNeill met with a cold reception on his return from the city, and the Shah not only rejected the amicable arrangement he had made, but announced his resolution to renew the assault. The redress Mr. McNeill continued to demand for a wanton outrage committed on one of his messengers some months before, who had been stripped naked and scourged, was persistently refused, and he himself was treated with great contumely. The influence of England was completely prostrated, and he found it necessary to break off all diplomatic relations with the Shah and retire to the Turkish frontier.

Battle of the 24th
June—the siege
raised, 1838.

The siege was prosecuted with new vigour. The 24th June was fixed for a general assault, and it afforded a fresh opportunity for the display of Lieutenant

Pottinger's courage and genius. Count Simonich personally undertook the direction of the attack, and Russian engineers superintended the operations. The city was attacked at five points, but the assailants were repulsed from four of them. At the fifth, however, they succeeded in making a practicable breach, but were thrice repelled by the gallantry of the Heratees. Their courage began at length to droop, and they recoiled from the onslaught of the enemy. Yar Mahomed, with all his bravery, was paralyzed by the energy of the Persians and seated himself in despair at a distance from the scene of action. The fate of Herat trembled in the balance, and the city was on the point of being lost, when it was saved by the indomitable spirit of Lieutenant Pottinger. He went up to Yar Mahomed, conjured him, threatened him, reviled him, and at length, seizing him by the arm, dragged him to the breach, where he fell like a madman on his own troops as they drew back from the weapons of the Persians. The effect was magical; they rushed forward with infuriated zeal; the Persians were seized with a panic, when on the point of gaining their object, and fled in dismay to their camp, with the loss of more than 1,700 men, among whom was the Russian General Berowski. Herat was saved and the siege was turned into a blockade, during which the inhabitants suffered the extremity of wretchedness from the scarcity of provisions, and the unabated extortions of Yar Mahomed. The Persian army was likewise suffering from want of food. The Shah had lost many thousand men in the various conflicts, and a still larger number from desertion; his communications with Persia, from which he drew his supplies, were interrupted by the increasing boldness of the marauding tribes on the route, and he only wanted a decent pretext for raising the siege. Meanwhile, two steamers were sent by the Government of India with 500 sepoy to occupy the island of Karrack in the Persian Gulf, a description of which has been given in a former chapter. The force was too insignificant for any influential effort, but its strength was magnified by rumour, and in the camp before

Herat it was confidently announced that a large British fleet had destroyed the ports on the coast, and that a British army was marching on Shiraz. Mr. McNeill availed himself of the consternation created by this expedition, and deputed Colonel Stoddart to the Persian camp with a peremptory message to the Shah. He was instructed to state that the occupation of Herat, or of any part of Afghanistan, would be considered an act of hostility to England, that a British armament had already arrived in the Persian gulf, and that if the Shah desired to avert the measures which the British Government would adopt to vindicate its honour, he must immediately retire from the city. The king received Colonel Stoddart with cordiality, and at the first interview said, "The fact is, if I do not leave Herat, there will be war." "There is war," replied the Colonel, "everything depends on your Majesty's answer. God preserve your Majesty." Two days after, he was again in the royal presence, when the king informed him that he had made up his mind to consent to all the demands made by the British Government, and that he gave up the siege simply from his desire to maintain its friendship. He broke up his encampment on the 9th September and returned to Persia, having lost no small portion of his army and a large amount of treasure, besides incurring the disgrace of failure in an enterprise which had been the talk of Central Asia for ten months. The memorable defence of Herat against 40,000 Persian troops, aided by the skill of Russian engineers, stands side by side with the defence of Arcot by Clive, and reflects equal credit on the Anglo-Saxon youth by whose sole energy and genius it was rendered successful, though he had never seen service, and had no knowledge of the art of war except that which he had derived from study.

Persistence in the expedition to Cabul, 1838. The grand projects of Persia which had for two years agitated the minds of men from the Caspian sea to the banks of the Ganges were quenched in the trenches of Herat. The dangers which were supposed to menace the British empire in India from the ambition of Persia and the

intrigues of Russian agents, were at once dispelled. The hostility of the rulers of Cabul and Candahar had ceased to have any political importance, and it was naturally expected that under this new aspect of circumstances the expedition would be relinquished. But, a large army had been assembled, and all the preparations for a grand enterprise completed, and it required more decision of character than the Governor-General possessed to resist the importunities, and to disappoint the expectations, of the ardent spirits around him. Accordingly, on the 8th November he announced in Orders that while the relinquishment of the siege of Herat was a just cause of congratulation, he should "still continue to prosecute with vigour the measures which had been announced with a view to the substitution of a friendly for a hostile power in the eastern provinces of Afghanistan, and to the establishment of a permanent barrier against schemes of aggression on our north-west frontier." This resolution to persevere in the expedition has justly been considered more obnoxious to censure than even the original design. The Governor-General endeavoured to justify it by affirming that it was required of us "alike in observation of the treaties entered into with Runjeet Sing and Shah Soojah, as by paramount considerations of defensive policy." But there was no allusion whatever in the tripartite treaty to the despatch of a British army across the Indus, and the Shah was particularly anxious to avoid the appearance of being carried to Cabul on the shoulders of infidels, which he considered would be detrimental in the highest degree to his popularity and his interests. He wanted British gold, not British bayonets, and it is an open question whether "the paramount considerations of defensive policy" would not have been more effectually promoted had he advanced through the country with his own army, and with a liberal supply of money, to buy up the mercenary chiefs.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

LORD AUCKLAND'S ADMINISTRATION—THE AFGHAN EXPEDITION, 1838-1842.

Meeting with
Runjeet Sing—
The march, 1838. THE army of the Indus, as it was designated, assembled at Ferozepore on the banks of the Sutlege towards the end of November. Before it proceeded on its route there was a grand meeting between Lord Auckland and the lion of the Punjab, then tottering on the brink of the grave; but he still exhibited in his countenance his habitual calmness of design, and his single eye was still lighted up with the fire of enterprise. The assembly, which was second in magnificence only to that of Roopur, was diversified by showy pageants, gay doings, and feats of mimic war. As the army was no longer bound for Herat its strength was reduced by one half, and the Commander-in-chief, Sir Henry Fane, who had consented to take the command in person when it was destined to march into Central Asia and baffle the designs of Russia, declined to head a diminished force simply to seat Shah Soojah on the throne of a better man. The Bengal column started from Ferozepore on the 10th of December, under the command of Sir Willoughby Cotton, with about 9,500 men of all arms, 30,000 camels, and 38,000 camp followers. The force raised for the immediate service of the Shah, which was designated his army, though commanded by Company's officers, and paid from the Company's treasury, consisted of about 6,000 men. The Bombay troops under the command of Sir John Keane amounted to 5,600, making a total of 21,000 soldiers. The political charge of the enterprise was entrusted to Mr. Macnaghten, with whom it originated, and he was officially styled the Envoy and Minister at the court of Shah Soojah, the Shah being the puppet, and Mr. Macnaghten the

king. The most direct route to Cabul from the banks of the Sutlege lay through the Punjab, a distance of about five hundred miles, but "our ancient and faithful ally" refused to grant a passage through his dominions to a body of 50,000 men, and it became necessary to take a circuitous route of a thousand miles down the Indus to Bukkur, and thence northward up to Candahar and Cabul.

Treatment of
Sinde, 1839.

There was likewise another reason for adopting this devious course in the determination which was formed to exact a heavy contribution from the Ameers of Sind. The conduct of the British Government on this occasion has been the subject of much controversy. On the one hand, it is asserted that the counsellors of Lord Auckland, haunted by the Russophobia which had given birth to the expedition—though the Russians had retired with the Persians from Herat, and were nowhere in Central Asia—seemed to consider that in their efforts to provide for the safety of the British empire in India, they were at liberty to suspend every consideration of justice, and that they imposed an iniquitous treaty on the Ameers. On the other hand, Captain Eastwick, who assisted in negotiating the treaty, considered it an indispensable measure of self-defence, forced on us by the machinations of the Ameers. They had plundered our stores of grain and taken every step, short of open hostilities, to obstruct the operations of the British Government. They had treated the British representative with gross indignity, and even menaced him with assassination; and, with a full knowledge of the hostile attitude the King of Persia had assumed towards us, threatened to form an alliance with him, and received an envoy from his court in their capital. In the treaty concluded with them in 1832 it was stipulated that no military stores should be transported through the province by land or by water, but the Bengal column marched through northern Sind, and Sir John Keare, who had landed with the Bombay force at Kurrachee, was moving up from the south. Colonel Pottinger was instructed by the Governor-General to

inform them that "the article of the treaty which prohibits the using of the Indus for the conveyance of military stores must necessarily be suspended during the course of these operations; and that at this important crisis not only those who have shown a disposition to favour our adversaries, but those who display an unwillingness to help us, in the just and necessary undertaking in which we are engaged, must be displaced, and give way to others on whose friendship and co-operation we may be able implicitly to rely." The province of Sinde was formerly a dependency of the Dooranee empire, and had paid tribute whenever the rulers of Cabul were strong enough to enforce it. No tribute had been transmitted for forty years, and the Ameers were virtually independent. They were now required to pay up the arrears of revenue which was assumed at twenty-five lacs of rupees to a ruler who had been an exile from the throne of Cabul for thirty years. But when Colonel Pottinger presented this demand, he was confounded by the production of two releases from all further claims of every description which the Shah had written in two Korans, and signed and sealed, when he had prevailed on them to pay him three lacs of rupees in 1833. The Ameers said they were confident the Governor-General did not intend to make them pay over again for what they had already bought, but he was of opinion that it was not incumbent on him to enter into any formal investigation of this plea, and Mr. Macnaghten remarked that rather than allow the grand enterprise of restoring Shah Soojah to be postponed by any opposition from the Ameers, it would be better to let loose 20,000 of Runjeet Sing's troops upon their capital. It was likewise determined to impose a subsidiary force on them for which they were to provide three lacs of rupees a-year. The Ameers naturally demurred to these exactions, but Colonel Pottinger was desired to inform them that "neither the ready power to crush and annihilate them, nor the will to call it into action, were wanting, if it appeared requisite, however remotely, for the safety or the integrity of

the Anglo-Indian empire or frontier." To coerce them into submission, Sir John Keane marched with the Bombay army up to the neighbourhood of the capital, and it was resolved to strengthen the arguments of the negotiators by sending down the Bengal column to join him. The order to march was received with enthusiasm, for the expedition held out the prospect of military distinction and still more of a rich haul of prize money in a city which was reputed to contain eight crores of rupees. Awed by the presence of a British force, the Ameers yielded to necessity, signed the subsidiary treaty and paid up the first instalment of the demand. The Bengal troops retraced their steps with a feeling of bitter disappointment to Bukkur; and the sepoys, notwithstanding their superstitious objection to crossing the Indus, passed over without any hesitation, and for the first time erected the flag of England on the opposite bank.

Advance of the
Army, 1839.

The disasters of the force began as soon as it was across the Indus. The mortality among the draft cattle, on which the subsistence of the army depended, became portentous, and it was deemed advisable for Sir Willoughby Cotton to push on at once with the Bengal column through the sandy desert of Cutch Gundava, a hundred and forty miles in extent. Lord Auckland's secretaries had assured the officers of the army that the march to Cabul would be a military promenade, and the assertion was now to be exemplified. As this arid waste furnished little water and no pasturage, the camels died by hundreds, and the Beloochee freebooters, who were in fact the only produce of the soil, hovered round the camp and never lost an opportunity of pillaging it. After a march of sixteen days the army reached Dadur at the mouth of the Bolan pass, the southern entrance into Afghanistan, with provisions on the beasts of burden that had survived sufficient only for a single month. The troops were six days defiling through this terrific gorge. There was no opposition from the mountaineers, but the flint stones lamed the camels, and the want of pasture and fatigue disabled the artillery

horses; the mountain paths were strewed with abandoned tents, equipage and stores, and the little stream which flowed at the bottom of the ravine, was tainted with the carcasses of animals. Emerging from this pass the troops entered the beautiful valley of Shawl, but though it was covered with vineyards and orchards, it could only furnish food for the army for a few days. No small portion of the stock of provisions had been lost with the cattle in the Bolan pass, and starvation stared the army in the face. Captain Burnes was sent back to Khelat to endeavour to conclude a treaty with Mehrab Khan, the independent ruler of Belochistan, with the object of providing for the immediate wants of the force, and securing the passage of future supplies through the pass. For this service the chief was offered a subsidy of a lac and a half of rupees a-year; but it was beyond his power to afford the relief which the pressing necessities of the army required. His territory was by no means fertile; the harvest of the preceding year had been deficient; the British troops and the swarm of camp followers had given the growing crops to their cattle, and wantonly wasted the water on which the fields depended for irrigation, and the Belochees themselves were living on herbs and grass. Mehrab Khan informed Captain Burnes that he had received the most tempting overtures from the Persians and Russians, but had determined faithfully to see the British army through the pass. His conduct was deserving of all praise; and it was owing entirely to his active agency, that the troops were enabled to traverse that fearful defile, when a word from him might have brought the expedition to a dead lock, and an unhappy termination.

Arrival at Candahar, 1839. On the 6th April, Shah Soojah's force, with the

Envoy and the Bombay army reached Quettah, the largest town in the district of Shawl, where Sir Willoughby Cotton was already encamped, and Sir John Keane assumed the command of the whole expedition. The troops were half mutinous for want of food; the loaf of the European soldier was diminished in weight, the native troops were reduced to a

pound of flour a-day, and the camp followers to half that quantity. More than twenty thousand camels had perished, and it was necessary to push forward with all speed to Candahar. In the intervening space lay the Kojuck pass, scarcely less terrific than the Bolan, though not of the same extent. The batteries and the field pieces had to be dragged up and lowered down its appalling precipices by the European soldiers, pressed by hunger, parched with thirst, and consumed by incessant fatigue. Such was the military promenade to Cabul. As the Shah approached Candahar, the Barukzye princes, betrayed by their chiefs and followers, whom British gold had been employed to corrupt, fled to the west, and he entered the city without opposition on the 25th April. Some of the inhabitants shouted welcome, others strewed flowers in his path, and the curiosity of the people gave such an appearance of enthusiasm to his progress, that the sanguine Envoy assured Lord Auckland that he had been received with feelings bordering on adoration. But curiosity soon subsided, and when, a fortnight after, a gorgeous ceremonial was got up in the plain for his installation, which was celebrated by a salute of a hundred and one guns, not a hundred of the citizens were present, and the acclamations were confined to his own retainers.

Ghuzni, 1839. The army, still on reduced rations, was obliged to remain inactive in Candahar for ten weeks till the crops had ripened, and it was unable to resume its march before the 27th June. Two hundred and thirty miles distant from Candahar, and ninety from Cabul, lay the great fortress of Ghuzni, from which Mahmood had issued more than eight hundred years before to plant the standard of the crescent on the plains of India. It was deemed absolutely impregnable, and regarded as the pride of Afghanistan. Hyder Khan had been sent by his father, Dost Mahomed, to garrison it with 3,000 men, and he had taken advantage of the detention of the army at Candahar to strengthen the fortifications and to provision the fort for six months. It was found to be strong both by nature and by

art. The parapet which rose sixty or seventy feet above the plain, and the wet ditch, presented insurmountable obstacles to an attack by mining or escalade. Sir John Keane had listened to the voice of those who asserted that it was a place of no strength, and consequently left behind him the battering train which had been dragged with infinite labour through the Bolan and Kojuck passes. To attempt to breach the walls with the puny six and nine pounders which accompanied his force was idle, and there was every prospect of the total collapse of the expedition. A nephew of Dost Mahomed, however, was induced by the offer of a large bribe to desert his countrymen and turn traitor, and from him the engineers obtained an accurate description of the condition and character of the defences. All the gates had been built up with the exception of one, and Captain Thomson, the chief engineer, assured Sir John Keane that the only mode of attack which presented any chance of success was that of blowing it up, and then rushing into the fortress. Nine hundred pounds of powder were accordingly packed in bags under his direction and conveyed in silence and darkness to the gate. Fortunately, the night was gloomy and tempestuous, and the attention of the garrison was drawn off by a demonstration from the light batteries in other directions. The powder exploded; the massive barricade was shattered to pieces, and heavy masses of masonry and beams came toppling down in great confusion. Col. Dennie of the 13th Light Infantry rushed in with the storming party over the debris; the enemy, on hearing the explosion, hastened to the breach, and for some time there was a mortal struggle, but three hearty cheers, while it was yet dark, announced to the General, who was watching the result from a neighbouring height with deep anxiety, that the fortress was in our hands. At dawn of day, the British ensign was planted on the proud citadel of Ghuzni by Ensign Frere. This exploit cost the army a hundred and eighty in killed and wounded, of whom eighteen were officers; and it was the only military operation between Ferozepore and Cabul. A day or two after, a body

of *ghazees*, or Mahomedan fanatics, endeavoured to enter Shah Soojah's encampment in the hope of assassinating him, but were repulsed and pursued by Captain Outram, who captured their holy standard together with about fifty prisoners. When conducted into the presence of the Shah, they gloried in their attempt and reviled him to his face for having brought the infidels into the country, while one more ferocious than the rest stabbed one of his attendants. He immediately ordered the whole number to be executed, and they were deliberately hacked to pieces in cold blood outside his tents.

Arrival at
Cabul, 1839.

The fate of Ghuzni opened up the road to Cabul, and filled Dost Mahomed with consternation. While the army under Sir John Keane was advancing towards the capital, another army under Prince Timur, the son of the Shah, and Colonel Wade was approaching it from the eastward by way of Jellalabad. Distracted by this double peril, the Dost called his officers together, and with the Koran in his hands implored them to make one bold stand like brave men and true believers. "You have eaten my salt," he said, "these thirteen years; grant me but one request in return. Stand by the brother of Futteh Khan while he executes one last charge against these Feringee dogs: in that onset he will fall; then make your own terms with Shah Soojah." But there was neither fidelity nor spirit left in them, and Dost Mahomed, finding the struggle hopeless, parked his guns at Urgundeh, in the vicinity of Cabul, and turned with a handful of followers to the regions of the Hindoo Koosh. As soon as the intelligence of his flight reached the army, it was resolved to follow him without a moment's delay. Captain Outram and nine other officers, animated with a lofty spirit of adventure, started in pursuit of him, with a small body of cavalry and several hundred Afghan horse commanded by Hajee Khan Kaukur. For six days they gave neither Dost Mahomed nor themselves any rest, night or day, and would in all probability have eventually overtaken him, but for the treachery of the Afghan Hajee. He had deserted the Dost for

the Candahar rulers, and then deserted them for Shah Soojah on the receipt of a large bribe, and now determined to abandon the cause of the Shah on the first opportunity. He consented to accompany the expedition only that he might defeat its object. He pretended illness, and always contrived to remain a march or two behind; he threw impediments in the way of every movement, and so effectually delayed the pursuit, that on reaching Bameean the Dost was found to have gained a start of thirty miles and passed beyond the confines of Afghanistan. The old traitor was sent to Hindostan, and passed many years in durance at Chunar. This enterprise was in keeping with Captain Outram's character, but it was more remarkable for its chivalry than its prudence. The treachery of the Hajee, which prevented the encounter of the parties, was, after all, a fortunate circumstance, since he and his Afghan horse would not have failed to join the Dost in attacking the feeble and jaded party of officers, in which case not one of whom would have escaped to tell the tale. On the 7th August, 1839, Shah Soojah, still resplendent with jewels, though without the Koh-i-noor, was conducted with martial pomp through the city of Cabul to the Bala Hissar, but there was no popular enthusiasm, and the procession resembled a funeral. The citizens came to their thresholds to gaze, not so much on the exiled and restored king, as on the cavalcade of infidels parading their streets, upon whom they did not fail to pour the most hearty maledictions.

Colonel Wade
and Timur,
1838.

Three weeks later, the Shah was joined by his son Timur, who advanced on the direct line from Peshawur to Cabul in company with a Sikh contingent. He was totally destitute of character or spirit, and the entire responsibility of the expedition devolved on Colonel Wade, the able and experienced political agent at Loodiana. The prince's army, composed of a very miscellaneous assortment of about 4,000 recruits, but paid by the Company, reached Peshawur on the 20th March. A month after, the Raja Golab Sing, and Runjeet Sing's grandson, Nao Nihal

Sing, joined the camp with about 6,000 Sikh soldiers. A march through the Khyber pass to unknown dangers was equally unpalatable to both men and commanders, and it was not difficult to discover pretexts for delay. Insubordination is the normal condition of all Indian armies, even under their own princes, and the Sikh army at Peshawur was no exception to the general rule. Soon after its arrival one regiment turned out the colonel and the officers, shotted the guns and calmly awaited the progress of events. This mutiny was no sooner hushed up, than another broke out in the Goorkha corps, which struck its tents, and marched out of the camp with drums beating and colours flying to Peshawur. There the men took up a position a little distance from the fort, and were permitted to remain in a state of open revolt while a report of their conduct was sent on to Lahore. After four months had been wasted at Peshawur through these and other impediments, the expedition entered the Khyber on the 20th July. The Afredies were prepared to resist its progress with vigour, but Colonel Wade defeated their project by crowning the heights and turning their flank, a manœuvre by which these defiles were probably for the first time opened by the use of steel and not of gold. Dost Mahomed had sent the ablest of his sons, Akbar Khan, to oppose the progress of this force, but he was recalled to the defence of the capital as Sir John Keane advanced from the south, and Colonel Wade, after having mastered the Khyber, reached Cabul without difficulty.

Retention of
the force in
Afghanistan,
1839.

The object of the expedition had now been attained by the substitution of a friendly for a hostile power in Afghanistan, and the period had arrived, in accordance with Lord Auckland's manifesto, for the withdrawal of the British troops. It was evident, however, that there was no national feeling of attachment to the throne of the Shah, and that without the continued support of British bayonets it must eventually totter and fall. This truth had dawned on Mr. Macnaghten on his reaching Candahar, when

he wrote to the Governor-General that we must be prepared to look on Afghanistan for some years as an out-post yielding nothing, but requiring much expenditure to keep it in repair. Lord Auckland was equally convinced of the fact, and on the 20th August recorded his opinion that to leave the Shah without the support of a British army would be followed by his expulsion, and ensure a palpable failure of our plans, which would reflect disgrace on Government and become a source of danger. Our difficulties, as the Duke of Wellington had predicted, began as soon as our military success was complete. They commenced with the occupation of Cabul on the 2nd August, 1839, and they culminated on the 2nd November, 1841, in the insurrection which annihilated the army. To support the authority of the Shah it was determined to leave a body of about 10,000 troops to garrison Cabul, Jellalabad, Ghuzni, Candahar, and other places. General Willshire who commanded the Bombay force was directed on his way back to inflict a signal retribution on Mehrab Khan, the ruler of Belochistan, for having withheld supplies from the army on its march, and neglected to restrain the Beloochee freebooters, in violation of the treaty which Captain Burnes had forced on him. In both cases he set up a valid plea of inability, and it is impossible to exonerate the proceedings which were pursued against him from the charge of vindictiveness and injustice. Kelat was found to

Capture of

Khelat, Oct. 15, fought valiantly for their chief and their country. 1839.

be a very strong fortification, and the Beloochees After the gates had been demolished by cannon, they continued to dispute every inch of ground, and Mehrab Khan fell with eight of his principal officers gallantly fighting in its defence. A relation was placed on the vacant throne and three of the most productive districts were annexed to the dominions of Shah Soojah, a most ungrateful return for the hospitable reception which Mehrab Khan had given to that monarch when he was obliged to fly from Afghanistan in 1838.

Honours, 1840. The expedition was as fertile in honours as it was barren in military achievements. It was a measure of ministerial policy, condemned by the general voice of society, in England and in India, and it was considered politic to make the most of the success which at first attended it. Lord Auckland was created an earl, and Sir John Keane, who had done nothing but leave his battering train behind him when he ought to have brought it on to Ghuzni, a baron with a pension of £2,000 a-year for two lives. Mr. Macnaghten, Colonel Pottinger, and General Willshire were made baronets, and Colonel Wade a knight; but Captain Thomson, whose exertions at Ghuzni saved the campaign from an ignominious failure received only a brevet-majority and the lowest order of the Bath, and at once retired from the service. The Shah was, moreover, advised to solicit permission of "his sister the Queen of England," to institute an order of knighthood, and the officers who had borne him on their shoulders to the throne were decorated with the evanescent "order of the Dooranee empire."

Death of Runjeet Sing, 1839. Runjeet Sing died as the expedition was leaving Candahar, on the 27th June, 1839, at the age of fifty-seven, the victim of the excesses in which he had long been accustomed to indulge. The last attack before that which terminated his life deprived him of the use of speech, but his active mind was as eager as ever in public affairs. He pointed with his finger to the quarter from which he desired information, heard the reports read, and dictated his orders by signs to his faithful secretary. He possessed the same grand creative genius as Sevajee and Hyder Ali, though like them he was unable either to read or write. It was his extraordinary talent alone which reared the edifice of Sikh greatness, and if he had not been hemmed in by the irresistible power of the Company, he would undoubtedly have established a new and magnificent empire in Hindostan. He succeeded to the leadership of his tribe at the early age of seventeen, when the Punjab was distracted by the conflicts of its various indepen-

dent chieftains. He left it a compact and powerful kingdom, strengthened by the annexation of some of the richest provinces of the Dooranee empire. The military array of the country at the beginning of his career consisted only of a body of matchlock horsemen, who, though as renowned in India as the Mahratta or Mysore horse, were not adapted for any regular and extensive system of warfare. By indefatigable exertions, by the adoption of every improvement he could hear of, and by incessant and successful expeditions, he succeeded in creating an army 80,000 strong, with 300 pieces of cannon, superior in discipline, valour, and equipment to any force which had ever been seen in India under native colours. His annual revenue was gradually augmented till it reached two crores of rupees. He exhibited to an extraordinary degree the oriental passion for hoarding, and considered it a sacred duty to allow no day to pass without adding a sum, greater or less, to his accumulations. It is related that when he sometimes sat silent and moody at his evening durbar, and the courtiers enquired the cause of his depression, he replied, "it is near sunset and not a rupee has been sent to the *mootee mundeer*, or the treasury, to-day." Twenty voices exclaimed with joined hands, "Maharaj, my money is yours," and he immediately required them to verify the assertion by affixing their signature to a note of hand, which they were punctually obliged to honour the next day. The sum which he was enabled to amass exceeded twelve crores of rupees, of which he is said to have directed that forty lacs should be distributed in charity after his death. He bequeathed the celebrated Koh-i-noor which now adorns the diadem of England to the shrine of Juggunnath, and he left the crown to his imbecile son, Kurruck Sing, but the real power of the state was shared between his grandson, Nao Nihal Sing, an impetuous youth of eighteen, and Dhyan Sing, one of the crafty and ambitious Jummoo brothers, who contrived to appropriate the office of minister to himself. Runjeet Sing was the only man in his court friendly to the British alliance. During the expe-

dition to Afghanistan, he placed the resources of the Punjab unreservedly at the disposal of the Governor-General, and it was not till after his death that the hostility of the Lahore cabinet was openly developed. It was then that the Sikh officers on the frontier entered into a hostile correspondence with the disaffected in Afghanistan, and intrigued against the British Government with the tribes who held the command of the passes. The ministers at Lahore remonstrated in a lofty tone against the constant movement of British armaments and convoys through the Punjab, asserting that there was nothing in the treaties between the two states to sanction the conversion of their country into a highway for British troops; and it required the extraordinary tact of our representative, Mr. George Clerk, to prevent a direct collision. This opposition indefinitely augmented the perils of our position in Afghanistan, and exasperated Sir William Macnaghten to such a degree that throughout the ensuing year, he never ceased to press on Lord Auckland the necessity of "curbing the Sings," as the Sikhs were termed, "and macadamizing the Punjab, and annexing Peshawur to the dominions of Shah Soojah."

Russian complaints against Khiva, 1840.

Soon after the occupation of Cabul, the Russophobia which incessantly oppressed the minds of Sir William Macnaghten, Sir Alexander Burnes, and many others, was raised to fever heat by the report that a great Russian expedition was marching on Khiva, which they considered the immediate precursor of a movement towards the Indus, though the intervening country of more than a thousand miles consists of deserts without water, and mountains covered with perpetual snow. Khiva, the celebrated Kharism of early Mahomedan history, lies to the south of the sea of Aral, on the banks of the Oxus, towards its estuary. With the exception of the land on the banks of that river and the oasis of Merv, the country presents the aspect of a continuous waste, unrelieved by mountains, rivers, lakes, or forests. The population does not greatly exceed a million, and consists chiefly of Oosbeks. For half a century, the Khan, or ruler,

had been in the habit of committing depredations on Russian caravans, attacking Russian out stations on the sea of Aral, and kidnapping Russian subjects whom he sold into slavery. After repeated remonstrances from Orenberg, a Russian envoy was sent to demand the release of the slaves, but the barbarian chief placed him in confinement. The Emperor then tried the experiment of retaliation, and in 1836 laid an embargo on all the property and the subjects of the Khan within his dominions; but scarcely a hundred of the captives were liberated in the course of two years. The Emperor at length resolved to despatch a military expedition against Khiva, to fulfil the imperative obligation of protecting the lives and liberty of his own subjects.

British diplo-
macy in Central
Asia, 1839-40.

This expedition had a twofold motive. In his Simla manifesto, Lord Auckland stated that the object of the expedition across the Indus was "to give the name and just influence of the British Government its proper footing among the nations of Central Asia." The ambitious spirit of Sir William Macnaghten was prepared to carry out this novel and adventurous policy to an extent which alarmed even his own Government. Soon after the occupation of Cabul, he sent a regiment of infantry and a troop of horse artillery to Bameean in the Hindoo Koosh, under the direction of Dr. Lord, the political agent, who pushed forward the force still farther into the Oosbeg district of Syghan, and installed a chief of his own selection in the government of it. This aggressive movement, for which there was no occasion and no excuse, appeared to indicate a settled design to establish British influence and power in Turkistan, and spread alarm among its different rulers. Major Todd, who had been sent as the British representative to Herat, was diligently employed in improving its fortifications, and had, moreover, sent a communication to the Khan of Khiva, offering him British friendship and alliance. The Khan, threatened with a Russian invasion, had also sent an envoy to Herat to make proposals for a treaty. Major Todd then deputed Captain Abbot, one of his

assistants, to Khiva to persuade the Khan to propitiate the Government of Russia by liberating the captives; but he exceeded his instructions and proposed a British alliance offensive and defensive. The proposal was immediately disavowed by the Government of India, and he was recalled, but the repudiation was not generally known, and the influence of this rash procedure remained without correction. Colonel Stoddart had also been sent on a mission to Bokhara by Mr. McNeill. These simultaneous movements, military and diplomatic, at Syghan, and at Khiva, at the source and the mouth of the Oxus, at Herat, and at Bokhara, raised a suspicion at St. Petersburg that the object of England was not simply to prevent the advance of Russian influence to India, but to introduce British influence into Central Asia, and the Emperor took his measures accordingly. The Russian expedition to Khiva had been timed to leave Orenberg in April, 1840, but the Emperor was induced to hasten its departure by the rapid establishment of British power in Afghanistan, and the activity of British diplomacy beyond its limits, and it was ordered to proceed at the beginning of winter in November, 1839. The manifesto which announced it, not only enumerated the grievances which the Russians had suffered from the Khivans, but adopting the language of Lord Auckland's proclamation, stated that the expedition "was intended to strengthen in that part of Asia the lawful influence to which Russia has a right, and which alone can ensure the maintenance of peace." In the Russian account of it, the object was affirmed without disguise to be "to establish the strong influence of Russia in the Khanats"—as the principalities of Khiva, Bokhara, and Kokan are styled—"and to prevent the influence of the East India Company from taking root in Central Asia." The two European powers, destined eventually to divide political influence in Asia between them, were in fact, at this period, jealous of each other's progress, and resorted to the fatal expedient of fitting out armaments to counteract it. "If we go on at this rate," said Baron Brunow, the Russian Minister in

London to Lord Palmerston, "the Cossack and the sepoy will soon cross bayonets on the Oxus." The Russian expedition proved a total failure. The army consisting of 3,000 foot, 2,000 horse, and twenty-two field guns, with 10,000 camels, started from Orenberg in November on a march of a thousand miles to Khiva; but the attempt to traverse the desert between the Caspian sea and the sea of Aral in the depth of winter, when the ground was covered with snow to the depth of many feet, and not a blade of grass was to be found for several hundred miles, was an act of infatuation. After advancing to the centre of this scene of desolation, the expedition completely broke down, and the General prudently retraced his steps to Orenberg, with the loss of the greater portion of his materiel and his men. Major Todd, after the recal of Captain Abbot, deputed Captain Richmond Shakespeare on the same errand to Khiva. He reached it at the critical period when the Khan was overwhelmed with a dread of Russian vengeance, which served to strengthen our representations, and induced him to liberate four hundred Russian captives, whom Captain Shakespeare had the pleasure of conveying to Orenberg. The Russian Government felt the same irritation at the intrusion of British agency and influence into any of the provinces of Turkistan, as the British Government had felt at the interference of Russia at Cabul and Candahar. The liberation of the captives was attributed by the Russians to the terror of their power, and every idea of obligation to the British officer for his officious services was distinctly repudiated.

The Bala Hissar
and the canton-
ments, 1839.

To return to Cabul. The first and most important question which arose upon the determination to hold Afghanistan with a British force, was the housing of the troops, more especially during the approaching winter. The Bala Hissar, or citadel of Cabul, stood on a hill, and completely commanded the city. It afforded accommodation for 5,000 men, and if well provisioned and fortified could be held by a thousand men against any force or skill which Afghanistan could bring against it. Captain

Havelock had remarked soon after the occupation of Cabul, "Here then all depends in a military point of view on a firm hold of the Bala Hissar. It is the key of Cabul. The troops that hold it ought not to allow themselves to be dislodged but by a siege, and they must awe its population by their mortars and their howitzers." Lieut. — now Sir Henry — Durand, the engineer of the force, strongly urged the occupation of the upper portion of it by the troops. They were accordingly cantoned there, and preparations were made to provide cover for the military stores and ammunition, and to improve the fortifications, which would soon have become impregnable; but Shah Soojah maintained that it was his palace, and that the privacy of his zenana would be disturbed if any portion of it were occupied as a barrack. Some of the native chiefs likewise raised objections to the establishment of a British garrison within its walls, and for the very reason which rendered such a measure indispensable to the safety of the army. The works were therefore discontinued, and the troops lodged in temporary houses at the base of the citadel. The Shah and the envoy took up their residence for the winter in the milder climate of Jellalabad. On their return to the capital in the spring, the Shah demanded the whole of the Bala Hissar for his seraglio, consisting of a hundred and sixty females, and Sir W. Macnaghten yielded to his importunity, contrary to his own better judgment, but not without the concurrence of the Commander of the forces, Sir Willoughby Cotton. The British troops were therefore turned out into cantonments erected in the plain in the most exposed position which could have been selected. This fatal weakness on the part of the Envoy eventually entailed the loss of his own life, and the annihilation of the army. The whole of the Afghan policy from first to last was a succession of unexampled blunders, but the crowning act of folly was the evacuation of the Bala Hissar to make room for the women of the king.

Herat, 1840.

On the arrival of the army at Candahar the Envoy despatched Major Todd as political agent to Herat to

conclude a treaty with Shah Kamran, to conciliate his vizier, Yar Mahomed, and to improve the fortifications of the city. To maintain British influence at that court, money was sent in profusion from Cabul; but Yar Mahomed took great offence at the earnest efforts of Major Todd to put down the execrable traffic in slaves in which he was largely engaged, and he likewise professed to be alarmed at the political movements of British agents in Central Asia. While receiving constant supplies of money from the British Government he opened a correspondence with the nearest Persian governor, and offered to place the whole country at the disposal of the king. Incensed at these acts of perfidy, Sir William Macnaghten urged the annexation of Herat to the territories of Shah Soojah, but Lord Auckland, believing that Yar Mahomed might have been induced to apply to Persia, in consequence of the diplomatic movements of our officers in the neighbouring countries, determined to overlook his past delinquencies, and make another experiment on his gratitude. The supply of guns and muskets, of ammunition and money, was consequently renewed, and with such prodigality as to terrify the financial authorities in Calcutta. This lavish expenditure resulted only in more audacious intrigues with Persia. Kamran addressed a letter to the king, in which he styled himself the faithful servant of the Persian crown, and proposed a united effort to expel the infidels, whom he said he tolerated only for their money. Under this fresh provocation, Lord Auckland's mind began to waver regarding the expedition to Herat, which Sir William continued to press with unabated earnestness; but he was now in Calcutta at his own Council board, and the Commander-in-chief demonstrated to him that the present strength of the Indian army was altogether inadequate for any new undertaking. The expedition was therefore definitively negatived, notwithstanding the unabated importunity of the Envoy, who pronounced the conduct of the Governor-General to be "drivelling beneath contempt," and "sighed for a Wellesley or a Hastings."

State of the
Government
of Afghanistan,
1840.

The conviction daily became more confirmed that Shah Soojah not only had no hold on the affections of his subjects, but that he was an object of intense aversion to them. The Afghans whom he had appointed to the administration of districts were venal and oppressive, but the main cause of his unpopularity was the infidel aid on which he rested for support. It could not be concealed from the Afghans that while he was the nominal sovereign, the country was in truth ruled by the Envoy, and that all real power was in the hands of the foreign unbelievers, whose presence in the country was felt to be a visitation like the plague. Nor had the Shah the means of satisfying the expectations of his needy aristocracy, even if they had been moderate. The most productive provinces which once belonged to the crown of Cabul had been annexed to the Punjab by Runjeet Sing, and the remaining districts yielded only fifteen lacs of rupees a-year, which were scarcely sufficient to pay the priesthood, and to meet the expenses of the Shah's soldiers and his own household. Among the British officers entrusted with the management of districts, were the honorable names of Pottinger, Rawlinson, Todd, Leech, and Mackeson, but there were others who brought odium on the Government by their haughty bearing and their wanton and arbitrary proceedings. The first mission to Cabul had not inspired the Afghans with a very exalted idea of English morals, and, after the occupation of the country, the undisguised licentiousness of some of the officers, and more especially of several of those who, for obvious reasons, took up their residence in the city, the invasion of the harems of the chiefs, and the dishonour inflicted on their families, brought down curses on the "infidel dogs." Everything concurred to render our presence hateful and our position precarious. During the twenty-seven months of our occupation, the Government was a government of sentry boxes, and it was sustained only by the gleam of British bayonets. The country was garrisoned, not governed, and we were reposing

on a smothered volcano. Yet so confident did Sir William Macnaghten feel of the security of our situation that he sent for Lady Macnaghten to Cabul. His example was followed by other officers, and the guardianship of ladies in an enemy's country, hundreds of miles from our own frontier, was added to the other embarrassments of our position.

Movements of
Dost Mahomed,
1840.

The first disturbance broke out in the Khyber pass where, within a few weeks of the occupation of Cabul, the mountaineers massacred a large detachment of troops and carried off their baggage in triumph. Through the length and breadth of the land, from the neighbourhood of Jellalabad to Khelat, violence was the rule, and except the exception. One of the most serious revolts occurred in Belochistan, in the middle of 1840, when the whole province was wrested from us, the chief whom General Willshire had chosen was deposed, and the son of Mehrab Khan seated on the throne. General Nott was obliged to march down from Candahar to restore our authority in this important principality, which though wild and thinly populated extends from the banks of the Indus to the confines of Persia. The capital was recaptured and our power re-established. But the great source of anxiety throughout the year 1840, was connected with the movements of Dost Mahomed. After his flight from Cabul in August, 1839, he was hospitably entertained by the chief of Khooloom beyond Bameean. He was then induced to accept the invitation of Nusser-oolla, the Ameer of Bokhara the "commander of the faithful," as he was styled, but who was for more than thirty years the most brutal tyrant in all Transoxiana. Dost Mahomed and his sons were treated at first with some show of kindness, but it was not long before they were subjected to a rigorous and painful captivity, which was subsequently relaxed on the intercession of the King of Persia, and on the appearance of British troops at Syghan. Meanwhile, Jubbur Khan, after wandering from place to place with the females of the Dost's family, was persuaded to entrust them to the protection of the British Government. The confidence thus

reposed in our good faith by a people proverbial for perfidy, was no ordinary tribute of honour to our national character. The ladies and children were conveyed to Hindostan and treated with every consideration. The Dost at length succeeded in making his escape from Bokhara, and returned to Khooloom, where he was received with open arms by the chief, who placed the resources of the province at his disposal. The Oosbegs crowded to his standard, and in a short time he found himself at the head of a force of 6,000 or 8,000 men, with which he resolved to cross the Hindoo Koosh, raise the war cry of the Prophet, and, gathering strength from the unpopularity of the Shah and his infidel supporters, march in triumph to Cabul. An entire company of Captain Hopkins's Afghan regiment deserted to him with their arms and accoutrements, under the guidance of their native commandant, Saleh Mahomed. The British outposts which had been rashly planted in these mountain stations without any support were withdrawn in haste. Cabul was thrown into a state of commotion, and the inhabitants commenced closing their shops and removing their families. The representative of the Lahore Government began openly to intrigue against the Shah. The region north of Cabul was ripe for insurrection. "The Afghans," wrote Sir William, "are powder, and the Dost is a lighted match;" but the alarm subsided as speedily as it arose. Brigadier Dennie, who had been sent to reinforce Bameean, came up with the Dost on the 18th September, and with a mere handful of troops obtained a decisive victory over the whole host of Oosbegs.

Surrender of
Dost Mahomed,
1840. The Dost, after this defeat, moved into the Kohistan, or highlands north of the capital. The chiefs had recently returned from the presence of the Shah, to whom they had taken an oath of fidelity on the Koran, but they received their former master with cordiality, and prepared heartily to espouse his cause. Sir Robert Sale was sent into the hills to attack them and had signal success at Tootundurra, but was soon after defeated in an injudicious

attempt to capture a fort. Dost Mahomed, after flitting about the country for two or three weeks, came down into the Nijrow district, a few miles from the capital, which again presented a scene of fermentation. The British officials were filled with consternation; guns were mounted on the citadel to overawe the town, and the Envoy talked of "the disgrace of being locked up in Cabul for some time." Sir Robert Sale, who had been incessantly tracking the Dost, came upon him on the 2nd November in the valley of Purwandurra. The heights around were bristling with an armed population, but he had only about two hundred ill-mounted, though strong and sturdy Afghans with him. He had no intention to attack his pursuers, but the 2nd Native Cavalry galloped down upon him and he resolved boldly to meet the charge. Raising himself in his stirrup, and uncovering his head, he called upon his soldiers, in the name of God and the Prophet, to aid him in driving the accursed infidels from the land of the faithful. The cavalry troopers fled from the field like a flock of sheep, while their European officers fought on with the courage of heroes, till three of them were killed and two wounded. Sir Alexander Burnes, who had accompanied the force, sent a hasty note to Sir William Macnaghten to announce the disaster and to assure him there was now no course left but to fall back on Cabul, and concentrate all the troops there. The communication did not, however, reach him before the following afternoon, when he was taking a ride; but before he had recovered from the surprise it occasioned, a horseman rode up and accosted him with the words, "the Ameer is at hand." "What Ameer?" asked the Envoy. "Dost Mahomed Khan," was the reply, and immediately after, the Ameer presented himself, and having dismounted, placed his sword in the hands of Sir William and claimed his protection. "He had felt," he said, "even in the moment of victory, that it would be impossible for him to continue the contest. He had met his foes in an open field, and discomfited them, and the time had arrived when he could claim their consideration with

dignity." Sir William returned his sword and begged him to remount, and they rode together to the cantonments, where, with that ease which is characteristic of the natives of the East, he entered into free conversation, recounted his wanderings and sufferings during the last fifteen months, and made numerous enquiries regarding his family and relatives. His frank and princely bearing in the hour of adversity created a strong feeling of sympathy and admiration among the officers who crowded to listen to him, which was in no small degree heightened by the contempt they felt for the wretched puppet in the Bala Hissar. Sir William Macnaghten, when bewildered with the anxieties to which the approach of the Dost to Cabul gave rise, had said in his letters to Calcutta that no mercy should be shewn to the man who was the author of these distractions, and he had hinted at the proposal of setting a price on his head; but the magnanimous confidence of the Dost called forth all the noble feelings of his nature. In announcing his voluntary surrender to Lord Auckland, he said, "I hope he will be treated with liberality. His case is not parallel with that of the Shah. The Shah had no claim on us; we had no hand in depriving him of his kingdom, whereas, we ejected the Dost, who never offended us, in support of our policy, of which he is the victim." He was escorted to Calcutta, and the liberal sum of two lacs of rupees a-year was assigned for his support. He became the honoured guest of the Governor-General at the festivities of Government House, where he amused himself with testing the skill of Miss Eden at chess.

CHAPTER XXXV.

LORD AUCKLAND'S ADMINISTRATION—THE AFGHAN EXPEDITION, 1841-42.

Herat, 1841. THE lenity shewn by Lord Auckland to Yar Mahomed in condoning his perfidy, and continuing the supply of arms and money, elicited at first some appearance of gratitude, but he speedily resumed his treacherous communications with the court of Persia, and Major Todd had the courage to refuse any payment beyond the monthly subsidy of 25,000 rupees. Yar Mahomed immediately renewed his intrigues with increased vigour, and despatched an agent to the Persian governor of Meshid, inviting him to unite in an attack on Candahar while the road to Cabul was blocked up with snow, and also instigated the disaffected chiefs of Western Afghanistan to revolt. This glaring act of perfidy exhausted the patience of Major Todd, who took advantage of the assemblage of a large British force in Upper Sinde, to suspend even the monthly allowance, till the pleasure of his Government was known. But this only served to kindle the wrath of the minister, and to increase his demands. On the 8th February, he required the payment of two lacs of rupees to discharge his own debts, as well as a further advance of money to improve the fortifications, and an increase of the regular stipend. Major Todd made the injudicious request that he would admit a contingent of British troops into Herat, and depute his own son to meet and escort them, if the measure were approved by his own Government. Yar Mahomed refused the request and peremptorily insisted on the immediate payment of all his demands, or the instant departure of the mission, and Major Todd at once determined to withdraw from

Herat. Lord Auckland was mortified with this precipitate movement which aggravated the difficulties of our position in Afghanistan, and cast an air of ridicule on the whole policy of the Government. The Major was dismissed from his political employment, and remanded to his regiment. This has been considered a harsh if not an unjust measure, but it is impossible to peruse the clear and able vindication of this proceeding which Lord Auckland placed on record, without admitting the great force of his justification. The abrupt termination of the mission was in one respect inopportune, inasmuch as all our differences with Persia had been accommodated and the court of Persia was closed against the intrigues of Kamran before it occurred, though the fact was not known at the time to Major Todd; in other respects it cannot be considered unfortunate, as it withdrew our officers from the dangers to which they would inevitably have been exposed nine months later on our expulsion from Cabul.

General Nott and
Major Rawlinson
at Candahar,
1840.

The political charge of the province of Candahar had been entrusted to Major—now Sir Henry —Rawlinson, who had served his apprenticeship to diplomacy in Persia, where he had acquired a complete knowledge of the language and character of the people, and a clear perception of the position and policy of the different courts in Central Asia. He was second to none of the political officers whose talents were developed, and whose reputation was nurtured, in the instructive school of Afghan politics, and it was mainly owing to his foresight and management that our authority was maintained in that seething cauldron of rebellion. The military command was in the hands of General Nott, who, with all his infirmities of temper, possessed a fund of sound sense, a spirit of great decision, and no inconsiderable store of professional knowledge. He was prompt and energetic in dealing with the revolts which were continually cropping up around him, but the freedom of his remarks was displeasing to Sir W. Macnaghten and to Lord Auckland, and he was consequently refused the promotion to which his

rank and abilities entitled him. On the retirement of Sir Willoughby Cotton from Cabul, that important command should, in all fairness, have been entrusted to him; but he was again passed over; and it is melancholy to reflect how different would have been the course of events, and the fate of the army, if he had been at the side of Sir William Macnaghten, on the memorable morning of the 2nd November. The Dooranees who occupied the province of Zemindawer, lying between Candahar and Herat, were of Shah Soojah's own tribe; they had been subjected to great oppression during the ascendancy of the Barukzyes and hailed the return of their prince as a deliverer with delight. If there was one province in Afghanistan more than another in which the Shah had reason to expect cordial loyalty and unflinching support, it was in that occupied by the Dooranees; but when their expectations of sharing the sweets of power under a ruler of their own clan were disappointed, and they found that all real power was monopolized by strangers and infidels, no tribe eventually manifested a more rancorous hostility to the Shah. In November, 1840, Aktar Khan, their chief, openly announced his intention to march on Candahar, and General Nott sent a force to beat up his quarters, which awed him into temporary submission. He succeeded in reassembling his army, and in July took up a position on the Helmund, with 6,000 men, in six divisions, with a priest at the head of each, and a banner inscribed "We have been trusting in God; may he guide and guard us." He was vigorously attacked by Colonel Woodburn and defeated, but assembled his followers again in the following month, when a more signal discomfiture broke up the confederacy. These successive reverses dismayed the Dooranee chiefs who came in and made their submission to the representative of the Shah, with the exception of Akram Khan, whose indomitable spirit resisted every overture and defied every threat. His feelings were well expressed in the common Afghan remark, "We are content with blood, but shall never be content with a master." In other countries, his

conduct might have been deemed patriotic, but in Afghanistan it was pronounced treasonable, and it was resolved that no mercy should be shewn him. One of his own countrymen was induced by a bribe to disclose his retreat; he was seized and brought into Candahar, and, under positive orders from Cabul, barbarously blown from a gun.

Eastern Ghilzyes,
1841.

The province lying to the north-east of Candahar was inhabited by the Ghilzyes, a fine muscular race, expert in the use of the musket, sword, and knife, and characterized by an intense ferocity of disposition, the result of centuries of rapine and petty warfare. They were able to bring 40,000 men into the field, and were as jealous of their own independence in their wild mountains, as they were eager to destroy that of others. They had in time past carried their victorious arms to the capital of Persia and recorded their prowess on many a battle field in India. They had played an important part in the politics of Afghanistan, where, within three generations, they had exercised supreme authority. They had been the most resolute opponents of every invader, and had never bowed the neck to the rulers of Cabul or Candahar, but continued with perfect impunity their hereditary profession of levying black mail on all who traversed their mountains. Though Sir William Macnaghten had prevailed on them for an annual subsidy of 30,000 rupees to abstain from infesting the highways, their deep-rooted hostility to the intrusive foreigners was becoming daily more palpable, and it was resolved to strengthen the fortifications of Khelat-i-ghilzye which lay in the heart of their country. They were determined to oppose a measure which would restrain their freedom, and they boldly advanced to obstruct the progress of Colonel Weymer, who was sent against them with a body of 5,000 men. The combat, which took place on the 22nd May, 1841, lasted five hours; and it was not till ten in the evening that they quitted the field, carrying their wounded with them. The strength of the tribe was impaired by this and a subsequent defeat, and Sir William Macnagh-

ten began to congratulate himself on the cheering aspect of affairs in Afghanistan, and to flatter himself that all difficulty in managing the country was now removed. But Major Robinson, with a clearer appreciation of the precariousness of our position, did not fail to press on him the unpalatable truth that the country was universally pervaded by an implacable spirit of hostility, and that there would assuredly be a general outburst, on the first favourable opportunity.

Resolution to
hold Afghanis-
tan, 1841.

That opportunity was not far distant. The expense of garrisoning Afghanistan began to tell to an alarming extent on the finances of India. The army of occupation fell little short of 25,000 men, and the annual charge was moderately computed at a crore and a half of rupees. All the treasure accumulated by Lord William Bentinck's economical reforms had been exhausted, and the treasury was empty. The Court of Directors were alarmed, and at the close of 1840 communicated their apprehensions to Lord Auckland. The restored monarchy, they said, would evidently require a British force to maintain tranquillity within, and prevent aggression from without; to attempt to accomplish this object by a small force would be unwise and dangerous, and they should prefer the entire abandonment of the country, with a frank avowal of the complete failure of our project; but they left it to the Government of India to determine the course to be adopted—either a speedy withdrawal from the country, or a large increase of the army. When the surrender of Dost Mahomed was announced at the India House, the Directors stated that it had made no change in their views, and they trusted that advantage would be taken of this auspicious circumstance to bring the question to an issue in accordance with their wishes. Nothing could be more judicious than this recommendation. Since our entry into Afghanistan there had been no opportunity so favourable for retiring from it. All apprehension of an invasion from the west had disappeared. The Persian court was on the most friendly terms with us. The expedition of the Russians to

Khiva had failed, and they were no longer heard of in Central Asia. Dost Mahomed and his family were in our hands. Khelat had been recovered, and Belochistan reoccupied. "The noses of the Dooranee chiefs," as Sir William Macnaghten affirmed, "had been brought to the grindstone. Afghanistan was as quiet as an Indian district, and its tranquillity was miraculous." Lord Auckland could not, however, bring himself to approve of a retrograde movement in Afghanistan, before the authority of the Shah had been completely established, though it was impossible not to perceive that our presence was the chief cause of his unpopularity and insecurity. The two civil members of the Council concurred with him in voting for the maintenance of our position in Afghanistan. The two military members who would undoubtedly have voted with the Court of Directors for the withdrawal of our army, had no opportunity, either by accident or by design, of recording their opinions. Sir William Macnaghten, on hearing that the question of withdrawing the British force had been the subject of serious discussion, declared that to deprive the Shah of British support would be an act of "unparalleled political atrocity, and that he would pack up his all, and return to his asylum at Loodiana as soon as the resolution was communicated to him." We had, in fact, placed ourselves in a position from which it was impossible to recede without the complete collapse of our policy, which would have exposed us to the ridicule of Central Asia, and of the princes of India. Neither could we hold it without an enormous and apparently interminable expenditure, which would cripple the resources of Government, and deprive it of the power of doing justice to the interests of India.

Retrenchment
and revolt,
1841-42.

The Governor-General, having resolved to remain in Afghanistan, opened a new loan, and inculcated a system of rigid economy on the Envoy, which was to be begun with curtailing the stipends of the chiefs. By that fatality which seemed to cling to every measure connected with this ill-starred expedition, the retrenchments which should have been delayed to the last were the first

adopted. These stipends were considered by Sir William Macnaghten as a compensation to the chiefs for relinquishing the immemorial practice of levying contributions on the highways in their respective districts. He had many misgivings about the wisdom of this economy, which would affect every tribe in the country, but the orders from Calcutta were peremptory, and the eastern Ghilzye chiefs were the first to be summoned to Cabul and informed that the exigencies of the state rendered it necessary to reduce their allowance. They received the announcement at the beginning of October, without any apparent discontent, made their salaam to the Envoy, and returning to their mountain fastnesses, plundered a caravan, and closed the road to India by blocking up the passes. They had always regarded these exactions from travellers in the light of an ancient inheritance, and an indefeasible right. They were magnanimously indifferent to the politics of Afghanistan, and cared not who ruled, so long as their privileges were respected. The stipends now about to be reduced had been guaranteed to them when we entered the country, and they had performed their part of the contract with exemplary fidelity. They had not allowed a finger to be raised against our posts, or couriers, or weak detachments, and convoys of every description had passed through their terrific defiles, the strongest mountain barriers in the world, without interruption. The Shah, on hearing of this hostile movement, sent Humza Khan, the governor of the Ghilzyes, whose allowance had also been retrenched, to bring them to reason, but as he was himself at the root of the conspiracy, his presence only served to fan the flame. The 35th Native Infantry, commanded by Colonel Monteith, which was under orders to return to the provinces, was directed by the Envoy to "proceed to the passes and chastise these rascals and open the road to India," but he was treacherously attacked during the night by the mountaineers, who were abetted by the horsemen and officers the Shah had deputed to accompany and assist him, and he lost much baggage. Sir Robert Sale,

who had been appointed to command the brigade of troops returning to India, was sent forward to the support of the 35th. He encountered no little opposition in the Khoord Cabul, and on reaching Tezeen ordered a large detachment to proceed against the fort of the leader of the Ghilzyes, the capture of which would have inflicted a severe, and perhaps a decisive blow on the insurrection. The wily chief sent his envoys to cozen the political agent with the force, who allowed himself to be drawn into a treaty which conceded nearly all the claims of the insurgents. Their stipends were restored, and a sum of 10,000 rupees was actually paid down to them, though they were then in open hostility. Not only was the opportunity of nipping the revolt in the bud thus sacrificed, but it was indefinitely strengthened by this fatuous compliance, which proclaimed the weakness of Government, and enabled the chiefs to announce that Sir Robert Sale had been obliged to purchase their forbearance. They gave hostages, it is true, to accompany the force, well knowing that we should not injure them, under any circumstances, but they took care at the same time to send emissaries to raise the tribes on the route, who attacked the brigade at every point as it advanced towards Gundamuk. Sir Robert Sale reached that station in the beginning of November, and found all communication with Cabul cut off, and the intermediate country in a blaze of rebellion.

Security of the
Envoy, 1841.

Sir William Macnaghten had been rewarded for his services by the Governorship of Bombay, and had made preparations for leaving Cabul in the beginning of November. Throughout the previous month, while the surface of society in Afghanistan presented the image of unruffled calm, a general confederacy, which embraced almost every influential chief of every tribe, was organized for the expulsion of the infidels from the country. Intimation of it poured in upon the British authorities from all quarters. Major Pottinger, who, since his departure from Herat, had taken charge of the political duties in the highlands north of

Cabul; Captain Colin Mackenzie, whose public occupation in the city placed him in a position to feel the native pulse; Lieutenant Conolly, in attendance at the Shah's court; Mohun Lall, a Cashmere youth who had received the benefit of an English education, and acted as Sir Alexander Burnes's moonshee, together, with many others, warned the Envoy of the storm which was gathering. But he had persuaded himself that the country was in a state of unexampled repose, and that the rising of the Ghilzyes was a mere local émeute which might be easily suppressed, and not the token of a national revolt. He was confirmed in this feeling of security by Sir Alexander, who was to succeed to his political employment, and who was supposed to enjoy the best opportunities of knowing the feelings of the chiefs and the people. On the evening of the 1st November he called on Sir William Macnaghten and congratulated him on leaving the country in a state of profound tranquillity. At the same hour, some of the conspirators were

Insurrection at
Cabul. Murder
of Sir A. Burnes,
1841.

assembled in a house in the city to arrange the plan of the insurrection. Among the foremost was Abdoolla Khan, a proud and vindictive noble, who had been deprived of the headship of his tribe, and now revenged himself by fomenting the outbreak of the Ghilzyes. Aware of his sinister designs, Sir Alexander Burnes had sent him an offensive message, calling him a dog, and threatening to recommend the Shah to deprive him of his ears. At this meeting he advised that the first attack on the morrow should be made on the house of the man who had insulted him. Sir Alexander was unfortunately more obnoxious to the Afghan chiefs, not excepting even the Shah himself, than any of the other British officers, some of whom, by their genial disposition and their high moral character, had acquired general esteem. He received repeated premonitions of his danger, but he had an overweening confidence in his personal influence over the Afghans, and treated every suggestion with contempt. The insurgents surrounded his house at dawn with loud yells, when for the first time he became aware of the peril of his situation,

and despatched a note to Sir William for succour. He likewise sent two messengers to Abdoolla Khan offering to redress all his grievances if he would restrain the fury of the people; but one of them was murdered, and the other covered with wounds. He harangued the mob from his balcony, and offered large sums for his own life and that of his brother, but the Afghans were thirsting for his blood, and for the more tempting plunder of the neighbouring treasury. Captain William Broadfoot fell in defence of the house, but not before he had slain six of his assailants. A Mahomedan Cashmerian then entered the house, and approaching Sir Alexander solemnly swore on the Koran to conduct him to a place of safety if he would direct his guard to cease firing on the insurgents, but no sooner had he and his brother entered the garden, than the miscreant called out "This is Secunder—Sir Alexander—Burnes Sahib," and they were immediately hacked to pieces by the infuriated crowd. The insurgents then attacked the adjoining house of Captain Johnson, the paymaster of the Shah's force, and plundered it of 170,000 rupees, which he had imprudently removed from the Bala Hissar to suit his own convenience. The houses of the officers were then set on fire, and all the records consumed. The mob did not originally exceed a hundred, but the number was rapidly augmented by the success of this exploit and the booty which had been acquired, and the whole city was soon in a flame of hostile excitement. The confederate chiefs who had stirred up the émeute, had so little expectation of its success that they kept aloof from the assailants, and had their horses ready for flight on the first appearance of British troops; and it was not till the afternoon, when it appeared that no efforts were to be made to avenge the outrage and to vindicate our authority, that they ventured abroad. The slightest exhibition of energy at the commencement would have extinguished the insurrection. This assertion rests not only on the authority of the officers who survived the catastrophe, but also on that of all the native chiefs to whose custody they were subsequently committed. It appears absolutely

incredible that a British army of 5,000 men should have been allowed to remain inactive within a mile and a quarter of the spot where British officers of the highest rank had been murdered, and a British treasury sacked by a handful of insurgents.

General Elphinstone's infirmities, 1841.

The General-in-chief in Afghanistan was General Elphinstone, a gallant old Queen's officer, but utterly disqualified for this important and dangerous post by his physical infirmities. These were fully known to Lord Auckland when he importuned him to accept the post, contrary to the advice of Sir Jasper Nicholls, the Commander-in-chief, who earnestly recommended that it should be given to General Nott; but General Nott had incurred the displeasure of Lord Auckland by the freedom of his remarks. It is impossible, therefore, to exonerate the Governor-General from a large share of the responsibility of the overwhelming calamity which ensued, and which is to be attributed to the incompetency of the officer entrusted with the supreme command in a country ripe for revolt. General Elphinstone was equally unfitted for this arduous duty by his mental weakness, and the total want of all decision of character. It was at seven in the morning of the 2nd November, that Sir William received information that the city was in a ferment, and that Sir Alexander Burnes's house was besieged, and he proceeded immediately to consult the General. The Envoy made light of the émeute which he said would speedily subside, and the General was too happy to be spared the exertion of thought, not to acquiesce in this opinion. It was decided, however, that Brigadier Shelton's brigade, which was encamped on the neighbouring heights of

Fatal procrastination, 1841.

Sea Sung, should be ordered to proceed to the Bala Hissar to act as might appear expedient, that assistance should be sent, if possible, to Sir Alexander Burnes, and that the remainder of the troops should be concentrated in the cantonments. At a period when moments were of inestimable value, hours were wasted in communications with the Shah regarding the admission of the Brigadier's force into the Bala

Hissar, which was at first refused, and it was mid-day before these orders and counter-orders terminated with permission to march. On the arrival of the Brigadier, the Shah asked who had sent him, and why he had come? The Shah himself, however, was the only man who acted with promptitude on that memorable morning. On hearing of the outbreak he ordered his own regiment of Hindostanees under the command of Colonel Campbell to proceed at once to the spot and quell it. If that officer had promptly marched along the skirt of the hill without any incumbrance, he might have arrived in time to save Sir Alexander Burnes and the treasure, but he proceeded with his guns through the narrow and intricate streets of the city, where his way was soon blocked up by the opposition of the inhabitants. The insurgents, flushed with success, drove his regiment back, and Brigadier Shelton did nothing more than cover its retreat to the Bala Hissar. No effort was made by the Envoy or the Commander-in-chief, to extricate Sir Alexander, which might have been effected with perfect ease. There was a short and direct route of only a mile and a quarter from the cantonment to the scene of disturbance by the open Kohistan road, and a body of a thousand men might have been sent forward at once with their guns. Their approach at an early hour would, at once, have restored order, more especially as that quarter of the city was inhabited by the tribe of Kuzzilbashes, who were friendly to us, and would immediately have joined the force. Such a movement was the more imperative, as the provisions for the Shah's army, to the extent of 8,000 maunds, were stored in a wretched fort not 500 yards from Sir Alexander's residence. The mob, after plundering and burning his house, and sacking Captain Johnson's treasury, immediately attacked this fort. Captain—now Sir George—Lawrence, entreated permission to proceed to its relief, but it was peremptorily refused him. Captain Colin Mackenzie gallantly defended the post for two days without food or rest, and at length, seeing no hope of succour, was obliged to abandon it and cut his way to the cantonments.

Inactivity of the
Authorities,
1841.

On the evening of this first day of disaster, the General, instead of forming a vigorous plan of operations for the morrow, contented himself with writing to the Envoy: "We must see what the morning brings, and then think what can be done." The morning revealed the fact that nothing was wanting to quench the rebellion but promptitude and resolution. The 37th Native Infantry had been summoned back on the previous day from the Khoord Cabul where it had been left by Sir Robert Sale, and Major Griffiths, the commandant, though vigorously opposed at every step by the insurgents, succeeded in conducting the corps in safety to the cantonment, with all its baggage and its sick and two guns. Nothing, however, was done on the second day except a feeble effort to penetrate the city with an inadequate force, but it was not despatched till three hours after noon, and it was driven back by the thousands of armed men, whom the success of the rising had brought into the city. Within thirty hours of the outbreak, with a body of troops, sufficient, under a man of spirit, to maintain our position against all attacks, the Envoy deemed it necessary to send letters to General Nott at Candahar, and to Sir Robert Sale to importune them to hasten with their regiments to the relief of the garrison. It was then that the fatal error of relinquishing the Bala Hissar and cantoning the troops in the plain was revealed in all its intensity. These cantonments had been planted in a piece of low ground, nearly a mile in extent, with ramparts so contemptible, that a pony was backed by an officer to scramble down the ditch and over the wall. They were so situated as to be commanded by the neighbouring hills, and by intermediate forts which had not been occupied or demolished, and the troops could neither enter nor leave them without being exposed to a raking fire from these various points of attack. Human folly seemed to have exhausted itself in the construction of these works in the immediate neighbourhood of a populous, fanatic, and disaffected city. To crown the blunders of the political and military authorities, the com-

missariat stores on which the existence of the force depended, and which ought to have been lodged in the Bala Hissar, or at least within the cantonments, had been deposited in a small fort four hundred yards beyond them, the access to which was commanded by an unoccupied fort and by the King's garden. The commissariat fort, which was guarded by only eighty men, was vigorously assailed by the insurgents, and the General proposed to send out a detachment to enable Lieutenant Warren, who was in command, to evacuate it. There was a universal remonstrance against this act of insanity, and two companies were therefore sent to strengthen the garrison, —while 4,000 men were lying idle in the cantonments—but they were repulsed with the loss of two officers killed, and three wounded. Thrice did the General yield so far to the importunity of his staff as to promise to despatch sufficient reinforcements, and thrice did he alter his mind. The enemy began at length to undermine the walls of the fort, and Lieutenant Warren, despairing of all succour, was obliged to abandon it; and men and officers looked over the walls of the cantonment with burning indignation, while a rabble of Afghans was diligently employed, like a swarm of ants, in carrying off the provisions on which their only hope of sustaining life was placed. The loss of these stores completely paralyzed the garrison.

General Sale
declines return-
ing to Cabul,
1841.

The urgent request sent by Sir William Macnaghten to General Sale and General Nott to come to the relief of the cantonment without any delay, produced no result. General Sale had reached Gundamuk when he received this communication, which was accompanied by one from General Elphinstone who desired him to return, if he could place his sick and wounded in safety with the Afghan irregulars at that station. A council of war was held, and it was determined to push on to Jellalabad, instead of falling back on Cabul. General Sale has been censured by high authority for this movement, but the reasons which recommended it appear to be conclusive. The winter had already set in with intense rigour. The brigade had lost

a great portion of its camp equipage; the camel drivers had nearly all deserted with their animals, and to transport the ammunition and provisions it would be necessary to abandon the remainder of the tents. The cartridges in store were not sufficient for more than three actions, and the force would probably be obliged to fight the enemy at each of the eight marches to Cabul. The sick and the wounded had increased to three hundred, and to leave them at Gundamuk, either with or without the irregulars, would be to consign them to inevitable destruction. On the other hand the occupation of a position like Jellalabad was recommended by the consideration that it would keep open the communication with India, and provide a defensible fortress and a safe retreat for the Cabul force to fall back on, if circumstances should render it necessary.

General Nott
sends a force to
Cabul, which
returns, 1841.

The aspect of affairs at Candahar towards the close of 1841 was considered so tranquil that it was resolved to send back to India three of the regiments then in the province. But they had not accomplished more than two marches when unquestionable tokens of the coming storm were afforded by the total destruction of a detachment in the north, and by the altered and offensive bearing of the people. On the 14th November, General Nott received, in a quill, the letter sent by the Envoy the day after the murder of Sir Alexander Burnes requiring three regiments to be despatched to his relief with all speed. He was exceedingly averse, however, to part with the brigade, which he considered would be more useful at Candahar. The troops could not, he argued, reach Cabul under five weeks, by which time, "everything would be settled one way or another." They would be required to fight every inch of the way beyond Ghuzni, and to wade through the snow; and they would eventually arrive in so crippled a state as to be wholly unfit for service. In obedience, however, to the orders of the Envoy the three regiments were despatched under Colonel Maclaren, but the General did not conceal from him his own conviction that they were marching to certain destruction.

That they might have reached Cabul in safety, was however, by no means improbable, but they commenced their march with great reluctance, and returned to Candahar with great alacrity on the first appearance of a few flakes of snow, and the loss of some commissariat donkeys.

The question of
Assassination,
1841. Extraordinary exertions were made by the Commissariat officers to obtain supplies from the

neighbouring villages, and within four days of the outbreak the General was enabled to inform the Envoy that they had temporarily, and he hoped permanently, got over the difficulty of provisions. "Our case," he said "is not yet desperate; I do not mean to impress that, but it must be borne in mind that it goes very fast." The Envoy, seeing the honour and safety of the force in such keeping, felt himself constrained to open negotiations with the insurgent chiefs. Through the moonshee Mohun Lall who continued to reside in the city, he made them an offer of two, three, or even five lacs of rupees, but, as might have been expected, this fresh token of weakness only served to increase their arrogance. At the same time Lieutenant John Conolly, the political agent with the Shah in the Bala Hissar, authorized the moonshee to offer 10,000 or even 15,000 rupees for the head of each of the principal rebels. There is nothing to support the attempt which has been made to connect the Envoy with this atrocious proposal except the circumstance that Lieutenant Conolly was in constant communication with him; on the other hand, there is irrefragable evidence of the detestation in which he held the practice, in his letter to the moonshee in which he regretted "to find that it was ever considered his object to encourage assassination." "The rebels," he said, "are very wicked men, but we must not take unlawful means to destroy them." On a subsequent occasion, when the subject was brought up in the presence of Captain Skinner, he assured him that his mind revolted from the very suggestion of such a procedure.

Brig. Shelton

The utter incompetence of the General was

comes into cantonment, 1841. hurrying the garrison to destruction, but there appeared some faint hope of deliverance, if Brigadier Shelton could be associated with him in the command, and he was accordingly recalled to the cantonment from the Bala Hissar where he had continued since the morning of the 2nd of November. He was a younger and more vigorous officer, distinguished for his dauntless courage and iron nerve, and his arrival on the 9th November was hailed by the desponding garrison with delight. But it was soon found that the obliquities of his disposition completely neutralized the value of his services. If he had chosen to control his petulant humours, and had cordially sustained and strengthened the General, he might have earned the gratitude of his country by securing the salvation of the force, but the discord which arose from his intractable disposition only served to increase the difficulties of the crisis. The Brigadier complained of the officious interference of the General, or rather of the officers who advised him, as he does not appear ever to have had an opinion of his own. The General pronounced him insubordinate and contumacious; and between them the national honour was trampled in the dust, and 15,000 lives sacrificed. In the desperate condition to which affairs had been reduced there was still one course which would have extricated the army from all its perils,—an immediate retreat to the Bala Hissar. From that impregnable position the troops could have sallied forth on the city, and procured supplies from the surrounding country. The Shah did not cease to urge this movement, which was equally recommended by the Envoy and the General. But the Brigadier pertinaciously resisted it on grounds which were palpably frivolous, inasmuch as he himself had recently brought a regiment and a gun from the citadel into the cantonment without meeting with any impediment. His incredible obstinacy prevented the adoption of this course and sealed the doom of the army.

Action at Behmaroo, 1841.

On the 13th the enemy planted two guns on the Behmaroo hills and began to cannonade the can-

tonments. The General and the Brigadier resisted all the entreaties of the Envoy to make an attempt to dislodge them, but as he continued to insist on the despatch of a strong force, and took the entire responsibility of the movement upon himself, the Brigadier started before daybreak and was engaged throughout the day in conflict with the enemy. The success was not decisive, but it was the last which the garrison was destined to achieve. There is little interest in dwelling on the long and melancholy catalogue of errors and disasters, faithfully and eloquently described by Lieutenant—now Sir Vincent—Eyre who bore a large share in the dangers of the siege, which followed closely upon each other, disgusting the officers, disheartening the men, and finally sinking the army in irretrievable ruin. On the 16th, Major Pottinger and Lieutenant Haughton, the sole survivors of the gallant body of men in the Kohistan, in the defence of which a noble Goorkha corps fell to a man, reached the cantonment exhausted with fatigue and wounds. The 23rd November brought the climax of military disasters. The enemy had again made their appearance on the Behmaroo hills, and the Envoy urged the necessity of a vigorous effort to dislodge them from a position which enabled them to inflict the greatest injury on the cantonments. The Brigadier protested against the movement; the troops, he said, were dispirited and exhausted by living on half rations of parched wheat, but his objections were over-ruled and a detachment was sent out which, being weak, failed to accomplish the object. A council of war was then held when, upon the earnest entreaty of the Envoy, it was determined that a stronger force should set out before daybreak, on the morning of the 23rd. The hill was carried without difficulty, but as day began to dawn, thousands of armed men streamed out of the city, and a general action was brought on. By an act of incredible fatuity, Brigadier Shelton had taken out a single gun with him, which was admirably worked and told with great effect on the

Action of the
23rd November,
1841.

enemy, till the vent became overheated and it was rendered unserviceable. The Afghans with their long range matchlocks poured a destructive fire upon our musketeers, and laughed at their balls which fell short of the mark. The troops, pining with cold and hunger, and utterly broken in spirit, refused to follow their officers, and were soon in confused and disastrous flight. The Brigadier with iron courage stood in the thickest of the fire and called on his men to support the honour of their flag. The flying regiments paused and reformed, and the Mahomedan fanatics shrunk from the assault. At this juncture, Abdoollah Khan, one of the insurgent chiefs whom Mohun Lall had marked out for assassination and who commanded the Afghan cavalry, fell and they fled in a panic to the city, followed by the infantry. Sir William was standing on the ramparts with the General, eagerly watching these movements, and urged him to send out a body of fresh troops to improve the advantage and complete the victory, but he replied that it was a wild scheme. The Brigadier might have withdrawn his force in safety to the cantonments during the confusion, but he chose to halt; the enemy recovered from the panic, and rushed back on him with redoubled fury, when the whole body of English soldiers disgracefully abandoned the field and took to flight. The fugitives and the pursuers were so mingled in this race, that the Afghans might easily have captured the cantonments if they had known how to improve the advantage they had gained; but in the moment of victory, the chiefs drew off their men, and, after mutilating the bodies of the slain, returned to the city with shouts of exultation. This defeat at Behmaroo, as Brigadier Shelton truly observed, "concluded all exterior operations." A general gloom hung over the encampment; the army was thoroughly demoralized; the disasters and the dishonour of these three weeks, which were justly attributed to the imbecility and the mismanagement of the commanders, destroyed all confidence in them, and wore out the principle of military discipline.

Negotiations,
1841.

The day after this disaster, the Shah again entertained the Envoy to occupy the Bala Hissar, as the only course left to secure the honour and safety of the army, and Sir William pressed it on the military chiefs with increasing importunity, but they pertinaciously resisted all his entreaties, and General Elphinstone officially informed him that it was no longer feasible to maintain our position in the country, and advised him to have recourse to negotiation. With such imbecility at the head of the force, Sir William was obliged to submit to this humiliation and to solicit a conference with the insurgent chiefs, whom he met in the guardroom of one of the gateways. The debate, which was long and acrimonious, was brought to a close by Sultan Mahomed, who asserted in haughty and offensive language that, as the Afghans had beaten the English, they had a right to dictate the terms of capitulation, and he demanded that the whole army should surrender at discretion with its arms, ammunition, and treasure. The Envoy at once terminated the interview by declaring that he preferred death to dishonour. A week after, Akbar

Arrival of Akbar
Khan, 1841.

Khan, one of the sons of Dost Mahomed, a young soldier of great energy, but of a fiery and impetuous temper, arrived at Cabul, and was at once accepted as the leader of the national confederacy. He soon discovered that to extinguish the British force it was only necessary to defeat the efforts of the commissariat officers to obtain provisions. He accordingly arrested the progress of supplies by threatening with death all who were detected in furnishing them. Under the pressure of hunger, the troops daily became less capable of exertion, and the Envoy, seeing the destruction of the force inevitable, renewed his entreaty to withdraw it to the Bala Hissar, while the sick and wounded were sent under cover of the night, but the General raised a host of objections, and refused his concurrence. Sir William then suggested that they should endeavour to obtain provisions by their own good swords from the surrounding villages, but the General assured him that the only alternative left was to negotiate for a safe

retreat from the country on the most favourable terms possible.

Treaty of the
11th Dec., 1841. Starvation now stared the ill-fated garrison in the face; on the 11th December there was food left only for the day's consumption of the fighting men, while the camp followers, who had been living on the carcases of camels, were completely famished. Supplies were not to be obtained for money because the villagers could not venture to sell them, nor by force because the commanders and the men had not the heart to fight, and the Envoy was constrained with infinite reluctance to make another offer of negotiation. A conference was accordingly held with the chiefs, and, after an angry discussion of two hours, the terms of a treaty were arranged. The salient points in it were, that the British troops at Candahar and Cabul, at Ghuzni and Jellalabad should evacuate the country, receiving every possible assistance in carriage and provisions, and that Dost Mahomed and his family should be set at liberty. Shah Soojah was to be allowed the option of remaining in Afghanistan with a pension of a lac of rupees a-year, or of accompanying the British troops to India. The army was to quit the cantonments within three days, and in the mean time to receive ample supplies of provisions, for which due payment was to be made, and four officers were to be delivered up as hostages for the performance of the stipulations. This is the most disgraceful transaction in the records of British India, but to form an impartial opinion of it, we must turn to the Envoy's own explanation. "The whole country," he wrote, "as far as we could learn, had risen in rebellion; our communications on all sides were cut off; we had been fighting forty days against superior numbers under most disadvantageous circumstances with a deplorable loss of life, and in a day or two must have perished of hunger. I had been repeatedly apprized by the military authorities that nothing could be done with our troops. The terms I secured were the best obtainable, and the destruction of 15,000 human beings would little have benefited our country, while the Govern-

ment would have been almost compelled to avenge our fate at whatever cost." The position of the Envoy has been vividly described by the historian of the Afghan war, "environed and hemmed in by difficulties and dangers, overwhelmed with responsibility which there was none to share—the lives of 15,000 men resting on his decision—the honour of his country at stake—with a perfidious enemy before him, a decrepit General at his side, and a paralyzed army at his back, he was driven to negotiate by the imbecility of his companions." The entire responsibility of this humiliating convention rests upon the two military commanders, than whom it would scarcely have been possible to select officers more completely disqualified for their post, the one by bodily infirmity and constitutional imbecility; the other by his perverse temper and his obstinacy. The brilliant success of Sir Robert Sale at Jellalabad shews how easily the position of the British army at Cabul might have been rectified, with the superior means and appliances at command, if the direction of affairs had devolved on Captain Lawrence, or Captain Colin Mackenzie, or Captain Eyre, or Major Pottinger, or any other of the noble spirits in the camp.

Violation of the
Treaty by the
enemy, 1841.

But it never was the intention of the Afghan leaders to fulfil the terms of the treaty, or to permit any portion of the army to leave the country. The Bala Hissar was evacuated by our troops on the 13th, but they were assailed by the insurgents on their route, and no small portion of the priceless provisions in their charge was lost. Supplies were furnished so scantily as not to satisfy hunger, and the Afghans were permitted to intercept them without any interference on the part of the chiefs; sometimes they were altogether withheld. The forts around the cantonment were surrendered, and the Afghans were seen squatting on the walls jeering at our misfortunes. The chiefs were allowed to go into the magazines and carry away whatever stores they liked, while the British officers and men watched the spoliation with swelling indignation. To complete the disasters of the force, snow began to fall on the 18th December, and was

lying many inches deep on the ground by the evening. If the troops had been enabled to move towards Jellalabad immediately on the signature of the treaty, they might have reached it as a military body, though attacked at every step of the way; but a new horror was now added to the difficulties of their position. The conduct of Sir William Macnaghten at this crisis, during the twelve days which elapsed between the signature of the treaty and his assassination, has been characterized by some, as not only dishonourable, but perfidious. It is certainly to be regretted that in the remote hope of saving the army from destruction, he should have allowed himself to be drawn into the filthy meshes of Afghan intrigue; but it must not be overlooked, that if the treaty bound him to repair to Peshawur with all practical expedition, it also bound the Afghan chiefs to furnish him with all possible assistance in carriage and provisions. The treaty was equally binding on both parties; he had faithfully fulfilled his part, as far as practicable, by ordering the evacuation of Jellalabad, Ghuzni, and Candahar, by surrendering the forts, and giving hostages, while Akbar Khan and the Barukzyes not only continued to withhold both carriage and provisions, but rose in their demands and insisted on the delivery of all our military stores and ammunition, and the surrender of the married families as additional hostages for the fulfilment of the treaty. In these circumstances, Sir William instructed the moonshee Mohun Lall to open negotiations with other tribes and to inform them that if any portion of the Afghans wished him to remain and would make this declaration to the Shah and send in provisions, he should feel himself at liberty to break with the faithless Barukzyes. In this communication he made the characteristic remark that "though it would be very agreeable to stop at Cabul a few months, he must not consider what was agreeable but what was consistent with good faith." If he had hesitated to depart after receiving sufficient supplies of cattle and provisions, he would have been justly chargeable with a breach of his engagement; but it is the mere wantonness of detrac-

tion to charge him with violating it when the other party intentionally kept him without the means of fulfilling it. There can, at the same time, however, be no doubt that while he lingered at Cabul and endeavoured to play off one party against another, he indulged a latent hope of some happy turn in the current of events which might enable him to rescue the garrison from perdition, and the British character from the ignominy of the treaty; but what other British functionary, with the same responsibilities, would have hesitated to adopt the same course?

Assassination
of Sir William.
23rd Dec., 1841.

It was at this critical juncture, while Sir William Macnaghten was tossed upon a sea of difficulties, and bewildered by the appalling crisis which was approaching, that he was drawn into the net which Akbar Khan spread for his destruction. On the evening of the 22nd December, the wily Afghan sent two agents with Major Skinner, who was his prisoner, to the Envoy, with a proposal, to be considered at a conference the next day, that Akbar Khan and the Ghilzyes should unite with the British troops outside the cantonment and make a sudden attack on Mahomed Shah's fort and seize the person of Ameenoola, the most hostile and ferocious of the insurgent chiefs, whose head was to be presented to the Envoy for a sum of money, but the offer was indignantly rejected by him. It was further proposed that the British force should remain till the spring, and then retire of its own accord: that the Shah should retain the title of king, and that Akbar Khan should be vizier, receiving from the British Government an annuity of four lacs of rupees a-year, and an immediate payment of thirty lacs. In an evil hour for his reputation and his safety, the Envoy accepted this treacherous proposal in a Persian paper drawn up with his own hand. When this wild overture was communicated to General Elphinstone and Captain Mackenzie the next morning, they both pronounced it to be a plot, and endeavoured to dissuade Sir William from going out to meet Akbar Khan. He replied in a hurried manner, "Let me alone for that, dan-

gerous though it be ; if it succeeds it is worth all risks ; the rebels have not fulfilled one article of the treaty, and I have no confidence in them, and if by it we can only save our honour, all will be well. At any rate, I would rather suffer a hundred deaths than live the last six weeks over again." At noon he directed the General to have two regiments and some guns ready for the attack of the fort, and then proceeded with Captains Trevor, Mackenzie, and Lawrence, with the slender protection of only sixteen of his body guard to the fatal meeting. At the distance of six hundred yards from the cantonment Akbar Khan had caused some horse cloths to be spread on the slope of a hill, where the snow lay less deep. The suspicions of the officers as they dismounted were roused by the appearance of Ameenoola's brother at the conference, and the large number of armed followers who were present. Akbar Khan addressed a haughty salutation to Sir William, and immediately after, on a given signal, the officers were suddenly seized from behind, and placed separately on the saddle of an Afghan horseman, who galloped off to the city. Captain Trevor fell off the horse, and was hacked to pieces. Akbar Khan himself endeavoured to seize Sir William, who struggled vigorously, exclaiming in Persian, "For God's sake." Exasperated by this resistance, the fierce youth drew forth the pistol which Sir William had presented to him the day before, and shot him dead, when the *ghazees* rushed up, and mutilated his body with their knives. If his own repeated declaration be worthy of any credit, Akbar Khan had no intention of taking away the life of the Envoy, but was simply anxious to obtain possession of his person as a hostage for the Dost. Thus perished Sir William Macnaghten, the victim of W. Macnaghten, an unsound and unjust policy, but as noble and brave a gentleman as ever fell in the service of his country. If he was in a false position in Afghanistan, it was because he had so completely identified himself with the policy which carried us across the Indus, as to be unable to perceive the magnitude of its errors and the certainty of its

Character of Sir
W. Macnaghten,
1841.

failure. If he misled others regarding that policy, it was only after his own mind had been deceived. He attempted the task of establishing the permanent authority of foreigners and infidels in a wild and inaccessible country, inhabited by sturdy, lawless, and fanatical Mahomedans, and he failed. Whether there was any other officer in the service who would have proved more successful may well be doubted; but it certainly could not have been accomplished without entailing ruin on the finances of India. Throughout seven weeks of unparalleled difficulties, Sir William exhibited a spirit of courage and constancy of which there are few examples in the history of the Company. He was the only civilian at Cabul, and he was one of the truest-hearted soldiers in the garrison. If he was at length drawn into a fatal negotiation with Akbar, not altogether in accordance with the high standard of English morals, let it not in all candour be forgotten that no public officer since the establishment of British power in the east, has ever been called to pass through so fiery an ordeal; that the unexampled strain of the three preceding days had evidently disturbed the balance of his mind, and that he risked his own honour and life to save the lives of fifteen thousand of his fellow creatures.

*Energetic advice
of Major Pottin-
ger, 1841.*

No effort was made from the cantonment to avenge the murder of the Envoy, or to recover his mangled remains, which were paraded in triumph through the city of Cabul. Major Pottinger had been unnoticed since his arrival in a wounded state from Charekar, but all eyes were now turned on him to fill the political post of the late Envoy, and he summoned a council, at which were present General Elphinstone, Brigadier Shelton, and two senior officers, to discuss the terms on which the Afghan chiefs now offered to grant the army a safe conduct to Peshawur. They differed from those to which the late Envoy had given his consent only in the demand of larger gratuities to themselves. Major Pottinger recoiled from these humiliating conditions; he asserted that the former treaty had been cancelled by the foul murder of Sir

William, and he urged the officers to reject the terms with scorn and defiance. His energy might yet have saved the garrison, but the council of war refused to fight, and resolved to accept the proposed treaty, at whatever sacrifice of honour or money. Orders were therefore signed by Major Pottinger and General Elphinstone to the commanders at Jellalabad, Ghuzni and Candahar to surrender the forts to the Afghans who might be deputed to demand them, and retire from the country. The confederate chiefs, as might have been expected, immediately rose in their demands, and required that all the coin and the spare muskets and guns, save six, should be surrendered, and that General Sale, his wife and his daughter, and all the other officers of rank who were married and had families, should be left in the country as hostages for Dost Mahomed. On the 26th, letters arrived from Jellalabad and Peshawur stating that reinforcements were on the way from Hindostan, and imploring the garrison to hold out. There were, moreover, intestine feuds among the Afghan chiefs; Shah Soojah appeared to be regaining some portion of his influence, and Major Pottinger seized the occasion of this gleam of sunshine to dissuade the General and the Brigadier from treating with enemies who would be sure to betray them, and he implored them to make one bold and prompt effort either to occupy the Bala Hissar, or to cut their way to Jellalabad. The General was almost persuaded to adopt this advice, but Brigadier Shelton, the evil genius of the cantonment, vehemently contended that both courses were equally impracticable, and that it was more advisable to pay any sum of money than to risk the safety of the force in such attempts. The Major, mortified and humiliated, was constrained to proceed with the treaty; but he informed the chiefs that no pecuniary transactions could be completed without the presence of Captain Lawrence, the secretary of the late Envoy. He was accordingly released, and returned to the cantonment, where he drew bills to the extent of fourteen lacs of rupees on the Government of India, but made them payable after the safe arrival of the force at

Peshawur, which the Afghan chiefs professed to guarantee, but had determined to prevent. By this stroke of policy, he inflicted on them a just penalty for their treachery, and relieved his own Government from the necessity of honouring the bills. Guns, waggons, small arms, and ammunition were then given up amidst the indignant exclamations of the garrison, and four officers were surrendered as hostages. On the 4th January, the ratified treaty with the seals of eighteen of the Afghan chiefs was sent in. It was dictated in a spirit of arrogance, and received with a spirit of humility which no British officers had exhibited since the day of Plassy, and it was violated without any scruple. With the treaty came also intimations from the city of the preparations which were in progress to assail the force as soon as it quitted the cantonments, and of the oath which Akbar Khan had taken to annihilate every soldier but one, who was to be permitted to reach Jellalabad to tell the tale.

Retreat of the
Army, 1842.

On the 6th January the army, still 4,500 strong, with 11,000 camp followers, after having for sixty-five days endured such indignities as no British soldiers had ever before suffered in India, began its ominous march from the cantonments, leaving all its trophies in the hands of an insolent foe. The snow lay ankle deep on the ground, and the salvation of the force depended on the rapidity of its movements. If it had crossed the Cabul river before noon, and pushed on with promptitude to the Khoord Cabul pass, it might have escaped destruction; but owing to the indecision and mismanagement of the General, the rear guard did not leave the gate before the shades of night came on. The Afghan fanatics then rushed in, and set the cantonments on fire, and lighted up this first night of horrors with the blaze. In the morning, the spirit of discipline began to wane, and the force was no longer a retreating army, but a panic stricken and disorganized rabble. The infuriated Ghilzyes pressed on the rear, seizing the baggage and cutting down all who opposed them. Safety was to be found only in speed, but, through the unac-

countable folly of the military authorities, the troops were halted on the second night at Bootkhak. The crowd of men, women, and children, horses and camels, lying in the snow in wild confusion, without food, or fuel, or shelter, presented a scene of unexampled misery. Akbar Khan now made his appearance and demanded fresh hostages for the safe conduct of the force to Tezeen, and Captain Lawrence, Captain Colin Mackenzie, and Major Pottinger were delivered up to him. Between Bootkhak and Tezeen lay the terrific gorge of the Khoord Cabul, five miles in length, so narrow that the rays of the sun seldom penetrated its recesses. At the bottom of it ran an impetuous torrent, which the road crossed and recrossed twenty-eight times, and it was through this fearful defile that the disordered mass of human beings pressed on with one maddening desire of escaping destruction. But the Ghilzyes poured an incessant fire from their unerring rifles upon the crowd from every height, and three thousand perished under their weapons, and through the intensity of the cold. It was in this scene of indiscriminate carnage, that English ladies, some with infants in their arms, had to run the gauntlet of Afghan bullets amidst a heavy fall of snow.

Continued disasters, 1841. In the morning Akbar again made his appearance, and offered a supply of provisions and advised the General to halt. The whole force exclaimed against this insane delay, but he was deaf to all entreaties, and the perishing troops were constrained to sit down idle for an entire day in the snow, when another march would have cleared the defile. Akbar offered likewise to take charge of the ladies and children and convey them to Peshawur. They had scarcely tasted food since leaving Cabul; they were insufficiently clad and without any shelter from the frost and snow. Major Pottinger, now Akbar's prisoner, felt that it would be impossible for them to survive such hardships, and was anxious that they should be relieved from the horrors of their situation. In accordance with his advice, Lady Macnaghten, Lady Sale, and nine other ladies, with fifteen children, and eight officers were

sent to Akbar's camp, and thus rescued from destruction. On the morning of the 10th, the remains of the army resumed the march, but before evening the greater number of the sepoys had disappeared. Panic stricken and paralyzed with cold, they were slaughtered like sheep by the remorseless Ghilzyes and a narrow defile between two hills was choked up with the dying and the dead. Four hundred and fifty Europeans, with a considerable body of officers, yet remained, but the enemy took post on every point, blocked up every ravine, and dealt death among their ranks, while Akbar himself hovered over their flank, and, when implored to put an end to the slaughter, declared that it was beyond his power to restrain the fury of these hill men. He proposed, however, that the remnant of the troops should lay down their arms, and surrender, but even General Elphinstone revolted from this indignity. The march was therefore resumed, and Brigadier Shelton with his accustomed gallantry repelled every attack. On approaching Jugdulluk, a conference was held with Akbar Khan, who still continued to hang upon the rear, and he promised to send in water and provisions to the famished men, on condition that General Elphinstone, Brigadier Shelton, and Captain Johnson should be transferred to him as hostages for the evacuation of Jellalabad. They were accordingly given up, but this concession brought no respite from the ferocity of the Ghilzyes, in whom the thirst for blood had overcome even the love of money. They resisted the most tempting offers, and openly revelled in the prospect of cutting the throats of all the Feringees who were left. Akbar Khan, having obtained possession of the ladies and the principal officers, abandoned the rest of the army to their vengeance, and retired to Cabul. At the Jugdulluk pass twelve of the bravest of the officers met their doom, and here the Cabul force may be said to have ceased to exist. Twenty officers and forty-five European soldiers contrived to reach Gundamuk, but they gradually dropped down under the weapons of their foes, with the exception of one officer, Dr. Brydon, who was descried from the ramparts of

Jellalabad on the 13th January, slowly wending his way to the fort, wounded and exhausted, on his jaded pony, the sole survivor, with the exception of a hundred and twenty in captivity, of a body of 15,000 men.

Total destruction
of the force,
1842.

The entire annihilation of this large army was the heaviest blow which had ever fallen upon the British power in India. But it did not produce any such demonstrations of hostility at the native courts, or any such fermentation in the community as might have been expected, by comparison with the effect created by the destruction of Monson's army in 1804, or by our failures in Nepaul in 1814, or our non-success in Burmah in 1824. The sensation created in the native states and among our native subjects, at each of the successive shocks which have affected our prestige in India, appears to have gradually become more and more moderate. This may be attributed not merely to the extinction of the military power of the native rulers, but to that feeling of acquiescence which time scarcely fails to produce in an established Government which is felt to be equitable and mild beyond all former example, and affords ample protection to industry, and full scope for the general pursuit of happiness, and to which there is no other objection than that it is a Government of foreigners. This conclusion was still more clearly exemplified during the great Sepoy mutiny of 1857, which, if it had occurred forty years before, would unquestionably have been followed by the temporary loss of the empire, but which produced no conspiracies at the native courts of Hyderabad, Indore, Baroda, or Gwalior, and scarcely any ebullitions of hostile feeling, except in the districts in which our authority was entirely extinguished. In the case of this Afghan disaster, moreover, the chiefs and people of India awaited a demonstration of the efforts we should make to vindicate our military character. Such adversity was not new in the history of the country. Two centuries and a-half before this period, a Mogul army of equal, if not greater

magnitude, had been engulfed in these same defiles, and only two men survived to tell the tale, but the Emperor immediately despatched a more powerful force under his ablest generals to the scene of humiliation, and his reputation was at once restored, and his authority re-established. Nor did the native princes forget that in the British period of history, the sack of Calcutta in 1756 was avenged by the conquest of Bengal, Behar, and Orissa, and that Colonel Monson's disastrous retreat in 1804 was immediately followed by the pursuit of Holkar, the victory of Deeg, and the extinction of his battalions. The promptitude with which we had repaired our misfortunes on those occasions had served to brighten our reputation, and there could be no doubt that similar efforts would produce similar results in 1842.

Despondency and
weakness of
Lord Auckland,
1842.

Unhappily, at this period there was no Wellesley at the head of the state, and Lord Auckland was not equal to the crisis. He was completely bewildered and prostrated by the magnitude of the calamity, and, instead of determining boldly to retrieve our honour by putting forth the strength of the empire, he allowed its fortunes to drift down the stream with the current of circumstances. He knew that his proceedings in Afghanistan were unanimously reprobated by the India House, and by the Tory Ministry which had recently returned to Downing Street. He was on the eve of relinquishing the government, and the prospect of handing it over to his successor, who had emphatically denounced his Afghan policy, just at the period when it had miserably collapsed, augmented his confusion. On hearing of the siege and peril of the cantonment, he wrote to the Commander-in-chief, Sir Jasper Nicholls, that it was not clear to him how the march of a brigade, for which the officers on the frontier were importunate, could produce any influence on the events which were passing at Cabul, and that "if all should be lost there, he would not encounter new hazards for the purpose of re-conquest." This imbecile policy was fully upheld by the Commander-in-chief, who had always expressed

a strong disapprobation of the war. The news of the extinction of the force was received in Calcutta on the 30th January; it roused Lord Auckland from the state of morbid despondency into which he had sunk, and he issued a declaration, stating that "The Governor-General in Council regarded the partial reverse which had overtaken a body of British troops in a country removed by distance and difficulties of season from the possibility of succour, as a new occasion for displaying the stability and vigour of the British power, and the admirable spirit and valour of the British Indian Army." But after this spasmodic flush of energy, he relapsed into an unhealthy feeling of dejection, and wrote to the Commander-in-chief, that, as the main inducement for maintaining the post of Jellalabad, as a point of support for any troops escaping from Cabul, had now passed away, his only object was to withdraw General Sale to Peshawur. Instead of considering how to restore our military superiority, the sole basis on which our position in India rests, he was prepared to leave it without vindication, and considered only by what means he might most speedily wash his hands of Afghanistan.

But there were two officers in the north-west as fully alive to the exigencies of the crisis, as the Governor-General and the Commander-in-chief were dead to them; Mr. Robertson, formerly the Commissioner in Burmah, and now the Lieutenant-Governor of Agra, and Mr.—subsequently Sir George—Clerk, who exerted themselves with extraordinary energy to push on reinforcements and supplies. On Mr. Clerk devolved the duty of forwarding through the Punjab the regiments which had been appointed to relieve those returning from Afghanistan, and his able assistant, Captain—afterwards Sir Henry—Lawrence, now urged them on with redoubled vigour. Their exertions, however, were neutralized by the unhappy choice of a commander, which did not rest with them, and the brigade, instead of being placed under the orders of the most energetic officer which the service could furnish, was sent for-

Mr. Robertson
and Mr. George
Clerk, 1842.

Colonel Wild's
Brigade, 1842. ward under Colonel Wild, into whom the Com-mander-in-chief said he would endeavour to infuse some degree of energy. By a fatality to which we had become accustomed in everything connected with Afghanistan, the brigade was despatched without cavalry or cannon, in the vague hope that the Sikhs might be induced to accommodate it with some ordnance. The Colonel crept through the Punjab at a snail-like pace, and was thirty-five days in reaching Peshawur, whereas five years before, when Runjeet Sing had met with reverses in Afghanistan, one of his European officers marched over the same ground, short of fifty miles, in twelve days. Colonel Wild had doubtless many difficulties to encounter, but the most serious impediment to his progress was the lack of that vigour with which other soldiers would have conquered them. His sepoy, on their arrival at Peshawur, were eager to advance, but he lingered at that station till they had become thoroughly demoralized by the example of their Sikh auxiliaries. Shere Sing, the successor of Runjeet Sing, had sent positive injunctions to General Avitabile who commanded at Peshawur, and to his native generals to co-operate with the British brigade, and to "earn a name by their zealous services which should be known in London;" but the Sikh soldiers, as already stated, had an instinctive dread of the Afghan passes, and although Major Mackeson had advanced a lac and a-half of rupees for their services, they intercepted one of the guns which had been sent over to Colonel Wild, and threatened to put General Avitabile to death and return to Lahore. They were induced, however, to advance to Jumrood at the entrance of the pass, but they had no sooner looked in, than they turned round to a man, and marched back to Peshawur, when General Avitabile shut the gates upon them, and retired to the citadel. Colonel Wild then ventured into the pass alone, but the rickety guns the Sikhs had lent him, broke down on the first discharge, and his sepoy lost heart, and allowed themselves to be ignominiously chased back, leaving their cannon in the possession of the Afreedis.

General Pollock's
Brigade, 1842.

Meanwhile, Mr. Clerk was urging the Commander-in-chief, then in the north-west provinces, and the Governor-General to despatch a second brigade to the relief of the army, which was still supposed to be holding its ground at Cabul. Lord Auckland was reluctant to allow it to proceed, but the indomitable zeal of Mr. Clerk bore down every obstacle, and a force of 3,000 men, including a European regiment crossed the Sutlege on the 4th January. The selection of the officer to command it was the solitary instance of wisdom exhibited by the military authorities in this emergency. It fell on General Pollock, an old artillery officer, who had campaigned with Lord Lake, assisted in the first siege of Bhurtpore, commanded the horse artillery in pursuit of Holkar, taken an active share in the Nepal war, and commanded the Bengal artillery in Burmah in 1824. Forty years of service had enlarged his experience, and matured his judgment without impairing his energy. His sagacity, caution, and collectedness, combined with great decision of character, qualified him in a pre-eminent degree for the arduous task which had now to be performed. On the 22nd January, after the entire destruction of the Cabul force had been announced, Mr. Clerk met Sir Jasper Nicholls at Thanesur to discuss the measures which it was advisable to adopt at this crisis. The Commander-in-chief considered that this catastrophe furnished no reason for pushing forward further reinforcements, and that as the retention of Jellalabad was no longer necessary for the safety of the Cabul force, the withdrawal of Sir Robert Sale's brigade was the only object which ought now to engage the attention of Government. Mr. Clerk, in a spirit more worthy of a Briton, maintained that the national reputation and the safety of British interests in the east required that the garrison of Jellalabad should be strengthened with fresh troops, to enable it to march to Cabul simultaneously with the Candahar force from the westward, and inflict a signal retribution upon the Afghans on the theatre of their recent successes, and then withdraw from Afghanistan with dignity and

undiminished renown. He could not brook the idea of leaving them to revel in the annihilation of a British army, and the humiliation of British honour. The energy of this appeal was successful, and a third brigade was directed to be held in readiness to advance into Afghanistan. But, in the latest communication addressed by Lord Auckland to the Secret Committee, he stated that his directions in regard to the immediate withdrawal of the brigade from Jellalabad into our own provinces, were clear and positive, and in his last letter to General Pollock informed him that the paramount object of his proceedings at Peshawur should be to "secure the safe return of our people and troops, now detained beyond the Indus."

Close of Lord Auckland's Administration, 1842. The arrival of Lord Ellenborough at Calcutta on the 28th February, brought Lord Auckland's melancholy administration to a close. It comprised

a single series of events—the conquest, the occupation, and the loss of Afghanistan. He likewise wrote a benevolent minute on education; he sanctioned the substitution of solemn declarations for judicial oaths, a measure of doubtful expediency; and he endeavoured to promote the interests of science, for which he had a natural turn, but for administrative or material progress he had no leisure, and they remained for six years in a state of comparative abeyance. His administration commenced with a surplus revenue of a crore and a-half of rupees, and it closed with a deficit of two millions, and a large addition to the debt. It was, however, rendered memorable in the history of India, by the termination of the connection Government had maintained for many years

Idol Temples, 1842. with the establishments of idolatry, which was a scandal to the pious Christian, and offensive to the religious Hindoo. The views of the Court of Directors on the subject of religious observances after their functions had been limited to the imperial duty of governing India in 1833, were communicated to the local authorities in an able despatch drawn up by Mr. Charles Grant, the President of the Board of

Control. The natives of India were assured that the Government would never fail to protect them in the exercise of their privileges, and to manifest a liberal regard to their feelings, in all cases in which their religious rites and offices were not flagrantly opposed to the rules of common humanity and decency. But the interference of British functionaries in the interior management of native temples, in the customs, habits, and religious proceedings of their priests, and in the arrangement of their ceremonies and festivals, was to cease. The pilgrim tax was everywhere to be abolished. Fines and offerings were no longer to be considered sources of public revenue, and no servant of the Company was to be engaged in the collection, management, or custody of them. In all matters relative to their temples, their worship, their festivals, their religious practices and their ceremonial observances, the natives were to be left entirely to themselves. These orders were tardily obeyed in Bengal, and it was not till seven years after they had been issued, that the management of the temple of Juggunnath was restored to the raja of Khoorda, its hereditary custodian, and that the pilgrim tax at the various shrines was relinquished, though not without an unbecoming reluctance at the loss of the three lacs of rupees a-year it yielded to the treasury. At Madras, which, from the obtuse feelings of its public functionaries in long and unbroken succession had come to be designated the "benighted Presidency," a morbid homage had been paid for half a century to native superstitions, and it required an oburgatory missive from the Court of Directors, of which Mr. Butterworth Bayley was then Chairman, to suppress the attendance of troops and military bands at idolatrous festivals, the firing of salutes on the birthdays of the gods, and the decoration of images, and the presentation of offerings, on the part of the East India Company.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

LORD ELLENBOROUGH'S ADMINISTRATION—CLOSE OF THE
AFGHAN WAR, 1842.

Lord Ellen-
borough Gover-
nor-General,
1842.

LORD ELLENBOROUGH who now assumed the reins of Government was a statesman of high repute, and an eloquent speaker; and his style was as clear and vigorous, as that of his predecessor was, for a Governor-General, exceptionally confused and feeble. He had for some years taken a special interest in the affairs of India, and a prominent part in Indian debates, more especially during the discussions of the last Charter. Like Lord Wellesley and Lord Minto he had served his apprenticeship to the government of India at the Board of Control, where he had acquired an ample knowledge of the condition of the country, and the principles and policy of the Company's administration. He was reported to be a good man of business and a moderate Tory, and his appointment was welcomed with delight in a country where the animosities of political party are scarcely heard of, and the public care about nothing but progress. He was known to possess great energy and decision of character, and the community augured a happy change from the weak and vacillating policy of his predecessor. His address at the entertainment given him by the Court of Directors at the London tavern created great expectations of the beneficence of his administration. He abjured all thoughts of warlike or aggressive policy, and announced his determination to cultivate the arts of peace, to emulate the magnificent benevolence of Mahomedan conquerors, and to elevate and improve the condition of the people.

General Pollock's
advance, 1842. General Pollock arrived at Peshawur on the
5th February, and found the four regiments

of infantry which had preceded him in a state of total insubordination. This was the first mutiny which had occurred in the native army since 1824, and it arose from the seductions and the example of the Sikh troops, and the dread of service in Afghanistan. Many of the sepoy had deserted their colours, and nightly meetings had been held in the camp at which the mutineers encouraged each other in the determination not to enter the Khyber. Efforts were likewise made to debauch the newly arrived regiments, and brahmins were sent round to bind them to the same resolution by an oath on the water of the Ganges; but the General ordered every emissary found in the lines to be seized and expelled, and acted with such promptitude and energy as to put a speedy end to these machinations. Nor did the officers manifest much less reluctance to encounter the difficulties of the march, and it was openly declared at the mess table that it would be better to sacrifice the whole of Sir Robert Sale's brigade than to risk the safety of a fresh army. One officer went so far as to affirm that he should consider it his duty strenuously to dissuade the sepoy from moving into the pass. The difficulties of General Pollock's course were indefinitely aggravated by these demonstrations. Sir Robert Sale was importuning him to advance without delay to his relief, but the General felt that, with a force so entirely demoralized, one half in hospital and the other half in a state of mutiny, he could not move without the risk of a second failure, which would have been fatal to the hopes of the Jellalabad garrison. Being obliged to wait for further reinforcements, he devoted the months of February and March to the task of improving the discipline, recovering the health, and reviving the confidence of his troops, which was strengthened in no ordinary degree by the arrival of a regiment of dragoons and some troops of European horse artillery. Raja Golab Sing had been sent with some of his own Jummoo battalions to assume the command of the Sikh army, and to curb the insolence of the Sikh troops, and Shere Sing, the successor of Runjeet

Sing had given him positive and unequivocal orders to afford every possible assistance to General Pollock. But Golab Sing had been withdrawn most reluctantly from the pursuit of his own ambitious schemes in the regions lying beyond Cashmere, and his feelings were so lukewarm and his efforts so perfunctory as to lay him open to the suspicion of treachery. An effort was therefore made by the British Agent to counteract it by the offer of Jellalabad as an independent principality. At length the masterly arrangements and resolute bearing of General Pollock completely overcame the dread with which the Sikhs regarded the Khyber, and secured the active co-operation of the raja. Major Mackeson, the political agent, had offered the Khyberrees the sum of 50,000 rupees for a passage through their defiles, but they immediately rose in their demands, which were flatly rejected. They then proceeded to block up the entrance of the pass with huge stones and branches of trees cemented together with clay, and covered the mountains on either side with assailants whose matchlocks carried death to the distance of eight hundred yards. But the admirable plan which General Pollock devised for mastering the pass by sending two columns to crown the heights on the right and the left, and clear them of the Afghans, baffled all their efforts to guard this formidable barrier.

Entrance of the Khyber, 1842. At three in the morning of the 5th April, the troops moved out of the camp, without beat of drum or sound of bugle, and clambered up the rugged and precipitous crags with great enthusiasm, and the dawn of day revealed their presence to the thunderstruck Afreedis on the summit of their own mountains. A sharp conflict ensued, but the British troops had the advantage of confidence as well as valour, and the Afghans were soon perceived to fly precipitately in every direction over their hills. Both the columns then descended into the valley, and the defenders of the pass, finding themselves attacked both in rear and in front, deserted their position in haste and confusion, and the pass was opened to the long string of baggage, which, including the munitions of war

and provisions for Sir Robert Sale's brigade, extended two miles in length. By the evening, the army and the convoy reached the fort of Ali Musjid, five miles within the pass. No further opposition was offered to the advance of General Pollock, who reached Jellalabad on the 15th April and found that the illustrious garrison had already achieved its own relief.

Sir Robert Sale at Jellalabad was the capital of Western Afghanistan, selected for the mildness of its climate as the winter residence of the rulers of Cabul, and not inferior in importance to Candahar and Ghuzni. Sir Robert Sale entered it on the 13th November with provisions for only two days. He found that the fortifications were in a state of complete dilapidation, and that rubbish had been allowed to accumulate to such an extent around the ramparts that there were paths over them in many places into the country. Immediately beyond the walls, were ruined forts, walls, mosques, and gardens, which afforded cover for assailants at the distance of only twenty or thirty yards, and the inhabitants both in the town and the country were as hostile as the Ghilzyes. The day after the occupation of the town, the armed population of the neighbourhood, to the number of 5,000, advanced towards the walls with yells and imprecations on the infidels, when Sir Robert determined to give them a sharp and decisive lesson. Colonel Monteith issued from the gate at the head of about 1,100 men, of all arms; the artillery cannonaded the enemy; the infantry broke their ranks; the cavalry completed their discomfiture, and, in a short time not an Afghan was to be seen, with the exception of those who lay dead on the field. Captain Broadfoot, who had accompanied the brigade with his sappers and miners, was an officer of indomitable energy, and extraordinary resources, with a remarkable genius for war and policy. He was immediately appointed garrison engineer, and commenced the task of clearing and strengthening the fortifications without delay. The whole of the 13th Foot was turned into a working party; a spirit of zeal and emula-

tion was kindled throughout the garrison, and an indefensible mass of ruins was in a short time converted into a fortress proof against every thing but siege artillery. On the 9th January a horseman rode up to the walls with the order which Major Pottinger and General Elphinstone had written at the dictation of the chiefs for the evacuation of Jellalabad. The officers were unanimous in replying that as Akbar Khan had sent a proclamation to the chiefs in the valley to raise their followers and destroy the force, while the Cabul convention provided for their safe escort through the country, they considered it their duty to await further communication from the political and military chief in Afghanistan.

Councils of War,
1842. At the close of January a letter was received from Shah Soojah as the ostensible head of the Government in Cabul, demanding the evacuation of Jellalabad, in accordance with the terms of the treaty. It was written in red official ink, but he stated in a private communication that it had been signed under compulsion. A council of war was held, when Sir Robert Sale and Captain Macgregor, the political agent, who had doubtless been informed of the anxiety of Lord Auckland to escape from the country at the earliest moment, advised that the requisition to abandon Jellalabad should be complied with under certain specified conditions. This proposal was vigorously opposed by Captain Broadfoot, who characterized it as detestable; but his opinion was weakened by his impetuosity. The debate was so stormy that the council wisely determined to adjourn to the following day, when Captain Broadfoot produced a paper in support of his views, drawn up by his friend, Captain Havelock, in his usual calm, clear and decisive language. During the discussion which ensued, the political agent endeavoured to support his opinion by the remark, that the Government of India had abandoned the garrison, that no attempt would be made to relieve them after the failure of Colonel Wild, and that it was impossible for them to hold their position much longer. To this Captain Broadfoot replied, that if their own Government

had thus deserted them, the covenant between the two parties was cancelled, but they had a duty to perform to their country, that of upholding its honour at the present crisis, from which nothing could absolve them. The majority of the council, however, determined to adopt the advice of the political agent, but resisted the indignity of giving hostages, which had formed part of the proposal. A reply to this effect was accordingly sent to Cabul, with the understanding that if the communication from the Shah and the chiefs was a simple acceptance of the terms, the garrison would be bound to evacuate the town and the country, but if it were clogged with any conditions, or appeared evasive, they should be at liberty to adopt whatever course circumstances might dictate. The answer from Cabul required the officers to testify their sincerity by affixing their seals to the document. Another council was held, and Sir Robert Sale and the political agent called upon the officers to comply with this request. Captain Broadfoot urged that the suspicion of their sincerity liberated them from any obligation to confirm the treaty, and he proposed that the whole question of capitulation should be reopened. Some of the officers, under the influence of Broadfoot and Havelock, had repented of their former pusillanimity. A recent foray had been successful in supplying them with nearly nine hundred head of cattle; the officers were in fine feather, and the majority voted against any renewal of the negotiations. The next day letters were received from General Pollock conveying the pleasing intelligence that reinforcements were advancing from India, and all idea of abandoning their post was at once and finally dismissed.

The great
earthquake,
1842.

On the 18th February, a succession of earthquakes destroyed in a few minutes the labour of three months. The parapets were thrown down, the bastions seriously injured, and one of the gates reduced to a mass of ruins. The effects of this visitation were too severely felt in the country around to allow the enemy to take advantage of the defenceless state to which Jellalabad was

reduced, and the damage was repaired with such promptitude that the Afghans declared it was impossible the earthquake could have been felt there. Akbar Khan now made his appearance on the scene. If he had been able to advance at once from Cabul with the guns he had obtained in the cantonments, while his troops were flushed with success, the peril of the garrison would have been extreme; but he was happily detained at the capital by differences with the chiefs, and on his arrival found that the defences had been restored, the fosse completed, and a store of provisions laid in. He found also that he had no longer to deal with men like General Elphinstone and Brigadier Shelton, or with a force sunk in despondency, but with commanders and men full of animation and confidence, and he prudently abstained from too near an approach to the ramparts. On the 11th March, however, he was emboldened to draw out his army, and advance to the attack of the town, but the whole garrison sallied forth and assaulted him with such impetuosity as to drive him ignominiously from the field. He resolved, therefore, to turn the siege into a blockade, with the hope of starving the force into submission. This strategy, which had been successful at Cabul, rendered the situation of the garrison extremely critical; the cattle were perishing for want of fodder, the men were on reduced rations of salt meat; the officers were on short commons, and the ammunition had begun to run low. On the 1st April, the troops sallied forth and swept into the town five hundred sheep and goats they had seen from the bastions for several days grazing in the plain, and thus supplied themselves with food for ten days. Akbar Khan had been gradually drawing his camp nearer to the town, in order to cut off foraging parties, and at length pitched it with 6,000 troops, within two miles of the ramparts. Captain Havelock had repeatedly and strenuously urged on General Sale the necessity of a bold attack on his encampment, as affording the only hope of relieving the garrison from its perils, but he had resolutely resisted the proposal.

Defeat of Akbar
Khan, 7th April,
1842.

On the evening of the 6th, the General yielded to the importunity of the officers who entertained the same opinion as Captain Havelock of the necessity of an energetic assault on the enemy's encampment. The plan of the engagement was laid down by the captain, and provided that the force should move out in three columns, and, without noticing the little forts which studded the intermediate space, make a sudden and vigorous attack on Akbar Khan, and drive his army into the river, which was then a rapid and unfordable torrent. The troops issued from the gate at dawn on the 7th April, but at the distance of three quarters of a mile from it, a flanking fire was opened from one of the forts on the centre column, commanded by Sir Robert Sale in person, and he ordered Colonel Dennie to storm it. The Colonel rushed forward with his usual gallantry, but was mortally wounded in endeavouring to penetrate the fort. This false movement not only entailed the sacrifice of a valuable officer, but had well nigh marred the enterprise. The advance column of 360 men led by Captain Havelock, moved on towards the enemy's encampment, and was thus exposed, without support, to the impetuous assault of Akbar's splendid cavalry, 1,500 in number; but they repelled two charges, and drove the assailants back to their camp. Repeated and earnest messages were sent for the advance of the two other columns which had been detained around the fort, and their timely arrival completed the victory. The enemy were dislodged from every point, and pursued to the river with the loss of their guns, equipage and ammunition, and their camp was given up to the flames. Akbar Khan disappeared, and the neighbouring chiefs hastened to make their submission; the villagers poured in provisions, and General Pollock, on his arrival, a week after, found the garrison in exuberant spirits and robust health. One such day at Cabul would have saved the army.

State of affairs
at Candahar,
1841—1842.

Immediately after the outbreak at Cabul, the chiefs despatched Atta Mahomed to raise Western

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Afghanistan, and General Nott deemed it prudent to withdraw his detachments from the outlying districts, and concentrate his force in Candahar. Major Rawlinson endeavoured to get up a movement among the Dooranees in favour of Shah Soojah, the head of their own tribe, and bound the chiefs by solemn oaths to remain faithful in their allegiance, but their fidelity was shaken by the report industriously spread that he himself was hostile to the continuance of British authority in Afghanistan. The Shah's cavalry, the Janbaz, who had in every instance proved insubordinate, went into open revolt, murdered their officers, and joined the camp of Atta Mahomed. Soon after, the Shah's own son, Sufder Jung, decamped from Candahar, and placed himself at the head of the insurgents, who, after having been engaged for some weeks in making preparations, at length moved down to attack the city and encamped within five miles of it. On the 12th January, General Nott marched out with five regiments of infantry and one of cavalry, and in an engagement which did not last more than twenty minutes, inflicted a signal defeat on them. The flame of rebellion however continued to spread through the country, and all the Dooranee chiefs threw off the mask, and openly joined the insurgents. Mirza Ahmed, the ablest man in Western Afghanistan, who had hitherto enjoyed the entire confidence of Major Rawlinson, and had been entrusted by him with large sums, went over to the enemy and assumed the direction of their movements; but the hostile camp was a prey to intestine dissensions. The Dooranee chiefs had always been at feud with each other, and it required all the extraordinary tact of the Mirza to keep these discordant elements from explosion. The British troops, on the contrary, were cheerful in the confidence of their strength, and sustained their health and spirits by games and amusements, while at the same time the General employed himself in improving the fortifications, and laying in provisions for five months. The insurgent chiefs and Sufder Jung at length sent to demand the evacuation of Candahar in conformity with the order which

Major Pottinger and General Elphinstone had signed two months before, under compulsion. General Nott and Major Rawlinson rejected the demand with scorn, and refused to enter into any negotiations for the evacuation of the country till they had received instructions from their own Government, written after the murder of the Envoy was known. It was deemed advisable to make a vigorous effort to break up the Afghan camp which continued to hover round the city. To prevent any insurrectionary movement within, a thousand Afghan families were expelled, after which General Nott marched out on the 10th March to encounter the enemy. Under the subtle advice of Mirza Ahmed, the Afghan leaders contrived to draw him to a distance from the city while they doubled back in the hope of capturing it during his absence. That chief and Sudder Jung arrived at sunset at the Herat gate, where their emissaries had been employed for some hours in heaping up brushwood saturated with oil. It blazed up as soon as the torch was applied to it, and the *ghazees*, enflamed with fanaticism and drugs, rushed forward with hideous yells, and seemed to court death with the courage of martyrs. The wild confusion of the scene was increased by the pitch darkness of the night, and the post was defended for five hours with great skill and energy by Major Lane and Major Rawlinson. Two guns were brought to bear on the enemy, and a number of grain bags were piled up behind the gate, which fell outwards about nine in the evening, when the *ghazees* rushed forward and with frantic fury, climbed up the mound of bags, but so vigorous was the defence that all their efforts were rendered vain. Towards midnight their violence seemed to be exhausted and they retired with their wounded, venting curses on Mirza Ahmed and were with difficulty restrained from laying violent hands on him, for having inveigled them into an enterprise which had cost the lives of six hundred true believers.

Fall of Ghuzni,
1842.

Soon after, intelligence was received that
Colonel Palmer, after holding Ghuzni for four

months with a regiment of native infantry, had surrendered it to the Afghans. There was a general impression that this capitulation was even more disgraceful than that of Cabul, and that under an officer of greater ability and decision, the post might have been maintained with ease till it was relieved, and this opinion was fully confirmed when General Nott subsequently had an opportunity of examining the defences. Great gloom was also diffused through the garrison of Candahar by the repulse and retreat of General England. He had reached Quettah with a convoy of provisions, ammunition and money, and some additional troops for General Nott, and was strongly advised to await the reinforcements which were then on their way from below to join him. But he persisted in advancing into the Pisheen valley, and on the 28th March reached the village of Hykulzye, where he had been warned to expect some opposition. A body of 500 of his sepoy's approached a slight elevation with a breastwork consisting of a mound of earth thrown up from a ditch four feet deep, when the enemy suddenly sprung up from behind it, and poured a destructive fire on them, which brought down a hundred killed and wounded. Their comrades recoiled from this unexpected discharge, but rallied immediately after, and were eager to be led on to the attack. Colonel Stacy thrice volunteered to carry the sunga, or breastwork, with a hundred, or even with eighty men, but the Brigadier would listen to no entreaty, and hastened back to Quettah, where he actually began to throw up entrenchments, as if he expected to be attacked. It was subsequently ascertained that the entire number of the enemy at Hykulzye, who had occasioned this disgraceful retreat did not greatly exceed a thousand. From Quettah, he wrote to General Nott: "Whenever it so happens that you retire bodily in this direction, and that I am informed of it, I feel assured that I shall be able to make an advantageous diversion in your favour." General Nott's temper was never remarkable for its suavity at the best of times; but it entirely broke down under the provocation of this unmanly exhibition, and he

ordered the Brigadier to advance without the least delay to Candahar, where the supplies under his charge were imperatively needed. On reaching the scene of his former repulse, the troops rushed forward impetuously to retrieve their honour, and carried the breastworks with perfect ease. The Brigadier soon after reached the defile which leads to the Kojuck pass, and calling for a chair, coolly seated himself in it, and resisted the entreaties of his officers who were impatient to secure the honour of mastering it; nor would he allow his brigade to move till he heard that it was in possession of Colonel Wymer, whom General Nott had sent from Candahar to meet him.

Lord Ellenborough, on his arrival at Calcutta, found himself involved in a labyrinth of difficulties, but he entered on the arduous task bequeathed by his predecessor with becoming dignity and confidence. On the 15th March, a notification signed by himself and all the members of Council announced the course which it was intended to pursue. "The British Government was no longer compelled to peril its armies, and with its armies, the Indian empire, in support of the tripartite treaty. Whatever course we may hereafter take must rest solely on military considerations and regard to the safety of the detached bodies of our troops, to the security of those now in the field from all unnecessary risk, and finally to the establishment of our military reputation by the infliction of some signal and decisive blow upon the Afghans, which may make it appear to them, and to our own subjects, and to our allies, that we have the power of inflicting punishment upon those who commit atrocities, and violate their faith, and that we withdraw ultimately from Afghanistan, not from any deficiency of means to maintain our position, but because we are satisfied, that the king we have set up, has not, as we were erroneously led to imagine, the support of the nation over which he has been placed." These noble sentiments were received with acclamation throughout India; but after a very brief residence in Calcutta, he left the Council board and proceeded to the north-

Lord Ellen-
borough's Pro-
clamation, 15th
March, 1842.

west, to be near the Commander-in-chief. During the discussions of the India Bill he had contended for placing some restrictions on the powers of Indian Governors by subjecting them to the wholesome restraint of Council, and he had dwelt with much emphasis on "the peril of leaving too much to the erratic caprice of a single man." He was now about to illustrate the truth of these remarks. As he proceeded on his journey, he received intelligence of the success of General Pollock in forcing his way through the Khyber, and of the total defeat of Akbar Khan on the 7th April, which he announced to the public in a brilliant proclamation conferring upon the garrison of Jellalabad, the title of "illustrious." But he was likewise informed of the repulse which Brigadier England had experienced at Hykulzye and of his retirement to Quettah. This trumpery check unhappily made a more powerful impression on his mind than the important successes of Sale and Pollock; and on the 19th April, he announced to the Commander-in-chief his determination to withdraw the troops of General Nott and General Pollock, at the earliest practicable period to positions where they might have certain and easy communication with India. General Nott was therefore ordered to evacuate Candahar and to retire to the Indus, after blowing up the gateways and demolishing the fortifications. The Commander-in-chief was instructed to direct the withdrawal of General Pollock's army to Peshawur, but it was left to him "to consider whether the troops, redeemed from the state of peril in which they had been placed in Afghanistan, and it may still be hoped not without the infliction of some severe blow on the Afghan army, it would be justifiable again to put them forward for no other object than that of avenging our losses, and re-establishing our military character in all its original brilliancy." The Commander-in-chief, who had always been opposed to the Afghan expedition, lost no time in ordering General Pollock to withdraw every British soldier to Peshawur, unless he should have brought the negotiation for the release of the prisoners to

Determination to
withdraw, 19th
April, 1842.

such a point that its happy accomplishment might be risked by withdrawal, or, had equipped a light force to rescue them, or, was in expectation of an attack from Cabul. In other words, if no negotiation was pending for the recovery of the brave officers and tender women and children held in captivity, or, if no effort had been made towards the accomplishment of this object, they were to be abandoned to their fate. Lord Ellenborough would evidently have been more safe by the side of his Council than by the side of the Commander-in-chief.

Effect of the order on General Pollock, 1843. To this communication General Pollock replied on the 13th of May, that the withdrawal of the

force at the present time, construed as it must necessarily be into a defeat, would produce a most disastrous effect, and compromise our character as a powerful nation in that part of the world. The release of the prisoners, he remarked, was also an object which could not be repudiated. The want of cattle however, would effectually prevent his immediate retirement from Jellalabad, and he ventured to hint that he might possibly be detained there for several months through the same difficulty. By this dexterous suggestion, he was enabled to evade the injunction to retire at once from his position, and he trusted to another change in the versatile mind of Lord Ellenborough for more auspicious orders. In reply to this communication he was authorized to remain at Jellalabad till October. The order to evacuate Candahar and Afghanistan fell like a thunderbolt on General

And on General Nott and Major Rawlinson, 1842. Nott and Major Rawlinson. It was with no small difficulty that the admirable tact of the Major

had succeeded in maintaining anything like order and government in the province amidst the reeking elements of revolt and anarchy. He felt that any suspicion of our intention to retire would raise the whole country in arms, and render it impossible any longer to procure cattle without compulsion, and that the perils of the force would be indefinitely multiplied. The political and military chiefs determined to keep the secret of these instructions to themselves; but the

orders they had received to withdraw the garrison from Khelat-i-Ghilzye and to demolish the fortifications, could scarcely fail to open the eyes of the Afghans to the design of our Government. The ferocious Ghilzyes had determined to dislodge the British force from that fortress, and 4,000 of them had recently assailed it with unusual fury; thrice had they clambered up the ramparts, and thrice had they been hurled back by the gallantry of Captain Halkett Craigie and his men, nor did they withdraw till 500 of their number lay killed and wounded on the field. This triumph, which gave additional strength to our authority, rendered the proposal to abandon the fortress the more grievous. But General Nott replied promptly to the requisition of the Governor-General on the 19th May, though not without a heavy heart, that the evacuation of the province should be effected in the best manner circumstances would admit of. Arrangements were immediately commenced for withdrawing the army, but happily they were allowed to occupy two months, and before they were completed, he received a communication from Lord Ellenborough, dated the 4th July, which left him free to march to Cabul.

Lord Ellen-
borough's change
of plan, 1842.

Lord Ellenborough had enjoined secrecy on the generals relative to the order of evacuation; but it was not possible to conceal it from the public, and it became known throughout the country before it reached Jellalabad or Candahar. Never before had such a burst of indignation been excited in India from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin. It was universally felt that this dastardly retirement would inflict a deeper and more galling stigma on the national character than the humiliation at Cabul, which might be considered one of the chances of war. With all the contempt which Lord Ellenborough professed for public opinion, it was scarcely possible that he could be indifferent to this unanimity of reprobation. It is also known that the Court of Directors and his own colleagues in the Ministry had intimated their expectation that an attempt should be made to

vindicate the national honour and liberate the prisoners before we retired from the country. For fifteen weeks he continued to reiterate his determination to withdraw, but there were indications in his official correspondence that his mind was vacillating between the opposite attractions of national honour and personal consistency. At length he discovered an expedient for reconciling them. On the 4th July, Mr. Maddock, the secretary to Government, was instructed to convey to General Nott the official assurance that the resolution of the Governor-General to withdraw the troops at Candahar to India remained without alteration. On the same day Lord Ellenborough wrote himself to the General suggesting that it might possibly be feasible for him to withdraw from Afghanistan by advancing to Ghuzni and Cabul, over the scenes of our late disasters. "I know," he said, "all the effect it would have on the minds of our soldiers, of our allies, of our enemies in Asia, and of our own countrymen, and of all foreign nations in Europe. It is an object of just ambition which no one more than myself would rejoice to see effected; but I see that failure in the attempt is certain and irretrievable ruin, and I would inspire you with the necessary caution, and make you feel that, great as are the objects to be obtained by success, the risk is great." This mode of withdrawal, as every one, not excepting even the Governor-General, could perceive was nothing more or less than an advance on the capital with the view of planting the British standard again on the battlements of the Bala Hissar, and retrieving our national honour. It was unquestionably the duty of Lord Ellenborough, as the head of the state, to have taken the responsibility of this risk on himself, and to have furnished General Nott with distinct instructions, instead of leaving him to encounter the risk and the odium of failure. A copy of this communication was sent to General Pollock, with the suggestion that he might possibly feel disposed to advance to Cabul in order to co-operate with General Nott. Both generals were too happy to obtain permission to move up to the capital and restore our military character, and

liberate the captives, to shrink from the responsibility with which it was clogged.

Before following the march of the armies of retribution, it is necessary to allude to the fortunes of Shah Soojah, and of the hostages and captives. After the retreat of the British army on the 6th January, the Shah continued to occupy the Bala Hissar. The insurgent chiefs acknowledged him as king and paid him an empty homage, but they themselves engrossed all the substantive power of the state, and continued to coin money and to read prayers in the name of Zemaun Khan, who had been elected the supreme ruler after the 2nd November. The Shah sent repeated communications to Jellalabad, declaring his unalterable attachment to the British Government, and asking for nothing but money, though he had contrived to save twenty lacs of rupees out of the sums lavished on him since he left Loodiana. He endeavoured at the same time to convince the chiefs of his unalterable fidelity to the national cause, and he was consequently mistrusted by both parties. To test his sincerity, the chiefs desired him to place himself at the head of the army they had assembled to march on Jellalabad and expel General Sale. It was rumoured that he would be murdered or blinded by the Barukzyes if he left the Bala Hissar, but Zemaun Khan endeavoured to remove his suspicions by an oath on the Koran. With this assurance he descended from the citadel on the 5th April, decked out in all the insignia of royalty, of which he was inordinately proud, but was shot dead on the road by a body of matchlock men whom the son of Zemaun Khan had placed in ambush, without his father's knowledge. His body was rifled of the costly jewels which he always carried about his person, and thrown into a ditch; and thus terminated his chequered career of five and thirty years. Great doubts have been entertained of his fidelity to his English allies, but the balance of evidence fixes on him the charge of having given encouragement to those feelings of opposition which resulted in the revolt at the beginning of November, inasmuch

as on the departure of Sir William Macnaghten, who had always been his friend, he was to be consigned to the control of Sir Alexander Burnes, who was personally obnoxious to him, as he was to every other Afghan chief. The assassin was condemned to be stoned to death by the doctors of Mahomedan law, but his influence was too powerful to permit the execution of the sentence. The Shah's son Futteh Jung, a man of weak intellect and dissolute manners, was proclaimed king by one party, and he succeeded in rescuing the body of his father, which, after lying in state for some days, was interred with royal honours. Other parties were opposed to him; a civil war raged in the city, which was bombarded from the guns of the Bala Hissar, and there was fighting from house to house. Akbar Khan returned to the capital after his defeat at Jellalabad, and laid close siege to the citadel, which surrendered on the 7th June. The victorious Barukzyes then fell out among themselves, a battle was fought between the factions, and Akbar Khan's troops remained masters of the field. Futteh Jung was replaced on the throne, stripped of all the wealth Shah Soojah had accumulated, and reduced to the condition of a puppet, while Akbar Khan became the head of the government.

The English hostages and captives, 1842.

Of the British officers who were taken over as hostages the greater number were entrusted to Zemaun Khan, the only Afghan chief who never wavered in his attachment to the English throughout these scenes of treachery, and whom they were accustomed to describe as the good Nabob. He treated them with uniform kindness, and not only refused every demand to surrender them to the ferocity of the other chiefs, but raised a body of 3,000 troops at his own expense for their protection; but on the death of Shah Soojah he was constrained by the clamour of the people to make them over to the high priest of Cabul, under whose guardianship they remained till the beginning of July, when Akbar Khan attained supreme power in the city. Having formed the resolution of obtaining possession of the

hostages, he at length prevailed upon the priest to sell them for 4,000 rupees, after which they were lodged in the Bala Hissar. The captives, consisting of nine ladies, twenty gentlemen, and fourteen children, who had been made over to him during the retreat, were conducted through the recent scenes of slaughter, amidst the mangled corpses, which emitted the sickening smell of death, to a fort at Tezeen. Soon afterwards they were conveyed over mountain paths, all but impassable, to Budeabad, forty miles distant from Jellalabad, where they were lodged for three months in the apartments built for the family of Mahomed Shah, the father-in-law of Akbar Khan. No disposition was manifested to embitter their captivity by harshness; they were daily supplied with a sufficient quantity of coarse food, and a sum of 1,000 rupees was distributed among them to purchase sugar and other luxuries. The monotony of their prison life was relieved by correspondence in cypher with their friends at Jellalabad, and by the receipt of books and newspapers. During the absence of Akbar Khan, however, Mahomed Shah did not scruple to plunder them of the few articles of property they still possessed. On the approach of General Pollock's division to Jellalabad, Akbar Khan deemed it advisable to remove them for greater security to a more distant asylum. After a difficult march over barren hills and stony valleys, they were again lodged in the fort of Tezeen, where General Elphinstone sunk under the accumulation of bodily suffering and mental distress; a noble and brave soldier, endeared to all around him by his urbanity, and beloved by the men for his gallantry, but without any qualification for the anxious post which Lord Auckland had thrust upon him. His remains were conveyed to Jellalabad by his faithful servant Moore, with the permission of Akbar, and interred by the garrison with military honours. On the 22nd May the captives were again removed, and conveyed to a fort three miles from Cabul, where they enjoyed more liberty and comfort than they had yet experienced. They had the free use of an orchard and its fruit; they were

allowed the luxury of a bath in the river, and permitted to interchange visits with their friends in the Bala Hissar. They received letters from Jellalabad, from India, and from England, and there was abundant exercise for the body, and healthy occupation for the mind during the three months of their captivity in this fortress.

For more than three months the camp at Jellalabad had been kept in a state of feverish suspense

*Advance of
General Pollock,
1842.*

regarding the intentions of Government. There was a general dread lest the armies should be ordered to retire from the country leaving their cannon, standards, sick and wounded, and their brave countrymen and helpless females and children, in the hands of a barbarous and exulting foe, and the order to advance to Cabul was received with a shout of exultation. Meanwhile Akbar Khan deputed one of the British officers whom he held in captivity, to negotiate with General Pollock for the release of the prisoners, which he agreed to grant on condition that the British force should evacuate the country without marching on the capital; and he threatened if this were refused, to send them into Turkistan and distribute them among the Oosbeg chiefs. The request, as might have been expected, was peremptorily refused, and though the negotiation was subsequently renewed, it never came to any result. Lord Ellenborough had made energetic and unceasing efforts to furnish General Pollock with cattle, to enable him to retire to Peshawur, and his march to Cabul was facilitated in no small degree by these abundant supplies, but he could not venture to advance before he had the assurance that the communication of the 4th July had reached General Nott in time to prevent his marching southwards, in accordance with previous orders. It was not before the middle of August that General Pollock was informed that the General had turned his face towards Cabul; and on the 20th of that month an army of 8,000 men, animated with feelings of the highest enthusiasm marched out of Jellalabad to avenge the national honour. At Jugdulluk, where the

Ghilzyes had eight months before slaughtered our troops without mercy, they appeared again under the ablest of their leaders, and with the flower of their tribes; but they had no longer a dispirited and fugitive soldiery to deal with. The "illustrious garrison" of Jellalabad took the lead in the assault, and drove them from heights which appeared inaccessible, uttering loud cheers as standard after standard fell into their hands. The victory was in every respect complete, and it proved that the triumph of the Afghans in January was the result not of their own superior valour, but of the utter incompetence of the British officers. The rout of the Ghilzyes, and the bold and confident movements of General Pollock, spread consternation through all ranks at Cabul. Akbar Khan put his threat in execution, and sent all the prisoners and hostages to Turkistan, and then advanced with the chiefs of Cabul and their forces, to make one last effort to protect it from an avenging foe. The British soldiers as they moved forward were roused to a state of frantic excitement by the sight of the mangled remains of their comrades, with which the route was strewn, and there could be little doubt of the result of any conflict with the enemy.

Battle of Tezeen,
1842.

The two forces met in the valley of Tezeen, which at the beginning of the year had been the scene of a great massacre. It is surrounded on all sides by lofty hills, and every available height bristled with matchlock men who had poured down from Cabul. The Afghan horse, intent on plunder, were the first to advance to the conflict, but they were routed with great slaughter by the European dragoons and the native cavalry. The artillery then engaged in the assault, and did great execution both in the valley and on the heights, while the infantry clambered up the hills, in the face of a murderous fire from the jezails of the Afghans. The sepoy emulated his European comrade; and with a steady pace and dauntless spirit they united in driving the enemy from crag to crag, and dispersed them like chaff before the wind. Akbar Khan fled from the field into the highlands

Re-occupation of Cabul, 1842. north of Cabul, leaving his followers to shift for themselves, and the British army, after a triumphant march through the scenes of their humiliation, encamped on the Cabul race-course on the 15th September, and the British ensign again floated over the Bala Hissar.

Advance from Candahar, 1842. Aktar Khan, the leader of the insurrection in Western Afghanistan, who fled to Herat after his defeat, had now returned and assumed the command of the disaffected chiefs, and determined to take advantage of the absence of Colonel Wymer at Khelat-i-Ghilzye. On the 29th May, the whole body of the enemy appeared in the neighbourhood of Candahar; the hills were crowned with masses of horsemen, and the rocky heights covered with their infantry, thick as locusts. Conspicuous in the centre of the front ranks appeared a female figure surrounded by the chieftains, and animating the fanatic ghazees to the conflict. It was the gallant widow of Akram Khan—the rebel, or the patriot—whom the Cabul authorities had ordered to be blown from a gun at the close of the previous year, and who had now abandoned the seclusion of the zenana to avenge his death, and placed herself in the front of the battle mounted on his charger, and unfolded his standard. Under cover of the guns, General Nott's infantry stormed the heights, and drove the Afghans successively from every position, and the cavalry was then let loose to complete the victory. The next eight weeks were passed in collecting cattle and provisions for the retrograde march to the Indus through the Bolan pass, which Lord Ellenborough had ordered on the 18th April, but the arrangements were scarcely completed when his auspicious despatch of the 4th July reached Candahar, and General Nott accepted with alacrity the responsibility of retiring to India by way of Cabul, as the Governor-General facetiously termed the march. A portion of the force was sent back with the heavy guns, through the Bolan pass under Brigadier England, and on the 7th August, General Nott evacuated Candahar, leaving the province in the hands of Sudder Jung, the son of Shah Soojah, who had

intermediately abandoned the insurgents, and made his peace with the British authorities. Owing to the admirable discipline maintained by General Nott and Major Rawlinson, there had been no licentiousness on the part of the soldiers to irritate the inhabitants, who were seen to crowd around them and embrace them as they bade farewell to the town. The army reached Ghuzni without encountering any opposition worthy of record, and found the citadel in good repair, but the town in a state of dilapidation. The fortifications were blown up; the wood work was set on fire; and throughout the night the sky was illuminated by the flames of this ancient and renowned fortress, to which a new celebrity had been given by the latest conquerors of India. The request made by Runjeet Sing to Shah Soojah in 1833, to make over the gates of Somnath, which he indignantly rejected, had taken the fancy of Lord Ellenborough, and he determined to attach to his administration the honour of restoring them to India. In his letter of the 4th of July, he instructed General Nott, if he should elect to retire by way of Ghuzni and Cabul, "to bring away from the tomb of Mahmood, his club which hangs over it, and the gates of his tomb which are the gates of the temple of Somnath, which will be the just trophies of your successful march." Major Rawlinson, the highest authority on questions of oriental archæology, after a careful examination of the inscription, came to the conclusion that they were only a fac simile of the original gates; but the priesthood maintained a different opinion, and bemoaned the loss of them, and of the rich harvest they derived from the numerous pilgrims who resorted to the shrine. The Hindoo sepoys, on the other hand, exhibited no feeling of exultation, and were unable to comprehend the object of this singular proceeding. Great care was taken to avoid any desecration of the tomb during the removal of the trophies. They were carefully packed up, and accompanied the army to Cabul, which General Nott reached the day after the arrival of the Bengal division.

Rescue of the
Prisoners, 1842.

The first object of General Pollock on reaching Cabul was the recovery of the prisoners whom Akbar Khan had suddenly removed from Cabul on the 25th August, and sent forward day and night, without intermission or rest, several thousand feet above the level of the sea, over the barren wastes and steep ascents of the Hindoo Koosh, to Bameean, where they arrived on the 3rd September. Sir Richmond Shakespeare, the General's military secretary, was immediately despatched in command of 600 horsemen, to make every effort to overtake them. The day after, Sir Robert Sale was likewise sent forward with a brigade to assist in this noble enterprise. The commander of the Afghan escort with the prisoners was Saleh Mahomed, a soldier of fortune, who had been a native commandant in Captain Hopkins's local regiment which had deserted to the Dost in the previous year. On the line of march to Bameean, this gossiping Afghan established a friendly intercourse with Captain Johnson, one of the prisoners, who possessed a perfect knowledge of the native language and character, and who endeavoured to work on his cupidity for the release of the captives, but at first with little apparent success. On the 11th September, Saleh Mahomed called Captain Johnson, Captain Lawrence, and Major Pottinger aside, and produced a letter from Akbar Khan directing him to convey the prisoners into the higher regions of the Hindoo Koosh, and transfer them to the Oosbeg chief of Khooloom. Their dismay may be readily conceived at the prospect thus presented to them, of passing the remainder of their lives in dismal and hopeless captivity among these barbarians; but it was speedily relieved when he proceeded further to state, that he had likewise received a message from the moonshee, Mohun Lall, at Cabul, promising him on the part of General Pollock, a gratuity of 20,000 rupees and an annuity of 12,000 rupees, if he would restore the captives to liberty. "I know nothing," he said, "of General Pollock, but if you three gentlemen will swear by your Saviour to make good to me the offer I have received, I will deliver you over

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to your own people." The proposal was accepted with rapture, and the officers and the ladies hastened to bind themselves by a deed to provide the requisite funds, according to their respective means. The hero of Herat was now in his element. By common consent he assumed the direction of their movements, deposed the governor of Bameean, and appointed a more friendly chief in his stead, hoisted another flag, and laid under contribution a tribe of Lohanee merchants who happened to be passing through the country. He issued proclamations calling upon all the neighbouring chiefs to come in and make their obeisance; and all the decent apparel left with the prisoners was bestowed in dresses of honour on those who obeyed the summons, to whom he likewise granted remissions of revenue. The services of the Afghan escort, consisting of about 250 men, were secured by a promise of four months' pay on reaching Cabul. After this daring assumption of authority, Major Pottinger deemed it necessary to prepare for a siege, and lost no time in repairing the fortifications, digging wells, and laying in a supply of provisions. On the 15th September, a horseman galloped in from Cabul with the electrifying news that Akbar Khan had been completely defeated by General Pollock at Tezeen, that the Afghan force was annihilated, and the British army in full march on the capital. Major Pottinger and his fellow prisoners determined to return without any delay to Cabul. They quitted the fort on the morning of the 16th, and slept that night on the bare rocks, unconscious of fatigue or suffering. At midnight they were aroused by a mounted messenger with a note from Sir Richmond announcing his approach, and the next afternoon he and his little squadron were in the midst of the band of prisoners, and the sufferings of eight months were at an end. On the 20th, the column sent under the command of Sir Robert Sale joined the cavalcade, and the General was locked in the embraces of his wife and daughter; two days after, the cantonments at Cabul rang with acclamations as the captives entered them. Never since the establishment of British rule in

India had so intense a feeling of suspense and anxiety pervaded the length and breadth of the land as the fate of the prisoners created, and the thrill of delight which vibrated through the community on the report of their safety may be more easily conceived than described.

Capture of Istaliff, 1842.

In the meanwhile, Ameenoola Khan, one of the most ferocious opponents of British authority in Afghanistan, was collecting the scattered remnants of the Afghan army in the Kohistan, or highlands of Cabul, to renew the struggle, and it was deemed important to break up this hostile gathering. Istaliff, the chief town, was situated on the margin of a valley, which for its genial climate, its lovely aspect, and its luxuriant orchards, was considered the garden of eastern Afghanistan. This fortified town was regarded as the virgin fortress of the province, and deemed so secure against any attack that the Afghans had lodged their treasure and their families in it, with perfect confidence. A force was despatched against it under General M'Caskill, but he left all the arrangements of the day to Captain Havelock, through whose admirable strategy, the town was carried by assault with trifling loss. Ameenoola was among the first to fly, and the whole population, men, women, and children, were soon after seen to stream over the hills, in their white garments, in eager flight. Chareekar, where the Goorkha regiment had been slaughtered, as well as several other towns which had taken a prominent part in the insurrection, were also destroyed.

Destruction of the Great Bazaar, 1842.

The object of the expedition had now been fully accomplished. Afghanistan had been reconquered, our prisoners recovered, and our military reputation re-established in the eyes of India, and throughout Central Asia. Among the ablest of our political officers, there were some who considered that a precipitate retirement might neutralize the effect of our success, and they recommended the continued occupation of the country, at least for twelvemonths. But although Afghanistan was more completely at our feet than it had been at any period

since we entered it, the increasing complication of Punjab politics, and the growing power and insubordination of the Khalsa soldiery rendered it impolitic to maintain a large army of occupation at an inordinate cost, in a false and perilous position beyond the Indus, and Lord Ellenborough wisely determined to withdraw the whole force before the winter. It was deemed advisable however, to leave some lasting mark of retribution on the capital, and the great bazaar, where the mutilated remains of Sir William Macnaghten had been exposed to the insults of the mob, was selected for destruction. It was the noblest building of its kind in Central Asia, and too substantial to yield to anything but gunpowder; two days were therefore employed in blowing it up. A report was simultaneously spread that Cabul was to be given up to plunder, and though the most strenuous efforts were made to guard the gates, the soldiers rushed in from both camps with an irresistible impetus. Houses and shops were pillaged, the city was set on fire in several places, and subjected for three days to the wild and licentious passions of men maddened by a remembrance of the foul and treacherous murder of their comrades, and by the tokens of our disgrace which met the eye in every direction. The quarter of the friendly tribe of the Kuzzilbashes was with difficulty saved from destruction, but the vengeance wreaked on the rest of the city has no parallel in our Indian history.

Return of the
army, 1842.

The English colours were hauled down from the ramparts of the Bala Hissar on the 12th October, and the two armies turned their backs on Cabul. The old blind king, Zemaun Shah, the brother of Shah Soojah, whose expedition across the Indus and whose negotiations with Tippoo and other native princes, had spread consternation throughout India in the days of Lord Wellesley, returned with the army to close a life of vicissitude under the shade of the Company's protection. The family of Shah Soojah, and the remnant of that royal family took advantage of the opportunity to return to their former retreat on the banks of the

Sutlege. The force halted at Jellalabad to enable General Pollock to demolish the fortifications, and then pushed on through the Khyber, which he traversed without molestation by adopting the plan he had pursued when he entered it six months before, of crowning and clearing the heights. General Maclaren and General Nott, who commanded the centre and rear divisions, did not deem it necessary to take the same precaution, and they consequently suffered the disgrace of leaving a considerable portion of their baggage in the hands of the hereditary freebooters of the pass. At Peshawur the officers were entertained with splendid hospitality by General Avitabile. The march of the army through the Punjab, owing partly to the friendly disposition of the ruler Shere Sing, and partly to the assemblage of a large force at Ferozepore, was not interrupted by any adverse feeling.

Proclamation of
Lord Ellenbo-
rough, 1842.

Lord Ellenborough received intelligence of the re-occupation of Cabul whilst residing at Simla, in the house in which Lord Auckland had, four years before, penned the manifesto which ushered in the Afghan war. It fell to the lot of Lord Ellenborough to issue a proclamation announcing its termination, and he could not resist the temptation of giving it dramatic effect, by affixing the same date, the 1st October, to it, though it was not issued till ten days after. The proclamation stated that the British arms would now be withdrawn from Afghanistan, but as he had not at the date of it received any intelligence of the prisoners, except that they had been sent into captivity in the wild regions of the Hindoo Koosh, the public loudly denounced this manifest indifference to their fate. No such document had ever before issued from the Governor-General's bureau. The policy of the state in times past had been subject to repeated changes, but these changes had been carried into effect without any ostentatious parade of superior wisdom, or any reflection on previous transactions, and the Government of India at successive periods had always presented to its princes and people the dignified and imposing appearance of unanimity. But on this

occasion, the policy of a preceding administration was for the first time officially held up to public contempt. "Disasters unparalleled in their extent, except by the errors in which they originated have in one short campaign been avenged upon every scene of past misfortune. The enormous expenditure required for the support of a large force in a false position will no longer arrest every measure for the improvement and comfort of the people. The combined army of England and India, superior in equipment, in discipline, in valour, and in the officers by whom it is commanded to any force that can be opposed to it in Asia, will stand in unassailable strength upon its own soil, and, for ever, under the blessing of Providence, preserve the glorious empire it has won in security and honour." Lord Ellenborough had been in such a state of excitement since he assumed the charge of the Government that these inflated expressions excited little surprise, and the community only regretted that with all his fine talent he had so little ballast. The proclamation of the Gates appeared next, but it was at once seen to be a servile imitation of Bonaparte's Egyptian proclamation. The Somnath gates were to be restored to India with a grand flourish of trumpets. "My brethren and friends," said the Governor-General in his address to the natives, "our victorious army bears the gates of the temple of Somnath in triumph from Afghanistan, and the despoiled tomb of Mahmood looks on the ruins of Ghuzni. The insult of eight hundred years is avenged. To you princes and chiefs of Sirhind, of Rajwarra, of Malwa, and Guzerat, I shall commit this glorious trophy of successful warfare. You will yourselves with all honour transmit the gates of sandal wood to the restored temple of Somnath." This gasconade was designated by the Duke of Wellington, "a song of triumph;" but the community in India, native as well as European, regarded it as the triumph of folly over common sense. The gates, even if genuine, had been desecrated by their association with a Mahomedan mosque. The princes and chiefs to whom the address was sent, were partly Hindoos and partly

Mahomedans. To the latter it was an unequivocal insult; to the Hindoos, not one in twenty of whom had ever heard of the legend, the whole transaction appeared an absurdity. There was, moreover, no temple of Somnath to receive them, and it was preposterous to suppose that the Government of India intended to erect and endow one. In the General Order which Lord Ellenborough issued on the occasion, he directed that these trophies of our arms should be transmitted from Ferozepore to Somnath, on the western coast, a distance of 600 miles, with every demonstration of pomp, under the charge of an officer on a salary of 1,000 rupees a month, with an escort of three European officers and a hundred sepoys. They were to receive double batta during the service, and, to give additional importance to the procession, a detachment of his own body guard was to accompany it, under charge of one of his aides-de-camp. The gates were placed on a carriage covered with costly trappings, and brought in the Governor-General's train from Ferozepore to Agra. At the shrines of Muttra and Brindabun, which he visited on his route, they were unveiled for three days for the benefit of the brahmins and devotees. As the encampment proceeded on its way to Agra hundreds of Hindoos daily prostrated themselves before the car, and made poojah and offerings to it as to a deity. But the gates were not destined to reach Somnath; they never travelled beyond Agra, where they were soon after consigned to a lumber room in the fort.

Meeting at Ferozepore, 1842. At Ferozepore to which the divisions of General Nott and General Pollock were now tending, Lord Ellenborough had assembled a large army, partly to overawe the Sikhs, and partly to give a grand ovation to the returning heroes "at the foot of the bridge of the Sutlege." Two hundred and fifty elephants had been collected for the occasion, and Lord Ellenborough superintended in person the painting of their trunks, and the completion of their gaudy caparisons. They were to be drawn up in two lines and to salute the victorious battalions on their bended knees, but as

the elephant crouches on his hind legs, half the effect of the display was lost. The officers were feasted in magnificent tents, decorated with flags bearing the names of their victories, and the sepoy were regaled, as the Governor-General's notification ran, "with their favourite metoys" or sweetmeats. Including the regiments from Afghanistan more than 40,000 British troops were assembled on this occasion at Ferozepore, and presented an imposing array of power after our disasters beyond the Indus. An interview between the Governor-General and Shere Sing, the ruler of the Punjab, was prevented by some accidental misunderstanding, but the heir apparent came down with a strong escort of Sikh troops to compliment him. He reviewed the British army and noticed with peculiar interest the veterans of General Nott's and General Sale's brigades. The camp was then broken up, to the great relief of Shere Sing, who was haunted with the dread of a conflict with the British force, and on its departure considered himself happy in having escaped a great peril. A court-martial was convened, according to professional usage, to investigate the conduct of the officers who had "abandoned their posts and gone over to the enemy," and they were honorably acquitted of all blame. Major Pottinger's proceedings were submitted to a court of enquiry, of which Mr. George Clerk was President, the result of which added fresh lustre to the character of the young soldier who had driven the Persian army from Herat, and resisted the capitulation at Cabul, even in the last extremity. The Afghan prisoners in our hands were likewise released. Lord Ellenborough intended at first that they should present themselves at the durbar at Ferozepore while he was celebrating the triumph of the British arms in Afghanistan, but the universal voice of society was raised against so ungracious and so un-English a treatment of men whom we had torn from their country, and on whom we had inflicted a grievous injury. The more generous feelings of Lord Ellenborough's nature overcame his love of display, and Dost

Mahomed was dismissed at a private interview. On taking leave of him the Governor-General enquired his opinion of the English after all he had seen of them in India. "I have been struck," he replied, "with the magnitude of your power, and your resources, with your ships, your arsenals, and your armies, but what I cannot understand, is, why the rulers of so vast and flourishing an empire should have gone across the Indus to deprive me of my poor and barren country."

Remarks on the expedition, 1842. The surprise expressed by the Dost was equally shared by the English community both in India and in England, with the exception of the cabinet of secretaries at Simla and the Whig cabinet in Downing Street. After twenty-five years of calm reflection, the expedition still appears an unparalleled instance of human rashness and folly. The object of the war was to counteract the hostile designs of Persia, by securing a friendly power in Afghanistan. Mr. McNeill advised the Government of India to subsidize and strengthen Dost Mahomed, who was eager for our alliance; but Lord Auckland and Mr. Macnaghten rejected this counsel and resolved to place a puppet on the throne, whom it became necessary to support by British bayonets and British gold. They accordingly took possession of a country of mountains and snow, filled with a turbulent and fanatic population, and we planted our armies in positions separated from all support by the Kojuk and the Bolan passes on one side, and by the Khoord Cabul and the Khyber on the other. Our most easterly post in Afghanistan was distant from the nearest post in India by thirty-five marches, and the intervening space was occupied by the cities, forts, and armies of a powerful and doubtful ally, whose troops were organizing annual revolutions, and whose Government was fast verging into a state of servile subjection to them. The crisis of 1838 came round again in 1856. The King of Persia invaded Herat and mastered the city, and it was deemed important to the interests of the Indian empire to check his career. Time had assuaged the feelings of the Dost, and he had entered into a treaty with us

engaging "to be the friend of the friends and the enemy of the enemies of the Company." He was liberally supplied with arms and money to oppose the Persians ; a military demonstration was likewise made by a British army in the maritime provinces of Persia, and under the influence of these combined movements, the king was constrained to withdraw from Herat and sue for peace. If the same politic course had been adopted by Lord Auckland, we should have been saved the greatest disgrace our arms had ever encountered in Asia, and the loss of fifteen thousand lives, and fifteen crores of rupees.

One of the most mournful episodes of the Afghan war was the tragic end of Colonel Stoddart and Captain Conolly. The Colonel had been sent as envoy to Bokhara at the close of 1839 to promote the liberation of the Russian slaves, and to enter into a friendly treaty with the Ameer. The prince was of a haughty and revengeful temper, and while he claimed the title of Commander of the Faithful, was regarded throughout Central Asia as the incarnation of perfidy and ferocity. He had addressed a letter to the Queen of England, and being irritated by the contempt with which it was treated at the Foreign Office, determined to wreak his vengeance on the only Englishman in his power, notwithstanding the fact of his being a diplomatic agent. A complimentary reply under the royal sign manual to the most powerful chief in Central Asia, with whom we were seeking to establish an alliance, would not have lowered the dignity of the Crown inasmuch as George the third, and the Prince of Wales had corresponded directly with the Nabob of the Carnatic. Colonel Stoddart was consigned to a loathsome prison and repeatedly scourged, and required to turn Mussulman, which he steadily refused. He was soon after cast into a dark pit, the place of torment for the vilest criminals, filled with decomposed animal matter and the bones of the dead, and subsequently exposed at one of the gates of the city to the jeers and the brutality of the faithful, but he

Colonel Stoddart
and Captain
Conolly, 1839-42.

continued resolutely to adhere to his faith. The next day he was again severely beaten, and his grave was dug before his eyes. "The grating of the spades," as he subsequently recorded, "jarred on my shattered nerves beyond endurance," and it was in this state of mental and physical prostration that he pronounced the formula of the Mahomedan creed. He was, however, destined to two months of additional suffering, but he endured it with a degree of constancy which excited the admiration even of his persecutors. The continued success of the British arms in Afghanistan induced the Ameer to treat him with some degree of consideration, but the expedition sent across the Hindoo Koosh by Sir William Macnaghten, combined with the deputation of political missions to Khiva and Kokan, raised a suspicion in his mind that the English Government had a design on the independence of Turkistan. He, therefore, adopted the precaution of despatching a mission to St. Petersburg to solicit the aid of Russia. It appears that a fair opportunity was at this time presented to Colonel Stoddart of escaping from the country, through the influence of Russia, but from a high though mistaken sense of honour, he refused to take advantage of it, lest he should appear to owe his liberation to the good offices of a foreign Government. Lord Palmerston solicited the friendly efforts of the Russian Government on his behalf, and Colonel Bouteneff, who was sent by the Emperor on a return embassy to Bokhara in May, 1841, was instructed to persist with greater importunity in demanding his release. Letters from Lord Clanricarde, the British Minister at St. Petersburg were transmitted to him by that occasion, and the Russian Chancellor, in his communication to the Governor-General of Orenberg, expressed a hope that the Colonel would be induced "to waive his feelings of misplaced vanity," and embrace the present opportunity of obtaining his release. Colonel Bouteneff reached Bokhara in August, 1841, and Colonel Stoddart was permitted to take up his residence with the Russian mission. In October, Captain Conolly, who had been sent on a mission

by Sir William Macnaghten to Kokan, arrived at Bokhara, but he was suspected of having encouraged the ruler of that state in his hostility to the Ameer, and was immediately arrested and his property confiscated. The Ameer had addressed a second letter to the Queen of England, but was referred for a reply to the Government of India. His communications with Russia had always been made directly to the Emperor, who did not disdain to reply to his letters; and he regarded the different treatment he had received from the Foreign Office in England in the light not only of an insult, but of a subterfuge, as the Government of India was universally believed to be hostile to Bokhara. Then came the insurrection at Cabul, and the murder of Sir Alexander Burnes. Colonel Stoddart was immediately removed from the protection of the Russian mission, and subjected, together with Captain Conolly, to a rigid imprisonment. The entire destruction of the British army produced a complete revolution in the feelings of the Ameer regarding the value of any European connection. He no longer considered the Russian alliance an object of any importance, and the mission was treated with great contumely. The envoy was abruptly summoned to his presence as he was setting out on a fresh expedition to Kokan, and dismissed from his court with contemptuous indifference. Colonel Bouteneff, who had for some time been apprehensive of being sent to keep company with the English prisoners, was happy to escape from the hands of this capricious tyrant. On his departure, he demanded the release of Colonel Stoddart and Captain Conolly, in conformity with the promise of the Ameer, but was informed that another letter had been addressed to the Queen of England, and that they would be forwarded direct to England on the receipt of her reply. On the 17th June, however, they were both led out to the market-place of Bokhara and decapitated.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

LORD ELLENBOROUGH'S ADMINISTRATION—SINDE AND GWALIOR
WAR, 1842—1844.

Sinde, 1842. ON the 1st October, 1842, Lord Ellenborough announced in his Simla proclamation that the "Government of India, content with the limits which nature appears to have assigned to its empire, would devote all its efforts to the establishment and maintenance of peace," and he ordered a medal to be struck to inaugurate the reign of peace with the motto, "*Pax Asiæ restituta*." Before six months had elapsed, he issued another proclamation, annexing the whole kingdom of Sind to the Company's dominions. That country was divided into three principalities, Upper Sind, ruled by the Ameers of Khyrpore, of whom Meer Roostum was the chief; Meerpoore, governed by Shere Mahomed, and Lower Sind held by the Ameers of Hyderabad. They were independent of each other, almost to the same extent as the princes of Rajpootana, and Lord Auckland had entered into separate treaties with them in 1839; but in 1842 it was resolved by the officers commanding in Sind, to treat them as one body, and to hold all the Ameers responsible for the assumed default of any one of them. The humiliating treaties dictated in 1839 had imposed on them a subsidiary force and a tribute, but it had left them their estates and their regal dignity, and they appear to have acquiesced meekly in the subordinate condition to which they were reduced. During the three subsequent years in which Afghanistan was occupied by our troops, and Sind had become the basis of our operations beyond the Indus, their conduct was marked by good faith, if not by cordiality. Under the personal influence of Major Outram, the political Resident, they permitted a free passage to our troops and stores through their country, and assisted the steamers