PART III
MODERN INDIA

Book I

THE RISE AND GROWTH OF THE BRITISH POWER
CHAPTER I

ADVENT OF THE EUROPEANS

Foreigners could enter India mainly through two routes: the well-known land-route across the north-west frontier and the sea-route. The Muslims from Ghazni and Ghor, Samarcand and Kábul invaded this country through the land-route. The Mughul Empire took care to maintain a large standing army to buttress its authority; but it failed to realise the importance of guarding the sea-coast by building a strong navy which, among the Indian powers of modern times, the Maráthás alone tried to do. Evidently the Mughuls did not aspire to rule the sea, across which came to India the European trading nations, who ultimately gave a new turn to the history of this land.

India had commercial relations with the countries of the West from time immemorial. But from the seventh century A.D. her sea-borne trade passed into the hands of the Arabs, who began to dominate the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea. It was from them that the enterprising merchants of Venice and Genoa purchased Indian goods. The geographical discoveries of the last quarter of the fifteenth century deeply affected the commercial relations of the different countries of the world and produced far-reaching consequences in their history. Bartholomew Diaz doubled the Cape of Good Hope, or the Stormy Cape, as he called it, in 1487, and Vasco da Gama found out a new route to India and reached the famous port of Calicut on the 27th May, 1498. "Perhaps no event during the Middle Ages had such far-reaching repercussions on the civilised world as the opening of the sea-route to India."

1. The Portuguese

The discoveries of Vasco da Gama, who received friendly treatment from the Hindu ruler of Calicut bearing the hereditary title of Zamorin, brought the merchants of Portugal, who had always coveted the advantages of eastern trade, into direct maritime touch with India and opened the way for their commercial relations with her. On the 9th March, 1500, Pedro Alvarez Cabral sailed
out from Lisbon to India in command of a fleet of thirteen vessels. But the Portuguese, instead of confining themselves within the limits of legitimate trade, became unduly ambitious to establish their supremacy in the eastern seas by forcibly depriving the merchants of other nations of the benefits of their commerce, and molesting them. This inevitably brought them into hostilities with the ruler of Calicut, whose prosperity was largely dependent on Arab merchants. The Portuguese on their side began to take part in the political intrigues among the States of Peninsular India and entered into alliances with the enemies of the ruler of Calicut, the chief of whom was the ruler of Cochin.

It was Alfonso de Albuquerque who laid the real foundation of Portuguese power in India. He first came to India in 1503 as the commander of a squadron, and the record of his naval activities being satisfactory, was appointed Governor of Portuguese affairs in India in 1509. In November, 1510, he captured the rich port of Goa, then belonging to the Bijapur Sultânate, and during his rule did his best to strengthen the fortifications of the city and increase its commercial importance. With a view to securing a permanent Portuguese population, he encouraged his fellow-countrymen to marry Indian wives; but one serious drawback to his policy was his bitter persecution of the Muslims. The interests of the Portuguese were, however, faithfully served by him, and when he died in 1515 they were left as the strongest naval power in India with domination over the west coast.

A number of important Portuguese settlements were gradually established near the sea by the successors of Albuquerque. These were Diu, Damâo, Salsette, Bassam, Chaul and Bombay, San Thomé near Madras and Hugli in Bengal. Their authority also extended over the major part of Ceylon. But in course of time they lost most of these places with the exception of Diu, Damâo and Goa, which they still retain. We have already noted how Qâsim Khân captured Hugli during the reign of Shâh Jahân, and the Marâthas captured Salsette and Bassam in A.D. 1739.

Though the earliest "intruder into the East", the Portuguese lost their influence in the sphere of Indian trade by the eighteenth century. Many of them took to robbery and piracy, though a few adopted more honourable careers. Several causes led to their decline. Firstly, their religious intolerance provoked the hostility of the Indian powers, which became too strong for them to overcome. Secondly, their clandestine practices in trade ultimately went against them. Thirdly, the discovery of Brazil drew the colonising activities of Portugal to the West. Lastly, they failed
to compete successfully with the other European Companies, who had come in their wake. These were jealous of the prosperity of Portugal due to her eastern trade and would not accept her policy of exclusion and extravagant claims, though these were based on priority of occupation and a Papal Bull.

In A.D. 1600 the English East India Company secured a royal charter granting them “the monopoly of commerce in eastern waters”. The United East India Company of the Netherlands was incorporated for trading in the East by a charter granted by the Dutch States General on the 20th March, 1602, which also empowered the said Company to make war, conclude treaties, acquire territories and build fortresses. It was thus made “a great instrument of war and conquest”. The Danes came in A.D. 1616. The French East India Company, sponsored by the famous French statesman Colbert and formed under State patronage in A.D. 1664, was destined to have an important career in the East. The Ostend Company, organised by the merchants of Flanders and formally chartered in A.D. 1722, had but a brief career in India. A Swedish East India Company was formed in A.D. 1731, but its trade was confined almost exclusively to China. A bitter contest among these trading companies was inevitable, as the object of their ambition was the same. Their designs of territorial expansion increased the bitterness of their commercial rivalry. There was a triangular contest during the first half of the seventeenth century—between the Portuguese and the Dutch, between the Portuguese and the English, and between the Dutch and the English. The Dutch opposition to the growth of English influence in India finally collapsed owing to the former’s defeat at the battle of Bedar (Bidera) in A.D. 1759, but the Anglo-French hostility that had begun in the meanwhile continued throughout the eighteenth century.

2. The Dutch

In 1605 the Dutch captured Amboyna from the Portuguese and gradually established their influence at the cost of the latter in the Spice Islands. They conquered Jacatra and established Batavia on its ruins in 1619, blockaded Goa in 1639, captured Malacca in 1641 and got possession of the last Portuguese settlement in Ceylon in 1658. The Dutch came to the islands of Sumatra, Java and the Moluccas, attracted by the lucrative trade in pepper and spices, with which those islands abounded, so that “the Archipelago was not only the strategic and administrative centre of their system, it was also their economic centre”.
AN ADVANCED HISTORY OF INDIA

Commercial interests drew the Dutch also to India, where they established factories in Gujarāt, on the Coromandel Coast and in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, entering deep into the interior of the lower Ganges valley. The more important of their factories in India were at Pulicat (1610), Surāt (1616), Chinsurā (1653), Cāsimbāgār, Barāmağore, Patna, Balasore, Negapatam (1659) and Cochin (1663). By supplanting the Portuguese, the Dutch practically maintained a monopoly of the spice trade in the East throughout the seventeenth century. They also became the carriers of trade between India and the islands of the Far East, thus reviving a very old connection maintained in the palmy days of the Vijayanagara Empire. At Surāt the Dutch were supplied with large quantities of indigo, manufactured in Central India and the Jumna valley, and from Bengal, Bihar, Gujarāt and Coromandel they exported raw silk, textiles, saltpetre, rice and gangetic opium.

The Spanish and Portuguese Crowns remained united from A.D. 1580 to 1640. England concluded peace with Spain in A.D. 1604; but the English and the Portuguese became rivals of each other in the eastern trade. By allying themselves with the Shāh of Persia, the English captured Ormuz in the Persian Gulf from the Portuguese in A.D. 1622 and obtained permission to settle in Gombroon and take half the customs dues. From this time, however, Portuguese rivalry began to be less acute. The treaty of Madrid, concluded in 1630, provided for the cessation of commercial hostilities between the English and the Portuguese in the East, and in 1634 Methold, the President of the English factory at Surāt, and the Portuguese Viceroy of Goa signed a convention, which "actually guaranteed commercial inter-relations" between the two nations in India. The growth of peaceful relations between the English and the Portuguese was facilitated by the recovery in A.D. 1640 of Portugal's independence from the control of Spain, the old enemy of England. The right of the English to the eastern trade was recognised by the Portuguese in a treaty, dated July A.D. 1654; and another treaty, concluded in A.D. 1661, secured to the Portuguese from Charles II, who received Bombay as a part of the dowry of Catherine of Braganza, the promise of English support against the Dutch in India. In fact, the English were no longer faced with bitter commercial rivalry from the Portuguese in India, who came to be too degenerate to pursue any consistent policy, though individual Portuguese traders occasionally obstructed the collection of investments by the English in their factories in the eighteenth century.

The Dutch rivalry with the English, during the seventeenth century, was more bitter than that of the Portuguese. The polic
of the Dutch in the East was influenced by two motives: one was to take revenge on Catholic Spain, the foe of their independence, and her ally Portugal, and the other was to colonise and establish settlements in the East Indies with a view to monopolising commerce in that region. They gained their first object by the gradual decline of Portuguese influence, which we have already noted. The realisation of their second object brought them into bitter competition with the English. In Europe also the relations between England and Holland had been hostile under the Stuarts and Cromwell, owing to commercial rivalry, and the French alliance and pro-Spanish policy of the Stuarts.

The naval supremacy of the Dutch and the negotiation of a twenty-one years' truce between Spain and Holland in 1609, by freeing them from the danger of war in Europe and some restrictions in the Spice Islands, encouraged the Dutch to oppose English trade in the East Indies more vigorously than before. During this period, the activities of the Dutch were mostly confined to Java and the Archipelago. However, they established themselves on the Coromandel Coast and fortified a factory at Pulicat in 1610, to provide themselves with cotton goods for which a ready market could be found in the Archipelago. Conferences held in London and at the Hague (A.D. 1611 and 1613-1615) led to an amicable settlement between the Dutch and the English. They came to terms in A.D. 1619 but hostilities were renewed after two years, and the cruel massacre of ten Englishmen and nine Japanese at Amboyna in 1623 “marked the climax of Dutch hatred” of the English in the East. Though the Dutch began to confine themselves more to the Malay Archipelago and the English to India, the former did not cease to be commercial rivals of the latter in India. During the years 1672-1674 the Dutch frequently obstructed communications between Surat and the new English settlement of Bombay and captured three English vessels in the Bay of Bengal. In 1685 the Dutch chief of Chinsura complained to Prince 'Azim-ul-Shāh, when he visited Burdwan, that while his company paid a duty of 3½ per cent on their trade, the English paid only Rs. 3,000 per annum, and asked that the Dutch might be granted the same privilege as the English. The commercial rivalry of the Dutch and the English remained acute till A.D. 1759.

3. The English East India Company

The completion of Drake’s voyage round the world in 1580, and the victory of the English over the Spanish Armada, inspired
the people of England with a spirit of daring and enterprise in
different spheres of activity and encouraged some English sea-
captains to undertake voyages to the eastern waters. Between 1591
and 1593 James Lancaster reached Cape Comorin and Penang; in
1596 a fleet of vessels under Benjamin Wood sailed eastwards;
and in 1599 John Mildenhall, a merchant adventurer of London,
came to India by the overland route and spent seven years in the
East. It was on the 31st December, 1600, that the first important
step towards England’s commercial prosperity was taken. On that
memorable day the East India Company received a charter from
Queen Elizabeth granting it the monopoly of eastern trade for
fifteen years. At first the Company dispatched “separate voyages”,
each fleet being sent by a group of subscribers, who divided among
themselves the profits of their trade, and it had to encounter
various difficulties. “It had to explore and map out the Indian
seas and coasts, it had painfully to work out a system of commerce
to experiment with commodities and merchandise, to train and
discipline a staff of servants. It had to brave or conciliate the
hostility of England’s hereditary Catholic enemy and her new
Protestant rival. Further, it had to establish a position even in a
home . . . there was no active State support given to England’s
first essays in the East. The East India Company was cradled in
the chilly but invigorating atmosphere of individualism. It had
to cope with the lingering medieval prejudice against the export
of bullion and a fallacious theory of foreign trade.”

The early voyages of the English Company were directed to
Sumatra, Java and the Moluccas in order to get a share of the
spice trade. It was in 1608 that the first attempt was made to
establish factories in India. The Company sent Captain Hawkins
to India, and he reached the court of Jahangir in 1609. He was
first well received by the Mogul Emperor, who expressed his
desire to permit the English to settle at Surat, for which Hawkins
had petitioned. But the hostile activities of the Portuguese, and the
opposition of the Surat merchants, led him to refuse the English
captain’s petition. Hawkins left Agra in 1611 and at Surat three
English ships under the command of Sir Henry Middleton
Middleton adopted a policy of reprisals against the Surat
merchants with regard to their Red Sea trade, which alarmed the
latter and led them to admit to Surat two English vessels under
Captain Best in 1612. The force sent by the Portuguese was
defeated by Best, and early in 1613 Jahangir issued a firm
permitting the English to establish a factory permanently
at Surat. Soon the English Company sent an accredited ambassa-
of the King of England, James I, to the Mughal court with a view to concluding a commercial treaty with the Emperor. The person chosen was Sir Thomas Roe, who was "of pregnant understanding, well spoken, learned, industrious, and of a comely personage". Roe remained constantly at Jahangir's court from the end of 1615 till the end of 1618, and though certain factors prevented him from concluding any definite commercial treaty with the Mughal Emperor, he succeeded in securing several privileges for the Company, particularly the permission to erect factories in certain places within the Empire. Before Roe left India in February, 1619, the English had established factories at Surat, Agra, Ahmadabad and Broach. All these were placed under the control of the President and Council of the Surat factory, who had also the power to control the Company's trade with the Red Sea ports and Persia. English factories were also started at Broach and Baroda with the object of purchasing at first hand the piece-goods manufactured in the localities, and at Agra, in order to sell broadcloth to the officers of the imperial court and to buy indigo, the best quality of which was manufactured at Bvāna. In 1668 Bombay was transferred to the East India Company by Charles II, who had got it from the Portuguese as a part of the dowry of his wife Catherine of Braganza, at an annual rental of £10. Bombay gradually grew more and more prosperous and became so important that in 1687 it superseded Surat as the chief settlement of the English on the west coast.

On the south-eastern coast the English had established a factory at Masulipatam, the principal port of the kingdom of Golconda, in 1611 in order to purchase the locally woven piece-goods, which they exported to Persia and Bantam. But being much troubled there by the opposition of the Dutch and the frequent demands of the local officials, they opened another factory in 1626 at Armagaoon, a few miles north of the Dutch settlement of Pulcat. Here also they were put to various inconveniences, and so turned their attention again to Masulipatam, and to their great advantage the Sultan of Golconda granted them the "Golden Firman" in A.D. 1632 by which they were allowed to trade freely in the ports belonging to the kingdom of Golconda on payment of duties worth 500 pagodas a year. These terms were repeated in another firman of A.D. 1634. But this did not relieve the English traders from the demands of local officers and they looked for a more advantageous place. In A.D. 1639 Francis Day obtained the lease of Madras from the ruler of Chandragiri, representative of the ruined Vijayanagar Empire, and built there a fortified factory which came to be known
as Fort St. George. Fort St. George soon superseded Masulipatam as headquarters of the English settlements on the Coromandel Coast.

The next stage in the growth of English influence was the expansion in the north-east. Factories had been started at Har- surpur in the Mahānadi Delta and at Balāsore in A.D. 1633. A factory was established at Hugli, under Mr. Bridgeman, in 1651 and soon others were opened at Patna and Cāsīmbāzār. The principal articles of the English trade in Bengal during this period were silk, cotton piece-goods, salt petre and sugar, but owing to the irregular private trade of the factory the Company did not derive much advantage before some time had elapsed. In 1655, all the settlements in Bengal, Bihār and Orissa, and on the Coromandel Coast, were made subordinate to Fort St. George.

Owing to various reasons, the prospects of the Company's trade at Madras and Surāt were not very bright during the first half of the seventeenth century. But its misfortunes disappeared during the second half of that century, owing to changes in the policy of the home government. The charter granted by Cromwell in 1657 gave it fresh opportunities. The thirty years following the Restoration of 1660 formed a period of expansion and prosperity. Both Charles II and James II confirmed the old privileges of the Company and extended its powers. At the same time, the establishment of a permanent joint-stock backing greatly relieved the Company of its past financial difficulties.

The Company's policy in India also changed during this period. A peaceful trading body was transformed into a power eager to establish its own position by territorial acquisitions, largely in view of the political disorders in the country. The long warfare between the imperial forces, the Marāthas and the other Deccan states, the Marātha raids on Surāt in 1664 and 1670, the weak government of the Mughul viceroys in Bengal, which became exposed to grave internal as well as external dangers, the disturbances caused by the Malabar pirates and the consequent necessity of defence made the change inevitable. Gerald Aungier, successor of Sir George Oxenden as President at Surāt and Governor of Bombay since 1669, wrote to the Court of Directors that "the times now require you to manage your general commerce with the sword in your hands". In the course of a few years the Directors approved of this change in the Company's policy and wrote to the Chief at Madras in December, 1687, "to establish such a politic of civil and military power, and create and secure such a large revenue to secure both . . . as may be the foundation
of a large, well grounded, secure English dominion in India for all time to come”. Sir Josiah Child, the dominant personality in the affairs of the Company in the time of the later Stuarts, was largely responsible for this new policy, though it did not actually originate with him. In pursuance of it, in December, 1688, Sir John Child, his brother, blockaded Bombay and the Mughul ports on the western coast, seized many Mughul vessels and sent his captain to the Red Sea and Persian Gulf “to arrest the pilgrimage traffic to Mecca”. But the English had underestimated the force of the Mughul Empire, which was still very strong and could be effectively exercised. Sir John Child at last appealed for pardon to Aurangzeb, who granted it (February, 1690), and also a licence for English trade when the English agreed to restore all the captured Mughul ships and to pay one-and-a-half lacs of rupees in compensation.

In Bengal, where the staples of commerce could not be purchased near the coast but had to be procured from places lying far up the waterways of the province, the Company was subject to payment of tolls at numerous customs-posts and to vexatious demands by the local officers. In 1651 Sultan Shuja issued a firman granting the Company the privilege of trading in return for a fixed annual payment of duties worth Rs. 3,000. Another nishān, granted in 1656, laid down that “the factory of the English Company be no more troubled with demands of customs for goods imported or exported either by land or by water, nor that their goods be opened and forced from them at under-rates in any places of government by which they shall pass and repass up and down the country; but that they buy and sell freely, and without impediment.” But the successors of Sultan Shuja did not consider the nishān to be binding on them and demanded that the English, in view of their increasing trade, should pay duties similar to the other merchants. The Company procured a firman from Shāh-ī Khān in 1672 granting them exemption from the payment of duties, and the Emperor Aurangzeb issued a firman in 1680 ordering that none should molest the Company’s people for customs or obstruct their trade, and that “of the English nation, besides their usual custom of 2 per cent for their goods, more 1½ j-ezā, or poll-money, shall be taken”. But in spite of these firmans, the Company’s agents in all places—Bombay, Madras and Bengal—could not escape from the demands of the local customs-officers and their goods were occasionally seized.

The Company at last decided to protect themselves by force, for which they thought it necessary to have a fortified settlement
at Hugli. Hostilities actually broke out between the Mughuls and the English on the sack of Hugli by the latter in October, 1686. Hijli and the Mughul fortifications at Balisore were also stormed by the English. The English were repulsed from Hijli, and abandoning it went down the river to a fever-stricken island at the mouth of the river, whence the wise English agent, Job Charnock, opened negotiations which ended in securing permission for the English to return to Sutanuti in the autumn of 1687. But hostilities were renewed in the next year when a fresh naval force was sent from London, under Captain William Heath, with orders to seize Chittagong. The commander, however, failed in his object and then retired to Madras.

These rash and unwise actions on the part of the English stopped when the President and Council of Bombay concluded a peace with the Mughul Emperor in 1690. Job Charnock returned to Bengal in August, 1690, and established an English factory at Sutanuti. Thus was laid "the foundation of the future capital of British India, the first step in the realisation of the half-conscious prophecy of 1687". Under the orders of the Mughul Emperor, Jahān Khān, successor of Shāista Khān in the government of Bengal, issued a firman in February, 1691, granting the English exemption from the payment of customs-duties in return for Rs. 2,000 a year. Owing to the rebellion of Sobhā Singh, a zamindār in the district of Bardwān, the English got an excuse to fortify their new factory in 1696, and in 1698 they were granted the zamindārī of the three villages of Sutanuti, Kalikātā (Kālighat or Calcutta) and Govindapur on payment of Rs. 1,200 to the previous proprietors. In 1700 the English factories in Bengal were placed under the separate control of a President and Council, established in the new fortified settlement which was henceforth named Fort William, Sir Charles Eyre being the first President of Fort William. The position of the Company in its Bengal settlement was somewhat peculiar. It held Bombay on behalf of the English Crown, no Indian prince having any jurisdiction there. At Madras its powers were based on the acquiescence of the Indian rulers and also on its English charters. "In Bengal this dual source of the Company's position was much more evident." It owed its authority over the English subjects here to English laws and charters; but over the Indian inhabitants it exercised authority as a zamindār.

The prosperity of the Company under Charles II and James II roused the jealousy of its enemies who resented its monopoly of trading privileges after the Revolution of 1688, which gave power to the Whigs. The Whigs were opposed to a body of traders who
had been in alliance with the old government. They lent assistance to the interlopers, as the private traders were called. In 1694 the House of Commons passed a resolution to the effect that all the subjects of England had an equal right to trade in India unless prohibited by statute. In 1698 a bill was passed into law establishing a new Company on the lines of a regulated Company. This new body came to be called the "General Society" and the old Company joined it as a member from 1707 in order to preserve the right of trading in India. About the same time a large number of other subscribers were incorporated into another joint-stock Company under the title of the "English Company of Merchants".

In spite of financial embarrassments, the new Company became indeed a serious rival of the old one, and sent Sir William Norris as an ambassador to the court of Aurangzeb to secure trading privileges for itself. But the mission ended in failure. Under some pressure from the ministry, the two Companies resolved upon amalgamation in 1702, which came into effect under the award of the Earl of Godolphin in 1708. The two Companies were henceforth amalgamated under the title of "The United Company of Merchants of England Trading to the East Indies" and their interminable quarrels stopped for ever. The legal monopoly of the United Company remained untouched till 1793.

The expansion of the English East India Company's trade and influence in India during the first forty years of the eighteenth century was quiet and gradual, in spite of the political disorders of the period, which only created occasional, but not very serious, hindrances for it and were easily overcome. The most important event in the history of the Company during this period was its embassy to the Mogul court in 1715, sent with a view to securing privileges throughout Mogul India and some villages round Calcutta. It was conducted from Calcutta by John Surman, assisted by Edward Stephenson. William Hamilton accompanied it as a surgeon and an Armenian named Khwaja Serhad as an interpreter. Hamilton succeeded in curing the Emperor Farrukhsiyar of a painful disease, and he, being thus pleased with the English, issued firmans complying with their request and directed the governors of the provinces to observe them. The privilege enjoyed by the English of trading in Bengal, free of all duties, subject to the annual payment of Rs. 3,000 per annum, was confirmed; they were permitted to rent additional territory round Calcutta; their old privilege of exemption from dues throughout the province of Hyderabad was retained, they being required to pay only the existing rent for Madras; they were exempted from the payment of...
of all customs and dues at Surat hitherto paid by them, in return for an annual sum of Rs. 10,000; and the coins of the Company minted at Bombay were allowed to have currency throughout the Mughal dominions.

In Bengal, Murshid Quli Jahan Khân, a strong and able governor, opposed the grant of the additional villages to the English. Still, the other rights secured by the firman of 1716–17 greatly furthered their interests. It has been aptly described by Orme as the "Magna Charta of the Company". The trade of the Company in Bengal gradually prospered, in spite of the occasional demands and exactions of the local officials. The importance of Calcutta increased so that it came to have a population of 100,000 by A.D. 1735, and the Company's shipping at the port during the ten years following the embassy of 1715 amounted to ten thousand tons a year.

For about eighteen years after Farrukhabad's firman, the trade of the English Company on the western coast suffered from the quarrels between the Marathas and the Portuguese, and the ravages of the Maratha sea-captains, notably Kanhoji Angria, who dominated the coast between Bombay and Goa from two strongholds, Ghora (or Vijayadurg) and Suvarnadurg. During the government of Charles Boone from 1715 to 1722, a wall was built around Bombay and armed ships of the Company were increased in order to defend its factory and trade against hostile fleets. After these eighteen years, the Company's trade in Bombay began to increase, its military strength was developed and Bombay had a population of about 70,000 in A.D. 1744, though the Maratha sea-captains were not finally crushed before 1757. The English concluded a treaty with the Marathas in 1739, and in alliance with the Peshwa, launched attacks against the Angriyas. Suvarnadurg was captured by Commodore James in 1755 and in 1757 Clive and Watson captured their capital, Ghora. At Madras also the English carried on a "peaceful commerce", being on "excellent terms" both with the Nawab of the Carnatic and his overlord, the Subahdar of the Deccan. In 1717 they took possession of five towns near Madras which Thomas Pitt, Governor of Madras from 1698 to 1709, had originally obtained from the Nawáb of the Carnatic in 1708, and in 1734 they also got Vepory and four other hamlets.

4. The French East India Company and French Settlements

Though "the desire for eastern traffic displayed itself at a very early period among the French", they were the last of the European powers to compete for commercial gains in the East with the other
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European Companies. Nevertheless leading Frenchmen like Henry IV, Richelieu and Colbert realised the importance of Eastern commerce. At the instance of Colbert, the “Compagnie des Indes Orientales” was formed in A.D. 1664. Though created and financed by the State, the French Company’s first movements were “neither well considered nor fortunate”, because its energies were then fritted away in fruitless attempts to colonise Madagascar, which had already been visited by Frenchmen. But in 1667 another expedition started from France under the command of François Caron, who was accompanied by Marcara, a native of Isphahán. The first French factory in India was established by François Caron at Surāt in A.D. 1668, and Marcara succeeded in establishing another French factory at Masulipatam in 1669 by obtaining a patent from the Sultān of Golkundā. In 1672 the French seized San Thomé, close to Madras, but in the next year their admiral, De la Haye, was defeated by a combined force of the Sultān of Golkundā and the Dutch and was forced to capitulate and surrender San Thomé to the Dutch. Meanwhile, in 1673 François Martin and Belleanger de Lespinay, one of the volunteers who had accompanied Admiral De la Haye, obtained a little village from the Mūlīna governor of Vahkundāpuram. Thus the foundation of Pondicherry was laid in a modest manner. François Martin, who took charge of this settlement from A.D. 1674, developed it into an important place, through personal courage, perseverance and tact, “amid the clash of arms and the clamour of falling kingdoms”. In Bengal, Nawāb Shāista Khān granted a site to the French in 1674, on which they built the famous French factory of Chandernagore in 1690–1692.

The European rivalries between the Dutch (supported by the English) and the French adversely influenced the position of the French in India. Pondicherry was captured by the Dutch in 1693 but was handed back to the French by the Treaty of Ryswick in 1697. Martin, again placed in charge of this settlement, restored its prosperity so that it came to have a population of about 40,000 at the time of his death in 1706 as compared with the 22,000 of Calcutta in the same year. But the French lost their influence in other places, and their factories at Bantam, Surāt and Masulipatam were abandoned by the beginning of the eighteenth century. The resources of the French Company were practically exhausted by this time, and till 1720 it passed through very bad days, even selling its licences to others. Of the five governors of Pondicherry who held office from 1707 to 1720 none followed the strong and wise policy of Martin. But with the reconstitution of the Company, in June, 1720, as the “Perpetual Company of the
Indies”, prosperity returned to it under the wise administration of Lenoir and Dumas between 1720 and 1742. The French occupied Mauritius in 1721, Māhē on the Malabar coast in 1725, and Karikal in 1739. The objects of the French, during this period, were, however, purely commercial. There “was nothing in the conduct of Lenoir or Dumas that allows us to credit the Company with political views and still less ideas of conquest. Its factories were more or less fortified, but for motives of simple security against the Dutch and the English; and although it enlisted troops, it used them only for purposes of defence”. After 1742 political motives began to overshadow the desire for commercial gain and Dupleix began to cherish the ambition of a French Empire in India, which being challenged by the English opened a new chapter in Indian history.
CHAPTER II

RISE OF THE BRITISH POWER, 1740-1765

1. The English and the French: The First Carnatic War

For nearly twenty years the Carnatic—the name given by the Europeans to the Coromandel Coast and its hinterland—became the scene of a long-drawn contest between the French and the English, which led to the ultimate overthrow of the French power in India. It had its repercussions also in Bengal which produced unexpected and momentous results. In the light of later events, we may justly regard this struggle as having decided once for all that the English and not the French were to become masters of India. For these reasons the Carnatic war has attained a celebrity in history which is not fully justified either by the immediate issues involved or by the incidents of the war itself.

In order to understand fully the nature of the struggle, we have to keep in view not only the position of the English and French Companies in India and the relations of the two nations in Europe, but also the prevailing political conditions in the Deccan and the somewhat uncertain relationship subsisting between the English and French merchants on the one hand and the local Indian powers on the other. All these important factors shaped the course of events as they developed from a petty struggle for privileges of trade into a bold bid for the empire of the Muggahis.

As has already been noted, Madras and Pondicherry were the chief trading stations of the English and the French on the Coromandel Coast. Each of these was a fortified city with about 500 Europeans and 25,000 Indians. The English also possessed in addition the Fort of St. David, a little to the south of Pondicherry. All three cities were situated on the sea-coast and depended for their safety and fresh supplies of resources from home upon the command of the sea. This aspect was not indeed fully realised at first, but its importance was gradually revealed. It put both the English and the French on a vantage-ground in respect of the local authorities, who had no navy, and ultimately made the success of the struggle between the two European
Companies dependent upon the power of each to maintain command over the sea.

Not only did the local Indian authorities possess no navy, but their condition was such that they shortly ceased to count as important military powers even on land. Politically, the whole of the Carnatic was almost in the melting-pot. It formed a province under the Subahdār of the Deccan, and was ruled by a governor, called the Nawāb, with headquarters at Arcot. But as Nizām-ul-mulk, the Subahdār of the Deccan, had made himself independent to all intents and purposes, the Nawāb of Arcot, in his turn, behaved almost like an independent prince. The Nizām, his nominal suzerain, was so engrossed with the Marāthas and the affairs of Northern India that he could hardly exercise any effective authority in the affairs of the Carnatic, except when, on rare occasions, he could spare some time and energy to visit the southern province.

One such occasion arose in the beginning of 1743. Three years earlier the Marāthas had plundered the Carnatic, killed its governor, Nawāb Dost 'Āli, and taken his son-in-law, Chanda Sāhib, as prisoner to Satārā. Saīdar 'Āli, the son of Dost 'Āli, had saved his life and kingdom by promising to pay the Marāthas a crore of rupees, but he was soon murdered by a cousin, and his young son was proclaimed Nawāb. All these incidents created a feeling of panic and uncertainty in the Carnatic and induced the Nizām to come there in person to restore order. It was, however, beyond his power to settle affairs in that troubled region, and although he appointed Anwār-ud-din Khān, a tried servant, Nawāb of the Carnatic, things drifted on almost as hopelessly as in previous years. The appointment of the new Nawāb made things worse as he was sure to be regarded as an intruder and rival by Nawāb Dost 'Āli’s relatives, who still held many forts and enjoyed extensive jāqārs.

While the whole of the Carnatic was being convulsed by these political events, the English and the French settlements were carrying on their peaceful avocations of trade and commerce, without any effective hindrance from any of the combatants. The French and the English had not as yet begun to take any active part in Indian politics except when it directly affected the interests of their trade. Nor did the local authorities regard them as of sufficient importance to be seriously taken notice of. Thus, left to themselves, they might have gone on pursuing their normal activities unaffected by what was going on around them.

But this was not to be. In 1740 England was involved in a European war known as the War of the Austrian Succession (1740-
1748). It is not necessary to discuss here either the origin or the progress of that war, but it will suffice to state that England and France took opposite sides and fought in the Netherlands for a period of nearly eight years.

The outbreak of war between England and France also placed the two mercantile Companies in India technically in a state of war. But the French authorities, both in Europe and India, at first tried hard to maintain neutrality in this country. There was precedent for such a state of things, and Dupleix, the governor of Pondicherry, opened direct negotiations with the English authorities in India for this purpose. But as the authorities in England declined to accept the proposal, their representatives in India, although willing to avoid hostilities, were unable to guarantee any neutrality, especially in seas where they had no control over His Majesty's ships.

As a matter of fact, hostilities were opened by the capture of French ships by the English navy under Barnett. As the French had no fleet in Indian waters, Dupleix sent an urgent appeal to La Bourdonnais, the governor of Mauritius, to come to his rescue. After a great deal of difficulty the latter equipped a squadron and reached the Indian seas with eight ships of the line.

The arrival of La Bourdonnais changed the course of the war. The commander of the English ships was either unwilling or unable to engage in a serious contest with the French and sailed to Hugli leaving the whole Madras coast at the mercy of the French squadron.

The French now besieged Madras both by land and sea. Within a week Madras surrendered, after a loss of only six killed. The English had so far displayed an amazing incapacity to fight the French on land or sea, and fortune seemed to smile upon the efforts of Dupleix.

But the greatest surprise of the war was yet in store. Anwār-ud-din, the newly appointed Nawāb of the Carnatic, was not a silent spectator of the contest that was raging within his kingdom. As the ruler of the country he was at least a nominal protector of both the English and the French, and each of them openly recognized this position in times of need. Thus, when at the outbreak of hostilities the English were all-powerful at sea, Dupleix had appealed to the Nawāb to protect the French ships. The English, however, did not respect his authority and paid no heed to his protests and complaints. But when Madras was besieged by the French, the English in their turn sought the protection of the Nawāb. Anwār-ud-din, true to his role of protector, asked Dupleix to raise the siege of Madras, but the French were no more disposed
than the English to respect his authority when it suited their purpose not to do so. There was, however, one vital difference. The Nawāb was unable to interfere actively in naval affairs as he possessed no navy. It was quite different in the case of warfare on land, as here the Nawāb was willing and seemed able to back up his demand by force. Dupleix knew this and sought to pacify him by diplomacy. He told the Nawāb that he was taking Madras only to place it in his hands. The Nawāb was, however, too astute to believe this, and when his repeated warnings went unheeded he sent an army against the French force besieging Madras.

Had the English in Madras resisted a little longer, the French would have been caught between two fires. As it was, the army of the Nawāb found the French in possession of the city, and blockaded them. But the tiny French force made a sally and scattered the unwieldy host of the Nawāb. The Nawāb’s army was forced to retire to St. Thomé and was again defeated by a detachment of the French army which was coming to reinforce the French in Madras.

The defeat of the Nawāb’s troops had far-reaching consequences which will be discussed in the proper place. For the time being the success of the French seemed complete and their material gains and increase in prestige seemed to exceed their highest ambitions.

But the overwhelming success brought in its train discord and disunion. La Bourdonnais had promised to restore Madras for a suitable ransom, but Dupleix was strongly against this policy. After a prolonged quarrel, Dupleix seemed ready to submit, when a hurricane caused severe damage to the French fleet and forced La Bourdonnais to retire with his ships from the Indian seas. Dupleix now formally denounced the treaty which La Bourdonnais had made with the Council of Madras and plundered Madras “from top to bottom”.

But the success of his policy was dearly purchased. With the departure of La Bourdonnais the English obtained the command of the sea. The first effect of this change was the failure of Dupleix to take Fort St. David in spite of a prolonged siege of eighteen months. In June, 1748, a large squadron was sent out from England under Rear-Admiral Boseawen to avenge the capture of Madras, and now the English in their turn besieged Pondicherry, both by land and sea. Fortune again smiled on Dupleix. Pondicherry was saved by the lack of military skill of the besieging army, and in October Boseawen was forced to raise the siege on the approach of the monsoon. Before he could renew the siege the War of the Austrian Succession had been concluded by the Treaty of Aix-la-
Chapelle (1748). Under the terms of the Treaty, Madras was restored to the English, and Boscawen sailed back to Europe. Thus closed the first stage of the struggle without any territorial gain on either side.

2. The Second Carnatic War

Outwardly the two parties were left by the Treaty exactly where they were before, but events soon proved that the situation had really changed a great deal. The recent struggle had some obvious lessons which the quick mind of Dupleix did not fail to grasp. They formed the basis of a new and daring policy which in its ultimate effects changed the whole course of Indian history.

The war had illustrated the great importance of sea-power. It demonstrated beyond doubt that, situated as they were, neither the French nor the English could hope to obtain a decisive and permanent success unless they could control the sea. The recognised supremacy of the English in this respect offered, therefore, but a gloomy prospect to the French. Besides, the French power was practically limited to the Carnatic, whereas the English had important settlements both in Bombay and Bengal. In any struggle for supremacy the French would therefore be at a great disadvantage, as regards both supplies from home and command of resources in India itself. The chances of ultimate success of the French against the English appeared thus to be very small indeed.

Any other person would have been dismayed by these sombre prospects. But the genius of Dupleix shone forth and suggested to him the only way out of the difficulty. The episode of Anwâr-ud-din’s discomfiture before Madras made a deep impression upon his mind and suggested immense possibilities in a new direction. The utter rout of Anwâr-ud-din’s huge forces by the small French army on land proved that in warfare better discipline and up-to-date equipment counted far more than mere numbers; and that vast Asiatic armies were no longer a match for even a handful of European troops. In his small but brave and disciplined army he thus possessed an effective weapon which would prove a decisive factor in any quarrel between two Indian princes. And in those days of political unrest, Indian princes would not be wanting who would be prepared to offer any price to Dupleix for turning the scale in their favour. Backed by the prestige and resources of such an Indian authority the French would ultimately be more than a match for the English.

So argued Dupleix, and as the events showed, reasonably enough. Fortune favoured him, and placed before him a unique
opportunity to work out his new policy. We have already referred to the fact that the appointment of Anwār-ud-dīn Khān as the Nawāb of the Carnatic gave rise to discontent among the friends and relations of the late Nawāb Dost ʿĀlī. This was brought to a head by Chanda Sāhib, the son-in-law of Dost ʿĀlī, who had been taken prisoner by the Mārāthas in 1741 as related above, but was set free after seven years. He now conspired to get back the throne of his father-in-law. A similar contest was then going on for the throne of the Deccan. Asāf Jāh Nizām-ul-mulk, who founded the kingdom, died in A.D. 1748, and was succeeded by his son, Nāsir Jang, but his grandson, Muzaffār Jang, laid claim to the throne on the ground that the Mughal emperor had appointed him Subahdār of the Deccan.

Dupleix was eagerly waiting for a situation like this. He concluded a secret treaty with Chanda Sāhib and Muzaffār Jang with a view to placing them on the thrones of the Carnatic and the Deccan respectively. On the 3rd of August, 1749, the three allies defeated and killed Anwār-ud-dīn at the battle of Ambar, to the south-east of Vellore. Muhammad ʿĀlī, the son of Anwār-ud-dīn, fled to Trichinopoly and a French army was sent to reduce that town.

The English could not fail to realise the great danger which threatened them, but they lacked the energy of Dupleix. They sent urgent invitations to Nāsir Jang to come and crush his enemies in the Carnatic and sent some help to Muhammad ʿĀlī at Trichinopoly. But they could not organise an effective confederacy against the one headed by Dupleix. The result was that Nāsir Jang, in spite of some initial successes in the Carnatic, was ultimately killed (December, 1750). Muzaffār Jang, who had been kept a prisoner, was now set free and proclaimed Subahdār of the Deccan. The grateful Subahdār suitably rewarded the services of his French ally. He appointed Dupleix governor of all the Mughal territories south of the Krishnā river and ceded to his territories near Pondicherry as well as on the Orissa coast, including the famous market-town of Masulipatam. In return, at the request of Muzaffār Jang, Dupleix placed at his disposal the service of his best officer, Bussy, with a French army. It proved to be the surest means to guarantee French influence at the court of the Nizām.

So far, things had gone admirably for the French, and Dupleix's policy triumphed beyond his most sanguine expectations. His protégés, Muzaffār Jang and Chanda Sāhib, occupied the thrones at Hyderabad and Arcot. In less than two years an insignificant body
of foreign merchants was raised to the position of supreme political authority in the Deccan and the Carnatic. To friends and foes alike Dupleix's success appeared nothing short of a miracle.

In order to complete his success it was necessary for Dupleix to come to a settlement with Muhammad 'Ali, who had taken refuge at the strong fort of Trichinopoly. The French force sent to reduce that city had wasted its energy in a fruitless effort to reduce Tanjore. Dupleix, therefore, decided to try the effect of diplomacy. He would perhaps have succeeded but for the intervention of the English, whose help and encouragement stiffened the resistance of Muhammad 'Ali.

It was now clear, even to the most obtuse mind, that the British position in Madras would be irrecoverably lost if Dupleix were left free to complete his designs. Fortunately for the English their new governor, Saunders, who took over charge in September, 1750, was more energetic than his predecessor. Under his guidance the English threw their whole weight into the struggle, and the home authorities, realising the gravity of the situation, determined to back him up with all the resources at their disposal. Thus although there was then no regular declaration of war or even avowed hostility between the English and the French nations in Europe, they engaged in an open war in India, nominally as auxiliaries of the native powers, but really as the principals in a life-and-death struggle.

Had Dupleix been able to strike a decisive blow at Muhammad 'Ali before the English could come to his rescue he might have nullified altogether the belated efforts of his rivals. But he was out-manoeuvred by the clever diplomacy of his opponents. On the advice of the English, Muhammad 'Ali kept up the negotiations opened by Dupleix, simply to gain time till the English were in a position to send effective assistance to him. Dupleix did not realise that he was being duped, till in May, 1751, a British detachment actually set out towards Trichinopoly. He then sent a French army under Law to capture the place, but Law proved hopelessly incompetent for the task. The siege of Trichinopoly dragged on, and by the end of the year the rulers of Mysore and Tanjore and the Maratha chief, Morārī Rāo, joined Muhammad 'Ali and the English.

In the meantime events were marching rapidly in the north. Robert Clive, a civilian employee in Madras, had lately joined the army. He proposed an expedition against Arcot, which had been already suggested by Muhammad 'Ali and approved of by the English governor, Saunders, as the best means of preventing the
fall of Trichinopoly, for Chanda Sahib was sure to divert an effective part of his army to the protection of his capital. The proposal was accepted and Clive was entrusted with its execution. With only two hundred Europeans and three hundred sepoys he occupied Arcot without any serious opposition. As he foresaw, Chanda Sahib immediately sent a relieving force from Trichinopoly to recapture his capital. For fifty-three days Clive heroically defended the city till the besieging forces withdrew (Sept.–Oct. 1751).

The capture of Arcot was the most remarkable achievement of the war. This daring exploit at once enhanced the reputation of the English as a fighting power and gave a crushing blow to the prestige of the French. Law, the French general in charge of the siege of Trichinopoly, was unnerved by the success of Clive and took refuge on the island of Sri Rangam. At the instance of Robert Clive the English besieged the island. Dupleix sent reinforcements, but they surrendered to the English on June 9, 1752. Three days later Law and his troops became prisoners of the English. To complete the disaster of the French, Chanda Sahib surrendered and was beheaded by the Tanjorean general.

Dupleix's high hopes were now dashed to the ground. By the incredible folly and incompetence of his generals he had lost the prize which was almost within his grasp. Still he worked on undaunted by recent reverses. He won over Morari Rao and the ruler of Mysore to his side and secured the neutrality of the Raja of Tanjore. He then began active operations (31st December, 1752) and renewed the siege of Trichinopoly. Minor military engagements took place throughout 1753 with alternate success and failure on both sides. Up to the very end Dupleix did not give up hope of taking Trichinopoly.

But the French authorities at home were thoroughly tired of Dupleix and decided to recall him. They never understood the full implications of the masterly policy of their gifted governor and were greatly concerned at the discomfort of the French troops and the heavy financial losses which his policy involved. Accordingly they sent Godeheu to investigate the local conditions and take proper measures to retrieve the situation. Godeheu landed on 1st August, 1754, superseded Dupleix, and reversed his policy. He opened negotiations with the English and concluded a treaty. The English and the French both agreed not to interfere in the quarrels of the native princes and each party was left in possession of the territories which it actually occupied at the time of the treaty.

Thus the French lost almost everything that Dupleix had gained for them. In the Deccan alone Dupleix's policy still bore some
fruit. By dint of extraordinary ability and energy, Bussy still maintained his influence there against the almost universal opposition of the nobility, who disliked the French and wanted to drive them out of the Deccan. Often Bussy thought of retiring to the Carnatic but was prevented by Dupleix, who steadily pursued the policy of maintaining an effective control at headquarters. By a masterly stroke of policy Bussy induced the Nizām to grant him the Northern Sarkârs for the payment of his troops. These consisted of the four districts of Mustafānagār, Ellore, Rajahmundry and Chincocole, yielding an annual revenue of more than thirty lacs of rupees. But even this solid acquisition did not enable Bussy to render any substantial assistance to the French in the Carnatic in the most critical hours.

The subsequent history of the French in the Deccan and the Carnatic will be dealt with in due course. But before we leave the subject we may pause for a while to consider the causes which led to the failure of Dupleix. It is obviously beyond the scope of this work to discuss at length the different views held on this subject, both by contemporaries and later historians. Passions and prejudices have clouded the issues and an insufficient knowledge of the relevant material makes it impossible to arrive at any definite conclusion. We must, therefore, confine ourselves to a broad general review of the whole situation without descending into details.

It is agreed on all hands that the immediate and the main cause of Dupleix's discomfiture was the failure of the home authorities to appreciate the merit of his plans and to support their execution by sending adequate assistance. It is, however, suggested that Dupleix alone was responsible for this, as much as he never cared to take his superiors into his confidence or divulge his plans to them in all details until it was too late. But if this is true, it only reveals the inherent conviction of Dupleix, justified in large measure by later events, that the Government of France were either unwilling or unable to devote serious attention to Indian issues and were always apt to view them as minor and subsidiary parts of their general policy. For while in England there was a private body, like the East India Company, whose whole interest was bound up with that of the English factories in India, the French trading concern was directly controlled by the Government, whose policy was naturally dictated by larger political issues. As a matter of fact, one of the chief reasons which induced them to settle amicably with the English in India was the fear of complications in America.
In the second place, it has been suggested that Dupleix attempted too much, and the division of his forces in the Deccan and the Carnatic was the real cause of his failure. It is hard to accept this view as even substantially correct. In the first part of 1754 Dupleix had enough military strength at his disposal to force the issue to a final decision. Even after the English had advanced to the help of Muhammad 'Ali, there was no reasonable apprehension that the French could be either outnumbered or out-maneuvered by the English.

On a careful consideration of all the relevant facts, the failure of Dupleix seems to be due to two main causes. He failed to recognise that the game in which he was engaged was one at which two could play, that the English could imitate his own policy in retrieving their lost position. Had he recognised this, he would certainly have come to a final reckoning with Muhammad 'Ali, one way or the other, before the English were ready to send any effective help to him.

Secondly, the hopeless incompetence of the French generals prevented him from rectifying his initial mistake. It is idle to deny the fact that the subsequent course of events in the Carnatic was determined to a large extent by personalities rather than circumstances. The brilliant genius and bold dash of Clive on the one hand, and the indecision and lack of energy displayed by Law and his colleagues on the other, determined the issues. Had Dupleix had at his disposal a military genius of the type of Clive, the history of the French in India might have been altogether different. If Dupleix could have triumphantly ended the war either at the beginning or even at the end of 1751, the French Government would have hailed him as the founder of their Empire in India and sent abundant supplies to him in men and money. His failure to do this involved him in disgrace and obloquy. He was engaged in one of those risky undertakings where success elevates a man to the rank of a hero but failure denounces him as an obstinate and perverse adventurer.

3. English Success in Bengal

The peace between the English and the French continued undisturbed till the outbreak of the Seven Years' War in Europe, news of which reached India towards the end of 1756. As in the case of the War of the Austrian Succession, England and France took opposite sides in this European war, forcing the English and the French in India to engage in hostilities which neither of them probably desired.
During the interval between the two wars, the relative positions of the English and the French had changed considerably, first by the struggle in the Carnatic which we have described above, and secondly by the events in Bengal to which we now turn.

Like the Deccan, Bengal was under a Subahdar who nominally acknowledged the suzerainty of the Mughul Emperor of Delhi, but was to all intents and purposes an independent kingdom. Like the Deccan, too, Bengal lacked any political strength or stability. Conspiracies and revolutions were the order of the day and corruption and inefficiency sapped the vitality of the State.

'Alivardî Khân, the Nawâb of Bengal, who owed his accession to the throne in 1740 to a successful revolution against his master, Nawâb Safdarjân Khân, proved a strong and capable ruler. But almost his whole reign was spent in an unceasing warfare with the Marâthâ plundersers, whose repeated incursions caused untold miseries to the people of Bengal. At last he had to buy peace by the cession of the revenues of a part of Orissa and an annual payment of twelve lacs of rupees as Chauth to them (May or June, 1751). During the remaining five years of his reign he tried to restore order and set up a regular system of government, but failed (p. 539).

The failure was due partly to the ill-health of the Nawâb, but mainly to the uncertainty of succession after his death. 'Alivardî had no male heir. His three daughters were married to three sons of his brother, Sirâj-ul-daulah, the son of his youngest daughter, was his chosen successor, but the arrangement was naturally disliked by the two other sons-in-law, who were governors respectively of Dacca and Purna. It was inevitable that they should be centres of plots and conspiracies by scheming persons. Although both of them died towards the close of 'Alivardî's reign, Ghasî Begam, the widow of the former, and Shaukat Jang, the son of the latter, pursued their policy up to the very end. Ghasî was ably supported by her Durân Rajballabh, who really carried on affairs in the name of the princess.

Amidst these troubles 'Alivardî died on 9th April, 1756, and Sirâj-ul-daulah ascended the throne without any difficulty. But although his succession was unopposed, his troubles indeed were great. In addition to the hostile activities of Rajballabh and Shaukat Jang, he found himself implicated in a bitter dispute with the English Company.

Even when Sirâj-ul-daulah was administering the State during the illness of 'Alivardî, the relations between the Nawâb and the English had been anything but friendly. The main cause of the dispute was the additional fortification of Calcutta, which the
English had recently undertaken, ostensibly as a measure of precaution against the French. The recent events in the Carnatic were certainly calculated to rouse the suspicion of the Nawâb against any such measure. The manner in which it was done increased the wrath of the Nawâb still further. The English not only mounted guns on the old fort but also commenced to build additional fortifications without the permission or even the knowledge of the Nawâb. The fact was that the English discounted, like many others, the chances of Sirâj-ud-daulah’s accession to the throne, and were therefore eager to court the favour of Râjbâlallah, the leader of the opposing party, with surer chances of success. This explains why at the request of Watts, their agent at Cassimârzâr, the English agreed to give protection to Râjbâlallah’s son Krishnadâs who fled to Calcutta with his family and treasure. They knew full well that this step was calculated to provoke the wrath of Sirâj-ud-daulah against them. There is no doubt also that Sirâj-ud-daulah construed the event as proving the complicity of the English in the schemes of Râjbâlallah against him.

The contemporary historian, Ornô, writes: “There remained no hopes of Alavârdr’s recovery; upon which the widow of Nawajis (i.e. Ghasâti Begum) had quitted Muzafârabâd (the capital city of Murshidâbâd) and encamped with 10,000 men at Moota Ghil (Moti jhil), a garden two miles south of the city, and many now began to think and to say that she would prevail in her opposition against Surajo Dowla (Sirâj-ud-daulah). Mr. Watts therefore was easily induced to oblige her minister and advised the Presidency (of Calcutta) to comply with his request.”

Indeed, the rumour was widely spread in Murshidâbâd that the English had espoused the cause of Ghasâti Begum. Dr. Forth, attached to the factory of Cassimârzâr, visited ‘Alavârdî about a fortnight before his death. While he was talking with the Nawâb, Sirâj-ud-daulah came in and reported that he had information to the effect that the English had agreed to help Ghasâti Begum. The dying Nawâb immediately questioned Forth about this. Forth not only denied the charge but disavowed on behalf of his nation any intention to interfere in Indian politics.

This denial had but little effect on the mind of Sirâj-ud-daulah which was already embittered against the English over the question of fortification. Immediately after his accession to the throne, he communicated his views to Watts, the chief of the English factory at Cassimârzâr, in remarkably plain language. The Nawâb pointed out that he looked upon the English only as a set of merchants
and they were welcome as such, but he disapproved of their recent fortifications and insisted on their immediate demolition. The Nawáb also sent envoys to Calcutta with similar instructions and a demand for the surrender of Rājballabh's family, but they were dismissed with scant respect by the English governor. This incredible conduct can only be explained by a tenacious belief that Rājballabh would ultimately succeed against Siraj-ud-daulah.

The first concern of Siraj-ud-daulah after his accession to the throne was therefore, to remove the great internal danger that threatened his safety. By a masterly stroke, which has not been sufficiently recognised in history, he succeeded in quietly removing Ghasiti Begam to his own palace, without any bloodshed. The English now came to realise their mistake. Excuses and apologies were offered for their late conduct. But Siraj-ud-daulah was not the man to be satisfied by mere hollow promises. He wrote a letter to Mr. Drake, the governor of Calcutta, repeating his orders to demolish the additional fortifications. For the time being he could do no more, for although Ghasiti Begam had been suppressed, Shaukat Jung, the governor of Purna, still remained the centre of a revolutionary conspiracy against him. The Nawáb rightly concluded that he must remove this danger before he could adopt a strong policy towards the English. Accordingly he marched towards Purna. When he reached Rājmahal, the reply of Governor Drake reached him. It was couched in polite language, but contained no indication that he would comply with the Nawáb's request. The Nawáb immediately changed his mind, and returned to Murshidabad, in order to begin a campaign against the English in good earnest. The letter of Drake evidently convinced him that he had more to fear from the inveterate enmity of the British than anything that Shaukat Jung could do against him.

Once having taken the decision, Siraj-ud-daulah acted with unwonted energy. The return journey from Rājmahal commenced on 20th May. He reached Murshidabad on 1st June and on 4th June seized the English factory at Cossimbazar. On 5th June he marched against Calcutta and reached there on the 18th. Three days later, Governor Drake, the Commandant and many prominent Englishmen abandoned the fort to its fate and sought their own safety on board the ships. Next day, i.e. on 20th June, Fort William surrendered to Siraj-ud-daulah after a feeble resistance.

The capture of Calcutta will ever remain memorable in history on account of the so-called Black Hole episode, which occupies a prominent place in the narrative of Holwell. According to his version, 146 English prisoners were confined during the night in
a small room, known as the Black Hole, 18 feet long by 14 feet 10 inches wide. One hundred and twenty-three died of suffocation, and 23 miserable survivors alone remained to tell the tale of that tragic summer night.

The truth of this story has been doubted on good grounds. That some prisoners were put into the Black Hole and a number of them, including those wounded in the course of the fight, died there, may be accepted as true. But the tragic details, designed to suit a magnified number of prisoners, must almost certainly be ascribed to the fertile imagination of Holwell, on whose authority the story primarily rests. In any case, it is agreed on all hands that Siraj-ud-daulah was not in any way personally responsible for the incident.

Leaving his general Manikchand in charge of Calcutta, Siraj-ud-daulah returned to Murshidabad. Shaukat Jung had in the meantime procured from the titular Mughal Emperor of Delhi the formal Nizamat for the Sultanahuship of Bengal and made no secret of his intention to make a bold bid for the viceregal throne. He no doubt relied upon the help of disaffected chiefs of Bengal like the banker Jagat Seth and the general Mir Jafar. But before they could agree upon any general plan, Siraj-ud-daulah marched against Shaukat Jung and defeated and killed him.

It reflects no small credit upon the young and inexperienced Nawab that he could get rid of his three powerful enemies within a few months of his accession to the throne. A superficial observer might well have regarded the future with equanimity, and perhaps even the Nawab was led into a false sense of security. But if he had been a true statesman he should not have been unaware of the dangers and difficulties ahead.

It was, for instance, sheer ineptitude to expect that the English would retire from Bengal after their first defeat without making fresh efforts to retrieve their situation. For, although small in number, the possession of the sea gave them a decided advantage in any warfare with the Nawab as it kept open the way for retreat when pressed hard, and the means of securing fresh supplies of resources, either from home or from other settlements in India. If the Nawab had fully realised this fact he would have continued his hold upon Calcutta in order to keep the English permanently in check.

The Nawab would perhaps have devoted his serious attention to this problem and evolved suitable measures if his own house were in order. But that was the chief plague-spot. Bengal, like most other provincial States, lacked almost every element that makes a State strong and stable. It had only recently emerged as a semi-independent kingdom; and no tradition or attachment bound
the people to the ruling house. The theoretical powers of the Emperor of Delhi still existed, and the case of Shaukat Jang showed what practical use could be made of them. The common people were too accustomed to revolutions to trouble themselves seriously about any change in the government, while the more influential chiefs shaped their policy with a view to their own interests alone. The idea of nationality or patriotism was virtually unknown. Personal allegiance to the ruler, which was the main foundation of government in those days, was conspicuously lacking in the case of Siraj-ud-daulah. Although we may not credit all the stories of his severity and self-indulgence, which were mostly invented by his enemies, we cannot but regard him as a wayward, pleasure-loving and erratic young man, a typical product of the age in which he lived. To prove this we need only recall a few incidents of his life such as his deliberate defiance of Aliwardi, when merely a boy of fifteen, his drinking bouts in Moti jhil, and the murder of Husain Quli Khan in a public street in broad daylight. However, we might condone them, they were not certainly calculated to inspire either love or confidence in the young Nawab.

Had Siraj-ud-daulah belonged to a royal family of long standing and ruled over a kingdom which had enjoyed for years a settled form of government, even his faults might not have proved his ruin. As it was, the circumstances of the times as well as his youth and inexperience tempted disaffection and conspiracy which neither his character nor his personality helped to allay.

The discomfited English leaders knew the situation in Bengal well enough, and, having experienced the force of the Nawab's arms, they sought to retrieve their position by exploiting the internal situation. After the fall of Calcutta, they had taken refuge in Fulta, and from this place they carried on intrigues with the leading persons whom they knew to be hostile to the Nawab. The attempt of Shaukat Jang to seize the throne opened up new hopes to them. They sent him a letter with presents "hoping he might defeat Siraj-ud-daulah". When that hope failed they won over to their cause Manikchand, the officer in charge of Calcutta, Omichand, a rich merchant of the city, Jagat Seth, the famous banker, and other leading men of the Nawab's court. At the same time they made appeals to the Nawab to restore their old privileges of trade in Calcutta. This appeal, backed by the support of the interested advisers, induced the Nawab to consent to an accommodation with the English.

In the meantime warlike preparations were being made by the Madras Council. As soon as they received the news of the
capture of Calcutta, they decided upon sending a large military expedition. Fortunately, a fully equipped army and navy which had been made ready for an expedition against the French were immediately available. After some discussion it was resolved to send the expedition under Clive and Admiral Watson. The expedition set sail on 16th October and reached Bengal on 14th December. The Nawāb was evidently quite ignorant of this. While the English fugitives at Fulta were lulling his suspicions by piteous appeals, and his treacherous officers and advisers were pleading the cause of the "harmless traders", Clive and Watson arrived at Fulta with the force from Madras. It is only fair to note that the English at Fulta were perhaps equally ignorant of the help sent from Madras, and did their very best to induce Clive to desist from warlike operations against the Nawāb, who was ready to concede their reasonable demands. But Clive and Watson paid no heed to the proposals of their compatriots in Fulta. On 17th December Watson addressed a letter to the Nawāb asking him not only to restore the ancient "rights and immunities" of the Company but also to give them a reasonable compensation for the losses and injuries they had suffered. The Nawāb appears to have sent a pacific reply, but it probably never reached Watson. Clive marched towards Calcutta. Mānikchānd made a pretence of war and then fled to Murshidābād. Clive recovered Calcutta on 2nd January, 1757, without any serious fighting. The English then plundered Hugli and destroyed many magnificent houses in that city.

Even after these provocations, Sirāj-ud-daulah came to Calcutta and concluded the Treaty of ‘Ālmagar (9th February, 1757), conceding to the English practically all their demands. This pacific attitude of Sirāj-ud-daulah, offering such a strange contrast to his earlier policy, is difficult to explain. It has been suggested that a night attack on his camp by Clive terrified him into a humble submission. But that attack, according to Orme, was a great failure for which Clive was taken to task even by his own soldiers. Besides, the letters written by Sirāj-ud-daulah, even before he reached Calcutta, contained proposals of peace similar to those to which he afterwards agreed. It is probable that the known treacherous designs of his own officers and the apprehension of an invasion from the north-west induced him to settle with the English at any cost.

Whatever may be the right explanation, it is quite clear that from this time onward Sirāj-ud-daulah displayed a lack of energy and decision at almost every step. The outbreak of the Seven Years’ War introduced a new element into the situation. The English
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naturally desired to conquer the French possession of Chandernagore. Siraj-ud-daulah very reasonably argued that he could never allow one section of his subjects to be molested by another. When the English made preparations for sending an expedition to Chandernagore he accused them of violating the Treaty of Alinagar and loudly proclaimed his determination never to sacrifice the French. Yet he did nothing to protect the French and Chandernagore was easily conquered by Clive and Watson in March, 1757.

It is admitted by the English themselves that the Nawab had a large force near Chandernagore under Nanda Kumâr, the Faujdar of Hugli, and if he had not moved away they could not have conquered the French city. It is almost certain that Nanda Kumâr was bribed, but it does not appear that the Nawab had given any definite orders to Nanda Kumâr to resist the English.

The Nawab, gallantly enough, afforded shelter to the French fugitives at his court, and refused to drive them away even when the English offered in exchange military help against a threatened invasion of Bengal by the heir-apparent to the Mughul Empire. Generosity and prudence alike must have dictated the course of policy which the Nawab pursued, for in any war with the English the French support would have been of inestimable value to him.

The English fully understood the danger of the situation. While the war was going on with the French, a Nawab of Bengal with sympathy for the French cause was an element of potential danger. A French force from Pondicherry might join the Nawab and renew in more favourable circumstances the policy of expelling the English which Dupleix had so brilliantly initiated in the Carnatic.

Hence the English leaders were bent upon replacing Siraj-ud-daulah by a Nawab more amenable to their control. A conspiracy was set on foot with the help of the disaffected chiefs, and it was ultimately resolved to place Mir Jafar upon the throne of Bengal. Mir Jafar and Rai Durlabh, the two generals of the Nawab, as well as Jagat Seth, the rich banker, all joined in the plot. A regular treaty was drawn up (10th June) which stipulated, among other things, the reward to be given to the Company and to their chief servants in Calcutta for their military help. A difficulty arose at the last moment. Omichand, who acted as the intermediary, asked for a large share of the plunder, and Clive silenced him by a forged copy of the treaty in which Omichand's demands were admitted. As Watson refused to sign this treaty his signature was forged at the instance of Clive.

As the Nawab displayed a lamentable lack of decision and energy in this critical moment. After having drawn upon himself the
wrath and inveterate hostility of the English by his support to
the French fugitives, he ultimately agreed to send them away
on the advice of his treacherous ministers. At the time of their
departure the French gave him friendly warning of the conspiracy,
which was evidently patent to everybody save the Nawâb. His
eyes were not opened until he came to know of the secret treaty.
Even then he failed to act vigorously. Had the Nawâb promptly
imprisoned Mîr Jâfar, the other conspirators would have been
struck with terror and the plot might perhaps have come to nothing.
The Nawâb's courage, however, failed. Far from taking any
energetic measures, he himself paid a visit to Mîr Jâfar (15th June)
and made pathetic appeals to him in the name of 'Allivardi Khân. Mîr Jâfar gave him most solemn assurances of support
and the Nawâb was apparently satisfied. He hastily began to
make preparations for the war, with Mîr Jâfar as commander of
his forces.

Three days before this interview the English forces had left
Calcutta on their expedition against the Nawâb. So thoroughly
did treachery pervade all ranks of the Nawâb's army, that little
or no real opposition was offered to the English even by the garris-
soms at Hugli or Kâtwâh. On the night of 22nd June Clive reached
the mango grove of Plassy, on the bank of the Bhâgirathi, where
the Nawâb was already entrenched with his troops.
The battle broke out on the morning of the 23rd June. On the
Nawâb's side Mîr Jâfar and Râi Durlâb stood still with their
large armies, and only a small force under Mohanlîl and Mîr Madan,
backed by a French officer, took part in the battle. Had Mîr Jâfar
loyally fought for the Nawâb the English forces might have easily
been routed. Even the small advance party made the situation
too critical for the English. After half an hour's fighting Clive withdrew his forces behind the trees. At eleven o'clock he consulted
his officers. It was resolved to maintain the cannonade during the
day and to attack the Nawâb's camp at midnight. Unfortunately
a stray shot killed Mîr Madan and this so unnerved the Nawâb
that he sent for Mîr Jâfar and accepted his treacherous advice to
recall the only troops which were fighting for him. What followed
may be best described in the words of a contemporary historian,
Gholâm Husain, the author of the Sîyar-ul-mutakherîn:

"By this time Mohanlîl, who had advanced with Mîr Madan,
was closely engaged with the enemy; his cannon was served
with effect; and his infantry having availed themselves of some
covers and other grounds, were pouring a quantity of bullets
A. Position of the British Army at 9 in the Morning.
B. Four guns advanced to check the fire of the French Party at the bank.
C. The Nabob's Army.
D. A Tank from whence the French Party cannonaded till 3 in the Afternoon, when part of the British Army took Post there, and the Enemy retired within their Entrenched Camp.
E. A Redoubt and round taken by Assault at 1 past 4, and which completed the Victory.
F. The Nabob's Hunting House. The dotted line BE shows the encroachment of the River since the Battle.

From V. A. Smith, "The Oxford History of India" (Clarendon Press).
in the enemy's ranks. It was at this moment he received the order of falling back, and of retreating. He answered: 'That this was not a time to retreat; that the action was so far advanced, that whatever might happen, would happen now; and that should he turn his head, to march back to camp, his people would disperse, and perhaps abandon themselves to an open flight.' Siraj-ud-daulah, on this answer, turned towards Mir Jafar, and the latter coldly answered: 'That the advice he had proposed was the best in his power; and that as to the rest, His Highness was the master of taking his own resolutions.' Siraj-ud-daulah, intimidated by the General's coldness, and overcome by his own fears and apprehensions, renounced his own natural sense, and submitted to Mir Jafar's pleasure; he sent repeated orders, with pressing messages, to Mohanlal; who at last obeyed, and retreated from the post to which he had advanced.

"This retreat of Mohanlal's made a full impression on his troops. The sight of their General's retreat damped their courage; and having at the same time spied some parties which were flying (for they were of the complot), they disbanded likewise, and fled, every one taking example from his neighbour; and as the flight now had lost all its shame, whole bodies fled although no one pursued; and in a little time the camp remained totally empty. Siraj-ud-daulah, informed of the desertion of his troops, was amazed; and fearing not only the English he had in his front, but chiefly the domestic enemies he had about his person, he lost all firmness of mind. Confounded by that general abandonment, he joined the runaways himself; and after marching the whole night, he the next day at about eight in the morning arrived at his palace in the city."

Siraj-ud-daulah reached Murshidabad on the morning of the 24th. The news of his defeat created the utmost panic and confusion in the city. He made an effort to collect his forces, but both men and officers fled pell-mell in all directions. In vain did he lavish considerable treasures to induce the troops to stand by him, and then, finding no other way, he fled with his wife Lutf-un-nisâ and one trusted servant.

Mir Jafar reached Murshidabad on the 25th and Clive followed him a few days later. Mir Jafar was proclaimed Subahdar of Bengal. In a few days news arrived of the capture of Siraj-ud-daulah. He was brought back to the capital and immediately murdered by the orders of Miran, the son of Mir Jafar. Thus the treacherous
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conspiracy of Mir Jafar was brought to a triumphant conclusion. Clive and his colleagues secured large rewards for themselves in addition to the zamindari of the Twenty-four Paraganas and a large sum for the Company.

The battle of Plassey was hardly more than a mere skirmish, but its result was more important than that of many of the greatest battles of the world. It paved the way for the British conquest of Bengal and eventually of the whole of India. Consequently everything in connection with it has been magnified beyond all proportions. Petty follies of Clive have been exaggerated almost as much as his valour and heroism. The forged document in favour of Omichand is no doubt a stain on his character, but considering the circumstances in which he was placed, and the moral standards of the age in which he lived, these things should be looked at in the proper perspective. On the other hand, he can lay no special claim to either extraordinary military skill or statesmanship. He was opposed to the rupture with the French, which was the immediate cause of the war with Siraj-ud-Daulah, and was only forced unwillingly to this step by the obstinacy of Watson. Even when war broke out he was always hesitating. In the war-council held at Katwa, only two days before the battle of Plassey, he gave his vote in favour of retreat. At Plassey itself he took Major Kilpatrick to task for ordering the troops to advance. Thus it would be hardly any exaggeration to say that Clive won the battle of Plassey in spite of himself. But all this does not take away from Clive the undoubted gifts of leadership and a spirit of dash and enterprise which he possessed in an unusual degree.

Clive’s opponent, Siraj-ud-Daulah, has been regarded by some as a martyr and by others as a monster of iniquity. There is as little justification for the one as for the other view. He was not much worse than most rulers of his age, and certainly better than Mir Jafar, Nawabish Muhammad or Shaukat Jang. In the first few months of his reign he showed undoubted ability and vigour, but lack of energy and decision was the prime cause of his ruin. There is also hardly any doubt that the conspiracy that cost him his life and throne was at least partially due to his personality and character.

Lastly, the conspiracy of Mir Jafar and others has been regarded as the “Great Betrayal” of the country by her unpatriotic sons. It was, however, nothing of the kind. Such conspiracies were far from being unusual in those days, and ‘Alivardi Khan himself owed to them his accession to the throne. It would be quite wrong to regard Siraj-ud-Daulah as fighting for the country and Mir Jafar and others as betraying it. Both sides acted from pure
self-interest and do not appear to have given a thought to the country as a whole. As a matter of fact, nobody perhaps thought, or had any reasonable grounds for thinking, that the conspiracy set on foot by Mir Jâfar and his colleagues would make the British the rulers of Bengal. Even as it was, the battle of Plassey gave Clive no better prospect in this respect than that of Bussy in the Deccan. That things took a different turn in Bengal was largely due to the character of Mir Jâfar and the nobles of his court, and also to the political circumstances of Bengal. But in some measure, at least, it was due to that unknown and unknowable factor called fate or destiny which sometimes plays no inconsiderable part in the affairs of man.

4. The Third Carnatic War

The peace which was established in the Carnatic by the treaty of Godeheu was again broken by the Seven Years' War. As in the case of the First Carnatic War, a war in Europe forced the English and the French in India to engage in hostilities which none perhaps desired at that moment. The news of the outbreak of the war reached India in November, 1756, and one of its immediate effects was the capture of Chandernagore—a French possession in Bengal—by Clive and Watson as described above.

In Madras, however, neither the English nor the French possessed enough military resources to commence hostilities at once. The major part of the military and naval forces of Madras had been sent under Clive and Watson to recover Calcutta. Even after that object was achieved, Clive delayed his return to Madras, on account of his ambitious political schemes which ultimately led to the battle of Plassey. The French resources were similarly crippled as the governor of Pondicherry had to send assistance to Bussy at Hyderabad.

So it was not until A.D. 1758 that warlike operations began on a large scale. The English fleet returned from Bengal under the command of Pocock who had succeeded Watson after the latter's death in A.D. 1757. The French received reinforcements from home and Count de Lally was sent to conduct the war. He was invested with absolute power in all civil and military affairs but he had no control over the naval forces which were commanded by d'Ache. This division of command, leading to disunion and discord, hampered the progress of the French and, as we shall see, ultimately ruined their cause.

Lally began splendidly. He besieged Fort St. David on 1st May and the place capitulated on 2nd June. He now wisely decided
to strike at the root of the British power in the Carnatic by reducing Madras. But d’Ache, who had already been defeated by the English fleet on the 28th April, refused to sail. It was impossible to carry on operations against Madras without the help of the navy, and so Lally decided to relieve his financial difficulties by forcing the Rājā of Tanjore to pay 70 lacs of rupees which he owed to the French. He invested Tanjore (18th July) but could not press the siege owing to lack of ammunition. The fact was that there was no spirit of mutual trust and concord between Lally and his men. He irritated them by his rude and haughty conduct and consequently he was ill-served by them. Lally, no doubt, possessed a high degree of military skill, but he was too hasty and ill-tempered to co-ordinate the different parts of the war machine. He wasted much time before Tanjore without being able to do anything. In the meantime, the English fleet had engaged d’Ache’s squadron and inflicted heavy losses upon it (3rd August). As soon as Lally received this news, he raised the siege of Tanjore (10th August), thereby inflicting a heavy blow not only to his own reputation but also to the prestige of the French army.

The French fleet now left the Indian seas and Lally had to wait till the English fleet would be forced to leave the harbourless Madras coast on the approach of the monsoon. He utilised the interval by making conquests of minor English outposts till the English possessed nothing in the Carnatic save Madras, Trichinopoly and Chingleput. Then when the English ships left he besieged Madras on 14th December. But the siege of Madras was marked by defects of the same kind as were noticed in the case of Tanjore. It dragged on till 16th February, 1759, when the British fleet reappeared, and Lally immediately raised the siege. This ignoble failure practically sealed the fate of the French in India.

The next twelve months completed the debacle. Lally had taken a very unwise step in recalling Bussy from Hyderabad and leaving the French troops there under incompetent commanders. Clive took this opportunity to send an army from Bengal under Colonel Forde against the French troops in the Northern Sarkārs. Forde defeated the French, successively occupied Rājāmundry (7th December) and Masulipatam (6th March) and concluded a favourable treaty with the Nizām Salābat Jang.

In the Carnatic also the English took the aggressive. They were at first defeated near Conjeeveram, but the French could not follow up their success on account of discontent among their troops for lack of pay, which ultimately led to an open mutiny. The discomfiture of the English was, however, more than made up by the
severe defeat inflicted by Pocock upon the French fleet of d’Ache which had reappeared in September. After this third defeat at the hands of Pocock, d’Ache left India for good, leaving the English the undisputed masters of the sea.

At the end of October, the able General Coote arrived in Madras with his troops and the English resumed the offensive. After a number of minor engagements a decisive battle took place (22nd January, 1760) near the fort of Wandiwash which Lally was besieging. The French army was totally routed and their fate was decided once for all.

Coote followed up his success by reducing the minor French possessions in the Carnatic. In course of three months the French lost everything in the Carnatic save Jinji and Pondicherry. The English then laid siege to Pondicherry (May, 1760).

Reduced to the last desperate strait, Lally hoped to retrieve the French position by an alliance with Hyder ‘Ali, then at the helm of affairs in Mysore. The idea was well conceived but led to no practical result. Hyder sent a contingent to the aid of the French, but the allies were not able to concert any military plan which held out a chance of success against the English. Thereupon Hyder’s contingent returned to Mysore, leaving Lally to his fate.

Pondicherry was closely blockaded both by land and sea. Lally lacked sufficient funds to maintain his army, and, even at this critical moment, failed to work in harmony with his men and officers. At last the inevitable took place, and on 16th January, 1761, Pondicherry made an unconditional surrender. The victors ruthlessly destroyed not merely the fortifications, but also the city itself. As Orme put it so pithily, “in a few months more not a roof was left standing in this once fair and flourishing city”.

The surrender of Pondicherry was followed shortly by that of Jinji and Mahé, a French settlement on the Malabar coast. The French thus lost all their possessions in India.

The causes of the failure of Lally are not far to seek and some of them have been discussed in connection with the failure of Dupleix. Both suffered equally from the insufficient supply from home, which was due partly to the defective organisation of the Company as a minor branch of the Government, and partly to the failure of the home authorities to recognise the importance of securing political power in India. The inferiority of the French at sea and the discord between commanders of land and sea forces were again common handicaps to both, though they operated more decisively against the French in the Third Carnatic War.

In addition, the possession of the military and financial resources
of Bengal gave the English a decisive advantage over Lally. From this secure base they could send a constant supply of men and money to Madras, and create a diversion in its favour by attacking the French in the Northern Sarkârs. Although it was not fully recognised at the time, the position of the English in Bengal made the struggle of the French a hopeless one from the very beginning of the Third Carnatic War. The battle of Plassey may be truly said to have decided the fate of the French in India.

The character and conduct of Lally also contributed not a little to the disastrous results. He had military skill and displayed bravery and energy, but possessed neither the tact of a leader nor the wisdom of a statesman. His end was tragic indeed. He was detained in England as a prisoner of war for two years, and allowed to return to France in 1763 at the end of the Seven Years' War. But a worse fate awaited him there. He was imprisoned in the Bastille for more than two years and afterwards executed with ignominy and insult.

In spite of Lally's undoubted failings and shortcomings, it is only fair to remember that the difficulties confronting him were really insurmountable, and that the French had no real chance of success against the English even under the best of leaders. There is a large element of truth in the remark of a historian, that "neither Alexander the Great nor Napoleon could have won the empire of India by starting from Pondicherry as a base and contending with the power which held Bengal and command of the sea".

5. British Ascendancy in Bengal

The revolution of 1757 definitely established the military supremacy of the English in Bengal. Their hated rivals, the French, were ousted, and they obtained a grant of territories for the maintenance of a properly equipped military force. More valuable still was the prestige they had gained by the decided victory over the unwieldy hosts of the Nawâb.

As regards the government of the country, there was no apparent change. The sovereignty of the English over Calcutta was recognised, and they secured the right of keeping a Resident at the Nawâb's court. Save for these minor changes, the position of Mir Jâîar differed, in theory, but little from that of Sirâj-ud-daulah. In practice, however, the supreme control of affairs had passed into the hands of Clive, as the new Nawâb was entirely dependent upon his support for maintaining his newly acquired position.
The position of Clive in Bengal was anomalous in the extreme. He was merely a servant of the Governor and Council of Madras when he gained the victory at Plassey. But in June, 1758, the Calcutta Council, on their own initiative, elected him to the governorship of Bengal, a position which was legalised by the orders of the Company towards the end of that year.

The anomaly of Clive's position with regard to the Nawâb, however, still continued. Without any formal rights or prerogatives, he exercised an effective control over the actions of Mir Jâfar, and, in particular, he prevented the latter from ruining some notable Hindu officials such as Râi Durlabh, the Diwân, and Râm Nârâyan, the governor of Bihâr. Mir Jâfar chafed at the interference of Clive, but he could hardly dispense with the military help of the English. This was strikingly illustrated when, in 1758, 'Ali Gaulhar (later known as Shâh 'Alam II) planned to occupy Bengal and Bihâr and laid siege to Patna. Mir Jâfar succeeded in averting this danger with the help of Clive, but the episode was a rude reminder to him, if any such were necessary, that however unwelcome the English might be, their help was essential to keep himself on the throne.

Finally, Mir Jâfar tried the desperate expedient of changing one master for another and entered into a conspiracy with the Dutch at Chinsurâ. The Dutch were very eager to supplant the English influence by their own and made an attempt to import fresh military forces from their settlements in Java. But the vigilance of Clive thwarted their design. They were defeated and humbled at Bedarâ in November, 1759, and sued for peace.

Clive thus maintained the supremacy of the English in Bengal for nearly three years, mainly by his personality and character. His departure on 25th February, 1760, was followed shortly by the death of Miran, the son of the Nawâb, and the question of succession immediately came to the forefront. The treachery and incompetence of the Nawâb and his failure to make the payments due to the Company made him and his family distasteful to the English. Holwell, the acting Governor, suggested the bold step of taking over the administration of the country, but the other members of the Council did not approve of the plan. He then supported the cause of Mir Kâsim, the son-in-law of the Nawâb, and Vansittart, the permanent Governor, acquiesced in this view. A secret treaty was accordingly concluded with Mir Kâsim on 27th September, 1760. Mir Kâsim agreed to pay off the outstanding dues to the Company and also to cede the three districts of Burdwan, Midnapur and Chittagong. In return for these concessions the English offered
to appoint him Deputy Subahdār and guaranteed his succession to the throne.

Vansittart and Caillaud, the commander of the Company's troops, thereupon proceeded to Murshidābād. But Mir Jāfār refused to appoint Mir Kāsim as Deputy Subahdār. After a fruitless discussion for five days, Caillaud was ordered to occupy the Nawāb's palace. The helpless Nawāb decided to abdicate rather than yield to the demands of the English. Mir Kāsim was then declared Nawāb and the revolution of A.D. 1760 was effected without any bloodshed.

It is somewhat singular that neither the English nor the new Nawāb took advantage of the new agreement to clear up the relations between the two parties. It was gradually becoming clear that, while the Nawāb claimed to be an independent ruler, the English authorities in Bengal had been acting in a manner which was incompatible with that position. It was evident that sooner or later the matter must come to a head, and the crisis came much earlier than was expected.

Vansittart followed throughout the policy of strengthening the hands of the Nawāb. While Clive protected Rām Nārāyan, the deputy governor of Bihār, Vansittart handed him over to Mir Kāsim who first robbed him and then put him to death. Having thus asserted his internal autonomy, Mir Kāsim felt strong enough to enter into that dispute with the English regarding inland trade which was to prove his ruin.

By an imperial firman the English Company enjoyed the right of trading in Bengal without the payment of transit dues or tolls. But the servants of the Company also claimed the same privileges for their private trade (see p. 807-8). The Nawābs had always protested against this abuse, but the members of the Council being materially interested, the practice went on increasing till it formed a subject of serious dispute between Mir Kāsim and the English. At last towards the end of 1762 Vansittart met Mir Kāsim at Monghyr, where the Nawāb had removed his capital, and concluded a definite agreement on the subject. The Council at Calcutta, however, rejected the agreement. Thereupon the Nawāb decided to abolish the duties altogether; but the English clamoured against this and insisted upon having preferential treatment as against other traders. Ellis, the chief of the English factory at Patna, violently asserted what he considered to be the rights and privileges of the English, and even made an attempt to seize the city of Patna. The attempt failed and his garrison was destroyed, but the events led to the outbreak of war between the English and Mir Kāsim (1763).
On 10th June Major Adams took the field against Mir Kāsim with about 1,100 Europeans and 4,000 sepoys. The Nawāb assembled an army 15,000 strong, which included soldiers trained and disciplined on the European model. In spite of this disparity of numbers, the English gained successive victories at Kātwah, Murshidābād, Giriā, Sooty, Udainalā, and Monghyr. Mir Kāsim fled to Patna, and after having killed all the English prisoners and a number of his prominent officials, went to Oudh. There he formed a confederacy with Nawāb Shujā-ud-daulah and the Emperor Shāh ʿAlam II with a view to recovering Bengal from the English. The confederate army was, however, defeated by the English general Major Hector Munro at Buxār on 22nd October, 1764. Shāh ʿAlam immediately joined the English camp, and some time later concluded peace with the English. Mir Kāsim fled, and led a wandering life till he died in obscurity, near Delhi, in A.D. 1777.

The short but decisive campaign against Mir Kāsim has an importance which is generally overlooked. The battle of Plassey was decided more by treachery than by any inherent superiority of English arms, and had the rights of the English in Bengal rested on that battle alone, their conquest of Bengal might justly have been attributed to a political conspiracy rather than to any fair fight. But the defeat of Mir Kāsim cannot be explained away by any sudden and unexpected treachery such as had overwhelmed Siraj-ud-daulah. It was a straight fight between two rival claimants for supremacy, each of whom was fully alive to its possibilities and forewarned of its consequences. Mir Kāsim knew quite well that a final contest with the English was the sure outcome of his policy, and he equipped his army and husbanded his resources as best he could. He was not inferior in capacity to an average Indian ruler of the day. His repeated and decisive defeats only demonstrate the inherent weakness of the army and the administrative machinery of Bengal. The confederacy which he brought into being against the English shows an astute diplomacy far in advance of the age, and its failure was again due to the inherent defects of Indian army and State organisation. The engagements with Mir Kāsim established the claims of the English as conquerors of Bengal in a much more real sense than did the battle of Plassey. They also reveal that the establishment of British rule in Bengal was due as much at least to the irresistible logic of facts as to the element of chance or accident.

It is, of course, quite true that the battle of Plassey gave the English a firm footing on the soil of Bengal, which they utilised to the full in their final encounter with Mir Kāsim. But even
making full allowance for this, we must hold that in the final and
decisive campaign the advantages, both political and military, should
undoubtedly have been on the side of the Nawāb, and his ignominious
failure only betrays the inherent and vital defects in the political
fabric of Bengal. The question was no longer whether but when
that fabric would collapse.

6. The British as the Ruling Power in Bengal

Immediately after the outbreak of war with Mir Kāsim, the
English once more proclaimed Mir Jāfar as the Nawāb and gained
important concessions from him. His death, early in 1765, was taken
advantage of by the Company to proceed still further and establish
their supremacy on a definite basis. The son of Mir Jāfar, Najm-ud-
daulah, was allowed to succeed his father only on the express con-
dition, laid down by the treaty of 20th February, 1765, that the
total management of administration should be left in the hands of
a minister, called the Deputy Subahdār, who would be nominated
by the English and could not be dismissed without their consent.
Thus the supreme control over the administration passed into the
hands of the English, while the Nawāb remained merely as a
figurehead.

This was the position of affairs when Clive came out as Governor
of Bengal for the second time (May, 1765). Several important and
intricate problems immediately confronted him. He first made a
settlement with the Emperor Shāh ‘Alam II and the Nawāb of Oudh,
who had espoused the cause of Mir Kāsim and been defeated at Buxār.
The prevailing idea among the Company’s servants in Bengal was to
restore the power of the Emperor so that the English could take
full advantage of his name and position in advancing their interests.
In pursuance of this policy, Vansittart had already promised Oudh
to the Emperor. But Clive definitely gave up this policy and
concluded the Treaty of Allahābād. By this he restored Oudh to
its Nawāb on payment of fifty lacs of rupees. Only Allahābād
and the surrounding tracts were detached from Oudh and handed
over to the Emperor Shāh ‘Alam II. In return for these concessions,
the Emperor, by a firman, formally granted the Diwāni of Bengal,
Bihār and Orissa to the East India Company on the 12th August,
1765.

The wisdom of the policy of Clive is now generally recognised.
Instead of committing the Company to endless wars, which would
have been the inevitable result of supporting the pretensions of
Shāh ‘Alam II, he created the buffer-state of Oudh, whose ruler
would be induced alike by material interests and sentiments of
gratitude to remain friendly to the British. At the same time he
gained a legal recognition of the status of the English in Bengal,
which counted for much even in those days of anarchy and confusion.

Clive next made an attempt to set his own house in order. The
servants of the Company were thoroughly demoralised, and bribery
and corruption reigned supreme. The accession of each Nawab,
even when there was a normal succession as in the case of
Najm-ud-daulah, was made the occasion of receiving large presents,
and the private right of internal trade was abused in all
possible ways. Clive effectively stopped the system of accepting
presents, in spite of strenuous opposition. He also checked the
abuses of private trade, but reorganised the salt-trade with a view
to distributing its profits among the civil and military servants of
the Company. The Directors, however, disapproved of it and the
monopoly of the salt-trade was entirely abandoned.

Clive also cut down the allowances (bāṭṭā), which the military
officers had been illegally enjoying for many years. Here, again,
Clive met with vigorous opposition and the officers threatened
to resign in a body. But the opposition gradually died down
and Clive regulated the bāṭṭā or field-allowances by a definite
scheme.
RISE OF BRITISH POWER, 1740–1765

Clive left India for good in February, 1767. In less than two years he had reformed the internal administration of the Company's affairs and placed its relation to the Government of Bengal on a definite legal basis. By his victory at Plassey, and subsequent reforms, he laid the foundations of the British supremacy in Bengal. Distinguished alike in war and peace, his name occupies a prominent place in the galaxy of British generals and administrators who carved out a mighty Empire for their motherland. His tact, patience, industry and foresight were of a high order and he always worked with a steady and clear grasp of the ends in view. In him we find a happy combination of high idealism and sound practical common sense.

Clive was succeeded by Verelst and the latter by Cartier (1769), during whose weak administration the evils of Clive's dual Government (in which the English enjoyed the substance and the Nawab the shadow of power) were fully manifest and the country began to groan under the weight of oppression, corruption and distress, which were aggravated by the terrible famine of 1770. Richard Becher, a servant of the Company, wrote to the Secret Committee of the Court of Directors on the 24th May, 1769: "It must give pain to an Englishman to have reason to think that since the accession of the Company to the Diwāni the condition of the people of this country has been worse than it was before; yet I am afraid the fact is undoubted... This fine country, which flourished under the most despotic and arbitrary government, is verging towards ruin." Nothing of particular importance marks this period. With the next governor, Warren Hastings (1772), however, we enter into a new phase of history which will be described in other chapters.
CHAPTER III

GROWTH OF THE BRITISH POWER, 1765–1798

1: Anglo-Marātha Relations

A. The First Anglo-Marātha War

After recovering from the blow of Pānípat, the Marāthas appeared once more in full force in the north in A.D. 1770 and brought the helpless Delhi Emperor, Shāh ‘Alam II, under their control by agreeing to escort him to his capital in return for certain privileges. Warren Hastings concluded the Treaty of Benares in September, 1773, partly to check the revived pretensions of the Marāthas in the north. But in the meanwhile a terrible calamity had befallen the Marāthas. The young Peshwā Mādhava Rāo I had expired in A.D. 1772, and internal dissensions appeared among the Marāthas, due to the inordinate ambition of the deceased Peshwā’s uncle, Raghunāth Rāo or Raghoba, and the weakness of Mādhava Rāo’s brother and successor, Nārāyan Rāo. Mādhava Rāo I had been able to check the designs of his uncle and even to conciliate him. But his successor, an inexperienced youth of frivolous habits, could not remain on good terms with him and placed him under arrest. This led Raghoba to organise a conspiracy with a discontented body of infantry, and Nārāyan Rāo was murdered before the eyes of his uncle on the 30th August, 1773.

Raghunāth Rāo was now recognised as the Peshwā, but his authority remained unchallenged only for a few months. A strong party at Poonā, under the leadership of a young Brāhmaṇa, Nānā Fadnavis, who had luckily escaped from the fatal field of Pānípat, began to counteract his measures. A new card was placed in the hands of the confederate Marātha leaders, when in the next year a posthumous son was born to the late Peshwā’s wife, Gangā Bai. They at once recognised the infant as the Peshwā and set up a council of regency in his name. Foiled in his attempts and driven out of the home provinces, Raghunāth Rāo appealed for help to the English at Bombay. Thus, as in the Carnatic and elsewhere in India, internal quarrels among Indian princes and chiefs offered an opportunity to the English to intervene in their affairs.
The English at Bombay were then on peaceful terms with the Marāṭha government at Poona, but they were induced to espouse the cause of Raghunāth Rāo by the prospect of acquiring certain maritime territories adjoining Bombay, which they calculated would make their position much more secure. 1 In response to Raghunāth Rāo’s appeal to them, they concluded with him the Treaty of Surāt on the 7th March, 1775. By this the English agreed to help Raghunāth Rāo with a force of 2,500 men, the cost of which was to be borne by him; in return Raghunāth Rāo undertook to cede to the English Salsette and Bassein with a part of the revenues of the Broach and Surāt districts, and promised not to form any alliance with the enemies of the Company and to include the English in any peace that he concluded with the Poona government. 1 A body of British troops under Colonel Keating had already reached Surāt on the 27th February, 1775. The allied armies of Colonel Keating and Raghunāth Rāo met the Poona troops on the 18th May on the plain of Arras, situated between the river Mahi and the town of Anand, and defeated them.

But the war had been commenced, and the Treaty of Surāt signed, by the Bombay Government, without any orders from the Supreme Council in Calcutta. Warren Hastings himself had no objection to ratifying the Treaty of Surāt, but his opponents, who formed the majority in the Council, were opposed to his view. The Calcutta Council, therefore, soon condemned the action of the Bombay Council as “impolitic, dangerous, unauthorised, and unjust”, and wrote to it on the 31st May to recall the Company’s troops “unless their safety may be endangered by an instant retreat”. 1 A few months later, in the same year, it sent Colonel Upton to Poona to negotiate a peace with the Poona regency. 1 Colonel Upton accordingly concluded the Treaty of Purandhar with the Poona authorities on the 1st March, 1776. 1 By this the Treaty of Surāt was annulled; the retention of Salsette, and the revenues of Broach, by the English was confirmed; the Poona regency agreed to pay twelve lacs of rupees to the English to cover the expenses of their campaign; and the English renounced the cause of Raghoba, who was to live at Kopargāon in Gujarāt on a monthly pension of Rs. 25,000 from the Peshwā’s Government.

This treaty did not take effect. The Bombay Government did not like its terms and they gave shelter to Raghoba in direct violation of the treaty and despite the protests of Upton. 1 The Poona leaders also did not fulfill its terms, and in 1777 Nānā Fadnavis received warmly a French adventurer, Chevalier de St. Lubin, and promised to grant the French a port in Western India, which created
suspicions in the minds of the members of the Bombay Council about the designs of the French in South India. The Court of Directors in several despatches upheld the policy and action of the Bombay Government, which re-opened the war and sent a force, consisting of 600 Europeans and 3,300 sepoys, under Colonel Egerton towards Poona in November, 1778. Owing to ill-health Egerton made over the command to Colonel Cockburn in January, 1779. On the 9th January the British troops met a large Marāṭha army at Telegōn in the Western Ghāts, but soon suffered reverses, which compelled them to sign a humiliating convention at Wadgāon. By it all territories acquired by the Bombay Government since 1773 were to be surrendered, the force arriving from Bengal was to be withdrawn and the Sindhia was to receive a share of the revenues of Brouāch.

This disgraceful convention was repudiated by the Governor-General, who wrote: “We have already disavowed the convention of Wadgāon. Would to God we could as easily efface the infamy which our national character has sustained.” Freed from the obnoxious opposition of his colleagues, Hastings now adopted measures to retrieve the prestige of the Company. A strong army, sent from Bengal under Colonel Goidard, marched right across Central India and took possession of Ahmādābād on the 15th February and captured Bassein on the 11th December, 1780. They met with a reverse in April, 1781, however, while attempting to advance towards Poona and had to fall back. But in the meanwhile, Captain Popham, who had been sent from Bengal by Hastings to support the Rānā of Gohad, an old enemy of the Sindhia, had captured Guwālior by escalade on the 3rd August. General Carnac also inflicted a defeat on the Sindhia at Sipri (modern Sivpur) on the 16th February, 1781.

The effect of these victories was to increase the prestige of the English. Mahādāji Sindhia, who had been long aiming at the leadership of the Marāṭha confederacy and wanted a free hand in Northern India, now changed his attitude and sought to ally himself with the English. He therefore opened negotiations with them and promised, on the 13th October, 1781, that he would effect a treaty between the English and the Poona Government.

The Treaty of Salbai was duly signed on the 17th May, 1782, though it was not ratified by Nānā Pādnāvis till the 26th February, 1783. By this treaty the English were confirmed in the possession of Salsette, and they recognised Mādhava Rāo Nāḥyan as the rightful Peshwā. Rāghoba was pensioned off. Sindhia got back all the territories west of the Jumnā; and Hyderabad
'Ali, who was not a party to the treaty, had to give up the territories which he had conquered from the Nawāb of Arcot. Thus the treaty established the status quo ante bellum. The material gains of the English secured by this treaty were not "very impressive", though they were put to a great financial strain which led Hastings to take recourse to objectionable financial methods. Nevertheless, it marks a turning-point in the history of British supremacy in India. It gave them "peace with the Marāthas for twenty years" and thus left them comparatively free to fight their other enemies like Tipu and the French and to bring the Nizām and the Nawāb of Oudh under their control. But we shall over-emphasise its importance if we say that "it established beyond dispute the dominance of the British as the controlling factor in Indian politics, their subsequent rise in 1818 to the position of a paramount power being an inevitable result of the position gained by the Treaty of Salbai".

As a matter of fact, though Hastings had been able to save the British position in India in the face of an extremely embarrassing situation, it could hardly be regarded as being completely secure. The Company had still to reckon with the jealousy and hostility of the Marāthas and Tipu, and to be on guard against the activities of the powers that had been rising in the Punjab, Nepal and Burma. Mr. (later Sir John) Macpherson, the senior member of the Council, who acted as the Governor-General for a year and a half till the arrival of Lord Cornwallis, had neither the ability nor the integrity to continue efficiently the policy of his predecessor. Further, clause 34 of Pitt's India Act, 1784, enjoined the Company to follow a policy of non-intervention in Indian politics. Though, owing to the rather insecure position of the Company in India, this policy could not be strictly followed either by Cornwallis or by Shore, yet the period extending from the departure of Hastings till the commencement of Lord Wellesley's administration was one of comparative political inactivity on the part of the English in India.

B. The Marāthas after Salbai

The Maratha confederacy had indeed been greatly weakened by this time through the "mutual distrust and selfish intrigues" of its members, who owned only a loose allegiance to it. But there appeared among the Marāthas some able personalities like Ahalyā Bāī, Mahādājī Sindia and Nānā Pādnāvis. In the words of Sir John Malcolm, whose knowledge of Maratha affairs of the time was based on personal investigations, "the success of Ahalya Bae in the internal administration of her domains was altogether won-
derful. In the most sober view that can be taken of her character, she certainly appears, within her limited sphere, to have been one of the purest and most exemplary rulers that ever existed". Ahalyā Bāi died in 1795, when the government of Indore passed into the hands of Tukoji Holkar, a good soldier though devoid of political ability. Tukoji’s death in 1797 was followed by chaos and confusion in the Indore kingdom.

Mahādāji Sindhiya was the most outstanding Marāṭha chief of the period. The Treaty of Salbai recognised him as "as far as related to the British Government an independent prince", but at the same time he "continued to observe, on all other points which referred to his connexion with the Poona Government, the most scrupulous attention to forms". He utilised his new position to extend and consolidate his authority in Northern India. He soon abandoned the old Marāṭha method of fighting, maintained in his army a number of Rājputs and Muhammadians, and organised it on European scientific methods by employing Benoit de Boigne, a Savoyard (French) military expert, and other European adventurers of various races and classes. With a view to realising his ambitions in the north he went to Delhi, made the titular Emperor, Shāh Ālam II, already helpless in the midst of violence, confusion and anarchy, his puppet, and utilised the fiction of his sovereignty to establish Marāṭha supremacy rapidly in Hindustān. He obtained from the Emperor the office of Wākil-i-mutlūq for his nominal master, the Peshwā, and himself became the Peshwā’s nāib or deputy. He also gained the command over the imperial army. In fact, he remained in Northern India as "the nominal slave but the rigid master of the unfortunate Shah Alum, Emperor of Delhi". By 1792 Mahādāji established his ascendancy over the Rājputs and the Jāts and his power in Northern India reached its "meridian splendour". He next thought it necessary to establish his influence at Poona, where Nānā Fadnavis, an astute politician, controlled all affairs, and so proceeded to the south in June, 1792, apparently to pay his respects to the young Peshwā, Mādhaba Rāo II. During Mahādāji Sindhiya’s absence from the north, his neighbour, Tukoji Holkar, challenged his authority but was severely defeated by his trained troops under de Boigne at Lakhari near Ajmer. Before his cherished object could be fulfilled, Sindhiya died of fever at Poona on the 12th February, 1794, at the age of sixty-seven. His

1 Some records originally kept at Maheshwar, the old capital of the Holkars, and recently brought to light (Proceedings, Indian Historical Records Commission, December, 1930) by Sardār Rāo Bahādur Kibe, M.A., Deputy Prime Minister, Indore State, "show what a leading part the pious lady Ahalyā Bāi took in the stirring events of the time".
vast possessions and military resources were inherited by his thirteen-year-old nephew and adopted son, Daulat Rāo Sindhiā. Grant Duff has justly considered the death of Mahādāji Sindhiā, a statesman of no mean order and an able military commander, "as an event of great political significance, both as it affected the Marāṭhā Empire and the other states of India". It sealed the fate of Marāṭhā supremacy in the north, where the English were left comparatively free to build up their dominion. The English must have regarded the success of Mahādāji in the north as opposed to their political interests, because judging "from the incessant perseverance with which he laboured to bring to maturity schemes once formed for his own aggrandisement, had his life been extended, he would in all probability have become a formidable antagonist to the interests of Great Britain, whose rulers were not acquainted with his active spirit or insatiable ambition". As a matter of fact, we find in the records of the English "various proofs of watchful jealousy" of Mahādāji's movements.

Marāṭhā affairs at the centre now passed under the absolute control of Nānā Pādnāvis. One of the objects of Nānā was to recover the lost territories of the Marāṭhās to the south of the Narmadā. This made a collision with Tipu Sultan of Mysore inevitable. The Marāṭhās, therefore, concluded a treaty of alliance with the Nizām in July, 1784, and a Marāṭhā army under the command of Hari Pant Phadke started from Poona on the 1st December, 1785. Tipu made some feeble attempts to oppose the invaders, but, apprehending the formation of an alliance between the English and the Marāṭhās, opened negotiations for peace, which was concluded in April, 1787. Tipu agreed to pay forty-five lacs of rupees, and to make over the districts of Badami, Kittur, and Nargund to the Marāṭhās, and got back the places which the latter had conquered. But this agreement between Tipu and the Marāṭhās did not last long, as on the outbreak of hostilities between the English and Tipu (A.D. 1789-1792), the Marāṭhās and the Nizām formed an offensive and defensive alliance with Cornwallis against the Sultan of Mysore. This triple alliance became for some time, in spite of clause 34 of Pitt's India Act, "a definite factor in Indian politics".

It rested, however, on too insecure a basis to be effective for a long time, as the allies had united together only to serve their respective interests against the aggressions of Tipu and not out of any feeling of sincere attachment towards one another. The Nizām was an old foe of the Marāṭhās, and as soon as the danger on the part of Tipu had been somewhat lessened, all the Marāṭhā
leaders—the Peshwā, Daulāt Rāo Sindhia, Tukoji Holkar and the Rājā of Berar—combined together against him. The Peshwā’s claim to chaush and sardeshmukhi over the Nizām served as the immediate cause for war. The Nizām’s troops had been trained by the Frenchman, Raymond, and all negotiations having failed, the two parties were driven to “decide their differences by the sword”. The Nizām appealed to the English for help, but got nothing from them. He was defeated by the Marāthas at Khordā or Kurdi (fifty-six miles south-east of Ahmadnagar) in March, 1795, and was compelled to conclude a humiliating treaty which subjected him to heavy pecuniary losses and to large territorial concessions. Had Shore intervened, the result of the battle might have been different. His critics point out that the Nizām was entitled to British support on the strength of the treaty of February, 1768, by which the Nizām had placed himself under the protection of the English. But it might be argued in defence of Shore that he was precluded from such intervention by clause 34 of Pitt’s India Act. Further, the Marāthas were then at peace with the English, who were not bound by any previous agreement to help the Nizām against a friendly power.

2. Anglo-Mysore Relations

A. The First Anglo-Mysore War

Mysore under Hyder and Tipu was a source of danger to the rising British power in India during the second half of the eighteenth century. While the Carnatic was distracted by wars, and Bengal was passing through political revolutions, Hyder steadily rose to power in Mysore. Originally an adventurer, he entered the service of Nanjiraj, the Dalwai or prime minister of Mysore, who had made himself the practical dictator over the titular Hindu ruler of the State. Though uneducated and illiterate, Hyder was endowed with a strong determination, admirable courage, keen intellect and shrewd common sense. Taking advantage of the prevailing distractions in the south, he increased his power and soon supplanted his former patron. He extended his territories by conquering Bednore, Sunda, Sera, Canara, and Guti and by subjugating the petty Poligars of South India. The rapid rise of Hyder...

1 The Nizām kept “two battalions of Female sepoys” who “took part in the battle and behaved no worse than the rest of the army”. Bengal: Past and Present, 1933.

2 The eighteenth-century history of India was largely influenced by the rise of adventurers to power: ‘Alivardi in Bengal, Sa’dat and Safdar Jung in Oudh, Sa’îd-ud-daulah in the Punjab, and the Nizām-ul-mulk, Hyder and Tipu in South India.
naturally excited the jealousy of the Marathas, the Nizām and the English. The Marathas invaded his territories in A.D. 1765 and compelled him to surrender Guti and Savanur and to pay an indemnity of thirty-two lacs of rupees. In November, 1766, the Madras Government agreed to assist the Nizām against Hyder in return for his ceding the Northern Sarkārs. In short, the Marathas, the Nizām, and the English entered into a triple alliance against Hyder. But the Marathas, who first attacked Mysore, were soon bought off by the Mysore chief. The Nizām, accompanied by a company of British troops under the command of General Joseph Smith, invaded Mysore in April, 1767, but, influenced by Mahfuz Khān, brother and rival of the pro-British Nawāb Muhammad Ṭāli of the Carnatic, he quickly deserted the English and allied himself with their enemy. It should be noted that the Madras Government failed to manage affairs skilfully, but Smith was able to defeat the new allies at the Pass of Changama and Trinomali in September, 1767. Hyder was soon abandoned by his fickle ally, the Nizām, with whom the Madras Government tactlessly concluded an ill-advised treaty on the 23rd February, 1768. By this the Nizām confirmed his old treaty obligations in as irresponsible a manner as he had broken them; and declaring Hyder a "rebel and usurper," he agreed to assist the English and the Nawāb of the Carnatic in chastising him. This alliance with the vacillating Nizām was of no help to the English, but it needlessly provoked the hostility of Hyder. "You have brought us into such a labyrinth of difficulties," observed the Court of Directors, "that we do not see how we shall be extricated from them." The Court of Directors, then not in favour of the further expansion of British territories in India but eager to preserve what had already been acquired, further wrote: "... it is not for the Company to take the part of umpires of Indostan. If it had not been for the imprudent measures you have taken, the country powers would have formed a balance among themselves. We wish to see the Indian princes remain as a check upon one another without our interfering."

In spite of the Nizām’s desertion Hyder continued to fight with great vigour. He recovered Mangalore after defeating the Bombay troops, appeared within five miles of Madras in March, 1769, and dictated a peace on the 4th April, 1769, which provided for the exchange of prisoners and mutual restitution of conquests. It was also a defensive alliance, as the English promised to help Hyder in case he was attacked by any other power.
B. The Second Anglo-Mysore War

The terms of the treaty of 1769 were not fulfilled by the Madras Government. When the Marathas invaded Hyder's territories in 1771, the English did not help him. This naturally offended the Mysore ruler, who remained on the look-out for an opportunity to strike once again. In 1779 he joined in a grand confederacy against the English, which was organised by the discontented Nizām and to which the Marathas, already at war with the Bombay Government, were a party. The British capture of Mahé, a small French settlement within the jurisdiction of Hyder, added to his resentment. He held that the neutrality of his kingdom had thus been violated, and declared war. Thus, as Hastings said, there was "a war actual or impending in every quarter and with every power in Hindustān". Outside India, also France, Spain, Holland and the revolted American colonies had combined against England, and France sought to utilise this opportunity to regain her lost position in India.

In July, 1780, Hyder, with about 80,000 men and 100 guns, came down upon the plains of the Carnatic "like an avalanche, carrying destruction with him". He defeated an English detachment under Colonel Baillie and in October, 1780, seized Arcot. The situation was indeed a critical one for the Company. In the words used by Sir Alfred Lyall, "the fortunes of the English in India had fallen to their lowest water-mark". But Warren Hastings soon sent to the south Sir Eyre Coote, the victor of Wandiwash and then Commander-in-Chief in India and a member of the Supreme Council, "to stand forth and vindicate in his own person the rights and honour of British arms". He also detached the Rājā of Berār, Mahādājī Sindhia and the Nizām from alliance with Hyder. Nothing daunted by these desertions, Hyder continued the war with his usual firmness and vigour, but Sir Eyre Coote defeated him severely at Porto Novo in 1781. The English captured Negapatam in November, 1781, and Trincomali, the best harbour in Ceylon, from the Dutch. An English force under Colonel Braithwaite was, however, defeated by the Mysore troops. Early in 1782 a French squadron under the command of Admiral Suffren appeared in Indian waters, and in the month of February next Du Chemin came with 2,000 men under his command. After some indecisive engagements of the English with the French and the Mysore troops, active hostilities ceased with the commencement of the rainy season. Hyder was not destined to fight any longer. The fatal effects of cancer resulted in his exit from this world at an advanced age.
on the 7th December, 1782. On the English side, Coote had retired owing to ill-health, leaving General Stuart in command of the Company's troops. He died at Madras in April, 1783.

Hyder was one of the ablest personalities in the history of India, who rose from obscurity to power during the distractions of the eighteenth century. A completely self-made man, he was endowed with strong determination, admirable courage, a keen intellect and a retentive memory, which more than counterbalanced his lack of the ability to read and write. Cool, sagacious, and intrepid in the field, he was remarkably tactful and vigorous in matters of administration, and had all business of the State transacted before his eyes with regularity and quickness. Easily accessible to all, he had the wonderful capacity of giving attention to various subjects at the same time without being distracted by any one of these. It would be unfair to describe him as an "absolutely unscrupulous" man, who "had no religion, no morals, and no compassion," as Dr. Smith has done. Though he did not strictly follow the external observances of his religion, he had a sincere religious conscience, and Wilks has described him as the "most tolerant" of all Muhammadan princes. Bowring gives a fair estimate of him in the following words: "... he was a bold, an original, and an enterprising commander, skilful in tactics and fertile in resources, full of energy and never desponding in defeat. He was singularly faithful to his engagements, and straight-forward in his policy towards the British. Notwithstanding the severity of his internal rule, and the terror which he inspired, his name is always mentioned in Mysore with respect if not with admiration. While the cruelties which he sometimes practised are forgotten, his prowess and success have an abiding place in the memory of the people."

Tipu, as brave and warlike as his father, continued the war against the English. Brigadier Mathews, appointed by the Bombay Government to the supreme command, was captured with all his men by Tipu in 1783. On the 23rd June of the same year news of a peace between the English and the French reached India. Colonel Fullarton captured Coimbatore in November, 1783, and intended to fall upon Tipu's capital, Seringapatam, but he was recalled by the authorities at Madras, where Lord Macartney had been eager for a peace with Tipu since his arrival as Governor and had sent envoys to his camp. Thus the Treaty of Mangalore was concluded in March, 1784, on the basis of mutual restitution of conquests and liberation of the prisoners. Warren Hastings did not like the terms of the treaty in the least and exclaimed, "What a man
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is this Lord Macartney! I yet believe that, in spite of the peace, he will effect the loss of the Carnatic."

C. The Third Anglo-Mysore War

Lord Cornwallis (1786-1793) came to India bound by Pitt's India Act to refrain from following a policy of war and conquest, except for purely defensive purposes. But he soon came to realise that it was not possible to follow strictly the injunctions of the said Act, which, as he expressed it, was "attended with the unavoidable inconvenience of our (the Company's) being constantly exposed to the necessity of commencing a war without having previously secured the assistance of efficient allies".1 Taking into consideration the facts of international politics, he rightly believed that Anglo-French hostility in Europe was bound to have its repercussions in India and that Tipu, allying himself with the French, would surely strike once more against the English. "I look upon a rupture with Tipu", he wrote to Malet, Resident at Poona, in March, 1788, "as a certain and immediate consequence of a war with France, and in that event a vigorous co-operation of the Marathas would certainly be of the utmost importance to our interests in the country."

As a matter of fact, the Treaty of Mangalore was nothing but a "hollow truce". Tipu also knew that the renewal of hostilities with the English was inevitable, because both were aiming at political supremacy over the Deccan. A ruler like Tipu could hardly remain satisfied with the arrangement of 1784. He tried to enlist for himself the support of France and of Constantinople, and sent envoys to both places in 1787; but he received only "promises of future help and no active assistance for the present".

Certain factors soon led to the third Anglo-Mysore conflict. In 1788 Lord Cornwallis obtained Guntur in the Northern Sarkars from the Nizâm, who in return asked for British help on the strength of the Treaty of Masulipatam, 1768. Cornwallis now took a course of action which amounted to a violation of the Act of 1784 in the spirit if not in the letter. He wrote a letter to the Nizâm on the 7th July, 1789, with a view to laying "the foundation of a permanent and powerful co-operation". He deliberately omitted Tipu's name from the letter, which was declared to be as binding "as a treaty in due form could be". Wilks, the historian of Southern India at this time, remarks that "it is highly instructive to observe a

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statesman, justly extolled for moderate and pacific dispositions, thus indirectly violating a law, enacted for the enforcement of these virtues, by entering into a very intelligible offensive alliance.”

“The liberal construction of the restrictions of the Act of Parliament had upon this occasion,” remarks Sir John Malcolm, “the effect of making the Governor-General pursue a course which was not only questionable in point of faith but which must have been more offensive to Tipoo Sultan and more calculated to produce a war with France than an avowed contract of defensive engagement framed for the express and legitimate purpose of limiting his inordinate ambition.”

This was indeed a sufficient provocation to Tipu. But the immediate cause of the war, which had been foreseen both by Tipu and Cornwallis, was the attack on Travancore by the former on the 29th December, 1789. The Rājā of Travancore was an old ally of the Company according to the Treaty of Mangalore and was entitled to the protection of the English. He applied to John Holland, Governor of Madras, for help but the Madras Government paid no heed. Lord Cornwallis, however, considered Tipu’s attack on Travancore to be an act of war and severely condemned the conduct of the Madras Government. Both the Nizām and the Marāthas, who apprehended that the growth of Tipu was prejudicial to their interests and were thus not well disposed towards him, entered into a “Triple Alliance” with the English on the 1st June and 4th July, 1790, respectively. The troops of the Marāthas and of the Nizām rendered useful services to the English in the course of the war, as Lord Cornwallis himself admitted.

The Third Anglo-Mysore War was carried on for about two years in three campaigns. The first under Major-General Medows did not produce any decisive result, as Tipu displayed “greater skill in strategy” than Medows. Lord Cornwallis wrote to Henry Dundas of the Board of Control: “... we have lost time and our adversary has gained reputation, which are two most valuable things in war.” He personally assumed command of the British troops in December, 1790, when he also formed the project of deposing Tipu in favour of the heir of the old Hindu ruling dynasty of Mysore. Marching through Vellore and Ambur to Bangalore, which was captured on the 21st March, 1791, he reached Arikera, about nine miles east of Seringapatam, Tipu’s capital, by the 13th May. But on this occasion too Tipu displayed brilliant generalship; and when the rains set in, Cornwallis had to retreat to Mangalore owing to the utter lack of equipment and provisions
for his army. The fighting was resumed in the summer of 1791, and Tipu captured Coimbatore on the 3rd November. But Cornwallis, with the help of an army sent from Bombay, soon occupied the hill-forts that lay in his path towards Seringapatam, arrived near it on the 5th February, 1792, and attacked its outworks. By his military and diplomatic skill Tipu averted a complete disaster, but he realised the impossibility of further resistance.

After some preliminary negotiations, the Treaty of Seringapatam was concluded in March, 1792. Tipu had to surrender half of his dominions, out of which a large portion, stretching from the Krishna to beyond the Penar river, was given to the Nizām, and a portion to the Marāthas, which extended their territory to the Tuṅga-bhadrā. The English acquired Malabar and sovereignty over the Rājā of Coorg, to whom Tipu had to grant independence; Dindigul and the adjoining districts on the south; and the Baramahal district on the east. These were "cessions of considerable importance in adding to the strength and compactness of the Company's territories". Moreover, Tipu had to pay an indemnity of more than £3,000,000 and to send two of his sons as hostages to Cornwallis's camp.

Some writers have criticised Lord Cornwallis for having concluded the treaty with the Sultān of Mysore instead of effecting his destruction, which, in their opinion, could have been easily done. Munro wrote: "Everything is now done by moderation and conciliation. At this rate we shall be Quakers in twenty years more." Thornton regrets that Tipu "should have been granted so favourable terms". But it should be noted that Cornwallis took this step out of some practical considerations. Sickness was spreading among his troops; war with France, and the consequent alliance between Tipu and the French, were apprehended; and the Court of Directors insisted on peace. Further, Cornwallis was not at all eager to occupy the whole kingdom of Mysore, which, in his opinion, would have made it difficult to effect a convenient settlement with the allies.

3. British Relations with Hyderābād and the Carnatic

A. The Nizām of Hyderābād

Like the governors of the other provinces, the Nizām-ul-mulk Aṣāf Jān, though theoretically a representative of the Delhi Emperor in the Deccan, had made himself virtually independent of the latter's authority in the reign of Muhammad Shāh. But the authority of his son, Nizām 'Āli, was menaced by the growing
ambitions of the Marāthas and the Sultāns of Mysore, which led him to court British help. On the 12th November, 1766, he concluded an offensive and defensive alliance with the Madras Council. In the course of the First Anglo-Mysore War, he was temporarily seduced from this alliance by an agent of Hyder ‘Ali, but he soon concluded a peace with the English at Masulipatam on the 23rd February, 1768. According to the treaty of 1766, as revised in 1768, the Company promised to pay an annual tribute of nine lacs of rupees to the Nizām in return for the latter’s granting them the Northern Sarkārs. The sarkār of Guntur being given for life to the Nizām’s brother, Basālāt Jang, the amount of tribute was reduced to seven lacs. But in 1779 Rumbold, the tactless governor of Madras, secured the sarkār of Guntur directly from Basālāt Jang and sought to stop the payment of tribute to the Nizām, who had violated the treaty of 1768 by taking French troops into his service. This was disapproved of by the Governor-General, Warren Hastings, but it served to alienate the Nizām, whose resentment had been already aroused by the English alliance with Raghoba, at a very critical moment. He joined in an anti-English confederacy with Hyder and the Marāthas. Hastings, however, succeeded in detaching the Nizām from the confederates by returning Guntur to Basālāt Jang when the Second Anglo-Mysore War had already progressed to the disadvantage of the English.

But after the death of Basālāt Jang in 1782, the English demanded the cession of Guntur from the Nizām on the strength of the treaty of 1768. Guntur occupied a position of importance both for the Nizām and the English; for the former it was the only outlet to the sea, and for the latter its possession was necessary to connect their possessions in the north with those in the south. After some hesitation the Nizām surrendered Guntur to the English in 1788 and in return sought their help, according to the treaty of 1768, to recover some of his districts which Tipu had seized. Lord Cornwallis, the then Governor-General, found himself in a delicate position, because the right of the Mysore Sultāns to those very territories had been recognised by the English by two separate treaties concluded with Hyder and Tipu respectively in 1769 and 1785; and also because he was precluded by clause 34 of Pitt’s India Act from declaring war against Indian powers or concluding a treaty with that object without being previously attacked. But at the same time he was eager to secure allies in view of the certain war with Tipu. So he wrote a letter to the Nizām on the 7th July, 1789, explaining the treaty of 1768 to suit his motives, and agreeing
to support the Nizām with British troops, which could not be employed against the allies of the English, a list of whom was included, Tipu's name being deliberately excluded from it. Thus the Nizām joined the Triple Alliance of 1790 and fought for the English in the Third Anglo-Mysore War.

As we have already noted, Sir John Shore, in pursuance of the neutrality policy laid down by Pitt's India Act, did not lend assistance to the Nizām against the Marāthas, who severely defeated him at Kharda in March, 1795.

B. The Carnatic

The Carnatic, distracted by the Anglo-French conflicts of the mid-eighteenth century, afterwards suffered terribly from the evils of a demoralised administration, due partly to the disreputable character of its Nawāb, Muhammad ʿĀli, and partly to the vacillating and selfish policy of the Madras Government. "The moral atmosphere of Madras appears at this time," remarks Thornton, "to have been pestilential; corruption revelled unrestrained; and strong indeed must have been the power which could effectually repress it while Mahomet Ali (Muhammad ʿĀli) had purposes to gain and either money or promises to bestow." Ceasing to reside at Arcot, Muhammad ʿĀli spent his days in a magnificent palace at Chepauk, a fishing village in the suburb of Madras, steeped in pleasure and luxury, to meet the extravagant expenses of which he borrowed lavishly from the Company's servants at Madras at exorbitant rates of interest, sometimes rising as high as 36 per cent per annum, and granting them assignments on the land revenues of the Carnatic districts. He was not, declared Burke, "a real potentate", but "a shadow, a dream, an incubus of oppression". The "Nabob of Arcot's Debts", through which the European bond-holders, including some members of the Madras Council, amassed huge fortunes at the expense of the interests of the kingdom, gave rise to serious administrative scandals and so the British Parliament tried to deal with them. But the Board of Control intervened in the matter and ordered that the debts of the Nawāb should be paid out of the revenues of the Carnatic. This decision of the ministry, denounced by Burke and others, dealt a severe blow "at the cause of pure administration in the East". According to an arrangement dated the 2nd December, 1781, the revenues of the Carnatic had been assigned to British control, the Nawāb being given one-sixth for his maintenance. But now that the creditors of the Nawāb clamoured for their money, the Board
of Control ordered the restitution of the revenues to the Nawâb
who went on plunging himself all the deeper into debt.

Thus the relations between Muhammad 'Ali and the Company
were very complicated when Lord Cornwallis came to India as the
Company's Governor-General for the first time. On the 24th
February, 1787, the English concluded a treaty with the Nawâb,
by which they agreed to defend the whole country in return
for a subsidy of fifteen lacs of pagodas (a coin current in Southern
India corresponding at the normal rate of exchange to three and
a half rupees). But during the war with Tipu (1790-1792) the
Company took into its own hands the entire control of the Carnatic
intending "to secure the two states (the Carnatic and Madras)",
as Malcolm says, "against the dangers to which they thought
them exposed from the mismanagement of the Nawâb's officers".
At the close of the war a treaty was concluded on the 12th July,
1792, by which the Carnatic was restored to its Nawâb and at the
same time the British subsidy was reduced from fifteen lacs of
pagodas to nine lacs.

Muhammad 'Ali died on the 13th October, 1795, and his son
and successor, Omdut-ul-Umarâ, could not be persuaded by Lord
Hobart, Governor of Madras since September, 1794, to modify the
treaty of 1792 to the extent of giving to the Company all the
territories which had been pledged as security for arrears of pecuniary
instalments. The new Nawâb, "perplexed, plagued and intimi-
dated" by his creditors, would not accede to the proposals.
The desire of the Madras governor to go to the length of annexing
Tinnevelly was not supported by the Governor-General, Sir John
Shore. The corruption in the Carnatic Government continued
unabated, owing, as Mill aptly expresses it, to "the compound of
opposition of the Supreme Government and of the powerful class
of individuals whose profit depended upon the misgovernment
of the country. . . ."
Allahābād and made these over to the Nawāb of Oudh in return for fifty lacs of rupees and an annual subsidy to maintain a garrison of the Company’s troops for the Nawāb’s protection. This arrangement was ratified by the Treaty of Benares, September, 1773, when Hastings had a conference with the Nawāb.

But this policy of Hastings drew the Company into a war with the Ruhellas. The fertile country of Ruhelkhand, lying at the base of the Himālayas to the north-west of Oudh, with a population of about 6,000,000, the bulk of whom were Hindus, and governed by a confederacy of Ruhela chiefs under the leadership of Hāfiz Rahamat Khān, had been threatened by the Marāthis since 1771. The Nawāb of Oudh also coveted the province of Ruhelkhand and there was no love lost between him and the Afghāns of that tract. But the common Marāthis danger led the Ruhellas and Shujā-ud-daulah, the Nawāb of Oudh, to sign a treaty on the 17th June 1772, in the presence of Sir Robert Barker. It provided that if the Marāthis invaded Ruhelkhand, the Nawāb of Oudh would expel them, for which the Ruhellas would pay him forty lacs of rupees. The Marāthis invaded Ruhelkhand in the spring of 1773, but they were repulsed by the combined British and Oudh troops and could not think of repeating their incursions owing to the disorders at Poona after the death of the Peshwā, Mādhava Rāo I. The Nawāb of Oudh then demanded from the Ruhela ruler the payment of the stipulated sum of forty lacs of rupees, which was, however, evaded by the latter. On the strength of the Treaty of Benares (September, 1773), Shujā-ud-daulah demanded, early in February, 1774, the help of the Company to coerce Hāfiz Rahamat Khān. A British army was accordingly sent under the command of Colonel Champion; and the allied British and Oudh troops marched into Ruhelkhand on the 17th April, 1774. Six days later, the decisive battle was fought at Miranpur Katra. The Ruhellas were defeated though, as the British commander observed, they exhibited “great bravery and resolution”. Hāfiz Rahamat was killed fighting bravely; about 20,000 Ruhellas were expelled beyond the Ganges; and their province was annexed to the Oudh kingdom, only a fragment of it, together with Rāmpurā, being left in the possession of Fāizullāh Khān, son of ‘Āli Muhammad Ruhela, the founder of the Ruhela power.

Opinions are sharply divided on the merits and demerits of Hastings’ policy in the Ruhela War. It was one of the main points of attack on Hastings in Parliament in 1786. Not only Burke and Macaulay but also most of the older school of historians, like Mill and others, have condemned it in severe terms. In their opinion,
Hastings "deliberately sold the lives and liberties of a free people and condoned horrible atrocities on the part of the armies of the Nawâb of Oudh". But the policy has found defenders in some modern writers, notably in Sir John Strachey, who has tried in his Hastings and the Rohilla War to justify it wholly. Though some of the expressions of Burke, Macaulay or Mill may be regarded as unjust invective, the policy of Hastings cannot escape reasonable criticism from certain points of view. One has to note that the expediency of the transaction was doubted by Hastings himself and still more by his Council, and they treated it during its initial stages with vacillation. Hastings might have thought, while concluding the Treaty of Benares, that the occasion for helping the Nawâb of Oudh would never arise; but to be committed to a course of action, without duly weighing the remote consequences involved in it, is not, in the words Mr. P. E. Roberts, "the happiest or most efficient kind of political conduct". It is also difficult to support the view that Hastings was in duty bound to lend assistance to the Nawâb of Oudh as the treaty between the latter and the Ruhelas had been concluded under British guarantee. Sir Robert Barker had merely witnessed the signatures of the two parties and did nothing else regarding it. Further, it is improper to argue, as Sir John Strachey has done, that the Ruhelas deserved expulsion from their province as they had established their rule over its Hindu population only twenty-five years before. It is clear that their title to the province was as good as that of many of the Indian States of the time which were rising on the ruins of the Mughul Empire. We have contemporary evidence, which could not be quite ignored even by Sir John Strachey, to show that the Hindus of Rohilkhand were well governed and enjoyed prosperity under the Ruhelas; it was the new Oudh rule that proved to be oppressive to them. Even Sir John Strachey has to admit that Hastings' policy was "somewhat cynical". Lastly, the Ruhelas cannot be accused of having in any way offended the English. Sir Alfred Lyall very reasonably observes that "the expedition against the Rohillas was wrong in principle, for they had not provoked us and the Vezir could only be relied upon to abuse his advantages". The whole transaction smacks of selfish motives, mainly of a mercenary character, and undoubtedly set a bad precedent. Its nature is clear from what Hastings himself avowed: "The absence of the Marâthas, and the weak state of the Rohillas, promised an easy conquest of them, and I own that such was my idea of the Company's distress at home added to my knowledge of their wants abroad, that I
should have been glad of any occasion to employ their forces that saves so much of their pay and expenses.”

B. The Chait Singh Affair

Mercenary motives led Hastings to commit two more indefensible acts. In one case, he made exorbitant demands on Chait Singh, the Rājā of Benares. Originally a feudatory of the Nawāb of Oudh, Chait Singh placed himself under the overlordship of the Company by a treaty in July, 1775, whereby he agreed to pay an annual tribute of 22½ lacs of rupees to his new masters. But with the outbreak of Anglo-French hostilities in 1778, Hastings demanded from the Rājā an additional sum of five lacs as a war contribution, which he paid. The demand was, however, repeated several times and the Rājā after pleading for time and exemption complied with it on every occasion. This did not suffice to satisfy Hastings. In 1780 he ordered the Rājā to furnish 2,000 cavalry, reduced at the latter’s request to 1,000. The Rājā gathered 500 cavalry and 500 infantry as substitute, and informed Hastings that they were ready for serving the Company; but he received no reply. Hastings had already determined to inflict on him a fine of fifty lacs of rupees. “I was resolved,” he said, “to draw from his guilt the means of relief to the Company’s distress. . . . In a word I had determined to make him pay largely for his pardon, or to exact a severe vengeance for his past delinquency.” To carry out his plans Hastings went in person to Benares and placed the Rājā under arrest. The Rājā submitted quietly; but the indignity inflicted upon him infuriated his soldiers, who rose suddenly, without their master’s instigation or his knowledge, and massacre a number of English sepoys with three officers. Hastings retired for his personal safety to Chunar, but soon gathering all the available troops suppressed the rising. Chait Singh justly argued his innocence in regard to complicity in the massacre; but to no effect. He was expelled from his country and found shelter at Gwalior. His kingdom was conferred upon his nephew, who was to pay a tribute of forty lacs, instead of 22½ lacs, to the Company.

Whatever might be said by the modern apologists of Hastings, there is no doubt that his conduct in the Chait Singh affair was “cruel, unjust and oppressive”, as Pitt observed at the time of his impeachment. Chait Singh was wrongly described as a mere zamindār, and not a ruling prince, by the defenders of Hastings. Even if they could have proved him to be a mere zamindār, one might very well question the justice of fleecing him and him alone and
not imposing a common tax on all the zamindārs. The treaty of 5th July, 1775, which still regulated the relations between the Rājā and the Company, definitely laid down that "no demand shall be made upon him by the Hon’ble Company, of any kind, or on any pretence whatsoever, nor shall any person be allowed to interfere with his authority, or to disturb the peace of his country". So legally the Rājā was not bound to pay any extra contribution. Forrest makes a gross mis-statement of facts when he says that the Rājā’s conduct was "contumacious and refractory and deserving of punishment". As a matter of fact, Chait Singh was all along submissive and his men rose in insurrection without his connivance only when their master had been humiliated. Unbiased writers must accept the reasonable verdict of Sir Alfred Lyall that "Hastings must bear the blame of having provoked the insurrection at Benares" and that there was "a touch of impolitic severity and precipitation about his proceedings against Chait Singh" due to a "certain degree of vindictiveness and private irritation against the Rājā". It is amply clear that the whole transaction was iniquitous from the moral point of view. It was also inexpedient.

Dr. V. A. Smith has tried to defend Hastings' exorbitant demands on the ground of expediency in view of the "grave necessities" of the disturbed political situation of the time. But the Governor-General did not make any financial gain, as the Rājā took away with him a portion of his wealth, and the remaining twenty-three lacs was looted by the troops to be divided among themselves. The Company on the contrary was put to the strain of bearing the cost of the military operations that followed. Thus the Court of Directors justly criticised Hastings' policy as "unwarrantable and impolitic". Further, the Company obtained the enhanced tribute of forty lacs from the new Rājā of Benares at a great sacrifice of the interests of the principality, the administration of which became worse under their protégé.

C. The Case of the Begams of Oudh

After the death of Shujā-ud-daullah, a shrewd, industrious and clever administrator, on the 26th January, 1775, his son and successor, Asaf-ud-daullah, unwisely allowed his liabilities to the Company to be increased by entering into a new treaty with them known as the Treaty of Faizābād—particularly binding himself thereby to pay a heavier subsidy for the maintenance of British troops. The administration of Oudh grew more and more corrupt under the new Nawāb, and the subsidy payable to the Company
fell into arrears. The Begams of Oudh, mother and grandmother of the reigning prince, had inherited from the deceased Nawab extensive jagirs and immense wealth, which, however, Asaf-ud-daulah, pressed by the Company for money, sought to seize on the ground that he had been unjustly deprived of them. In 1775, on the representations of Middleton, the British Resident in Oudh, the widow of Shujah-ud-daulah gave to her son £300,000, in addition to £250,000 already paid to him, the British Resident and the Council in Calcutta having given a guarantee that no further demands should be made on her in future. Hastings, opposed to his Council at this time, was outvoted. When in 1781 the Nawab of Oudh, pressed by the British Resident, proposed that he should be permitted to seize the property and wealth of the Begams to clear off his dues to the Company, Hastings had no hesitation in consenting to it and in withdrawing British protection from them. The Nawab soon began to waver and was afraid, as the Resident remarked, of the "uncommonly violent temper of his female relations"; but Hastings helped to screw up his courage. The Governor-General wrote to Middleton in December, 1781: "You must not allow any negotiations or forbearance, but must prosecute both services until the Begams are at the entire mercy of the Nawab." British troops were sent to Faizabad, where the Begams lived; and their eunuchs were compelled by imprisonment, starvation and threat, if not actual infliction, of flogging, to surrender the treasure in December, 1782.

The conduct of Hastings on this occasion exceeded all limits of decency and justice. "The employment of personal severities, under the superintendence of British officers, in order to extract money from women and eunuchs," observes Sir Alfred Lyall rightly, "is an ignoble kind of undertaking: . . . to cancel the guarantee and leave the Nawab to deal with the recalcitrant princes was justifiable; to push him on and actively assist in measures of coercion against women and eunuchs was conduct unworthy and indefensible." There can be no doubt that Hastings was the "moving spirit" in the whole transaction. Hastings argued, and his defenders maintain, that the Begams had forfeited their claim to British protection for their complicity in the affair of Chait Singh. The contention is hardly tenable. The testimony in regard to it is conflicting and "the charge of rebellion was ex post facto, made when it was found necessary to present a justification for the whole business".

In his last year of office Hastings made some unsuccessful attempts to reorganise the administration and finances of Oudh.
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Under the orders of the Court of Directors, he effected a partial restitution of the jagirs to the Begams, and removed the British Residency, but established in its place "an agency of the Governor-General" which proved to be a heavier burden on the resources of the State.

D. Policy of Cornwallis and Shore towards Oudh

In fact, Oudh continued to groan under the evils of maladministration and the burden of the Company's financial demands. In the time of Lord Cornwallis, the Nawâb appealed to him to relieve him of the "oppressive pecuniary burden" by withdrawing the Company's troops stationed at Cawnpore and Fatehpur. After meeting the Nawâb's minister Hyder Beg in a conference, the Governor-General agreed to reduce the subsidies from seventy-four to fifty lacs but objected to the withdrawal of British troops.

Hyder Beg was really an able minister, eager to reform the administration, but with his death in 1794, all hope of reform came to an end. On the death of Asaf-ud-daulah in 1797, Sir John Shore intervened in the case of disputed succession between Wâzir Ali, whom Asaf-ud-daulah had looked upon as his successor, and Safadat 'Ali, the deceased Nawâb's eldest brother. He raised the latter to the throne and entered into a treaty with him on the 21st January, 1798. By this the annual subsidy to be paid by the Nawâb was raised to seventy-six lacs of rupees; the fort of Allahabad, described by Marshman as the "military key of the province", was ceded to the Company; the Nawâb bound himself not to hold communications with, or admit into his kingdom, the other Europeans; and Wâzir 'Ali was allowed to live at Benares on an annual pension of a lac and a half of rupees. This arrangement, no doubt, greatly enhanced the Company's influence, but in no way served to remove the corruption in the internal government of Oudh. Throughout this province, "there were in all respects embarrassment and disorder. The British subsidy was always in arrear, while the most frightful extortion was practised in the realisation of the revenue. Justice was unknown; the army was a disorderly mass, formidable only to the power whom it professed to serve. The evils of native growth were aggravated by the presence of an extraordinary number of European adventurers, most of whom were as destitute of character and principle as they were of property".
CHAPTER IV

ESTABLISHMENT OF BRITISH ASCENDANCY, 1798-1823

1. Anglo-Maratha Relations and Fall of the Marathas

A. The Marathas after Kheda and the Second Anglo-Maratha War

The victory of the Marathas at Kheda enhanced their prestige and the influence of Nānā Fadnavis at Poona. But they were not destined to reap any permanent advantage out of it. It was at Kheda that the Marātha chiefs assembled under the authority of the Peshwā for the last time. Soon they spoiled all their chances by unwisely indulging in internal quarrels. The young Peshwā, Mādhava Rāo Nāriyān, grew tired of Nānā’s dictatorship, and, in a fit of despair, committed suicide on the 25th October, 1785. The next in succession was Raghoba’s son, Bājī Rāo II, a bitter foe of Nānā Fadnavis, whose claims were opposed by the ministers. This led to various plots and counter-plots till at last Bājī Rāo II was recognised as the Peshwā and Nānā Fadnavis as his chief minister on the 4th December, 1796. Taking advantage of these dissensions among the Marathas, the Nizām recovered the territories that he had been compelled to cede to them after his recent defeat at Kheda.

Devoid of military qualities, and fond of intrigue, Bājī Rāo II accentuated the rivalries of the Marātha leaders of the time, by setting one against another. Unfortunately for the Marātha nation, able leaders like Mahādāji Sindhia, Malhar Rāo Holkar and Tukojir Holkar had already left this world for ever. Their descendants, like Daulat Rāo Sindhia, a nephew and adopted son of Mahādāji Sindhia, and Jaswant Rāo Holkar, a natural son of Tukojir, utterly devoid of wisdom, only occupied themselves in mutual quarrels, to the prejudice of national interests, at a time when the Company’s policy of non-intervention had given place to one of aggressive imperialism with the arrival of Lord Mornington (subsequently Marquess Wellesley) as Governor-General on the 26th April, 1798.

An imperialist to the tips of his fingers and possessed of experience of Indian affairs as Commissioner of the Board of Control, Wellesley came to guide the destiny of the Company in India when
the political situation in this country was "extremely critical"; as he himself said; and the Company was exposed to grave dangers, due largely to Shore's policy of neutrality. Tipu, the "ancient enemy of the Company," greatly improved his resources, while his spirit of hostility was unabated; the Nizām was "reduced in reputation as well as in strength" and had welcomed French support, being alienated from the English neutrality in 1795; the power of Daulat Kathir "had arrived at a most alarming eminence"; the British in the Malabar region, with the exception of the Rājā of Cochin, were hostile; there was constant apprehension of an invasion from the Indian plains by Zamān Shāh, the ruler of Kābul; and the finances of the Company were in an unsatisfactory condition. The influence of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars in Europe added to the gravity of the situation. The French proceeded themselves with Tipu, and Napoleon had undertaken the occupation of Egypt with a view to threatening the British possessions in India.

To save the Company's position in this menacing situation, and to safeguard and further the interests of the British Empire as a whole, he accordingly followed the policy of subsidiary alliances with regard to the Indian powers. Indeed, the defence of England's Empire in India was the keynote of Wellesley's policy. His system of subsidiary alliances implied that the Indian powers "were to make no war and to carry on no negotiations with any other state whatsoever without the knowledge and consent of the British Government to protect them, one and all, against foreign enemies of every sort or kind." Only a weak power could submit to such an arrangement, and the Nizām, the greatest of all the Indian powers, readily accepted it. Some other States were also conquered or mediatised by Wellesley.

Mahārāṣṭra had not come into any close contact with the Company since Wellesley's accession to office. He had asked them on several occasions to enter his system "of defensive alliance and mutual guarantee" but got no response. "Hitherto," wrote Wellesley in 1800, "either the capricious temper of Bāji Rāo, or some scruple if the characteristic jealousy of the nation with regard to foreign relations, have frustrated my object and views." But the course of affairs, even in Mahārāṣṭra, took such
a turn as to afford an opportunity to the English to intervene. The shrewd old Marāṭha statesman, Nānā Pādnāvīs, who had so long done his best to preserve the form of solidarity of the Marāṭha confederacy and had his share in resisting British interference in Marāṭha affairs, died at Poona on the 3d March, 1800. "With him," remarked Colonel Palmer, the British Resident at Poona, "departed all the firmness and moderation of the Marāṭha Government." Though Pādnāvīs' attempt to establish hegemony at Poona, and his alliance of the north, have been considered by a modern Marāṭhi writer as shortcomings in his policy, yet it must be admitted that "Pādnāvīs", as Grant Duff observes, "certainly a great statesman. At least he is entitled to the high praise of having acted with the feeling and sincerity of a patriot". He understood the danger of English intervention in the affairs of the Marāṭhas and was opposed to any alliance with them. He "respected the English, admired their sincerity, detested political enemies, no one regarded them with more jealously and alarm". His death meant the removal of the barrier that had checked to a great extent the disruptive activities of the Malwa chiefs. Both Daulat Rāo Sindhiā and Jasswant Rāo Holkar entered upon a fierce struggle with each other for supremacy at Poona, and the weak-minded Peshwā made matters worse by his peremptory intrigues. Sindhiā at first prevailed, and while he was engaged in fighting against Holkar's troops at Malwa, the Peshwā ordered Vithuji Holkar, brother of Jasswant Rāo Holkar, to attack Sindhiā. This highly incensed Jasswant Rāo Holkar, whose power and influence had recently improved, and on October 23rd, he defeated the combined armies of Sindhiā and the Peshwā at Poona and captured the city. After running from place to place, the Peshwā was reduced at Bassein. Jasswant Rāo Holkar placed Vinayak Rāo, son of Amrītā Rāo, adopted son of Raghoba, on the Peshwā's throne.

The Peshwā had for long declined to accept the Subsidiary Alliance, but now in his helpless situation applied for protection to Wellesley. This was what Wellesley wanted, because it fitted in with his plan of establishing control over the Marāṭhas. Rāo II consented to accept the Subsidiary Alliance and sign the Treaty of Bassein on the 31st December, 1802. As stipulated by this treaty, a subsidiary force, consisting "of not less than 6,000 regular infantry, with the usual proportion of field-artillery and European artillery-men", was to be stationed within the Peshwā's territory in perpetuity; and for its maintenance, territories yielding revenues worth twenty-six lacs of rupees were surrendered to the Peshwā. Bājī Rāo II further agreed not to entertain any European
hostile to the English and subjected his relations with other States to the control of the English. Thus he “sacrificed his independence as the price of protection”. A British force under Arthur Wellesley conducted the Peshwâ to his capital and restored him to his former position on 13th May, 1803.

The Treaty of Bassein forms an important landmark in the history of British supremacy in India. “It was without question”, to quote Dean Hutton, “a step which changed the footing on which we stood in Western India. It trebled the English responsibilities in an instant.” It brought the Company into definite relations with the formal head of the Marâtha confederacy, and henceforth it “had either to control the greatest Indian power, or was committed to hostilities with it”. But there is no reason to overestimate its importance by holding, as Owen has done, that “the Treaty by its direct and indirect operations gave the Company the Empire of India”. The British suzerainty over India was certainly not a foregone conclusion in 1803; a great deal had still to be achieved before it could be thoroughly established. The weak points of the Treaty of Bassein were criticised in England in a contemporary paper entitled Observations on the Treaty of Bassein, written by Lord Castlereagh, the successor in May, 1801, of Dundas as President of the Board of Control. He was right in pointing out that it appeared “hopeless to attempt to govern the Marâtha Empire through a feeble and perhaps disaffected Peshwâ”. He especially attacked that article of the treaty by which the Peshwâ had to accept British arbitration in his disputes with other powers, and he had a just apprehension of the tendency of the treaty to involve the English “in the endless and complicated distractions of that turbulent (Marâtha) Empire”. Wellesley wrongly calculated that after the treaty there existed no reason “to justify an apprehension” of hostility with the Marâtha chiefs, though at the same time he realised that even if any war actually broke out the advantages gained by the English as a result of the Treaty of Bassein would help them to meet their opponents successfully.

War was not long in coming. The Treaty of Bassein was, as the Governor-General’s brother, Arthur Wellesley, aptly remarked, “a treaty with a cipher (the Peshwâ)”. It wounded the feelings of the other Marâtha leaders, who saw in it an absolute surrender of national independence, and by sinking their mutual jealousies for the time being tried to present a united front to the British. The Peshwâ, now repentant of his action, sent them secret messages of encouragement. Daulat Râo Sindhibâ and
Raghuji Bhonsle II of Berar at once combined and also tried to
win over Jaswant Rao Holkar to their party. But even at this
moment of grave national peril the Maratha chiefs could not
act together. Though Sindhia and Raghuji Bhonsle II mobilised
their troops, Holkar “retired to Malwa with the real design
of being guided by the issue of events” and took the field when
it was too late, and the Gaikwar remained neutral.

Hostilities commenced early in the month of August, 1803.
The total strength of the Maratha armies was 250,000 besides
40,000 troops trained by Frenchmen, while the British troops in
different parts of India numbered about 55,000. But Wellesley
was adequately prepared for the coming war. His measures in
Mysore and at Surat, his treaties with the Gaikwar and Oudh, and,
avove all, the Treaty of Bassein “afforded the most efficient means
of opposing the confederacy with success”. The English decided
to attack the enemy at all points, and the war was conducted
in two main centres, in the Deccan under Arthur Wellesley and
in Hindustan under General Lake—and simultaneously in three
subsidiary centres in Gujarat, Bundelkhand and Orissa. The French-
trained battalions of the Marathas did not prove very useful, and
the European officers in Sindhia’s army mostly deserted him. The
Marathas had certainly committed a mistake in abandoning
the harassing tactics of their predecessors and in giving preference
to Western methods of fighting for which they had to depend on
foreigners. It resulted in quick reverses.

In the Deccan, Arthur Wellesley captured Ahmadnagar, on
the Nizam’s frontier, on the 12th August, 1803, and on the 23rd
September gained a complete victory over the combined troops
of Sindhia and Bhonsle at Assaye, situated about forty-five
miles north of Aurangabad. Grant Duff described this battle as
“a triumph more splendid than any recorded in Deccan history”.
Burbannur and Asirgarh were captured by the English on the 15th October and 21st October respectively. The Bhonsle
Raja’s forces were completely defeated at Argon, about fifty
miles east of Burbannur, on the 29th November, and the English
captured the strong fortress of Gawilgarh on the 15th December,
1803. In Hindustan, also, success attended British arms. Lake
captured Delhi and Agra, and the northern army of the Sindhia
was severely routed at the battle of Delhi in the month of Sep-
tember and at Laswari, in Alwar State, in the month of November.
The English gained further successes in Gujarat, Bundelkhand and
Orissa. Thus, in the course of five months, Sindhia and Bhonsle
had to own severe defeats and conclude two separate treaties.
with the English. By the Treaty of Deogāon, concluded on the 17th December, 1803, the Bhonsle Rājā of Berār ceded to the English the province of Cuttack, including Balāsore, and the whole of his territory west of the river Warda. The English were henceforth to arbitrate if he had any disputes with the Nizām or the Peshwā; and "no European or American or a nation at war with the English,
or any British subject, was to be entertained without the consent of the British Government”. On his agreeing to maintain a British Resident at Nāgpur, the Honourable M. Elphinstone was sent there. Sindhia concluded the Treaty of Surji-Arjanguion on the 30th December, by which he gave to the victors all his territories between the Ganges and the Jumna and his forts and territories to the north of the Rajput principalities of Jaipur, Jodhpur and Gohad. To the westward he ceded to them Ahmadnagar, Broach and all his territories west of the Ajantā Hills. He renounced all his claims on the Mughul Emperor, the Peshwa, the Nizām and on the British Government; agreed not to admit into his service Europeans of enemy countries or British subjects without the consent of the English; and Sir John Malcolm was appointed Resident at his court. By another treaty, concluded on the 27th February, 1804, he entered into a subsidiary alliance, according to which a defence force of 6,000 infantry was to be stationed not in Sindhia’s territory, but near its frontier. As a reward for his loyalty to the English, the Nizām got, from the old possessions of the Rajā of Berār, all territories to the south of Narnula and Gāwilgarh and west of the river Warda, and, from the dominions of Sindhia, districts south of the Ajantā Hills such as Jalānpur and Gondāpur.

As a result of the Second Anglo-Marātha War, the English secured important advantages in various ways. “With all the sanguine temper of my mind,” confessed Wellesley, “I declare that I could not have hoped for a completion of my plans at once so rapid and so secure.” The British possessions in Madras and Bengal were linked up and were expanded also in other directions. The titular Mughul Emperor, Shāh ‘Alam II, came under their protection and treaties of alliance were concluded with the States of Jodhpur, Jaipur, Macheri, Bundi and the Jāt kingdom of Bharatpur. The French-trained battalions in the service of the Marāthas were removed. The Nizām and the Peshwa fell more under their influence than before. Munro, a critical writer, asserted: “We are now complete masters of India, and nothing can shake our power, if we take proper measures to confirm it.” But Wellesley showed an “almost wilful” error of judgment in believing that the treaties afforded the “only possible security for the permanent tranquillity and prosperity of these valuable and important possessions”. The Ministry in England, as is clear from the contemporary despatches of Lord Castlereagh, thought otherwise. The situation in India was rightly diagnosed by Arthur Wellesley, who thought that his brother, the Governor-General, put “a too exacting interpretation on the Treaties of Peace”. He wrote
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on the 13th May, 1804: "Our enemies are much disgusted, and complain loudly of our conduct and want of faith: and in truth I consider the peace to be by no means secured."

B. War With Holkar

In fact, the peace had already come to an end with the commencement of hostilities (April, 1804) between Holkar, who had so long kept himself aloof from the war, and the English. Holkar pursued the old tactics of the Marathas and defeated Colonel Monson, who had in an ill-judged manner advanced too far into the plains of Rajputana, at Mankundar Pass, thirty miles south of Kotah, and compelled him to retreat to Agra towards the end of August. Flushed with this success, Holkar marched northward and besieged Delhi from the 8th to the 14th October, but the city was successfully defended by the local British Resident, Lt.-Colonel Ochterlony. A band of Holkar's troops was defeated at Dig on the 13th November and another band, personally commanded by Holkar, was routed by General Lake on the 17th November. But the English soon suffered a serious reverse owing to Lake's failure to take the fortress of Bharatpur early in 1805. The Raja of Bharatpur, however, concluded a treaty with the English on the 10th April, 1805, and the war might have taken an adverse turn for Holkar but for Wellesley's sudden recall.

For some time past the authorities in England had been rather dissatisfied with the aggressive policy of Wellesley, and his conquests, though brilliant and of far-reaching consequence, "were becoming", it was believed by many, "too large for profitable management" and raised the Company's debts from seventeen millions in 1797 to thirty-one millions in 1806. Further, Wellesley's manners were imperious and overbearing, and he dealt with the home authorities in a rather masterful way, often disregarding their orders and instructions and not informing them of his actions. So long as Wellesley's policy was crowned with success, the home authorities did not interfere. But the news of the disastrous retreat of Monson and the failure of Lake before Bharatpur having reached England, his "war-loving" policy began to be severely condemned by a strong public opinion. Pitt is said to have declared that Wellesley "had acted most imprudently and illegally, and that he could not be suffered to remain in the government". Lord Wellesley resigned his post and sailed for England.

Lord Cornwallis being appointed Governor-General for the second
time at the age of sixty-seven reached Calcutta on the 30th July, 1805, with instructions from Castlereagh to stop aggrandisement and "to bring back things to the state which the legislature had prescribed" by the Acts of 1784 and 1793. But, before anything could be done to reverse the subsidiary treaties, Lord Cornwallis died at Ghuzipur on the 5th October, 1805, and Sir George Barlow, the senior member of the Council, became the acting Governor-General. Barlow carried out the policy of his predecessor. Peace was finally concluded with the Sindhi on the 23rd November, 1805. Gwalior and Gohud were restored to him; he was to claim nothing north of the river Chambal and the Company nothing to the south of it; and the Company pledged itself not to enter into treaties with the chiefs of Rajputana. Meanwhile Lord Lake had hunted Holkar up to Amritsar, where the latter had appealed to the Sikhs for help, who, however, did not accept his proposals. He thereupon opened negotiations with Lord Lake for peace, which was signed on the 7th January, 1806. Holkar gave up all claims to Tonk, Rampur, Bundi, Kooch, Bundelkhand and places north of the Chambal, but he got back the greater part of his lost territories. Further, in spite of strong protest from Lord Lake, Sir George Barlow published Decleratory Articles whereby Tonk and Rampur were practically surrendered to Holkar and British protection was withdrawn from the other Rajput States. Thus the Rajput States were left to their fate, to be distracted by Maratha inroads into their territories. As an envoy of the Raj of Jaipur observed, the Company now made "its faith subservient to its convenience".

C. The Third Anglo-Maratha War and the Fall of the Marathas

With the last quarter of the eighteenth century the Marathas had begun losing all those elements which are needed for the growth of a power, and so could not profit in the least by the British policy of neutrality in the beginning of the nineteenth century. The political and administrative conditions of all the Maratha States came to be hopelessly confused and gloomy, and their economic condition anything but satisfactory. Jaswant Rao Holkar secretly assassinated his brother, Kasi Rao, and his nephew Khande Rao. The course of events, however, so affected his mind that he became insane, and died on the 20th October, 1811. The real ruler was now the deceased Holkar's favourite mistress, Tulsi Bai, a clever and intelligent woman, who had the support of Balaram Seth, Jaswant Rao's minister, and of Amir
Khān, the leader of the Central Indian Pathāns. These unworthy men failed to administer the State properly.

So far as Daulat Rāo Sindhiā was concerned, the financial resources of his State could not suffice to meet the cost of his army, and his soldiers were permitted to collect money on their own account from the districts. The morale of the army thereby deteriorated and Sindhiā could not maintain a strong control over his generals.

Exposed to the inroads of the Pundarīs and the Pathāns, the territory of Raghūji Bhonsle was in the midst of disorder. So none of the three Marātha chiefs were in a position to oppose the English openly; and the Gāikwār of Baroda manifested no desire to violate the treaty of subsidiary alliance into which he had entered on the 21st April, 1805. Referring to the Marātha princes Prinsep believed that ‘as far as they were individually concerned, the objects of the settlement of 1805–1806 seem to have been attained: their weakness afforded a security against any one of them meditating a separate hostile enterprise; at the same time the balance that had been established remained unaltered, and the mutual jealousies relied upon as the guarantee against a second coalition were yet unextinguished’.

But another trial of strength between the English and the Marāthas took place before the latter finally succumbed. Though apparently friendly, the Marātha chiefs, including even the Peshwā, who had been restored to the masnad through the help of the English, nurtured in their heart of hearts feelings of jealousy and hostility against the English, which they could not then openly manifest owing to the distracted condition of their kingdoms, but which might burst forth on the appearance of a favourable opportunity. Largely under the influence of his unscrupulous favourite, Trimbakji Danglia, Bāji Rāo II engaged in intrigues with a view to leading once more a confederacy of the Marātha chiefs against the English. To settle some disputes between the Peshwā and the Gāikwār, the latter sent to Poona in A.D. 1814 his chief minister, Gangādhar Shāstrī, a friend of the English. Shāstrī was conducted by the Peshwā to Nāsik and was murdered there apparently at the instigation of Trimbakji. After a good deal of hesitation, Bāji Rāo II surrendered Trimbakji to Mountstuart Elphinstone, the British Resident at Poona since 1811, who placed him under confinement in the fortress of Thana. But he escaped a year later, it was believed with the connivance of the Peshwā, though there is no definite proof of it. Matters became most threatening by the year 1817. The Peshwā now made serious attempts to organise against the English a confederacy of
the Marātha chiefs and opened negotiations with them as well as with the Pathān chief, Amir Khān, and the Pindaris. He also tried to increase the strength and efficiency of his army.

The English did not fail to take prompt measures to check the Peshwā’s designs. With the arrival of the Earl of Moira, better known as the Marquess of Hastings (1813–1823), the British policy of neutrality had been thoroughly reversed. The new Governor-General was determined “to render the British Government paramount in effect, if not declaredly so” and to “hold the other States vassals in substance, if not in name. . . .” Mountstuart Elphinstone, instructed by the Governor-General on the 10th May, 1817, to circumscribe the powers of the Peshwā in such a way as to “prevent the evils apprehended from the course of policy pursued by the Court of Poona for several years”, induced Bājī Rāo II to sign most reluctantly the Treaty of Poona on the 13th June, 1817. The Peshwā had to renounce the headship of the Marātha confederacy; to commute his claims on the Gāikwār to four lac of rupees and to promise not to make further demands on him, and to surrender to the English the Konkan and some important strongholds. Daulat Rāo Sindhia was also compelled by the English to sign the Treaty of Gwālīor on the 5th November, 1817, by which he bound himself to co-operate with the English to suppress the Pindaris and gave the Company full liberty to enter into engagements with the States beyond the Chambal. Thus the English could conclude a number of treaties with the Rājput States, so long greatly harassed by Marātha inroads. Meanwhile, internal quarrels about the succession to the kingdom of Nāgpur had given an opportunity to the English to bring that kingdom under their influence. Rāghūji Bhonsle II died on the 22nd March, 1816, and was succeeded by his imbecile son, Parsoji. Parsoji had an able but ambitious cousin, Appa Sāheb, who aspired to the government and wanted as a preparatory measure to secure the regency. The English recognised this on his signing a treaty of subsidiary alliance on the 27th May, 1816. The Treaties of Poona, Gwālīor, and Nāgpur added greatly to the influence of the English at the cost of the Marāthas. The first dealt a severe blow at the power and prestige of the Peshwā; the second checked the pretensions of Sindhia over the Rājput States, which fell under British control; and the third cost the Nāgpur State its independence and brought it under the subsidiary system, which had been evaded by Rāghūji Bhonsle II but had been “so long and so earnestly desired by the British Government”. The “defensive means” of the English were now greatly improved, and Malcolm observe-
that "in the actual condition of India no event could be more fortunate than the subsidiary alliance with Nāgpur".

But none of the Marātha chiefs were sincerely reconciled to the loss of their independence and they had full sympathy with the Peshwā's desire to make himself free from British control. On the very day that Sindhia signed the subsidiary treaty, the Peshwā sacked and burnt the British Residency at Poona and attacked with about 27,000 men a small British army of 2,800 under Colonel Burr at Khirki; but he was completely defeated. Appa Siheb of Nāgpur and Malhar Rāo Holkar II, son of Jaswant Rāo Holkar, rose in arms against the English. The Nāgpur troops were defeated at Satābaldi on the 27th November, 1817, and Holkar's forces were routed at Mahidpur by Hislop on the 21st December, 1817. Appa Siheb fled to the Punjab and then to Jodhpur where he died in A.D. 1840. The districts lying to the north of the Narmadā were annexed to British territories and a minor grandson of Raghūṛṛi Bhonsło II was established as Rājā over the remnant of the state. Holkar was forced to sign the Treaty of Mandalor on the 6th January, 1818, by which he gave up all claims on the Rājput States, ceded to the English all districts south of the Narmadā, agreed to maintain a subsidiary force within this territory, submitted his foreign relations to the arbitration of the British, and recognised Amir Khān, a mercenary commander, as Nawāb of Tonk. A permanent British Resident was henceforth stationed at Indore.

As for the Peshwā, after his defeat at Khirki, he fought two more battles with the English—at Koregāon on the 1st January, 1818, and at Ashti on the 20th February, 1818. He was defeated in both, his able general Gokhale being killed in the second. Bājī Rāo II at last surrendered to Sir John Malcolm on the 3rd June, 1818. The Peshwāshīp, which served as the symbol of national unity among the Marāthas even in its worst days, was abolished; Bājī Rāo II was allowed to spend his last days at Bithur near Cawnpore on a pension of eight lacs a year; his dominions were placed under British control; and "British influence and authority spread over the land with magical celerity". Trimbakji was kept in life-long confinement in the fort of Chunār. The small kingdom of Sātārā, formed out of the Peshwā's dominions, was given to Pratāp Sinha, a lineal descendant of Shivājī and the formal head of the Marātha Empire. The State of Sātārā did not become the centre of a hostile Marātha confederacy, as Thornton apprehended. As a matter of fact, as Roberts records, "the rule of the new dynasty proved an evil and incompetent one, and Sātārā was one of the States to which subsequently the Doctrine of Lapse was applied by Dalhousie".
D. Causes of the Downfall of the Marāthas

Thus was foiled the last attempt of the Marāthas to build up their political supremacy in India on the ruins of the Mughul Empire. The fabric of the Marātha Empire, which the genius and military ability of Shivāji the Great had brought into existence and which, after a short period of decline, was revived by Bāji Rāo I, and competed with the English for political supremacy for about forty years, now collapsed most ignominiously. This was primarily due to certain inherent defects in the character of the Marātha State, particularly during the eighteenth century, though there were other factors which accelerated it. In the Marātha State, “there was”, Sir J. N. Sarkar asserts, “no attempt at well-thought-out organised communal improvement, spread of education, or unification of the people, either under Shivāji or under the Peshwās. The cohesion of the peoples of the Marātha State was not organic but artificial, accidental and therefore precarious.” Another drawback of the Marātha State was its lack of a sound economic policy and satisfactory financial arrangements, without which the political development of a nation becomes impossible. The sterile soil of Mahārāṣṭra held out no prospects for flourishing agriculture, trade and industries, and the Marātha State had to depend on uncertain and precarious sources of income like chaūth, which again cost them the sincere co-operation of the other indigenous powers. Further, the revival of the jāgān system after the death of Shivāji introduced a highly disintegrating force into the State; the Marātha jāgānārs, blind to all but their personal interests, ruined the national cause by plunging their country into intrigues and quarrels. With some exceptions like Shivāji, Bāji Rāo I, Mādhava Rāo I, Mahārā Rāo Holkar, Mahādāji Sindhiya and Nānā Fadnavis, the Marātha chiefs, particularly those of later times, indulged more in finesse or intrigue than well-calculated statesmanlike action, which produced a disastrous reaction on the destiny of their State, especially when they were confronted with superior British diplomacy during the close of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth. Lastly, the Marāthas of the eighteenth century, while discarding their old tactics of war, could not develop, even under Mahādāji Sindhiya and Nānā Fadnavis, a military system organised on the scientific lines of the West. Opposed to them were the English, possessed of an efficient military organisation, based on up-to-date methods and varied experience of European wars. It is indeed a pity that the Marāthas depended upon foreign adventurers “for
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a most vital means of self-protection”, and thus ultimately lost

their independence.

2. Anglo-Mysore Relations

A. The Fourth Anglo-Mysore War

Lord Cornwallis optimistically estimated the results of the war
with Tipu in his time by saying: “We have effectively crippled
our enemy, without making our friends too formidable.”

But the hope of a lasting peace was soon belied. A man like
Tipu could never accept for long the humiliation that he had

suffered at the hands of the English, against whom he nursed
a deep resentment. “Instead of sinking under his misfortunes,
he exerted,” writes Malcolm, “all his activity to repair the ravages
of war. He began to add to the fortifications of his capital—to
remount his cavalry—to recruit and discipline his infantry,
—to punish his refractory tributaries, and to encourage the culti-
vation of his country, which was soon restored to its former pro-

SINGAPUR, SHOWING THE SALLY-PORT

GATE, WHERE TIPU SULTAN WAS KILLED

sperity.” France was then involved in a deadly war with England
in Europe; and as an astute diplomat, Tipu tried to secure the
alliance of France against the English in India. He enlisted himself
as a member of the Jacobin Club and permitted nine Frenchmen in his service to elect "citizen Ripaud", a Lieutenant in the French navy, as their President, to hoist the flag of the recently established French Republic and to plant a Tree of Liberty at Seringapatam. With a view to securing allies for himself in the contemplated conflict, Tipu also sent emissaries to Arabia, Kābul, Constantinople, Versailles and Mauritius. The French governor of the Isle of France, Monsieur Malartic, welcomed the envoys and proposals of Tipu, and published a proclamation inviting volunteers to come forward to help Tipu in expelling the English from India. As a result of this, some Frenchmen landed at Mangalore in April, 1798.¹

Lord Wellesley on his arrival at Madras on the 26th April, 1798, quickly realised the hostile intentions of Tipu and at once determined to wage war on him, overruling the timid suggestions of the Madras Council. He held in his Minute of 12th August, 1798, that "the act of Tippec's ambassadors, ratified by himself, and accompanied by the landing of a French force in his country is a public, unqualified and unambiguous declaration of war; aggravated by an avowal, that the object of the war is neither expansion, reparation, nor security, but the total destruction of the British Government in India. To attempt to misunderstand an insult and injury of such a complexion would argue a consciousness either of weakness or of fear". Besides other preparations for the war, Wellesley tried to revive the Triple Alliance of 1790. The Nizām at once concluded a subsidiary alliance with the English on the 1st September, 1798, but the Marāthas gave rather vague replies to the Governor-General's overtures. Nevertheless, to show the "disinterestedness of the British Government to every branch of the Triple Alliance", Wellesley engaged to give the Peshāwā a share in the conquests of the war.

This war against Tipu was of a very short duration, but quite decisive. He was defeated by Stuart at Sedaseer, forty-five miles west of Seringapatam, on the 5th March, 1799, and again on the 27th March by General Harris at Malvelly, thirty miles east of Seringapatam. Tipu then retired to Seringapatam, which was captured by the English on the 4th May. The Mysore Sultān died while gallantly defending his metropolis, which was, however, plundered by the English troops. Thus fell a leading Indian power and one of the most inveterate and dreadful foes of the English. Mysore was at the disposal of the English.¹ The members of Tipu's family were interned at Vellore. They were suspected of being involved in the abortive mutiny of the sepoys at Vellore
in 1806 and were deported to Calcutta. As a sort of diplomatic move, Wellesley offered the districts of Soonda and Harponelly, lying in the north-west of the Mysore kingdom, to the Marathas, who, however, refused to accept these. To the Nizām was given
the territory to the north-east near his dominion, that is, the districts of Gooty and Gurramkonda and a part of the district of Chitnagudray except its fort. The English took for themselves Kanara on the west; Wynaad in the south-east; the districts of Coimbatore and Darapolam; two tracts on the east; and the town and island of Seringapatam. A boy of the old Hindu reigning dynasty of Mysore was given the rest of the kingdom. This new State of Mysore became virtually a dependency of the English. A subsidiary treaty, which the minor ruler had to accept, provided for the maintenance of a protecting British force within the kingdom. A subsidy was to be paid by its ruler which could be increased by the Governor-General in time of war; and the Governor-General was further empowered to take over the entire internal administration of the country if he was dissatisfied on any account with its government. This arrangement, Wellesley hoped, would enable him "to command the whole resources of the Raja's territory". The Governor-General "acted wisely", in Thornton's opinion, "in not making Mysore ostensibly a British possession. He acted no less wisely in making it substantially so". Because of misgovernment, Lord William Bentinck brought Mysore under the direct administration of the Company, and it remained so till 1881, when Lord Ripon restored the royal family to power.

The settlement of Mysore, as effected by Lord Wellesley, secured for the Company substantial territorial, economic, commercial and military advantages. It extended the Company's dominion "from sea to sea across the base of the peninsula", encompassing the new kingdom of Mysore on all sides except in the north. When in 1800 the Nizam transferred his acquisitions from Mysore to the Company, this kingdom "was entirely encircled by the Pax Britannica". This achievement of the Governor-General was enthusiastically applauded in England; he was elevated to the rank of Marquis in the peerage of Ireland and General Harris was made a baron.

B. Estimate of Tipu

Tipu is, in many respects, a remarkable personality in Indian history. A man of sound moral character, free from the prevailing vices of his class, he had an intense faith in God. He was fairly well educated, could speak fluently Persian, Kanarese and Urdu, and had a valuable library. A valiant soldier and a tactful general, Tipu was a diplomat of no mean order. This is proved by his clear perception of the fact that England and not any Indian power was the enemy; by his study of politics, particularly
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the relations between England and France in Europe; by the embassies he sent to France and other places; and the correspondence that he carried on with Zaman Shah of Kabul. He placed independence above everything else, and lost his life in trying to preserve it. Unlike many of his Indian contemporaries, Tipu was an able and industrious ruler. Some of his English contemporaries, like Edward Moore and Major D'Alon, were favourably impressed with his administration and have unhesitatingly stated that he enjoyed sufficient popularity in his kingdom. Even Sir John Shore observes that "the peasantry of his dominions are protected and their labours encouraged and rewarded". Some writers, old\(^1\) as well as modern,\(^2\) have wrongly described Tipu as a cruel and sanguinary tyrant, an oppressive despot, and a furious fanatic. He cannot be held guilty of systematic cruelty, and, as Major D'Alon remarks, "his cruelties were in general inflicted only on those whom he considered as his enemies". Also he was not a fierce bigot. The discovery and study of Tipu's Shrinikerti Letters prove that he knew "how to placate Hindu opinion, and religious intolerance was not the cause of his ruin". Though a pious Muslim, he did not attempt any wholesale conversion of his Hindu subjects, as Wilkes' account would lead us to believe; but he forced it only on those recalcitrant Hindus on whose allegiance he could not rely. In one respect, he compares unfavourably with his father; politically he was less sagacious and practical than the latter. He often tried to introduce useless innovations in the name of reform. "A restless spirit of innovation, and a wish to have everything to originate from himself, was," wrote Thomas Munro, "the predominant feature of his character."

3. Disappearance of the French Menace

The fall of Tipu was a source of immense relief to the English, who were much worried by French intrigues. Tipu was indeed, as the Governor-General's brother, the Duke of Wellington, observed, "the certain ally of the French in India". As a matter of fact, the battle of Wandiwash did not finally shatter the ambitions of the French in India. There still remained a French peril throughout the rest of the eighteenth century. The French now tried to pursue their ambitious designs by establishing their influence in the courts of Indian powers like the Nizam, the Sultan of Mysore and the Marathas. They joined their

\(^1\) Kirkpatrick, Wilks, Rennell and others.
\(^2\) Bowring, Roberts and Dean Hutton.
armies, and incited them against the English. Thus in 1777, St. Lubin negotiated a treaty with Nānā Fadnavis with a view to stirring up the Marāthas against the English, and the French considered an alliance with Hyder 'Ālī to be necessary "for regaining the ascendency which they have lost in India and to despoil their rival of it". Disgusted by English neutrality at the battle of Kharda, the Nizām sought French help, and maintained a trained body of 14,000 men under a French commander, named François Raymond, who had organised a definitely "anti-British, pro-French and pro-Tipu" party in the Hyderābād court. Daulat Rāo Sindhia also maintained in his northern armies 40,000 disciplined men under Perron, a French general, whose influence over the Sindhia was so great that Wellesley could without much exaggeration say that he had built a French State on the banks of the Jumna. We have already noted the nature of Franco-Mysore relations, which were undoubtedly antagonistic to English interests.

The French further tried to utilise the opportunities afforded by wars in America and Europe to regain what they had lost in India. Thus when the War of American Independence broke out, besides allying themselves with the revolted colonies, they sent, in 1782, three thousand men under Bussy and a fleet under Admiral Suffren to help Hyder 'Ālī; but Bussy's expedition was unable to further French interests. Again Hyder's son sought the French alliance when England was engaged in a deadly war with revolutionary France. Though on the outbreak of the Revolutionary Wars the French possessions in India were seized by the English, the Egyptian campaign of Napoleon, and the projects of the French to establish their influence in Egypt and then undermine the British position in India, were sources of deep anxiety to the English officers in India.

It did not take a long time for Wellesley, who possessed penetrating insight and a clear vision, to realise the nature of the French peril. He took immediate steps to remove it. Besides trying to destroy French influence in Indian courts and armies and disbanding the European-trained armies of the Nizām, he planned expeditions against the Isle of France, as from the beginning of the Revolutionary Wars French privateers used it as a base to prey upon English shipping in the Indian Ocean; but they could not be carried into effect owing to the refusal of Admiral Rainier, commander of the British squadron, to co-operate with him. He also contemplated the capture of Batavia, the capital of the Dutch East Indies. In response to an order from home, he sent an expedition to the Red Sea under the command of Sir
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David Baird in 1801. The French at Alexandria had already capitulated before Baird's party reached Cairo. Wellesley did not restore to the French their settlements in India after the Peace of Amiens, which was but a temporary truce of thirteen months.

The French still persisted in their anti-English intrigues in India. Decaen, the newly-appointed Captain-General of the French in India, tried fruitlessly to secure Indian allies and also encouraged French privateers to capture British vessels in the Indian seas. The English were, however, finally freed from the French menace by the year 1814–1815. This synchronised with the attempt of Lord Hastings to establish British paramountcy in India.

4. Hyderābād

We have seen that after his defeat at Kharda, the Nizām in utter disgust turned to the French for support and freely admitted Frenchmen into his court and army. When Lord Wellesley arrived in India, Frenchmen “of the most virulent principles of Jacobinism”, as Wellesley himself said, dominated the Nizām.

But Wellesley was determined to exterminate French influence and intrigues in India and to extend British control over the Indian powers. Circumstances favoured his policy. The Nizām had been somewhat pacified by British assistance given him during the rebellion of his son ʿĀli Jāh in 1797; he had by this time become suspicious of the growing French influence; and his minister Mir Ālam, a friend of the English, had been urging him to form an amicable settlement with the English. Wellesley's first step was to persuade the Nizām to conclude a subsidiary treaty on the 1st September, 1798, which provided for the maintenance and payment of a force of six battalions by the Nizām, the subordination of his external relations to the control of the English, and the expulsion of European officers belonging to other nationalities from his territory. The French-trained troops of the Nizām were disbanded by Malcolm and Kirkpatrick, and he proved to be a sincere ally of the Company in its war against Tipu, for which, as we have already noted, he was rewarded with portions of the Mysore kingdom. As the treaty of 1798 was of a temporary nature, a “perpetual and general defensive alliance” was formed between the English and the Nizām on the 12th October, 1800, whereby the subsidiary force was increased, for the maintenance of which the Nizām surrendered to the English all the territories he had got as spoils of the Mysore Wars in 1792 and 1798. He also agreed
not to enter into political relations with other powers without the permission of the English. Nizám 'Āli died in 1803, and his successor Sikandar Jâh, had no hesitation in confirming all the previous treaties with the English. By a treaty concluded in the time of Lord Hastings, on the 12th December, 1822, readjustment of territories was effected, and the Nizám was exempted from the payment of arrears of tribute to the Peshwâ.

The subsidiary alliance guaranteed protection to the Hyderâbâd State against external aggression; but it produced some disastrous consequences in its internal administration. As a natural sequel to the habit of dependence on another power, the Hyderâbâd rulers of this period lost all initiative for good and efficient government, and their country became subject to various disruptive forces, as was also the case with many other provinces of contemporary India, like Bengal, Oudh and the Carnatic, while the kingdom of Tipu, who was not a subsidiary ruler, was in a flourishing condition. "Conceive of a country," observed the Duke of Wellington, "in every village of which there are from twenty to thirty horsemen, who have been dismissed from the service of the State, and who have no means of living except by plunder. In this country there is no law, no civil government... no inhabitant can, or will, remain to cultivate, unless he is protected by an armed force stationed in the village. This is the outline of the state of the countries of the Peshwâ and the Nizám."

5. The Carnatic

The existence of dual government in the Carnatic, no less disastrous and oppressive to its people than the dual government of Bengal, could certainly not be tolerated by Lord Wellesley, a man of strong determination and highly imperialistic instincts. To bring the Carnatic under the supreme control of the Company by cutting out this "festerling sore" seemed to him to be an almost imperative need for the extension of his favourite principle, which he thus enunciated later on: "The Company with relation to its territory in India must be viewed in the capacity of a sovereign power." But "the method he employed was unfortunate and laid him open to the charge of sophistical dealing". Certain documents discovered at Seringsapatam proved, according to the Governor-General, that both Muhammad 'Āli and Omdut-ul-Umarâ, who died on the 15th July, 1801, carried on secret and treasonable correspondence with Tipu Sultân. He declared that they had thus "placed themselves in the condition of public enemies" and had forfeited their right to
6. Tanjore and Surat

The rulers of Tanjore and Surat were also compelled by Wellesley to surrender their administrative powers to the Company, and to remain content with “empty titles” and “guaranteed pensions.” As for Tanjore, a Maratha principality founded by Shivaji’s father, Shāhji, a disputed succession gave Wellesley an opportunity to intervene in its affairs and thus persuade its ruler to conclude a subsidiary treaty on the 25th October, 1799. By this treaty the whole civil and military administration of this kingdom passed to the Company in return for a pension of £40,000 per annum. A similar fate befell the principality of Surat. Since 1759 the Company had undertaken its defence on behalf of the Mughul Emperor, while its Nawāb retained the civil administration. But the Nawābs of Surat were unable to pay all the sums required by the Company for the expenses of the garrison it maintained in that State. When the old Nawāb of Surat died on the 8th January, 1799, Lord Wellesley, in a high-handed manner, forced his brother and legitimate successor, to surrender the whole administration of the territory to the Company in March, 1800. Thus Wellesley committed, in the opinion of Mill, “the most unceremonious act of dethronement which the English had yet performed, as the victim was the weakest and most obscure.” Beveridge unhesitatingly declares that “the whole proceeding was characterised by tyranny and injustice”.

the throne of the Carnatic. He ignored the claim of ‘Āli Hussain, son of the decessed Nawāb, to his father’s territory, and on the 25th July, 1801, concluded a treaty with ‘Āzim-ud-daulah, a nephew of Omdut-ul-Umārā, who was thereby installed as the nominal Nawāb of the Carnatic. He was guaranteed a pension of one-fifth of its revenues, and the entire civil and military administration of the province was taken over by the Company. The assumption of the Carnatic government was declared by Wellesley as “perhaps the most salutary and useful measure which has been adopted since the acquisition of the Dewanny (Divāni) of Bengal”; and writers like Thornton, Owen, and some others, have tried to vindicate his policy in every way. But it earned Mill’s severe criticism. The documents in question did not prove the treachery of the Carnatic Nawābs. Wellesley could have frankly declared what his object was, and could have given effect to it in a more straightforward manner.
7. The Fate of Oudh

Loss of independence was the price which the kingdom of Oudh paid for her long-continued internal bankruptcy, in the time of Wellesley. The Governor-General was convinced that, for the effective security of the north-western frontier, Oudh must be brought definitely under British control. In his private letter to John Lumsden, the Company's Resident at Oudh, he expressed his determination to take possession of the Doāb with a view to strengthening the Company's north-western frontier; to substitute for the Nawāb's troops "an increased number of the Company's regiments of infantry and cavalry, to be relieved from time to time and to be paid by His Excellency (the Nawāb); and to dislodge from Oudh every European excepting the Company's servants". The immediate execution of these projects was obstructed by an unfortunate incident at Benares, where, on the 14th January, 1799, Wīzīr 'Ālī, bitterly resentful of his position, massacred several Englishmen, including Mr. Cherry, the British Resident. He was in fact trying to organise a widespread conspiracy against the Company, had confederates in Bihār and Bengal, and even sought to secure the help of Zamān Shāh of Kābul, who threatened an invasion of Hindustān. But he was captured by a British force and sent to Fort William, where he spent his days in confinement till his death in A.D. 1817.

It was not possible for Wellesley to charge the Nawāb of Oudh, who had all along been faithful to the Company, with treason or insubordination, as he had done in the case of the ruler of the Carnatic. But he had a convenient pretext, in the threat of Zamān Shāh to invade Hindustān, for demanding from the Nawāb of Oudh the disbandment of his own army and the increase of the Company's forces. After some resistance, the Nawāb, under pressure from the British Resident, Colonel Scott, announced his intention to abdicate. Considering this proposal to be an excellent means for the establishment of "the sole and exclusive authority of the Company within the province of Oudh and its dependencies", the Governor-General wrote to the Court of Directors that it was his intention "to profit by the event to the utmost practicable extent". But when Wellesley sought to exclude the Nawāb's sons from succession to the musnad of Oudh, the Nawāb withdrew his announcement of abdication. This made the Governor-General furious. He declared himself "extremely disgusted at the duplicity and insincerity which mark the conduct of the Nawāb-Vāzir on the present occasion", and now presented to the Nawāb a draft treaty.
which considerably increased the number of Company's troops and
the amount of the subsidy that was to be paid. The Nawāb
advanced some reasonable objections on the strength of former
treaties; but Wellesley rejected these and forced him to submit to
his demands. This was not enough to satisfy the Governor-General.
He again compelled the Nawāb to conclude a treaty on the 10th
November, 1801, by which the latter had to surrender the rich and
valuable tracts of Rohilkhand and the Lower Doāb, that is, the
territories lying between the Ganges and the Jumān, covering
almost half of his dominions. Thus Oudh was encircled by British
territory except on the north; and the British possessions now
confronted Sindhīa along the entire line of his dominions in
Northern India. These were indeed advantages of great import-
ance for the Company. "The rectification of our military frontier,
and the territorial isolation of the Nabob (Nawāb)," as Owen
rightly says, "were not only parts of a larger scheme, but in
themselves measures of obvious importance, especially at such a
crisis."

Wellesley's treatment of Oudh has been condemned not only by
Will but also by most of the other historians. Even Dr. H. H.
Wilson admits that the negotiations with the Nawāb were carried
on in an objectionable manner. Sir Alfred Lyall, not indeed
always a hostile critic of Wellesley, considers that, in his dealings
with Oudh, Wellesley "subordinated the feelings and interests of
his ally to paramount considerations of British policy in a manner
that showed very little patience, forbearance, or generosity".
The Court of Directors also condemned it. British intervention
did not at once bring peace and good government to the kingdom.
The evils of administration were aggravated here, as in the other
States which had accepted subsidiary alliances, till the kingdom
was annexed subsequently on the charge of misgovernment. It
may be said that the subsidiary treaties of Wellesley in a
sense prepared the ground for Dalhousie's annexations in certain
cases.

8. Anglo-Gurkha Relations and the Nepāl War (1814-1816)

Taking advantage of internal struggles among the old ruling
clans of the Nepāl valley, the Gurkhaś, a tribe of the Western
Himalayas, conquered it in a.d. 1768. They gradually built up
a powerful State possessing considerable military strength and
naturally seeking outlets for expansion. Their attempts at a
northern push being checked by the great Chinese Empire, they
advanced towards the south, and during the early nineteenth
century they extended their dominion as far as the River Tista on the east and the Sutlej on the west, so that they were then "in actual possession of the whole of the strong country which skirts the northern frontier of Hindustān". With the occupation of the Gorakhpur district by the Company in 1801, the territories of the Gurkhas in the Tarāī became conterminous with the uncertain and ill-defined northern frontier of the British dominion, and the border districts became subject to the incessant inroads of the Gurkhas. Sir George Barlow remonstrated without any effect, and in the time of Lord Minto the Gurkhas conquered Butwal, lying north of what is now known as the Basti district, and Sheorap farther to the east. These were regained by the English without open hostilities. But the conflicting interests of the Gurkhas and the English made an appeal to arms inevitable.

An unprovoked attack by the Gurkhas on three police-stations in Butwal in the month of May, 1814, was followed in October by a declaration of war against them by the Governor-General. Lord Hastings. Lord Hastings himself planned the campaign. He decided to attack the enemy simultaneously at four different points along the entire line of the frontier from the Sutlej to the Kosi, and also tried "to corrupt the fidelity of the Nepālese Government". But to vanquish the hardy Nepālese did not prove to be a very easy task, on account of their peculiar tactics and brilliant qualities as soldiers, the lack of knowledge on the part of the British soldiers of the geographical difficulties of the mountainous region, and the incompetence of the British generals with the exception of Ochterlony. So the British campaign of 1814–1815 was attended with reverses. Major-Generals Marley and John Sullivan Wood, who were required to advance towards the Nepāl capital from Patna and Gorakhpur respectively, retreated after some unsuccessful attempts; General Gillespie lost his life through his "indiscreet daring" in assaulting the mountain-fortress of Kalanga, and Major-General Martinell was defeated before the stronghold of Jaitak. But these losses of the English were more than retrieved when Colonels Nicolls and Gardner captured Almora in Kumāon in April, 1815, and General Ochterlony compelled the brave Gurkha leader, Amar Singh Thapa, to surrender the fort of Mālaon on the 15th May, 1815. In view of the hopelessness of further resistance the Gurkhas signed a treaty at Sagauli on the 28th November, 1815.

Under the influence of the war party in Nepāl, its Government hesitated to ratify the treaty and hostilities began again. Ochterlony, now in supreme command of the British troops, advanced with fifty miles of the capital of Nepāl and defeated the Nepālese at
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Makwanpur on the 28th February, 1816. This led the Nepāl Government to ratify the treaty early in March next. In accordance with this the Nepālese gave up their claims to places in the lowlands along their southern frontier, ceded to the English the districts of Garhwal and Kumāon on the west of Nepāl, withdrew from Sikkim, and agreed to receive a British Resident at Katmandu. These were indeed important gains for the English. The north-west frontier of their dominions now reached the mountains. They obtained sites for important hill-stations and summer capitals like Simla, Mussoorie, Almora, Ranikhet, Landour and Nainī Tal; and also greater facilities for communications with the regions of Central Asia. The Nepāl Government has ever since remained true to its alliance with the English. By a treaty with the Rājā of Sikkim, dated the 10th February, 1817, a tract ceded by the Nepālese was given to him, and this created a barrier between the eastern frontier of Nepāl and Bhūtān.

9. Suppression of the Pindari and Pathān Hordes, and Extension of British Paramountcy over Rājputāna and Central India

While the principal Indian powers were falling one by one before the growing British supremacy, Central India remained steeped in utter confusion and anarchy due to the turbulence and nefarious activities of predatory hordes like the Pindaris and the Pathāns. In Rājputāna it was also partly due to the feudal rivalries among its different states, and partly to the ravages associated with the Marātha penetration into it during the second half of the eighteenth century. The continuance of this state of things over a wide area could not be tolerated by the English at a time when they were trying to establish their paramountcy over India. So after the close of the Nepāl war, Lord Hastings turned to deal with these disturbed regions, particularly because the Pindaris had recently carried their raids into British territory and were also enlisted as mercenaries in the armies of the hostile Marātha chiefs.

A. The Pindari War

The Pindaris\(^1\) were a horde of cruel marauders, who from their headquartes in Central India ravaged and plundered the neighbouring

\(^1\) "Many different conjectures have been offered as to the etymology of the term Pindari. The most popular one among the natives is that they derived it from their dissolute habits leading them constantly to resort to the shops of the sellers of an intoxicating drink termed Pinda." (Malcolm, Memoir of Central India, Vol. I, p. 433.)
regions as well as some distant areas. They were heard of towards the close of the seventeenth century during the Mughul-Maratha wars in the Deccan. The general political disorders of the eighteenth century led them to take to organised plundering and robbery as a profession, just as the failure of the Dual Government and the consequent disorders in Bengal led to the rise and prevalence of widespread dacoities in that province for the greater part of the second half of the eighteenth century. The Pindaris were employed as auxiliary forces in the Maratha armies and enjoyed the protection of Maratha chiefs like Sindhid and Holkar. In 1794 Sindhid granted them some settlements in Malwa near the Narmada. We get an idea of their organisation from contemporary English writers. One of them, Sir John Malcolm, writes: "The Pindaries, who had risen, like masses of putrefaction in animal matter, out of the corruption of weak and expiring States, had fortunately none of those bonds of union which unite men in adversity. They had neither the tie of religion nor of national feeling. They were men of all lands and all religions. They had been brought together less by despair than by deeming the life of a plunderer in the actual state of India, as one of small hazard, but great indulgence . . . . The Pindaries, when they came to a rich country, had neither the means nor inclination, like the Tartars, to whom also they have been compared, to settle and repose. Like swarms of locusts, acting from instinct, they destroyed and left waste whatever province they visited." They generally avoided pitched battles; and plunder was their principal object, for which they perpetrated horrible cruelties on all whom they could get hold of. "They avoid fighting," wrote Captain Sydenham in a memorandum on the Pindaris drawn up in 1809, "for they come to plunder, not to fight." Under their powerful leaders, Hira Buran, Chitu, Wasi Muhammad and Karim Khan, they extended their depredations far and wide. In 1812 they harried the British districts of Mirzapur and Shahabad. During 1815-1816 they devastated the Nizam's dominions and early in 1816 wantonly plundered the Northern Sarkars.

But Lord Hastings had by this time formed a strong determination to suppress them, for which he received in September, 1816, the sanction of the Court of Directors. He was shrewd enough to come to an understanding with the principal Indian powers, before he launched his operations for the final extermination of the Pindaris towards the close of 1817. He effected careful and vigorous military preparations with a view to rounding them up from all sides—on the north and east from Bengal, on the west.
from Gujarāt and on the south from the Deccan. He assembled together a large army of 113,000 men and 300 guns and divided it into two parts—the northern force of four divisions being placed under his personal command and the Deccan force of five divisions under the command of Thomas Hislop, who had Sir John Malcolm as his principal lieutenant. By the end of 1817 the British troops succeeded in expelling the Pindaris from Mālwa and across the Chambal, and by the close of January, 1818, they were practically exterminated. Karim Khān, one of their powerful leaders, surrendered to Sir John Malcolm on the 18th February, 1818, and was given the small estate of Gawshpur in the United Provinces. Wāsil Muhammad, who had taken refuge with Sindhiā, was handed over by the Marātha chief to the English and died while in captivity at Ghāzipur. Chītu was chased from place to place until he was devoured by a tiger in a jungle near Asirgarh. Thus Malcolm wrote about five years later: "... the Pindāres are so effectually destroyed that their name is almost forgotten." Most of the survivors "mingled with the rest of the population", and some became "active improving farmers".

B. Suppression of the Pathāns

Many Pathāns at this time took to the habits of a predatory horde like the Pindaris. "They commanded," notes Princep, a contemporary writer, "forces of a different description from those of the Pindāree chiefs. . . . Indeed, the grand difference between the two classes was, that the Pathāns were banded together for the purpose of preying on Governments and powerful chiefs: to this end their force moved about with the materials of regular battles and sieges, so as to work on the fears of princes and men in power, extorting contributions and other advantages from them, by such intimidation as an efficient army could only impress: while the object of the Pindārees was universal plunder". They became powerful under their leaders, Muhammad Shāh Khān and Amir Khān, and served as military adventurers under some of the Rājput and Marātha chiefs of the time. From about 1799 Amir Khān became intimately associated with Holkar’s government. Amir Khān became more formidable when, after the death of Muhammad Shāh Khān in 1814, the latter’s troops joined him; and his depredations and plunders were carried on with greater force. The Company’s Government decided to detach this powerful Pathān chief from the other predatory bands, and, after some negotiations, persuaded him to come to terms on the
9th November, 1817. He was recognised as the Nawáb of Tonk by the English and also by Holkar. The suppression of the Pindaris and the alliance with Amir Khán relieved India of a terrible pest, subversive of political order, public peace and social tranquillity.

**C. Extension of British Paramountcy over Rājputāna and Central India**

The Governor-Generalship of Lord Hastings also witnessed the establishment of British influence over the Rājput States and some minor states of Central India. Rājputāna had indeed a tragic history in the eighteenth century. The lords of Rājasthān had generally speaking lost the heroism and chivalry of their ancestors; and their land, distracted by dynastic quarrels (particularly between Jaipur and Jodhpur) and pseudo-chivalry, became a prey to external aggressions of the Marāthas, the Pindaris and the Pathāns. These inroads resulted in anarchy, plunder, economic ruin and moral degradation and “ended only with the total ruin and humiliation of this noble race (the Rājputs)”. Utterly bankrupt, the historic land of Rājasthān readily acknowledged British supremacy at a time when the English had vanquished the leading Indian powers.

Rājput alliance had been a potential factor in the consolidation of Mughul rule in India; the Marāthas under the third Peshwā failed to utilise it for their Hindu-Pād-Pādshāhi; and its value was realised by Lord Hastings even when the Rājputs had become “a played-out race”. The Governor-General was satisfied that an alliance with the Rājput States would give “immense strategic advantages for the Company’s military and political positions in Central India”, and would place at the disposal of the Company “the resources of the Rājput country, for defensive and offensive purposes, against the internal as well as external enemies of the Company”. So with the sanction of the home authorities he opened negotiations with the following Rājput States, which, one by one, entered into treaties of “defensive alliance, perpetual friendship, protection and subordinate cooperation” with the Company: the State of Kotah, then under the able guidance of Zalim Singh, on the 26th December, 1817: Udaipur on the 16th January, 1818, Bundi on the 10th February, 1818; Kishangarh, near Ajmer, and Bikāner, in March, 1818, Jaipur on the 2nd April, 1818; the three kingdoms of Pratāpgarh, Banswārā and Dungarpur, branches of the Udaipur house and situated on the border of Gujarāt, on the 5th October, 5th
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December, and 11th December, 1818, respectively; Jaisalmer on the 12th December, 1818; and Sirohi in 1823.

Thus the Rājput States, who were, as Lord Hastings himself said, “natural allies” of the Company, sacrificed their independence for protection and accepted British paramountcy. It is difficult to agree with Prinsep that the “good government and tranquillity” of Rājputāna were “the exclusive aims” of the Company in interfering in its affairs. In fact, the guiding considerations of Lord Hastings in his relations with the Rājput States were political “expediency and convenience” and strategic advantages.

The Nawāb of Bhopal entered into a treaty of “defensive and subordinate alliance” with the Company, and Jaorā being created an independent entity by the Treaty of Mandasor with the Holkar was given to Ghafur Khān, son-in-law of Amir Khān, Nawāb of Tonk, in return for the help he rendered to Sir John Malcolm. The minor States of Mālwa and Bundelkhand also acknowledged British supremacy. A band of able British officers effected the work of reconstruction and administrative consolidation in these States: Elphinstone in the Western Deccan, Munro in Madras, Malcolm in Central India, and Metcalfe, Tod and Ochterlony in Rājputāna. Students of Indian history have special reason to be grateful to most of them for the valuable works they have left behind, particularly Tod’s Rājasthān and Malcolm’s Memoir of Central India.

Thus the close of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century saw the fall of those Indian powers which arose or revived on the decline of the Mughul Empire and contended for political supremacy; and as a result of a number of political and military transactions, the British Government became the paramount power over a dominion extending from the Himālayas to Cape Comorin and from the Sutlej to the Brahmaputra. Clive sowed the seed of the British Empire in India; Warren Hastings preserved it against hostile forces; Wellesley reared it; and Lord Hastings reaped the harvest. Delhi, Oudh, Mysore, Hyderābād, the Carnatic, Surāt and Tānjore passed under British control, for all practical purposes, in the time of Wellesley. Lord Hastings pushed further the bounds of British imperialism. He shattered the Marāṭha power beyond any hope of recovery and extinguished the Peshwāship, established British control over Central India, and persuaded the weak and harassed Rājput States to barter away their independence for British protection. Another significant step taken by him was the formal abolition of the fiction of the Mughul Government. Mughul supremacy
had ceased to exist in fact more than half a century earlier. All the attempts of the Emperor Shāh 'Ālam II to restore it proved futile, and he had to spend his days in pitiable circumstances, sometimes as a wanderer seeking help hither and thither and sometimes at Delhi amidst the ruins of its ancient greatness. His name and personality were utilised for their own purposes by the Marāthas, the English, and probably also by the French. Warren Hastings stopped the payment of the Bengal tribute to the Emperor on the ground that he had placed himself under the protection of the Marāthas; and his successors gradually declared the Company's freedom from obligations to the descendant of the Great Mughul.

After Delhi had come under British control in 1803, Shāh 'Ālam II lived virtually as a pensioner of the Company till he closed his eyes for ever in 1806. His successor, Ākbar II, was asked by Lord Hastings to give up all ceremonial "implying supremacy over the Company's dominions" and it was not long before the titular dignity of the Mughul Rāj finally disappeared.