CHAPTER V

EXPANSION OF THE BRITISH DOMINION BEYOND THE
BRAHMAPUTRA AND THE SUTLEJ, 1824-1856

I. Factors in the Political History of this Period

Referring to the achievements of Lord Hastings, who left India on the 1st January, 1823, Prinsep, a contemporary writer, observed: "The struggle which has thus ended in the universal establishment of British influence, is particularly important and worthy of attention, as it promises to be the last we shall ever have to maintain with the native powers of India." But this optimistic prophecy did not turn out to be wholly true. There is no doubt that by the year 1823 the greater part of India, extending from the Sutlej to the Brahmaputra and from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin, fell under British control. But there were beyond the western and eastern limits already reached by the British arms, powers whose activities had been a source of great anxiety to the Mughuls and whose subjugation was indispensably necessary for the rising British power before it could establish an all-India Empire on a firm and secure basis. In short, an Indian Empire, without effective control over the western and eastern frontiers of the country, was an idle dream. This was proved by the subsequent conflicts of the English with the Sikhs, the Sindhis, the Pathans and Baloch tribes of the north-west frontier, and the Afghans beyond the Khyber Pass, and with the Burmese and the Assamese to the east of the Brahmaputra. Further, the growth of the new political authority inevitably gave rise to varied problems. It clashed with the interests of some who continued to nurse against it a feeling of discontent. This was aggravated by the Company's policy of annexation and led to a violent outburst in the Mutiny of 1857-1859, when British supremacy in India was put to a severe test. The foreign policy of the Company during this period received a new orientation. Sir Alfred Lyall observes: "As the expansion of our dominion carried us so much nearer to foreign Asiatic countries, our rapid approach to the geographical limits of India proper discovered for us fresh complications and we were now on the brink of collision
with new races.” Hitherto the Company’s external policy had been influenced by French projects and ambitions in the Near and Middle East and in India. The French menace disappeared with the fall of Napoleon, but Russia now stepped into the place of France. The expansion of Russia in Asia, and her various ambitious enterprises in the East, proved to be the dominating factor in the foreign policy of the East India Company in the post-Waterloo period.

2. The Eastern Frontier and the Burmese Wars

*A. The First Anglo-Burmese War*

When Lord Hastings left India, Mr. John Adam, a senior member of the Council, acted as Governor-General till the arrival of Lord Amherst, who took charge of his office on coming to India in August, 1823. The most important event of the new Governor-General’s regime was the First Anglo-Burmese War.

The English had had commercial intercourse with Burma since the seventeenth century. But the growth of their Indian dominion, and at the same time the establishment of the sway of a Tibetan-Chinese race over Arakan, Pegu and Tenasserim, situated south of Chittagong, during the second half of the eighteenth century, brought the two powers into political relations in the nineteenth century. About 1750 a Burman chief named Alaungpaya conquered the province of Pegu from the Tailangas in the delta of the Irrawaddy and established there a strong monarchy. His successors, notably Bodawpaya who reigned from 1779 to 1819 and was followed by Hpaigyida, extended the kingdom in different directions. The Burmese seized Tenasserim from Siam in 1766; subjugated the hitherto independent kingdom of Arakan in 1784, and conquered Manipur, near the Surma valley, in 1813.

The advance of the Burmese towards the eastern frontier of the Company’s dominion, which continued to remain “very ill-defined and variable”, made an Anglo-Burmese conflict inevitable. But being engaged seriously in other parts of India, the Calcutta Government tried at first to prevent an immediate rupture by sending envoys to Burma—Captain Symes in 1795 and again in 1802; Captain Cox in 1797; and Captain Canning in 1803, 1806, 1811. The envoys were not treated well and the missions proved unsuccessful. The refusal of the Company’s Government to comply with Burmese demands for the surrender of fugitives who were fleeing from the territories conquered by the Burmese, took shelter on the British border and from their new base made inroads into
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Burman territories, served to render relations more strained. Thus when the English were engaged in suppressing the Pindaris, the King of Ava sent a letter to Lord Hastings demanding the surrender of Chittagong, Daca, Murshidabad and Cassimabazar, which in medieval times paid tribute to the ruler of Arakan. The Pindari menace was over before Hastings received this letter. The Governor-General returned it to the Burmese king with the comment that it was perhaps a forgery.

But the Burmese commanders soon conquered Assam in 1821-1822 and thus came directly in contact with the ill-defined British frontier on the north-east. They further captured in September, 1823, the Shāhpuri island, near Chittagong, belonging to the Company, drove away the British outposts from that island to Dumdalli and made preparations for an attack on the Company's territories in Bengal. This was too much for the English to bear, and Lord Amherst, the Governor-General, declared war on the 24th February, 1824. The Burmese had the best means of defence in the physical features of their country, "which was one vast expanse of forest and morass, lined longitudinally by mountain ranges and the valleys of the Irrawaddy, Sittang and Salween". Further, though in open fighting the Burmese soldiers were a poor match for the trained British troops, yet they were expert in quickly preparing stockades of timber and in "throwing up earth-works and sinking rifle-pits". The British plan was to attack Rangoon by sea, and they sent an expedition under General Sir Archibald Campbell, with 11,000 men, mostly recruited from Madras, and with ships under Captain Marryat, the novelist.

The British troops were able to expel the Burmese from Assam, but Bandula, the ablest of the Burmese generals who had advanced to invade Bengal, repelled a British detachment at Rāmu on the Chittagong frontier. This could not, however, prevent a British attack on Rangoon, which was captured by Campbell on the 11th May, 1824. Without resisting the invaders, the Burmese fled into the jungles of Pegu carrying with them all kinds of supplies. The British troops were put to great hardships for lack of provisions. Their difficulties were aggravated by the unhealthiness of the place due to the rains. Their sufferings were terrible till the close of the rainy season. In the meanwhile, Bandula had been recalled to relieve the Burmese and had arrived before Rangoon on the 1st December with 60,000 men. He was, however, defeated on the 15th December and retreated to Donabew, where he held out bravely till the beginning of April, 1825, when he was killed by a chance shot. This was indeed a terrible loss to the Burmese.
Campbell occupied Prome, the capital of Lower Burma, on the 25th April and spent the rainy season there. After some futile negotiations for peace, fighting recommenced towards the end of 1825. The British troops having baffled all the opposition of the Burmese marched to Yandabo, within sixty miles of the Burmese capital. On the 24th February, 1826, the Burmese concluded a treaty, the terms of which, as dictated by Campbell, provided for the payment of a crore of rupees as war indemnity by the King of Ava; the absolute surrender by him of the provinces of Arakan and Tenasserim; abstention of the Burmese from interference of any kind in Assam, Cachar and Jaintia; their recognition of Manipur as an independent State; the conclusion of a commercial treaty "upon principles of reciprocal advantages"; and the admission of a British Resident at Ava, a Burmese envoy being allowed to come to Calcutta. A commercial treaty of a rather unsatisfactory nature was concluded on the 23rd November, 1826, and a British Resident was not accepted until 1830. From 1830 to 1840, the Residency was held successively by Major Burney and Colonel Benson. King Hpaogyida, being seized with melancholy, was deposed in May, 1837, in favour of his brother Tharrawaddy and was kept in confinement till he expired.

There is no doubt that the English secured important advantages out of the First Anglo-Burmese War. They deprived the Burmese of the greater part of their sea-coast, and Assam, Cachar and Manipur became practically their protectorates. But this cost them much in men and money, owing largely to the inefficiency and blunders both of the Governor-General, who being a man of mediocre abilities could not pursue a strong and consistent policy, and of the generals, who did not possess sufficient initiative to act promptly according to the needs of the situation. But for the timely despatch of reinforcements in men and provisions by Sir Thomas Munro, the Governor of Madras, the British troops in Burma would have been subject to greater hardships and the whole expedition might have been a failure. Though ultimately defeated, the Burmese soldiers, who, as Phayre admits, "fought under conditions which rendered victory . . . impossible" for them, deserve credit for the manner in which they tried bravely to resist the invaders and the skill they displayed in building stockades. A writer competent in such matters has asserted that "the position and defences at Donoobew, as a field-work, would have done credit to the most scientific engineer".

The early reverses and difficulties of the British in Burma gave rise to a conviction in certain quarters that the British dominion
was faced with impending ruin. This resulted in risings in some places. In Bharatpur, the claim of the minor son of a deceased ruler, who had been placed on the throne with the consent of Sir David Ochterlony, the British Resident at Delhi, was contested by his cousin, Durjan Sal. Lord Amherst at first followed a policy of non-intervention, and disapproved of the conduct of Sir David Ochterlony in trying to enforce his decision at the point of the sword, which led to the latter’s resignation and the appointment of Sir Charles Metcalfe in his place. Sir David Ochterlony, an old man in bad health, soon died. The new Resident, Sir Charles Metcalfe, urged the necessity of vindicating the prestige of the British Government by opposing the pretensions of the usurper and won over the Governor-General to his view. An expedition was eventually sent under Lord Combermere, who in January, 1826, stormed the fortress of Bharatpur, which had resisted the attacks of Lord Lake in 1805. Durjan Sal was deposed. Another disturbance that demands notice was the mutiny of the Sepoys at Bārrīckpore, which “was only quelled after the mutinous regiments had been fired upon by the British artillery and the parade-ground made a shambles”.

**The Second Anglo-Burmese War**

Something more was needed even after the gains of the First Anglo-Burmese War to establish effective British control on the eastern frontier of India. The new King of Burma, Tharrawaddy (1837–1845), refused to consider the Treaty of Yandaboo to be binding on him, and technically his action was “within the Burmese constitution, whereby all existing rights lapsed at a new King’s accession until he chose to confirm them”. But this was opposed to British interests, which were affected also in other ways. The British Residents at the court of Ava did not receive courteous treatment, for which reason the Residency had to be finally withdrawn in 1840, and British merchants, who had settled on the southern coast of Burma after the treaty of 1826, complained of oppression at the hands of the Governor of Rangoon. The merchants asked the Calcutta Government to intervene in the matter in order to redress their grievances. Lord Dalhousie sent a frigate under Commodore Lambert to Pagan, the new King of Burma (1845–1852), who had succeeded to the throne after his father, Tharrawaddy, had been put under restraint on the ground of his insanity, to demand compensation for the losses of the British merchants and to ask for the removal of the governor of Rangoon.
If the Governor-General sincerely desired a peaceful settlement, his object was not fulfilled by the despatch of a Commodore, which has rightly been considered to be an unnecessarily provocative measure. Dalhousie himself observed later on that "these commodores are too combustible for negotiations".

The King of Burma, inclined to avoid war, gave a courteous reply to Lambert's demands, removed the old governor and sent a new officer to settle the matter peacefully. But when a deputation of some senior naval officers sent by Lambert to the new governor was refused admission on the pretext that he was asleep, the British Commodore felt insulted, declared the port of Rangoon to be in a state of blockade and seized a ship of the Burmese king's. At this the Burmese batteries opened fire on the British frigate and the British Commodore returned the fire.

It appears from some documents that Lambert acted contrary to the Governor-General's orders and the latter censured his precipitancy. But he did not disavow the Commodore's act but rather "accepted the responsibility" for it and sent an ultimatum to the Burmese Government demanding compensation and an indemnity of £100,000, to be paid by the 1st April, 1852. At the same time vigorous preparations were made under his personal supervision for the impending conflict with the Burmese so that the blunders of the First Anglo-Burmese War might be avoided. His ultimatum received no reply, and on the day it expired, 1st April, 1852, British forces under General Godwin, a veteran of the First Anglo-Burmese War, and Admiral Austen, reached Rangoon. Martaban fell quickly; the famous pagoda of Rangoon was stormed on the 14th April; and Bassein, situated on the north-west corner of the Irrawaddy delta, was captured about a month later. Dalhousie went to Rangoon in September; Prome was occupied in October, and Pegu in November. The Governor-General had no desire to advance into Upper Burma but stipulated that the conquests in the lower part of the country should be recognised by the King of Burma by a formal agreement. On the refusal of the King to conclude such a treaty, he annexed Pegu or Lower Burma by proclamation on the 20th December, 1852.

By the annexation of Pegu the eastern frontier of the British Indian Empire was extended up to the banks of the Salween. British control was established over the whole of the eastern coast of the Bay of Bengal, and access to the sea was closed to the attenuated Burmese kingdom. Major (afterwards Sir) Arthur Phayre was appointed Commissioner of the newly acquired British province extending as far north as Myede, fifty miles beyond...
3. British Relations with the Sikhs and Annexation of the Punjab

A. Rise of the Sikh Power

The Sikh struggle for independence from 1708 to 1716 under the temporal leadership of Bāndā came to a disastrous end by the year 1716. Bāndā was tortured to death and his followers were subjected to relentless persecution at the hands of the Mughuls. But the repression could not kill, out and out, the military spirit of the Khālsā. Rather, the growing weakness of the Delhi Empire gave the Sikhs an opportunity to reorganise themselves. The invasion of Nadir Shah in 1739, and the first three Abdali invasions (1748-1752), by enfeebling Mughul hold on the Punjab and throwing this province into confusion, enabled the Sikhs to enrich themselves and to enhance their military power as well as political influence. In course of the next few years they “passed through a series of reverses to complete victory”. They baffled all the attempts of the Abdali invader to crush them, and defied him even after his victory at Panipat. When he left Lahore for his home on the 12th December, 1762, the Sikhs pursued him, hung about his army and harassed it in every way. Their aggressions were aggravated through the inefficiency of the Abdali’s lieutenants in the Punjab, over which they began to dominate, and they occupied Lahore in February, 1764. “The whole country from the Jhelum to the Satlaj was partitioned among the Sikh chiefs and their followers, as the plains of Sarhind had been in the previous year.” They assembled at Amritsar and proclaimed the sway of their commonwealth and faith by striking coins to the effect that Guru Govind had obtained from Nānak degh, legh, fatch, or grace, power and rapid victory. After the final retirement of Ahmad Shāh Abdali from India in 1767, the Sikhs wrested his Indian conquests from his weak successor, Timūr Shāh; and by the year 1773, Sikh sway extended from Shāhrānpur in the east to Attock in the west, and from Multān in the south to Kangrā and Jammu in the north.

The independence of the Sikhs was thus realised, and they formed themselves into twelve mīls or confederacies: the Bhāngī, the Kanheya, the Sukerchakia, the Nakai, the Fyzullapuria, the Ahluwalia, the Ramgarhia, the Dalewalia, the Karora Singhia, the Nishanwala, the Sahid and Nihang, and the Phulkia. This
organisation of the Sikhs has been described as "theocratic confederate feudalism". But with the disappearance of a common enemy, jealousies and discords appeared among the leaders of the Sikh mistis, who began to pursue a policy of self-aggrandisement at a time when British imperialism was rapidly expanding over India. To organise the Sikhs into a national monarchy on the destruction of feudalism was the work of a man of destiny, Ranjit Singh, whose rise must be briefly surveyed before we study the relations between the Sikhs and the English.

B. Ranjit Singh

Ranjit Singh was born on the 2nd November, 1780. He was the son of Māhā Singh, the leader of the Suherchakia misti, by his wife of the Jhind family. Unlike Shīvāji, Ranjit spent his early life amidst uninspiring surroundings. He was but a boy of twelve when his father died in 1792; and he was then the head only of a small confederacy with a little territory and very limited military resources, while there were many other superior chiefs. But the Indian invasions of Zamān Shāh of Kābul, during 1793–1798, exercised a decisive influence on his career. In return for the conspicuous services that Zamān Shāh received from Ranjit, he appointed him governor of Lahore at the age of nineteen, with the title of Rājā, in a.d. 1798. This grant of office by an Afghan ruler, against whose ambitious ancestor, Ahmad Shāh Abdālī, the Sikhs had fought stubbornly for mastery over the Punjab, marked the beginning of an "astonishingly successful military career", whose exploits resulted in the extinction of Afghān supremacy in the Punjab and the building up of a strong Sikh national monarchy. Ranjit threw off the Afghān yoke before long, and, taking advantage of the differences and quarrels among the chiefs of the Trans-Sutlej mistis, gradually absorbed them into his kingdom. In 1805 Holkar, pursued by Lord Lake, sought Ranjit's help; but the Sikh chief did not comply with his request. Ranjit Singh was relieved of this new menace by the conclusion of the Treaty of Lahore on the 1st January, 1806, which excluded Holkar from the Punjab and left Ranjit Singh free to carry on his conquest north of the Sutlej.

But Ranjit Singh aimed at supremacy over all the Sikhs. He "laboured", writes Cunningham, "with more or less of intelligent design, to give unity and coherence to diverse atoms and scattered elements, to mould the increasing Sikh nation into a well-ordered state, or commonwealth, as Govind had developed..."
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sect into a people, and had given application and purpose to the

general institutions of Nānak”. The realisation of this aim required

the establishment of Ranjit Singh’s control over the Cis-Sutlej

States lying between that river and the Jumna. The chronic

disorders and discords among these Cis-Sutlej States brought upon

them Maratha aggressions resulting in the establishment of Maratha

influence in the Cis-Sutlej Sikh country after Mahādāji Sindhia’s

treaty of 1785 with the Sikhs. But subsequently the British suc-

cceeded in driving out Sindhia and in bringing the Cis-Sutlej States

informally under their protection. Neither the Marathas nor the

English had any sound claim upon them, but in those days of

disorder the best claim was “that of the sword”.

The rapid successes of Ranjit Singh made his intervention in

the affairs of the Cis-Sutlej States inevitable. Quarrels among the

local Sikh chiefs, and an appeal for his help by some of them, gave

him the pretext for undertaking Cis-Sutlej expeditions in

1806 and 1807 and occupying Ludhiana. This extension of Ranjit’s

influence was not liked by some of the Sikh chiefs, who waited

upon Mr. Seton, the British Resident at Delhi, in March, 1808,
soliciting British help against Ranjit Singh. Their appeal passed

unheeded.

But for strategic and diplomatic reasons, the English soon thought

it necessary to check Ranjit Singh’s eastern advance to the Jumna.
They could not, however, resort to force at once, because it would

have been prejudicial to their interests to antagonise a power

in the north-west of India in view of the possibility of a French

invasion of the country in alliance with the Turks and the Persians.

Lord Minto took recourse to diplomacy. With the double object

of resisting Ranjit’s advance and enlisting his friendship against

an apprehended French invasion, he sent Metcalfe on a mission to

the Sikh king to negotiate for an offensive and defensive alliance

against the French, if they should ever invade India through Persia.
Calculating that the British Government stood badly in need of

his friendship, Ranjit conquered as much of the Cis-Sutlej territory

as he could; and also boldly demanded from the English acknowl-

dedgment of his sovereignty over all the Sikh States as the price

of the proposed alliance. But in the meanwhile the danger of

Napoleon’s invasion of India had disappeared owing to his engage-

ment in the Peninsular War, and relations between Turkey and

England had improved after the conclusion of the Treaty of

the Dardanelles by these powers in January, A.D. 1809.

Encouraged by this change in the political situation, the British

Government decided not to purchase Ranjit’s alliance at such a
high cost, but "to oppose the extension on the Indian side of the Sutlej of an ambitious military power which would be substituted upon our (British) frontier for a confederacy of friendly chiefs rendered grateful by our protection and interested in our cause". A body of troops was sent under David Ochterlony to enforce the demands of the English. The fear of British arms and the apprehension that the jealous Sikh States on the east of the Sutlej would throw themselves under British protection, led Ranjit to sign a treaty of "perpetual friendship" with the English at Amritsar on the 25th April, 1809. By this treaty, Ranjit's activities were confined to the right side of the Sutlej, and the Cis-Sutlej States came definitely under British protection. The British frontier was extended from the Jumna to the Sutlej and English troops were stationed at Ludhiana. Thus Ranjit had to give up the most cherished ideal of his life—that of undisputed mastery over all the Sikhs. Ranjit's "failure to absorb the Cis-Sutlej States was," remarks his latest biographer, "a tragedy of Sikh militant nationalism and the success of the Cis-Sutlej States with the aid of the British Government marked the disruption of the great creation of Guru Govind Singh".

Ranjit's ambition for eastern expansion being thus foiled, it sought outlets in the north, the north-west and the west. He
was successful in his conflicts with the Gurkhās from 1809 to 1811 and captured the Kangrā district. On the 13th July, 1813, he severely defeated the Afghāns at Haidārābād and captured Attock, the key to the frontier, which he arranged to have strongly garrisoned. Driven from Afghānistān the Afghān king, Shāh Shuja, sought shelter at Lahore (1813–1814), when Ranjit took from him the world-famous diamond the Koh-i-nūr. Shāh Shuja succeeded in escaping from Lahore in April, 1815, and retired to Ludhiana within the British sphere of influence. After several attempts, Ranjit captured Multān in 1818 and occupied Kāshmir in 1819. Peshawār also became his dependency in 1823. Thus by the year 1824 the largest part of the Indus valley was included within Ranjit’s dominions.

With a view to utilising the growing Sikh kingdom as a buffer state against the suspected Russian designs on India, Lord William Bentinck met Ranjit Singh at Rooper on the Sutlej in October, 1831, and managed to get the treaty of alliance with him renewed. On the 6th May, 1834, the citadel of Peshawār was captured by the Sikh general Hari Singh Narola (Nalwa) and Peshawār passed formally under Sikh control. But the further ambitions of Ranjit with regard to the Afghāns were restrained by the English. The kingdom of Sindh also felt the impact of Sikh expansion. As a matter of fact, the occupation of Sindh was important to Ranjit as it would increase the compactness of his dominions, because Sindh and the Punjab were “provinces of the Indus as Bengal and Bihar are provinces of the Ganges”. But here too he was forestalled and checked by the English. Nevertheless, Ranjit succeeded in establishing a kingdom large in extent and rich in fame, before he died on the 27th June, 1839, at the age of fifty-nine.

Ranjit Singh is one of the most important personalities in the history of modern India. Though his physical appearance was not particularly handsome and an attack of small-pox deprived him of sight in the left eye, he had delightful manners and address and inspiring features. He was, writes Cunningham, “assiduous in his devotions; he honoured men of reputed sanctity, and enabled them to practise an enlarged charity; he attributed every success to the favour of God, and he styled himself and his peoplecollectively the ‘Khalsa’ or Commonwealth of Govind”.

A born ruler of men, Ranjit is entitled to fame chiefly for his success in effecting the marvellous transformation of the warring Sikh States into a compact national monarchy, though his ideal of Pan-Sikhism could not be realised owing to the intervention of the British on behalf of the Cis-Sutlej States. One of his biographers,
Sir Lepel Griffin, observes: "We only succeed in establishing him as a hero, as a ruler of men and as worthy of a pedestal in the innermost shrine where history honours the few human beings to whom may be indisputably assigned the palm of greatness, if we free our minds of prejudice and, discounting conventional virtue, only regard those rare qualities which raise a man supreme above his fellows. Then we shall at once allow that, although sharing in full measure the commonplace and worse vices of his time and education, he yet ruled the country which his military genius had conquered with vigour of will and an ability which placed him in the front rank of the statesmen of the century."

Victor Jacquemont, a French traveller to Ranjit's court, described him as "an extraordinary man—a Bonaparte in miniature". Ranjit fully realised the need of a strong army for the task which he had set before himself and so radically changed the feudal levies of the Sikh chiefs, "brave indeed, but ignorant of war as an art", into a strong and efficient national army, which was thoroughly under his command, and which, according to Hunter, "for steadiness and religious fervour has had no parallel since the 'Ironsides' of Oliver Cromwell". The initiative for army reform came from Ranjit himself, and the bulk of his army was formed by the Sikhs. Though he was assisted in this work by European officers of various nationalities like Allard, Ventura, Court, Avitabile and others, some of whom had experience of the Napoleonic wars in Europe, his army did not become denationalised, and he always maintained a strict control over it. His artillery was very efficient.

Though a great conqueror, Ranjit was not stern by nature but, on the other hand, showed kindness and consideration towards his fallen foes. Baron Carl von Hügel, a German traveller who visited Ranjit's court in 1835, tells us that he never "wantonly imbedded his hands in blood. Never perhaps was so large an empire founded by one man with so little criminality". Ranjit was indeed a strong ruler with absolute control over his government, but he was not a tyrant "obsessed by the idea of over-centralisation". In his government "subordinate rights" were preserved; and his civil administration was far from being unduly severe, though it lacked certain features of a well-organised administration like elaborate laws, a fixed judiciary, or an efficient police. A contemporary British officer reports: "In a territory compactly situated, he has applied himself to those improvements which spring only from great minds and here we find despotism without its rigours, a despot without cruelty and a system of government far beyond the native institutions of the East, though far from the civilisation..."
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Manufactures and trade flourished in Ranjit's kingdom. English writers have praised the Sikh king for his "statesman-like recognition of the strength of the East India Company, the reliance he placed upon British promises, and his loyalty to his pitied word", in which respect he differed both from Hyder and Tipu. But it is noted by some critics that he displayed a lack of intrepidity and bold statesmanship in his dealings with the English. He created a Sikh kingdom but took no steps to prevent British domination, of which he had a presentiment when he said "sab jas ho jayega": he chose instead the line of least resistance.

C. The First Anglo-Sikh War

The structure of the Sikh military monarchy built up by Ranjit was not destined to last long. As is the case with such systems, its continuance or growth depended on the guidance of a strong personality, particularly in view of the rapid march of British imperialism in India at that time. The Sikhs were at the height of their power at the time of Ranjit's exit from this world; but "then it exploded", as General Sir J. H. Gordon puts it, "disappearing in fierce but fading flames". As a matter of fact, the death of Ranjit was the signal for the beginning of anarchy and confusion within his dominions, which, being prolonged, greatly weakened the Sikh power and ultimately led to its submission to the English. One weak ruler after another was deposed in quick succession till in 1843 Dalip Singh, a minor, was acknowledged as king with his mother, Rani Jhindan, as Regent. The struggles and convulsions of the period caused the collapse of the central civil government and resulted in the ascendancy of the Khalsa army through its delegates the Panchayets or Committees of five. Unrestrained by any strong authority, the army grew ungovernable and furious, and became the virtual dictator of the State. Unable to control the army or to defy it openly, the Lahore Darbar in its intense anxiety to get rid of this terrible incubus devised the plan of inducing it to invade British territory, in the belief that it would either be totally destroyed in the course of its war with the English or its "super-abundant energies" would be exhausted in a career of conquest. Thus the position was that the Sikh cause was almost doomed before the war broke out owing to the half-heartedness of its leaders; and the English, as Roberts points out, fought "against a fine army without a general, or, at any rate, without one supreme controlling mind".

Besides the activities of the Darbar, some provocative acts on the
part of the English, which served to convince the Sikh army of the desire of "their colossal neighbour" to take their country and destroy their independence, egged it on to enter upon a war. The English sent bodies of troops towards the Sutlej; during 1844 and 1845 they were preparing boats at Bombay with the object of constructing bridges across the Sutlej; troops were equipped in the newly-conquered territory of Sind for an attack on Multān, and the various garrisons in the north-west districts were being gradually strengthened. To the Sikh army, all this was "held to denote", writes Cunningham, "a campaign, not of defence but of aggression".

Thus the Sikh army's apprehensions of a British attack on the Sikh territory, at a time when the East India Company had been definitely pursuing a policy of annexation, were not unfounded. The Khālsā crossed the Sutlej unopposed on the 11th December, 1845, not through any lack of preparations on the part of the English, whose army in the frontier districts had been already reinforced, and had increased to 40,000 men and 100 guns, but owing to the personal misconceptions and negligence of Major Broadfoot, the British commander at Ferozepore. The Governor-General Sir Henry (afterwards Lord) Hardinge, promptly rose to the occasion. He issued a proclamation of war on the 13th December, 1845, and declared all Sikh possessions on the left bank of the Sutlej confiscated and annexed to the British dominions. The first battle, fought at Mudki, situated twenty miles to the south-east of Ferozepore, between the combined Ambālā and Ludhiana branches of the British troops under the command of Sir Hugh Gough and the Sikh army under Lāl Singh, was sharp and bloody. The brave Sikh infantry vigorously charged the Sepoys and European soldiers, who at first reeled before the accurate fire of the enemy. But the supineness of Lāl Singh at a critical moment spoiled the chances of the Sikhs, who were in the end defeated with heavy losses. The English casualties were also heavy: 657 of their soldiers were wounded and 215, including Major-General Sir Robert Sale, the defender of Jalalābād, and Major-General Sir John McCaskill, were killed. The British army next attacked the Sikh entrenchments at Feroz Shāh (Firuzshuhur), about twelve miles from the Sutlej, on the 21st December, 1845. The Sikhs offered a stubborn and formidable resistance and repulsed battalion after battalion by furious firing. The English were indeed faced with a grave situation. "During that night of horrors," the Commander-in-Chief wrote later, "we were in a critical and perilous state." But the brave Sikh warriors were again betrayed by their...
general, Tej Singh, who left the field all of a sudden. Thus the Sikhs ultimately gave up the battle, to the immense relief of their adversaries, and retreated across the Sutlej. "Had a guiding mind directed the movements of the Sikh army," observes Malleson, "nothing could have saved the exhausted British." The losses on both sides were heavy. On the English side 694 men were killed, including 103 officers, and 1,721 were wounded; and the Sikhs lost 8,000 men and 73 guns.

After their victory at Feroze Shāh, the British army remained somewhat "paralyzed" for some time waiting for guns, ammunition and stores from Delhi, when the Sikhs again crossed the Sutlej under Ranjur Singh Majhithia in January, 1846, and attacked the frontier station of Ludhīnā. Sir Harry Smith (afterwards governor of Cape Colony), who was sent to check the advance of the Khalsa, was defeated in a skirmish at Buddewal on the 21st January. Reinforced by additional troops, he defeated the Sikhs, in spite of their brave resistance, at Āliwal, to the west of Ludhiana, on the 28th January, 1846. The vanquished army was deprived of sixty-seven guns and was driven across the Sutlej. The final battle took place at Sobrāon on the Sutlej, where the main body of the Sikh army was strongly entrenched. Here also the Sikh soldiers showed wonderful steadfastness and resolution and fought from the early dawn of the 10th February "with the valour of heroes, the enthusiasm of crusaders, and the desperation of zealots sworn to conquer the enemy or die sword in hand." But all this proved to be of no avail, owing to the half-heartedness and treachery of almost all the Sikh generals with the honourable exception of Shām Singh; and by about one p.m. the Sikhs were defeated and their formidable entrenchments were stormed by the British army. A large number of Sikhs were slaughtered by the infuriated British soldiers, while crossing the Sutlej; on the English side 320 were killed and 2,083 were wounded.

The victory of the English at Sobrāon was of a decisive nature. They were relieved of the danger from "the bravest and steadiest enemy ever encountered in India" which almost shook to the very base the edifice of British dominion in the Upper Provinces. As a reward for these brilliant victories of great significance, the authorities in England, justly jubilant over the fall of the Sikhs, conferred peerages on the Governor-General, Sir Henry Hardinge, and the Commander-in-Chief, Sir Hugh Gough; and freely distributed honours and favours among all ranks.

The Governor-General with the victorious British army crossed the Sutlej by a bridge of boats on the 13th February and occupied
Lahore on the 20th February. The Sikhs, now utterly prostrated, had no alternative but to submit to any arrangement that Lord Hardinge might impose on them. He, however, shrank from complete annexation of the Punjab in view of the necessity of greater forces for this purpose than what he had at his disposal; and he also abstained from the expedient of subsidiary alliance in consideration of the future disadvantages of this course. He dictated a treaty to the vanquished Sikhs in their own capital on the 9th March, 1846. By it the Sikhs were required to cede to the British all territories to the left of the Sutlej, together with the extensive Jullundur Doab, lying between the Sutlej and the Beas. A heavy war indemnity amounting to one and a half crores of rupees was to be paid by the Lahore Darbar, partly in cash and partly by giving to the British the hill districts between the Beas and the Indus including Kasmir and Hazara. The Sikh army was reduced to 25 battalions of infantry and 12,000 cavalry, and 36 guns besides those already captured, were surrendered to the English. The Sikhs were prevented from employing any British, European or American subject, and from changing the limits of their territory, without the consent of the British Government. The minor Dalip Singh was recognised as the Maharajah with Rani Jindan as his regent and Lal Singh as the chief minister. The Governor-General agreed not to interfere in the internal administration of the Lahore State. But it was provided that a British force, sufficient to protect the person of the Maharajah, should be stationed at Lahore till the close of the year 1846; and Henry Lawrence was appointed British Resident there. To reduce the Lahore State in size, Kashmir was sold by the English to Golab Singh, a sardar of the Lahore Darbar, in return for one million sterling, by a separate treaty concluded with him at Amritsar on the 16th March. Thus arrangement, remarks Cunningham, "was a dexterous one, of reference be only had to the policy of reducing the power of the Sikhs; but the transaction scarcely seems worthy of the British name and greatness, and the objections become stronger when it is considered that Golab Singh had agreed to pay sixty-eight lacs of rupees as a fine to his paramount authority before the war broke out, and that the custom of the East as well as of the West requires the feudatory to aid his lord in foreign war and domestic strife. Golab Singh ought thus to have paid the deficient million of money as a Lahore subject, instead of being put in possession of Lahore provinces as an independent prince".

The outbreak of some disorders, particularly an insurrection against Golab Singh at the instigation of Lal Singh, who was
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dismissed for this offence, led to a revision of the original Lahore treaty on the 16th December, 1846, in such a manner as served to bring the Punjab under the more effective control of the English. It transferred the Lahore administration to the hands of a Council of Regency of eight Sikh sardars, who were to act under the virtual dictatorship of the British Resident. A British force was to be maintained at Lahore, the Government of which was to pay twenty-two lacs of rupees for its expenses. It was laid down that the new arrangements were to continue till the Mahārājā attained his majority on the 4th September, 1854, or till such period as the Governor-General and the Lahore Darbār might think necessary. The British Resident, Sir Henry Lawrence, sailed for England with Lord Hardinge on the 18th January, 1848; and his office, being held, for a brief interval, by his brother Sir John (afterwards Lord) Lawrence, was given to Sir Frederick Currie on the 6th April, 1848.

D. The Second Anglo-Sikh War and Annexation of the Punjab

Lord Hardinge's arrangements in the Punjab with the Sikh chiefs lacked any "prospects of permanence". The defeat of the Sikh army did not mean the extinction of national aspirations among the Sikh people, who had behind them traditions of brilliant achievements and had so recently opposed the English with grim determination. They justly attributed their humiliation to the treachery of their leaders and chafed under the ascendancy of the English in the Punjab. The removal of the Queen-mother, Rānī Jhūnīā from Lahore, on a charge of conspiracy against the British Resident, added to their discontent. A violent outburst in the shape of a national rising was imminent. Another trial of strength between the disaffected Sikhs and their victorious adversaries was inevitable, and it occurred very soon, the immediate occasion being supplied by an incident in the city of Mūltān.

Diwān Mulrāj, governor of Mūltān, was in financial trouble through a fall in the revenue-collection in his district, and on being pressed by the Lahore Darbār for a payment of one million sterling, as the price of his office, he resigned in anger in March, 1848. The Lahore Darbār appointed Sardār Khān Singh in his place and sent him to take charge of Mūltān in the company of two young British officers, Vans Agnew of the Civil Service and Lieutenant Anderson of the Bombay European Regiment. These two officers were murdered on the 20th April. It was believed that the crime was committed at the instigation of Mulrāj, who made preparations
for resisting the English. The Commander-in-Chief, Lord Gough, and the Governor-General, Lord Dalhousie, did not adopt any immediate measures to suppress the rising but decided to wait till the cold weather. Their policy was approved by the home authorities but was subjected to much criticism in other quarters. It is, however, true that there were political motives behind their action. Besides taking into consideration the difficulties of distant campaigns and the movement of troops during the hot weather and the rains, they wanted to gauge the strength of the Lahore Government and its ability to quell the disturbance, which it was technically bound to do, and also not to risk much in trying only to reduce it when there were sufficient indications of a widespread Multān rising. Despite the "wait and see" policy of the Supreme Government, a young British lieutenant named Herbert Edwardes, who was employed under the Sikh Council of Regency, and the British Resident, Currie, made some unsuccessful attempts to suppress the rising and besiege Multān. Sher Singh, son of Chatter Singh, the Sikh governor of the Hazara district, unwisely sent by the British Resident to join the besieging troops at Multān, went over to the side of Multān on the 14th September, 1848. The activities of Rāni Jhindān added fuel to the fire of Sikh discontent, and the veteran Sikh leaders began to rally round Sher Singh. Thus the Multān revolt soon assumed the nature of a Sikh national movement, and the inevitable Second Anglo-Sikh War began.

The Sikhs had this time won over their old foes, the Afghans, to their cause by holding out to them the city of Peshawar as a bait.

By this time Lord Dalhousie had resolved to meet openly the Sikh national challenge. He declared on the 10th October, 1848: "Unwarned by precedent, uninfluenced by example, the Sikh nation has called for war, and on my word, sirs, they shall have it with a vengeance." Lord Gough crossed the Ravi with a British army on the 16th November and had an indecisive engagement with Sher Singh at Rāmnagar on the Chenab. The Sikhs then entrenched themselves in a stronger position at Chilīānwālā, where a terrible battle was fought on the 13th January, 1849. The Sikhs "of all arms" fought desperately, and contested the field bravely. The British at last won a "Pyrrhic" victory at a high cost. Of their soldiers 602 were killed and 1,651 were wounded, and the colours of three regiments and four of their guns were captured. The Sikhs lost some brave soldiers and twelve guns. Better success, however, attended English arms at Multān, the citadel of which was stormed on the 22nd January, 1849. Mulrāj, after being tried by a military court, was transported for life beyond the seas, where he soon
The news of British losses at Chilānwalā gave rise to bitter criticisms against Lord Gough, both in India and England, and the Court of Directors appointed Sir Charles Napier to supersede him. But before the latter reached India, Lord Gough had been able to inflict a crushing defeat on the Sikhs and their Afghān allies, on the 21st February, 1849, at Gujarāt, a town near the Chenāb, where they had shifted themselves from their strong entrenched position at Chilānwalā, owing to lack of supplies. In the battle of Gujarāt, which “was essentially an artillery action and is known as the battle of the guns”, the Sikh soldiers fought as before with resolute courage but were defeated through lack of efficient leadership. “No troops could have fought better,” remarks Malleson, “than the Sikhs fought, no army could have been worse led.” The Sikhs suffered immense losses and their defeat was complete, leaving no chance of further resistance. The British loss was comparatively small. Only 69 were killed and 670 wounded; and their victory was decisive. The battle of Gujarāt, observed the Governor-General, “must ever be regarded as one of the most memorable in the annals of British warfare in India; memorable alike from the greatness of the occasion, and from the brilliant and decisive issue of the encounter”. On the 12th March, Sher Singh, Chatter Singh and all the Sikh chiefs and soldiers laid down their arms, and the Afghāns were chased by Sir Walter Gilbert to the Khyber Pass and Kābul.

It was no longer possible for the Sikhs to preserve their independence. On the 30th March, 1849, Lord Dalhousie, on his own responsibility, annexed the Punjab by a proclamation, against the wishes of Sir Henry Lawrence and Lord Elginborough and also of the Cabinet. He declared: “However contrary it may be to our past views and to our present views, annexation of the Punjab is the most advantageous policy for us to pursue. I firmly believe we shall not succeed in establishing a friendly Sikh power.” There is no doubt that the Governor-General’s bold policy secured a valuable advantage to the British Empire in India by pushing its frontiers to “the natural limits of India, the base of the mountains of Afghanistān”. The unfortunate young Dalip Singh had to suffer for the sins of others, and had to rest content with a pension of five lacs of rupees a year. Sent to England with his mother, Rāni Jhindān, he ultimately embraced Christianity and lived for a time as an English landowner in Norfolk. He subsequently came back to the Punjab and returned to his old faith but not to his old position. Rāni Jhindān died in London.

The success of arms in establishing British political supremacy in the Punjab was supplemented by the administrative measures
of a band of able British officers like Sir Henry Lawrence, his brother John Lawrence, Herbert Edwardes, John Nicholson, Richard Temple, and many others, who, under the supervision of the Governor-General, introduced reforms in various branches of administration, such as the army, the police, justice, land revenue, industry, agriculture, etc. The Governor-General at first constituted a Board of three, consisting of Sir Henry Lawrence, as its President, his brother, John Lawrence, and Charles G. Mansel, who had to make room for Robert Montgomery in 1851. But in 1853 the Board was abolished, Sir Henry Lawrence was sent to Rājputāna as agent to the Governor-General, and John Lawrence was made the first Chief Commissioner of the Punjab. The Sikhs henceforth became loyal to the British Empire and served its cause faithfully during the Second Anglo-Burmese War and the Mutiny of 1857-1859.

4. Afghānistān and the Company

A. The Durrānī Menace and British North-West Frontier Policy

From 1757, or more definitely from the year 1763—when, after the English victory at Buxār (22nd October, 1764), the defence of Oudh, situated on the north-west frontier of Bihār, became a matter of vital necessity and fixed policy to the English in Bengal—till the close of the eighteenth century, the dread of Durrānī invasion constantly haunted the minds of British statesmen in India. The Company's Government in Calcutta apprehended an Afghān dash upon Oudh and then upon Bengal. As a matter of fact, a collision between the Afghāns, aiming at political supremacy in Hindustān on the wreck of the Mughul Empire, and the English, trying for the same object, lay almost in the logic of history, as was the case with the Marāṭhā-Afghān clash of 1761. It was fortunate for the English that Ahmad Shāh Abdālī, after his victory at Pānīpāt, was prevented from pushing further east owing to troubles at home. There was an ebb-tide in the fortunes of the Durrānīs after the death of Ahmad Shāh Abdālī in June 1773, and his weak and indolent son and successor, Timūr Shāh (1773–1793), could not pursue the vigorous policy of his predecessor.

But Timūr's fifth son and successor, Zamān Shāh, who ascended the throne of Kābul in May, 1793, was an able and ambitious ruler. After having suppressed the forces of disorder at home, he advanced to Lahore in 1798 and cherished the dream of invading the interior of Hindustān like Nādir Shāh and Ahmad Shāh Abdālī. Though the project of Zamān Shāh was treated "very lightly" by some of
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his contemporaries, and most of the modern writers have pointed out the impossibility of its then being carried into effect in view of the changed political circumstances, the Company’s Government in Bengal could not consider “the idea of an invasion from Cabul as a mere visionary danger”. Zamān Shāh received invitations from Tipu Sultan, Wāzir ‘Āli, then trying to organise a conspiracy against the Company, and Nāṣir-ul-mulk, the discontented Nawāb of Bengal. In fact, the prospect of Zamān Shāh’s invasion of Hindustān “kept the British Indian Empire in a chronic state of unrest” during the administrations of Sir John Shore and Lord Wellesley. Dundas, President of the Board of Control, being confirmed “in the belief of his (Zamān Shāh’s) hostile designs”, instructed Lord Wellesley “to keep a very watchful eye upon the motions of that Prince, whose talents, military force, and pecuniary resources, afford him the means of being a formidable opponent”. The Governor-General maintained a large British force in Oudh, under Sir J. Craig, to protect that kingdom against the apprehended Afghan invasion, and claimed to have averted it by sending two missions in 1799 to Persia, whose relations with Afghanistān were then strained. The first mission was that of Mehdī ‘Āli Khān, a naturalised Persian then acting as the Company’s Resident at Bushire, and the next that of Captain John Malcolm. Persian friendship was also necessary for the English, to counteract the Asiatic designs of France; and the missions of Wellesley proved successful from both points of view. The Persian pressure compelled Zamān Shāh to return from Lahore to Peshāwār, to the immense relief of the English. This is clear from Lord Wellesley’s letter to the Secret Committee in London, dated the 28th September, 1801. Harassed by revolts at home, due chiefly to the strife between the Sadozāis (members of the royal family) and the Barakzāis under Payendah Khān and his eldest son, Fāteh Khān, Zamān Shāh was ultimately overthrown and blinded and fled to Bukhārā, then to Herāt and finally to India, where at Ludhīānā he survived for many years under pathetic conditions as a pensioner of the British Government, which had once been so much perturbed by the threat of his invasion.

B. Chronic Troubles in Afghanistān after Zamān Shāh

The removal of Zamān Shāh was followed by a period of chronic troubles and disorder in the kingdom of Afghanistān. His brother, Mahmūd Shāh, the next ruler (1800–1803), became a puppet in the hands of the Barakzāi chief, Fāteh Khān, and proved himself
utterly incompetent to suppress disorders in Kābul. In 1809, Shujā Mirzā, a grandson of Ahmad Shāh Durrānī, seized the throne of Kābul. But Shāh Shujā also proved himself incapable of establishing an efficient rule. "His resources were limited, and his qualities were of too negative a character to render him equal to the demands of such stirring times. He wanted judgment and above all, he wanted money." By the middle of the year 1809, he was defeated by the Barakzūis, the partisans of Mahmūd Shāh, who was thus restored to the throne of Afgānīstān. After some fruitless attempts "to splinter up his broken fortune", Shāh Shujā reached Ludhīnā in 1816 to remain there under British protection like his brother, Zamān Shāh. Mahmūd Shāh, a tool in the hands of the Barakzūis, gradually grew impatient of their control, and caused their leader, Fāteh Khān, to be killed most cruelly in 1818. This made the Barakzūis furious, and they in the course of a few years brought under their control the whole country of Afgānīstān, except Herāt, where Mahmūd Shāh and his son, Kāmrān, found refuge and acknowledged the suzerainty of Persia. Kāmrān continued to hold Herāt after the death of Mahmūd in 1829.

C. Dost Muhammad

In the meanwhile, Dost Muhammad, an able member of the Barakzūi clan, had made himself king of Kābul in 1826 and had been proclaimed Amīr with all the necessary formalities. More courageous and active than his contemporaries, Dost Muhammad frustrated an attempt of Shāh Shujā to regain Kābul in 1833 with the support of Ranjit; but about the same time Peshāwār was captured by the Sikhs owing to the support they received from Dost Muhammad’s brother, Sultān Muhammad Khān. In fact, Dost Muhammad’s position was beset with dangers on all sides. "On the north there were revolts in Balkh; on the south one of his brothers was holding out against him at Kandahār; on the east he was harassed by Ranjit Singh at Peshāwār with Shāh Shujā and the British Government in the background; on the west there was Mahmūd Shāh and Kāmrān at Herāt, with Persia plotting behind and Russia lurking in the distance." All this naturally made Dost Muhammad eager for friendship with the English. Thus after the arrival of Lord Auckland (1836–1842), as the Governor-General of India in March, 1836, Dost Muhammad sent him a congratulatory letter in the month of May and sought British help against the Sikhs and Persia. But the Governor-General declared the unwillingness of the British Government to interfere in the affairs of other States.
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To put diplomatic pressure on the British Government, the Amir of Afghanistān made overtures to Persia and Russia.

The course of European politics exercised at this time, as it had done before, since the middle of the eighteenth century, a profound influence on the history of Asia. From the early years of the nineteenth century, Russia was actuated by designs of expansion in the East, for which she concluded the Treaty of Gulistān with Persia in 1813. For the time being England succeeded in detaching Persia from her friendship with Russia, and signed the Treaty of Teheran with the former on the 25th November, 1814, according to which “all alliances between Persia and European nations hostile to Great Britain were made null and void, and all European armies were to be prevented from entering Persia, if hostile to Great Britain.” But in the course of a few years, the new Shāh of Persia, Muhammad Mirzā, son of ‘Abbās Mirzā, who had died in the autumn of 1833, turned out to be a friend of Russia, and Russian influence became predominant at the Persian court. Russia, “making a cat’s-paw of Persia”, instigated the Shāh to besiege Herāt (November, 1837, to September, 1838), which occupied a position of strategic importance from the standpoint of the interests of the British Indian Empire. “Near Herat,” writes Sir T. H. Holdich, “there exists the only break in the otherwise continuous and formidable wall of mountains which traverse Asia from the Bering Strait to the Caspian Sea. Near Herat it is possible to pass from the Russian outposts... to India without encountering any formidable altitude—and this is possible nowhere else.” The heroic defence of the Afghāns, aided by the courageous efforts of a young British officer, Eldred Pottinger, who was then travelling in Afghanistan, baffled the Persian attempt on Herāt. It served, however, to deepen the ever-increasing British anxiety about Russian ambitions in Asia.

D. The First Anglo-Afghan War

It would undoubtedly have been difficult for Russia to realise her Asiatic ambitions from distant Moscow, and to advance on the frontier of the British Indian Empire by traversing the frowning plateau of Afghanistān and then by defeating the trained army of the Punjab, whose ruler was a British ally. Nevertheless the movements of Russia alarmed British statesmen. They largely influenced Lord William Bentinck’s policy towards the Amirs of Sind and created much uneasiness in the mind of Lord Auckland, especially when the Amir
of Afghānīstān, annoyed with the English for their refusal of help against the Sikhs, had begun negotiations with Persia and Russia. This “Russophobia” also deeply stirred the Whig Cabinet of Lord Melbourne in England. The enterprising Foreign Secretary, Lord Palmerston, saw in Russian designs “imminent peril to the security and tranquility” of the Indian Empire, and goaded on the Government of India to take effective steps to checkmate them. The Secret Committee of the Court of Directors wrote to the Governor-General on the 25th June, 1836, to “judge as to what steps it may be proper and desirable . . . to take to watch more closely, than has hitherto been attempted, the progress of events in Afghānīstān and to counteract the progress of Russian influence in a quarter which, from its proximity to our Indian possessions, could not fail, if it were once established, to act injuriously on the system of our alliances and possibly to interfere even with the tranquility of our own territory. The mode of dealing with this very important question, whether by despatching a confidential agent to Dost Muhammad of Kābul merely to watch the progress of events, or to enter into relations with this chief, either of a political or merely, in the first instance, of a commercial character, we confide to your discretion, as well as the adoption of any other measures that may appear to you desirable in order to counteract Russian advances in that quarter, should you be satisfied from the information received from your agents on the frontier, or hereafter from Mr. McNeill, on his arrival in Persia, that the time has arrived at which it would be right for you to interfere decidedly in the affairs of Afghānīstān. Such an interference would doubtless be requisite, either to prevent the extension of Persian dominion in that quarter, or to raise a timely barrier against the impending encroachments of Russian influence”.

On the strength of this despatch, the Governor-General sent Alexander Burnes from Bombay to Kābul in November, 1836, under the pretence of a commercial mission, but in reality, as Burnes himself says, “to see into affairs and judge of what was to be done hereafter”. Burnes reached Kābul on the 20th September, 1837. Dost Muhammad, who obviously preferred the friendship of the English to that of the Russians, expressed his willingness to accept British overtures, provided the British Government agreed to put pressure on Ranjit Singh to restore Peshāwār to him. Burnes also recommended an alliance with the Amīr. But Lord Auckland and his two secretaries, William Macnaghten and John Colvin, turned a deaf ear to his suggestion. The hope of an Anglo-Afghan alliance was thus destroyed, and Burnes’ mission having failed, he
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left Kābul on the 26th April, 1838. Disappointed in securing British friendship, the Amir naturally sought Perso-Russian alliance, and the Russian envoy, Viktovitch, who had been hitherto treated "in a sourly and discouraging manner", was received by him with much favour.

Lord Auckland, who had so recently pleaded the doctrine of non-intervention in the affairs of other States when Dost Muhammad solicited British help in the recovery of Peshāwār from the Sikhs now felt no scruple in taking steps to depose Dost Muhammad and to restore the exiled Shāh Shujā to the throne of Kābul with the help of Ranjit Singh. To carry this resolve into effect, he sent Macnaghten, Secretary to the Government, to Lahore, and a Tripartite Treaty was signed between Shāh Shujā, Ranjit Singh and the English on the 26th June, 1838. A war of the English with Afghanistān was a logical outcome of this step. On the 1st October, 1838, the Governor-General issued from Simla a manifesto by way of an official justification of the intended war, in which, as Herbert Edwardes writes, "the views and conduct of Dost Muhammad were misrepresented with a hardihood which a Russian statesman might have envied". "Lies were heaped upon lies" in the Simla manifesto. The Governor-General's remark about Dost Muhammad's "unprovoked attack upon our ancient ally" has been aptly compared by Trotter "for truthfulness with the wolf's complaint in the fable against the lamb".

Lord Auckland's policy is indefensible from all points of view. As an independent ruler of Afghanistān, Dost Muhammad had every right to enlist Perso-Russian alliance on his side however prejudicial it might be to British interests. It should also be noted that Dost Muhammad decided to accept Perso-Russian alliance after the failure of his efforts to secure British friendship. "We had ourselves," observes Kaye justly, "alienated the friendship of the Barakzye Sirdars. They had thrown themselves into the arms of the Persian King, only because we had thrust them off." Further, the poor excuse of Perso-Russian aggression as a danger to British interests ceased to have any force whatsoever after the withdrawal of the Persians from Herāt in September, 1838; this "cut from under the feet of Lord Auckland all grounds of justification and rendered the expedition across the Indus at once a folly and a crime". Politically considered, the Governor-General's policy was ill-advised and inexpedient. Dost Muhammad, whom he wanted to depose, was an efficient ruler having sufficient control over the unruly Afghan tribesmen, whereas his nominee, Shāh Shujā, though possessed of some capacity, had hitherto met with nothing but failure, and
had no prospect of gaining popularity among the Muslims of Afghānistān by being reinstated through the assistance of the Sikhs, the old enemies of the Afghāns, and of the Christian British power. Shāh Shujā was a man "whom the people of Afghānistān had repeatedly, in emphatic, scriptural language, spied out for these Barukzye (Barakzāi) chiefs, who, whatever may have been the defects of their Government, had contrived to maintain themselves in security, and their country in peace, with a vigour and a constancy unknown to the luckless Sūdozeye Princes". In short, the Afghān war was launched, as Kaye pointed out, "in defiance of every consideration of political and military expediency; and there were those who, arguing the matter on higher grounds than those of mere expediency, pronounced the certainty of its failure, because there was a canker of injustice at the core. It was, indeed, an experiment on the forbearance alike of God and of man; and, therefore, though it might dawn in success and triumph, it was sure to set in failure and disgrace". Among the many contemporary critics of Lord Auckland’s policy, the Duke of Wellington wrote to Mr. Tucker that "the consequence of crossing the Indus, once, to settle a Government in Afghānistān, will be a perennial march into that country". His remark was prophetic.

Regardless of these considerations, Lord Auckland, largely influenced by his private advisers, John Colvin and W. H. Macnaghten, passed orders to assemble "the army of the Indus" to invade the kingdom of Dost Muhammad. Owing to Ranjit Singh’s objection to the passage of the British troops through his kingdom, and certain other reasons, it was arranged that the main British force under the command of Sir John Keane and Sir Willoughby Cotton, accompanied by Shāh Shujā, would advance from Ferozpore to Kābul by way of Bahawālpur, Sind, Baluchistān, and the Bolān and Khojāk Passes over a distance of one thousand miles, while the Sikh army, accompanied by Colonel Wade and Shāh Shujā’s son, Timūr, would march from the Punjab through Peshāwār and the Khyber Pass. As Dr. Smith observes, "the plan violated all the conditions of sound strategy, and was that of a lunatic rather than of a sane statesman". Further, the march through Sind meant a gross violation of the treaties of 1832 with the Amirs of Sind. The British army was considerably reduced in numbers through lack of water supply and provisions before it reached Qandahār. Sir W. H. Macnaghten accompanied the expedition in charge of its political affairs with Sir Alexander Burnes as his principal lieutenant.

The allies at first gained successes. Under the supreme command
of Sir John Keane, they occupied Qandahār in April, 1839, stormed Ghazni on the 23rd July, and Kābul fell into their hands on the 3rd August, 1839, when Dost Muhammad evacuated it. Shāh Shujā was triumphanty enthroned in Kābul without any welcome, or even a "common salaam", from the people. "It was," remarks Kaye, "more like a funeral procession than the entry of the King into the capital of his restored dominions." For a while the British arms seemed to have received additional lustre. But by the end of the year 1841, "that lustre, such as it was, had been lamentably besmirched".

Serious dangers were lurking in the situation. Restored by force of British arms and Sikh help, Shāh Shujā failed to evoke national sympathy and support; and "it was necessary still to hedge in the throne with a quickset of British bayonets" even after Dost Muhammad bad surrendered himself in 1840 and had been sent to Calcutta as a prisoner. But the British army was maintained in Afghanistan at a huge cost, entailing a heavy drain on the resources of India; and its presence there increased the prices of the articles of common consumption, which affected the rich as well as the poor people. The popular discontent at foreign domination was aggravated by lapses on the part of the British troops, stationed in the land of the freedom-loving Afghāns. In fact, the system of government imposed on the Afghāns "was becoming a curse to the whole nation".

When Shāh Shujā was not accepted by the nation, it would have been wiser for the British to withdraw with him. Considering the dangers of the situation in Afghanistān, the Court of Directors wisely suggested "the entire abandonment of the country, and a frank confession of complete failure". But Macnaghten, who fondly believed that British prospects were "brightening in every direction" and that everything was "couleur de rose", considered the proposal of withdrawal as "an unparalleled political atrocity" and rejected it. Lord Auckland also would not agree to confess the absolute failure of his policy and took recourse to half-measures, which were at once risky and discreditable. The British army of occupation was retained in Afghanistān and an attempt was made to economise by reducing the subsidies of the tribal chiefs of eastern Afghanistān, which alone had so long tempted them to adhere to the English. As a natural result of this "mis-placed economy", the chiefs broke out in insurrection in different parts. Two other serious mistakes were committed by the Governor-General. His appointment of General Elphinstone, an elderly invalid, to succeed Cotton in April, 1841, as the commander of the
army in Kâbul, against the desire of the Commander-in-Chief, who preferred Nott, the commander at Qandahâr, was a calamitous step. It was also unwise on his part to permit Shâh Shujâ to use the citadel of Kâbul, known as the Bala Hisâtâr, for his seraglio, while the troops were badly placed in ill-fortified cantonments outside the city at a distance from the commissariat stores. Further, Sikh help for the British ceased to be forthcoming owing to the prevailing disorders in the Punjab, after the death of their friend Ranjit Singh, on the 27th June, 1839.

Disturbances broke out by the autumn of 1841. On the 2nd November a howling mob pulled Alexander Burns out of his house, murdered him, his brother Charles, and also Lieutenant William Broadfoot. The English officers, civil as well as military, and the troops betrayed a regrettable lack of promptness and ability, and thus allowed “the little fire” to grow “by sufferance into a wide conflagration”, under the leadership of Akbar Khân, son of Dost Muhammad. They quarrelled among themselves and failed to realise the formidable nature of the outbreak. “There appears to have been,” comments Thornton, a contemporary writer, “an almost unanimous determination to shut the ears against all intimations of danger, and indulge in a luxurious dream of safety equal to that within the Maratha ditch.” On hearing of these disasters, Lord Auckland was greatly perturbed. He realised rather too late the folly of wrestling “against the universal opinion, national and religious”, and became eager “to consider in what manner all that belongs to India may be most immediately and most honourably withdrawn from the country”. The feeble General Elphinstone allowed the stores depots to be captured by the insurgents without striking a blow; and Macnaghten, the irresolute British political officer in Afghanstân, fearing to be starved out, concluded a humiliating treaty with Akbar Khân on the 11th December. It was agreed that the British forces should evacuate Kâbul as soon as possible, that Dost Muhammad should return to Kâbul, and that Shâh Shujâ should either remain in Afghanstân on a pension or should go to India with the British army. But Macnaghten, far from being sincerely disposed to observe these terms, entered within a few days into objectionable negotiations with the rival Ghizâli and Qizilbâshi chiefs. He was paid back in his own coin for this unwise act, as these chiefs betrayed him, inveigled him into an interview with Akbar Khân on the 23rd December, and slew him with one of his companions, Captain Trevor; his two other companions, Lawrence and Mackenzie, got off with their lives but were made prisoners.
Macnaghten's successor, Major Eldred Pottinger, wanted to break off all negotiations with the Afghans and either to occupy the Bala Hissār and hold out till help came or to proceed to Jalalābād which was bravely defended by Sale. But Elphinstone and other military officers, who had not the courage to stand and vindicate their national honour, disregarded his suggestions and stooped to make more concessions. They surrendered guns, muskets and ordnance stores and ratified the treaty on the 1st January, 1842. On the 6th January, the "crouching, drooping and dispirited" British troops and camp-followers, 16,500 men in all, set out on their return journey towards India, struggling through the stinging snow of the winter and a constant shower of bullets from the Afghans, whose fanatical rage Akbar Khān was unable to check. Within a few days the women and children and some officers, including Pottinger, Lawrence and Elphinstone, were given to Akbar Khān as hostages. But the slaughter of British troops continued and on the 10th January only about a quarter of the force was left. In the pithy phrase of Roberts, "the retreat became a rout, the rout a massacre." Thus considerably thinned, the retiring troops made the last desperate stand at the Pass of Jagdhab on the 11th January only to lose twelve of their officers. Of the 16,500 men that had started from Kābul a week before, all were destroyed excepting 120 prisoners under Akbar Khān, and only one, Dr. Brydon, reached Jalalābād, severely wounded and utterly exhausted, on the 13th January, to narrate the painful story of the tragic retreat.1

The gallant defence of Qandahār by Nott and Rawlinson, and of Jalalābād by Sale and Broadfoot, may be considered as the only streak of light in the enveloping darkness of disaster. Naturally shocked and mortified by these calamities, Lord Auckland tried to conceal his lack of foresight by describing the terrible catastrophe in the General Order issued on the 31st January as "a partial reverse", which afforded "a new occasion for displaying the stability and vigour of the British power, and the admirable spirit and valour of the British-Indian army". He made some ill-fated efforts to retrieve British prestige, but was soon compelled to leave his office, and Lord Ellenborough (1842-1844) took charge of it on the 28th February, 1842.

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1 There is, however, a reference in Macdonald's letter, dated the 17th June, 1842, to an account in the Journal of the Sorjunt of the 37th Native Infantry, who was an eye-witness of the events that happened from the date of the departure of Elphinstone's force from Kābul till its final destruction, and made his escape to Jalalābād. "It is a far better account than Brydon's, who seems scarcely yet to have recovered his reason, which in his fright he certainly lost for the time being." J.I.H., August, 1833
There is no doubt that the Afghân War was an unjust proceeding on the part of the Company's Government in India, and as such it merited, in the opinion of some writers, the "tremendous Nemesis" which overtook it. Kaye significantly observes: "... the wisdom of our statesmen is but foolishness, and the might of our armies is but weakness when the curse of God is sitting heavily upon an unholy cause." Further, the feeble and unwise manner in which it was conducted made its failure inevitable. In critically examining the causes of the British reverses and disasters in connection with the Afghân War, Captain Trotter remarks that "the utter collapse of that (Lord Auckland's) policy, baleful, lawless, and blundering as it was, sprang mainly from the choice of agents ill-fitted for their work. Macnaghten's cheery trustfulness, Elphinstone's bodily and mental decay, Shelton's stupid wilfulness, chronic dissensions between the civil and military powers, Sale's withholding of timely succour, all conspired with Lord Auckland's half-measures and ill-timed economies, to work out the dramatic Nemesis of an enterprise begun in folly and wrong-doing".

E. Lord Ellenborough (1842–1844) and Afghân Affairs

In view of the overwhelming disaster of the late Afghân War, Lord Ellenborough declared in a letter to the Commander-in-Chief, written on the 15th March, 1842, that the British Government would no longer "peril its armies and with its armies the Indian Empire" to support the Tripartite Treaty, but would aim at the establishment of its military reputation "by the infliction of some signal and decisive blow upon the Afghâns". He changed this resolution, however, on hearing the news of General England's defeat at Hakalaai and Palmer's surrender of Ghazni, and ordered the immediate withdrawal of the British troops that still remained in Afghânistân, without thinking any longer of reprisals or of releasing the prisoners. This order fell on the army, as Ottram recorded, "like a thunder-clap" and raised a storm of indignation both in England and India. Shâh Shujâ had meanwhile been murdered. Both Nott and Pollock showed no disposition to retire but maintained their positions, pleading want of transport as a reason for their hesitation to withdraw. Lord Ellenborough at last "discovered a way to maintain a particularly empty show of consistency, and at the same time to satisfy the universal demand for the decisive reconquest of Kâbul and recovery of the prisoners as a preliminary to withdrawal". On the 4th July
he sent letters to Nott and Pollock repeating the order for withdrawal from Afghanistan, but at the same time gave Nott wide discretion to retire to India, not by the Bolan Pass, but by Ghazni and Kabul through the Khyber, and also ordered Pollock to act in concert with Nott in this matter of retreat. It is clear that the Governor-General thus threw the responsibility for decision on the generals, who, however, accepted it without any hesitation. On the 20th August, Pollock started from Jalalabad with 8,000 of his choice troops; defeated the Afghans at Jagdalak on the 8th September and at Tezin on the 13th September, reached Kabul on the 15th September and once more hoisted the British flag at the Bala Hissar. On the 17th September he joined Nott, who had already destroyed the town and fortifications of Ghazni on the 6th September and had, according to the instructions of Lord Ellenborough, carried away the "so-called gates of Somnath", which Sultan Mahmud was supposed to have carried off in the eleventh century. The English prisoners were rescued; but "the glory of the avenging army at Kabul was marred by acts of barbarity" when it blew up the great bazar of Kabul with gunpowder and the city was ruthlessly sacked, many innocent people being subjected to great suffering, before it was evacuated on the 12th October. The returning army was welcomed by the Governor-General at Ferrozepore with "triumphal arches and histrionic paeans of victory". In a proclamation issued from Simla on the 10th October, though it was dated the 1st October, Lord Ellenborough denounced in strong language the policy of his predecessor and expressed his willingness "to recognise any government approved by the Afghans themselves, which shall appear desirous and capable of maintaining friendly relations with neighbouring States". In another bombastic proclamation, addressed to the princes, chiefs and people of India, the Governor-General announced: "Our victorious army bears the gates of the temple of Somnath in triumph from Afghanistan and the despoiled tomb of Sultan Mahomed looks upon the ruins of Ghaznee. The insult of 800 years is avenged."

The unwisdom and uselessness of the second proclamation can hardly be doubted. "The folly of the thing," observes Kaye, "was past all denial. It was a folly, too, of the most senseless kind, for it was calculated to please none and to offend many." It wounded the feelings of the Muslims; and the Hindus remained indifferent about the gates, which, as the antiquarians rightly held, had been built much later than the eleventh century "of no wood more precious than deal or deodar". The Governor-
General’s “glorious trophy of a successful war” was in the end consigned to a lumber-room in the fort of Agra, and he made himself subject to ridicule and censure, though he was powerfully supported by the Duke of Wellington and Lord Hardinge. Dost Muhammad was allowed to reoccupy his throne unconditionally, and he held it till his death, at the age of eighty, in 1863. His friendly attitude towards the English and opposition to Persia showed that the “whole disastrous episode”, which cost no less than 20,000 human lives and fifteen millions of money, was “entirely superfluous”.

5. The Annexation of Sind

The Afghan War was very closely connected with the conquest of Sind, which followed it. Sind embraced the lower valley of the Indus and was included within the empire of Ahmad Shâh Durrânî. But, during the closing years of the eighteenth century, it owed only a nominal allegiance to Afghânistân and was governed in practical independence by the Mîrs or Amîrs of the Talpûrî tribe, which, coming originally from Baluchistân, had overthrown the last of the Kalûrîs in A.D. 1783. The three important branches of the Talpûrî chiefs were seated at Hyderâbâd, Khairpur and Mirpur.

The English had had commercial interests in Sind for a long time; a factory established by them at Thâtta in 1758 was abandoned in 1775 and their commercial mission to the Talpûrî Mîrs in 1799 produced no important result. With a view to excluding French influence from Sind, the British Government concluded a treaty with the Amîrs of Sind in 1809, which was renewed in 1820. The journey of Alexander Burnes in 1831 up the river Indus on his way to Lahore disclosed to the English the importance of Sind from the political as well as commercial point of view, and since then its absorption into the growing British Empire had been only a question of time. “Alas,” observed a Seind, “Sind is now gone since the English have seen the river.” As we shall see, this proved wholly true as a prophetic prediction.

Sind had an ambitious neighbour in the Sikh ruler, Ranjit Singh, who coveted it as a natural sphere of expansion for his empire. But his attempts were thwarted by his friends, the English, who in their turn lost no opportunity of increasing their influence over that territory. Thus in 1831 Lord William Bentinck opposed Ranjit Singh’s proposal for a partition of Sind. But the Amîrs of Sind had to conclude a treaty with the British Government, rather reluctantly, on the 20th April, 1832, which provided that “the rivers and roads” of Sind should be opened to the
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"merchants and traders of Hindostan", but that no "military stores" and "armed vessels or boats" should come through these. As a sort of precaution against the apprehended absorption of their territory by the British, the Amirs took care to include another stipulation to the effect that "the two contracting powers bind themselves never to look with the eye of covetousness on the possessions of each other". This treaty was renewed in 1831. Up to 1838 Ranjit Singh often contemplated the incorporation of Sind into his empire, but was thwarted by the English, who now, with a view to strengthening the ties by which the Amirs of Sind were "connected with the British Empire", proceeded to extort from them favourable terms as a reward for their protection against Sikh aggression. By a treaty concluded on the 20th April, 1838, Lord Auckland forced on them an accredited British Resident. In fact, Sind soon fell out of the frying-pan into the fire. Sikh ambition in regard to it could not be realised, but it was to pay a high price for the uncalled-for British protection by being deprived of its independence through questionable means adopted by British officers.

On the outbreak of the First Anglo-Afghan War, the English, in violation of the treaty of 1832, took an armed force through Sind, and informed the Amirs that "while the present exigency lasts . . . the article of the treaty (of 1832) prohibiting the use of the Indus for the conveyance of military stores must necessarily be suspended". Greater humiliation and loss were inflicted on the Amirs when Lord Auckland demanded from them a heavy sum as a price for unsolicited British mediation in effecting a commutation of the pecuniary demands of Shāh Shujā on Sind. The Amirs, who had stopped the payment of any tribute to Shāh Shujā during his thirty years' exile and had also been granted an exemption by Shāh Shujā in 1833 from all claims, naturally hesitated to comply with Lord Auckland's demand. But they were given a warning to the effect that the British Government had the "power to crush and annihilate them, and . . . will not hesitate to call it into action, should it appear requisite, however remotely, for either the integrity or safety" of the Empire, or its frontiers. The Amirs had no other option but to submit to the Governor-General's exaction. Further, the threat of Sir John Keane's march on the capital of Sind compelled them to accept fresh terms from Lord Auckland in February, 1839, by which they were bound to pay a sum of three lacs of rupees per annum for the maintenance of a British force in their territories, and Sind was "formally placed under British protection". This treaty was
again revised by Lord Auckland and his advisers in their own way and was sent back for final signature to the Amirs, who “objected implored and finally gave way, by affixing their seals to the revised documents”.

A worse fate was, however, in store for Sind. She had been intimidated and coerced by Lord Auckland; but his successor went further and imposed on her the yoke of British authority by sheer force. During the critical years of the disastrous Afghan War, the province had been utilised as a base of operations by the British Government, and its Amirs had remained steadfastly loyal to their agreements with the English. But far from being duly rewarded for their attachment, the Amirs were unjustly charged with dissatisfaction and hostility against the British Government by Lord Ellenborough, who sought a convenient pretext to give effect to his design of annexing Sind. To make matters easy for himself, the new Governor-General removed Major James Outram, the Resident at Hyderabad, who had some experience of local affairs, and sent to Sind Sir Charles Napier with full civil and military powers as a representative of the Governor-General. Sir Charles Napier, a hot-headed and impulsive officer, acted on “the theory that the annexation of Sind would be a very beneficent piece of rascality for which it was his business to find an excuse—a robbery to be plausibly effected”. He took it for granted that the vague charges against the Amirs had been proved, and, besides arbitrarily interfering in a succession quarrel at Khairpur, dictated a new treaty by which the Amirs were required to cede certain important territories in lieu of the tribute of three lacs, to provide fuel for British vessels navigating the Indus, and to give up the right of coinage money in favour of the British Government. He did not stop with these demands, which amounted to an absolute surrender of national independence by the Amirs, but acted as if Sind had already become a part of the British Empire and “as though the right of the Governor-General of British India to parcel it out at his pleasure was unquestioned and unquestionable; and, moreover, as if it were desired to exercise this right in a manner as offensive as possible to those who were to suffer privation from the exercise”. Thus before the acceptance of a fresh treaty by the Amirs, he occupied the territory in question, and issued proclamations in strong language. Further, while talking of treaties, he sought to intimidate the Amirs by marching upon Imamgarh, a famous desert fortress lying between Khairpur and Hyderabad, without formally declaring war, and destroying it early in January, 1843.

These high-handed acts of Napier sorely tried the patience of
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the warlike Baluchis, and in a state of excitement they attacked the British Residency on the 15th February, 1843, whereupon Outram, who had returned to Sind as a British Commissioner, fled for refuge to a steamer. Thus war was now openly declared. A Baluchi army of about 22,000 men was defeated on the 17th February at Miānī, a few miles from Hyderābād, by Napier fighting with 2,800 men and 12 guns. This was followed by the immediate submission of some of the Amirs, but Sher Muhammad, "the Lion of Mirpur," still held out bravely. He was, however, thoroughly vanquished on the 24th March at Dabo, six miles from Hyderābād, whereupon Napier occupied Mirpur on the 27th March, Amarkot on the 4th April and conveyed the news of his victory to Lord Ellenborough in the punning message, "Peccavi," i.e. "I have Sin'd." Sher Muhammad was driven out of Sind in June and the war came to a close. Sind was formally annexed to the British Empire in August, 1843, and the Amirs were exiled. Napier unhesitatingly accepted $70,000 as his share of the prize money, while Outram, in spite of being a man of comparatively small resources, did not take his own share amounting to $3,000 but gave it to some charitable institutions. Outram, in fact, had no liking for Napier's policy and wrote to him: "I am sick of policy; I will not say yours is the best, but undoubtedly it is the shortest—that of the sword. Oh, how I wish you had drawn it in a better cause!"

The policy of Lord Ellenborough, and the high-handed acts of Sir Charles Napier, with regard to Sind, have been justly condemned by most writers. There is no doubt that they acted on purely imperialistic motives and resorted to highly objectionable means, by cynical violations of treaty obligations, to reduce the Amirs, who had inflicted no injury on the British, to a state of vassalage. "If the Afghan episode," observes Innes, "is the most disastrous in our annals, that of Sind is morally even less excusable." While trying to defend the policy by various laboured arguments, which are at once irrational and unhistorical, Napier has admitted in his Diary: "We have no right to seize Sind, yet we shall do so, and a very advantageous, useful, humane piece of rascality it will be." Strangely enough, the Court of Directors, while condemning the policy of annexing Sind, did nothing to undo the wrong. Napier was appointed the first Governor of Sind, and he tried hard during his rule of four years to consolidate British authority in the province.
CHAPTER VI

THE COMPANY AND THE MINOR INDIAN STATES (1774–1858)

1. Early Relations, 1774–1823

The rapid strides with which British imperialism had advanced in India since at least the time of Wellesley, if not earlier, inevitably affected the destiny of the Indian States that had arisen on the ruins of the Mughul Empire. Their relations with the Company’s Government varied according to changing political conditions and the personal views and ambitions of the Governors-General; but the “conviction which developed with Wellesley and continued up to our own time, that the government of the whole of India directly or indirectly by the British is part of a preordained system” had a considerable influence in shaping British policy towards the Indian States. Warren Hastings, confronted with the task of safeguarding British territories against the encroachments of the Marāthas, and the militant rulers of Mysore, adopted the policy of a “Ring-Fence”, that is, sought to guard the frontiers of the neighbouring States by way of precaution. But some of his transactions, such as his demands on Chait Singh of Benares and the Begams of Oudh, and conduct towards Faizullā Khān of Rāmpur, involved breach of treaties or betrayed a lack of moral scruples. The subsidiary treaties of Lord Wellesley established in fact British predominance over some of the Indian States. But in theory these States did not thereby become subject to British paramountcy as they retained their independence in matters of internal administration. All the treaties of Wellesley, except that with Mysore, were negotiated on terms of equality. Being, however, dependent on the Company for self-protection, States like Oudh, the Carnatic and Tanjore began to suffer from all the evils of “double government” like those which had distracted Bengal since 1765. It was Lord Hastings who transformed the treaties of “reciprocity and mutual amity” into those of “subordinate co-operation”, and established British paramountcy over most of the Indian States by compelling them to surrender their sovereign rights of making war or peace and negotiating agreements with other powers. Formally, these States retained.
2. Relations between 1823 and 1858

The period intervening between the departure of Lord Hastings and the outbreak of the Mutiny saw the weight of British influence falling more heavily on the Indian States, owing on the one hand to the growing executive and controlling authority of the British Residents in the sphere of internal administration of these States, and on the other to the frank enunciation of the policy of annexation by the British Government. This policy of annexation, formulated by the Court of Directors as early as 1834, and more clearly emphasised by them in 1841, was applied vigorously in the time of Lord Dalhousie. It was the outcome of two motives on the part of the Company's Government, namely those of extending British political influence by incorporating new territories into the Empire and of securing greater facilities for the transport of merchandise and the collection of revenues. Both were intended to tighten the hold of British Paramountcy over India.

Lord William Bentinck was tied to the policy of "let alone" by the authorities in England, when he came to India. But he departed from it drastically in some cases and his masters also enunciated the policy of annexation in the course of a few years. Thus in 1831 he took over the administration of Mysore, which had been misgoverned by Rājā Krishna Udaiyar and consequently fell into disorder; the Rājā was pensioned off and the Mysore administration remained in the hands of the British Government till 1851. Bentinck also absorbed some other States into the British Empire. The principality of Cāhrār, where the royal line had come to an end on the death of its last ruler, was annexed in August, 1832, on the charge of maladministration and at the request of its people; and the lands of the Rājā of Jaintī in Assam were incorporated into the British Empire in March, 1835, on the same ground. Coorg, near Mysore, whose Rājā, Virājendra Udaiyar, was an insane tyrant who inflicted terrible sufferings upon his people, and plotted to seize the station of Bangalore, was annexed by a formal proclamation, dated the 7th May, 1834, "in consideration of the unanimous wish of the inhabitants of Coorg to be taken under British protection", on the assurance "that they shall not again be subjected
to Native Rule”. Thus the loss of territories was the price that some of the native rulers had to pay for their misgovernment. Lord Auckland, whose energies were preoccupied with the Afghan War, could not pay much attention to the States, but he annexed the territory of the Nawab of Karnul, in Madras, on suspicion of his hostile designs against the British Government.

His successor, Lord Ellenborough, had to deal with a formidable outbreak in Gwalior. At the close of the Maratha War of 1817-1819, Gwalior had remained under Daulat Rao Sindhia as the most powerful Indian military State south of the Sutlej. Daulat Rao died in 1827, when one of his youthful relatives, Jankoji Rao Sindhia, was installed as the Rajah with an ambitious woman, Maharanee Baiza Bai, widow of Daulat Rao Sindhia, as the regent. The weakness of the new ruler, and the activities of the regent, gave rise to various intrigues and disorders in the State, which did not end even when the latter was expelled in 1833. In the midst of these troubles Jankoji died in 1843 without issue. A minor named Jayaji Rao was then raised to the Gadi; but intrigues and counter-intrigues quickly multiplied, especially through the machinations of two rival parties over the selection of a regent for the boy king. The Governor-General’s candidate, Krishna Rao Kadam, the Mamaji Sahib or the maternal-uncle of the deceased ruler, was removed from office by the youthful widow of the late ruler, who preferred the appointment of Khasee-wala. As is natural during civil strife in a State, the Gwalior army, 40,000 strong, became restless, which caused anxiety in the mind of the Governor-General. The latter feared that the combination of this army with the Khalsa army, about 70,000 strong, in the Punjab, where also a civil war was about to break out after the assassination of Sher Singh, would prove to be a serious menace to the British Government. To avert this undesirable development, Lord Ellenborough sent his own men to deal with the situation. When peaceful negotiations failed to settle the question at issue, he had recourse to armed intervention in Gwalior affairs and two British armies marched on the Chambal. The Gwalior army, which had become the de facto ruler of the State, advanced to oppose the British troops. But it was defeated on the 29th December, 1843, in two engagements—one at Maharaipur, north of Gwalior, by Sir Hugh Gough, and the other at Paniar, by General Grey. Gwalior, now reduced definitely to the status of a protected State, was placed under a Council of Regency, which was to manage its affairs during the minority of the Maharaajah subject to the control of a British Resident. The army was cut down to 9,000 men and a British
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contingent of 10,000 men was placed there. Curiously enough, during the Mutiny, the Gwalior army under the command of Dinkar Rao, minister of the State, supported the English, while the Company's contingent there rose against them.

The Governor-Generalship of Lord Dalhousie was marked by a stupendous growth of the British Empire at the expense of many of the Indian States. Lord Dalhousie annexed a large number of States in pursuance of what is known as the "Doctrine of Lapse", which means that, on the failure of natural heirs, the sovereignty of the "dependent" States, of those created by the British Government, or held on a subordinate tenure, lapsed to the Paramount Power, a position which, it was agreed, the British Government had acquired after the fall of the Mughul Empire; it also did not acknowledge the right of those States to adopt heirs, which had been a long-standing practice among the Hindus, without the consent of the suzerain authority. The doctrine did not apply to "protected allies". Referring to the glaring abuses in the government of some of the Indian States, the Governor-General declared that the British Government "in the exercise of a wise and sound policy is bound not to put aside or neglect such rightful opportunities of acquiring territory or revenue as may from time to time present themselves, whether they arise from the lapse of subordinate states by the failure of all heirs of every description whatsoever, or from the failure of heirs natural where the succession can be sustained only by the sanction of the government being given to the ceremony of adoption, according to Hindu law. The government is bound, in duty as well as in policy, to act on every such occasion with the purest integrity, and in the most scrupulous observance of good faith. When even a shadow of doubt can be shown, the claim should at once be abandoned". It is true that the principle applicable to adoption, and the policy of annexation, were not invented by Lord Dalhousie. Both of these had been asserted by the Court of Directors earlier since 1834 and had been applied in some cases. We have already noted earlier instances of annexation; as for the "Doctrine of Lapse" it had already been applied to Mandav in 1839, to Kolaba and Jalain in 1840, and to Surat in 1842. But there is no doubt that Lord Dalhousie advocated and applied the principles most vigorously. "There was," observes Innes, "fully adequate precedent for every one of his annexations. But his predecessors had acted on the general principle of avoiding annexation if it could be avoided; Dalhousie acted on the general principle of annexing if he could do so legitimately."

The States that were absorbed into the British Empire according
to the Doctrine of Lapse were Sàtãrã in 1848, Jaipur and Samba-
balpur, in Baghat, a Cis-Sutlej hill State, in 1850, Udaipur
in 1852, Nàgpur in 1853, and Jhansi in 1854. It should be noted
that the distinction between “dependent” States and “protected
allies” was very subtle; and it is doubtful if all these States could
be rightly regarded as “dependent” ones. The kingdom of Sàtãrã
was a British creation in the sense that, after the fall of the Peshwà
in 1818, it had been given by Lord Hastings to a member of the
house of Shivãjì. In 1839 the Ràjã was deposed on a charge of
misgovernment and his brother was raised to the Gadi. The latter
having no issue adopted a son, before his death in 1848, without
consulting the Governor-General or the British Resident. Lord
dalhousie, supported by all his leading colleagues, considered this
adoption to be invalid and declared that the State of Sàtãrã lapsed
to the sovereign power. The Court of Directors also agreed with
his view as “being in accordance with the general law and customs
of India”. Nàgpur also had fallen under British control in 1818,
but Hastings had bestowed it on a member of the old ruling house.
The Ràjã died in 1853, leaving no lineal descendants or adopted
son. Dalhousie annexed it on the ground of its being a creation
of the Company. Whatever might have been the legal position
of Sàtãrã and Nàgpur in relation to the British Government, it
is clear that Dalhousie’s motives in annexing them were purely
imperialistic. It has been admitted even by Lee-Warner, a strong
apologist of Dalhousie, who writes that with regard to Sàtãrã and
Nàgpur “imperial considerations weighed with him . . . they
were placed right across the main lines of communication between
Bombay and Madras and Bombay and Calcutta”. Further, the
disposal of the State funds and treasures of Nàgpur by public
auction, which has been characterised by Kaye in his Sepoy War
as “spoliation of the palace”, was certainly an undignified and
tactless measure. Jhansi, a district of Bundelkhand, was given
to the English by the Peshwà in 1818, and the English placed a
ruler on its throne on terms of “subordinate co-operation”. On
the death of its last ruler in November, 1853, leaving no issue
but only an adopted son, Dalhousie annexed it. A part of Sikkim,
about 1,676 square miles, was taken over by the Company in 1850
as a punishment on its chief for capturing the representative of
the British Government and ill-treating two British subjects.
Sambalpur was annexed to the British Empire in 1850 on the
death of its ruler Nàrãyan Singh without any heir. Lord Dalhousie’s
decision with regard to Baghat and Udaipur was reversed by Lord
Canning; and the Court of Directors did not approve of his proposi-
for the annexation of Karauli in Rajputana, on the ground that it was a "protected ally" and not a "dependent" State.

The principle of lapse was also applied to sweep away the titles and pensions of the rulers of some States, on the ground that appearances without the reality of authority were sure to shake Native confidence in the "good faith" of the Company. Thus on the death of the Nawab of the Carnatic in 1853, Lord Dalhousie decided not to recognise any one as his successor. Similarly, when the Rajah of Tanjore died in 1855, leaving behind him only two daughters and sixteen widows, the Governor-General abolished the Rajahship of this State for good. He wanted also to abolish the title of the nominal Delhi Emperor, in which, however, he was not supported by the Court of Directors. On the death of the ex-Peshwa, Baji Rao II, in 1853, the pension of eight hundred thousand rupees, which had been granted to him by Sir John Malcolm, was not allowed by Lord Dalhousie to be paid to his adopted son, Dundu Pant, later on known as Nana Sahib, on the ground that the pension had been a personal allowance of his adoptive father and so could not pass on to his successor. This measure has been described by Kaye as "harsh" and by Arnold as "grasping". The Nizam of Hyderabâd in the Deccan had not been regular in paying to the Company the stipulated sum for maintaining a British contingent in his territory. By an arrangement made in May, 1853, the cotton-producing province of Berar was given to the Company in lieu of the subsidy.

Besides conquest and lapse, the maxim of "the good of the governed" was also enunciated by the British Government in annexing some States whose administrations were "fraught with suffering to millions". The case of Oudh is the most typical example of the application of this maxim. Since Lord Wellesley's treaty of 1801, Oudh had been kept as a "protected feudatory State" with control over internal administration. It was indeed an unwise arrangement, under which the ruler of Oudh was invested with responsibility without power, and its natural consequence was that the administration of the State degenerated terribly, to the great suffering of its people. The British Government realised the evils of Oudh administration, and successive Governors-General, especially Lord William Bentinck and Lord Hardinge, warned its ruler; but none did anything to remedy the fundamental defect of the subsidiary system, which by guaranteeing British protection to the ruler of Oudh made him unmindful of the real interests of the State and saved him from "justifiable revolt on the part of his subjects". The growing deplorable situation in Oudh, to which
the attention of the British Government was drawn, more clearly
than before, by Colonel Sleeman, Resident in Oudh from 1848 to
1854, and his successor, Colonel Outram, both of whom were
opposed to the policy of lapse, convinced the Governor-General of
the necessity of the adoption of a bolder policy with regard to
Oudh. The existence of the ill-governed State of Oudh, almost
in the centre of the rapidly expanding British Empire in India,
could not but appear to the architects of the latter as a gross
anachronism, which should be removed as quickly as possible to
facilitate their own task. There could be no better or more convenient
pretext than to hold out the prospect of good government
for the absorption of a kingdom whose subjection to British
control dates back to the time of Warren Hastings. Lord Dalhousie
was inclined to solve the Oudh problem not by annexing it but
by merely taking over its administration and by allowing its ruler
to retain only his palace, rank and titles. But the Court of Directors
ordered its complete annexation, which was formally proclaimed by
Outram on the 13th February, 1856. Wazid 'Ali Shah, the last
ruler of Oudh, was deported to Calcutta, where he had to spend
his last days on an annual pension of twelve lacs of rupees.

The annexation of Oudh was an instance of territorial aggran-
disement which was "not warranted by international law," as
Dalhousie himself expressed it in his letter to Sir George Couper,
dated 15th December, 1855. It should be noted that for the
misgovernment of Oudh, which was utilised as the ground for its
annexation by the Company, then eager to consolidate its posses-
sions in India, the responsibility lay mainly on the English
who had thrust upon that kingdom the impolitic arrangement of
the subsidiary system and had unceasingly interfered in its affairs.
"The facts furnished by every writer on Oudh affairs, all testify,"
Sir Henry Lawrence stated, "to the same point, that British
interference with that province has been as prejudicial to its
court and people as it has been disgraceful to the British name."
Further, no consideration was shown for the unflinching loyalty
of the ruling house of Oudh to the British Government. It has
also been held by some that the annexation of Oudh meant a
"gross violation of national faith" involving disregard of an old
treaty. In 1837 Lord Auckland had concluded an agreement with
the ruler of Oudh, which bound him either to introduce reforms or
to make over the administration to the British Government while
retaining the sovereignty. Though this treaty was not sanctioned
by the Court of Directors, Lord Auckland intimated to the Oudh
ruler the disallowance of only one clause of it and, somehow
or other, "the treaty was actually included in a subsequent Government publication and was referred to as still in force by succeeding Governors-General". When the Court of Directors decided on annexing Oudh, the British Government suddenly informed the ruler of Oudh that the treaty of 1837 was "a dead letter".
CHAPTER VII

THE MUTINY

1. Presages of the Mutiny

The rapid expansion of the British dominion in India, attended as it was by changes in the administrative system and modes of existence to which the people had been accustomed through long ages, disturbed the placid currents of Indian life and produced commotions in different parts of the country. Mention may be made, in this connection, of the Barcilly rising of A.D. 1816; the Cole outbreak of 1831–1832, and other minor risings in Chota Nagpur and Palamau, the Muslim movements like the Ferazoo disturbances at Barasat (Bengal) in 1831 under the leadership of Syed Ahmad and his disciple, Meer Niser ‘Ali or Titto Meer, and later in 1847 at Faridpur (Bengal) under the guidance of Deedoo Meer; the Moplah outbreaks in 1849, 1851, 1852, and 1855; and the Santal insurrection of 1855–1856. These risings testify to the general ferment in the British Empire in India, the last and the most severe being the Mutiny of 1857–1859, which shook its mighty fabric to its very foundations.

2. Causes of the Mutiny

The Mutiny was the outcome of the changing conditions of the time, and its causes may be conveniently summed up under four heads—political, economic and social, religious, and military. The political causes had their origin in Dalhousie's policy of annexation, the doctrine of lapse or escheat, and the projected removal of the descendants of the Great Mughul from their ancestral palace to the Qutb, near Delhi. All this naturally gave rise to considerable uneasiness and suspicion in the minds of the old ruling princes, Muslim as well as Hindu. The annexation of Oudh, and the idea of doing away with the begimmed splendour that still surrounded the Mughul Emperor, wounded Muslim sentiments; and the refusal to continue the pension of the ex-Peshwa, Baji Rao II, to his adopted son, Nana Sahib, agitated some Hindu minds. As an
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matter of fact, some of the discontented rulers and their friends were conspiring against the Company's government even before the Mutiny. The more important among them were Ahmad Ullah, an adviser of the ex-King of Oudh; Nānā Sāheb; Nānā Sāheb's nephew, Rāo Sāheb, and his retainers, Tānṭā Topi and 'Azīmullah Khān; the Rānī of Jhansi; Kunwār Singh, the Rājput chief of Jajadishpur in Bihār, who had been deprived of his estates by the Board of Revenue; and Fīrūz Shāh, a relation of the Mughul Emperor, Bahādur Shāh.

The expropriation of some landlords by the British Government, and the growing unemployment among the followers and retainers of the dispossessed princes, gave rise to acute economic grievances and social unrest in different parts of the country. The resumption of rent-free tenures by Bentinck no doubt secured for the State increased revenue but at the same time it reduced many of the dispossessed landlords to a state of indigence. During the five years before the outbreak of the Mutiny, the Inam Commission at Bombay, appointed by Lord Dalhousie to investigate the titles of landowners, confiscated some 20,000 estates in the Deccan, without considering for a moment that such a drastic measure was sure to create complications in the economic condition of the country. In Oudh especially, there prevailed terrible bitterness of feeling, particularly after Sir James Outram was succeeded as its Chief Commissioner by Cerverly Jackson, a man of unsympathetic attitude and overbearing disposition. The King's stipendiaries and officials ceased to have their allowances and pensions; his capital was occupied by the new Chief Commissioner; and the disbandment of his army deprived the professional soldiers of their means of livelihood. All these converted Oudh, "the loyalty of whose inhabitants to the British had become proverbial, into a hot-bed of discontent and of intrigue". Matters were to some extent improved by the recall of Jackson and the appointment of Henry Lawrence; but discontent could not be completely allayed.

A large section of the population were alarmed by the rapid spread of Western civilisation in India during the closing years of the eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth. The conservative sections of the Indian people saw in inventions like the railway and the telegraph, in the extension of Western education, in the abolition of practices like Sati and infanticide, in the protection of the civil rights of converts from Hinduism by the Religious Disabilities Act of 1856, in the legalisation of widow remarriage by the Hindu Widows Remarriage Act of 1856, and in the unwarranted aggressive spirit of some Christian
missionaries, attempts on the part of the Government to destroy their social polity, to westernise their land at the cost of their time-honoured customs and practices and to convert India to Christianity. The activities of the Wahhabí sect must have contributed to inflame the feelings of the Muslims.

Thus several factors generated fumes of discontent in different parts of the country, the bursting of which into a devouring flame would not, however, have been possible if the Sepoy Army had remained, as before, loyal to the Company. “In the control of the Sepoy Army lay,” observes Innes “the crux of the position.” But, for several reasons, the attitude of the Sepoys towards the Company had become by this time far from friendly. Frequent engagement in prolonged campaigns in distant lands, which the Sepoys disliked, had severely tried their loyalty. Some regiments of Sepoys had already mutinied on four occasions, during the thirteen years preceding the outbreak of 1857, as their demands for extra allowances for fighting in remote regions had not been met by the Company’s government: the 34th N.I. in 1844, the 22nd N.I. in 1849, the 66th N.I. in 1850 and the 38th N.I. in 1852. Further, the discipline of the Sepoy Army, especially of the Bengal Division, had been rapidly deteriorating, owing largely to the defective policy of the Government which unwisely transferred able military officers from the field to political jobs and retained the rule of promotion by seniority, irrespective of any consideration of age or efficiency. General Godwin, for example, commanded in the Second Burmese War at the age of seventy. The so-called “Bengal Army” was recruited not in Bengal proper, but from high-caste men in Oudh and the North-Western Provinces. Being very sensitive about their caste privileges they were not easily amenable to discipline and also shared the general suspicion as to the westernising and Christianising policy of the Government. The feeling of discontent was intensified by Lord Canning’s General Service Enlistment Act ordering all recruits to the Bengal Army to be ready for service both within and outside India. The disparity in numbers between European and Indian troops had become glaring during the recent years; thus at the time of Lord Dalhousie’s departure from India, the former numbered 45,322 and the latter 233,000. The distribution of the troops was also defective. Places of strategic importance like Delhi and Allahabad were wholly held by the Sepoys; and between Calcutta and Allahabad there was only one British regiment at Dinapore near Patna. Again, England was then engaged in several extra-Indian wars like the Crimean War, the Persian War and the Chinese War, which sorely taxed her resources. A belief was engendered in the
minds of the Sepoys that England was in a critical situation and that, the British Army in India being so small, the safety of her Indian Empire depended on the Sepoys. "A consciousness of power," wrote the Commissioner of Meerut, "had grown up in the army which could only be exorcised by mutiny, and the cry of the cartridge brought the latent spirit of revolt into action." The introduction of the Enfield rifle, the cartridges for which were greased with animal fat, was indeed an ill-considered measure. It set the spark that enkindled the embers of discontent, which was being fanned sedulously among the army by Nana Sahib, the partisans of the King of Oudh, the Rani of Jhansi and a few others. There were some grounds for the belief of the Sepoy Army that the grease was made from cow or pig fat, obnoxious to both the Hindus and the Muslims. "On this inflammable material," writes Atchison, "the too true story of the cartridges fell as a spark on dry tinder," and the whole country from the Sutlej to the Narmada was ablaze.

3. The Outbreak of the Mutiny and Its Suppression

The first signs of unrest appeared early in 1857 at Barrackpore and Berhampore in Bengal; they were, however, quickly suppressed and the culprits were punished. But the Sepoys broke out into open revolt at Meerut on the 10th May, 1857, swarmed into the prisons, released their imprisoned comrades, murdered a few European officers and burnt their houses. General Hewitt, the incapable commanding officer at Meerut, although he had 2,200 European troops under him, took no steps to suppress the mutineers, who galloped the next morning to Delhi, where not a single British regiment was stationed at that time, and brought it under their control. They massacred many Europeans and destroyed their houses. Two signallers in the telegraph office, outside the city, warned the authorities in the Punjab in time by sending them a telegraphic message. Lieutenant Willoughby, the officer in charge of the magazine, defended it for a few days with his eight brave companions, but at last finding himself overwhelmed he blew it up. This caused great losses to the mutineers, who, however, soon occupied the palace and proclaimed the aged nominal king, Bahadur Shah II, whose name still conjured up to many the vanished glories of the once mighty Mughul Empire, Emperor of Hindustan. The loss of Delhi, which had fallen into British hands as a result of much hard fighting and diplomacy, dealt a severe blow to the prestige of the British Empire.
There was a comparative respite of about three weeks, during which Sir John Lawrence, the Chief Commissioner of the Punjab, managed to keep that province tranquil. But before any attempt could be made to recover Delhi, insurrections broke out by the first week of June in almost all the upper Gangetic provinces and parts of Central India—at Nāśirābād in Rājputāna, at Bareilly in Rohilkhand, at Cawnpore, at Lucknow in Oudh, at Benares and in certain parts of Bihār. The Bihār movement under the leadership of Kunwār Singh of Jagadishpur near Arrah was put down by William Tayler, Commissioner of the Patna Division, and Major Vincent Eyre of the Bengal Artillery. The Benares outbreak was suppressed by Colonel Neill of the 1st Madras Fusiliers, who put to death all the mutineers who could be captured; and in the surrounding districts that were placed under martial law by the Governor-General, “rebels, suspects, and even disorderly boys were executed by infuriated officers and unofficial British Residents, who volunteered to serve as hangmen”. The famous fort of Allahābād, defended bravely by Captain Brassey with a small Sikh force, was relieved on the 11th June by Neill. The mutineers became very active at Cawnpore, Delhi and Lucknow. But, fortunately for the English, the regions south of the Narmadā were not on the whole affected by the revolt. Lord Elphinstone preserved comparative tranquillity in the Bombay Presidency, though an Indian regiment mutinied at Kolhapur, and George Lawrence was able to keep Rājputāna quiet. The Punjab and particularly its Sikh chiefs, Gulāb Singh of Kāshmir, and many zamindārs and Indian officers, remained loyal to the Company. Valuable services were rendered by some famous Indian rulers and statesmen, like Sindhia and his minister, Sir Dinkar Rāo; Sir Salar Jang, the minister of Hyderabad, the Begam of Bhopāl, and Sir Jang Bahādur, the able minister of Nepāl, to arrest the spread of the movement. In the opinion of Innes, Sindhia’s loyalty “saved India for the British”; and Holmes, well known for his important work on the history of the Indian Mutiny, has described Sir Salar Jang as “a man whose name deserves to be even mentioned by Englishmen with gratitude and admiration”.

The mutineers at Cawnpore were led by Nānā Sāheb, who had been living at Bithur near Cawnpore and had proclaimed himself as Peshwā. They invested the British entrenchments, which had been hurriedly constructed, in a manner too inadequate for effective defence, by Sir Hugh Wheeler, the seventy-five-years-old commander of that station. From the 8th till the 26th of June, they invested garrison, consisting of about four hundred men capable
of bearing arms and a number of women and children, defended themselves bravely in the midst of dreadful suffering and privation. They surrendered on the 27th, being given assurances of safe conduct to Allahābād. But as the deluded British garrison were leaving the place in boats, a murderous fire was opened on them with the result that most of the men were massacred at the river-side, only four being able to escape. Two hundred and eleven women and children were confined in a building, known as the Bibigah, where they were mercilessly put to death on the 15th July, by orders of Nānā Sāheb and his friend, Tāntā Sūpī, and their bodies were flung into a well. It is difficult to say definitely how far these atrocities were perpetrated as a reprisal for the repressive measures of British and Sikh soldiers at Benares and Allahābād. The results of the Cawnpore massacre were very lamentable. It aroused a burning desire for revenge in the minds of Englishmen, both in India and England, and led the Company’s troops to perpetrate acts that have left very unpleasant memories. An avenging British force, under Neill and Havelock, reached Cawnpore one day after the tragic incident. The city was occupied by the mutinous Gwalior contingent on the 27th and 28th November, but Sir Colin Campbell recovered it on the 10th December.

The recovery of Delhi, the important rallying centre of the insurgents, could not but engage the serious attention of the British Government. On the 8th June a relieving British force from Aūmbālā, joined by a party from Meerut, defeated a mutinous army at Badī Sāri and took up a position on the famous Ridge overlooking the city of Delhi. Additional reinforcements, including a number of Sikhs, were sent from the Punjab by Sir John Lawrence, under a brave officer named Nicholson, to join the British troops on the outskirts of Delhi. Nicholson frustrated an attempt of the opposing force to intercept his advance, and assisted by Sir Archdale Wilson, Baird Smith and Neville Chamberlain, delivered a vigorous assault on the mutineers. On the 14th September, the Kāshmir Gate was blown up, and the city and the palace were captured after six days’ desperate fighting. Nicholson received a mortal wound. The city was sacked by British soldiers, and in the process many of its innocent male citizens were slaughtered. The *Bombay Telegraph* reported: “All the city people found within the walls when our troops entered were bayoneted on the spot; and the number was considerable, as you may suppose when I tell you that in some houses forty or fifty persons were hiding.” The titular Delhi Emperor, Bahādur Shāh II, was arrested at the tomb of Humāyūn by Lt. Hodson, a fierce cavalry officer, and his sons and a grandson
surrendered to Hodson as prisoners of war. Bahadur Shah II was deported to Rangoon, where he spent his last years in exile till he died in 1862, at the age of eighty-seven. The princes were shot down by Hodson, who had persuaded himself that they had been guilty of murdering Englishmen and women and that they would be rescued by a mob before he could take them to a place of safety. Thus came to an end the Mughal imperial dynasty. There is no doubt that Hodson’s act was “most uncalled-for.” The charges against the victims were not proved by any definite evidence, nor was any attempt made by the crowd to save them. Malleson observes that “a more brutal or a more unnecessary outrage was never committed. It was a blunder as well as a crime.”

At Lucknow, the mutiny broke out on the 30th May, and Sir Henry Lawrence, who had succeeded Mr. Jackson as Chief Commissioner, retired at the beginning of July to the Residency, with all the Europeans and Christians and about 700 loyal sepoys, and held out there only for a few days, as he was shortly afterwards killed by the bursting of a shell. The command of the besieged garrison then fell on Brigadier Inglis, who bravely defended the place against numerous assaults until Havelock and Outram fought their way at the point of the bayonet into the Residency on the 25th September with much-needed reinforcements. General Neill, who had “the energy of one of the most determined characters ever bestowed on man”, died at this time at Lucknow. Inglis, Havelock and Outram could not make their way out with the besieged garrison. Their final relief was effected by the middle of November by Sir Colin Campbell (afterwards Lord Clyde), who came from England as Commander-in-Chief. Sir Colin Campbell took vigorous action to suppress the risings in Oudh and Rohilkhand. With the valuable help of Jang Bahadur of Nepali, who joined him at the head of a powerful Gurkha contingent, he finally brought Lucknow under British control on the 21st March, 1858. But the Talukdars of Oudh had been infuriated by a singularly injudicious proclamation, issued by Canning at the end of March to the effect that the lands of all the Talukdars were liable to forfeiture “except those of six specifically mentioned and of others who could prove their loyalty”. They carried on a guerilla warfare. The capture of Bareilly in Rohilkhand in the month of May greatly disheartened them and they were thoroughly vanquished by the end of the year. Many of the mutineers fled across the British frontier to Nepal to perish there miserably.

Meanwhile, the insurgents in Central India had found an able leader in Tanti Topi, a Maratha Brahmana, who with the mutineers
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Gwalior contingent, 20,000 strong, crossed the Jumna at Kalpi, joined the troops of Naná Sáheb, and repulsed General Windham, who had been left in charge of Cawnpore. But he was defeated, and driven out, on the 6th December, 1857, by Sir Colin Campbell. Tántí Topí then joined Rání Lakshmi Bai of Jhansi and carried on a desperate fight in Central India. Meanwhile Sir Hugh Rose had been conducting successful campaigns in Bundelkhand, the southernmost centre of the mutiny. Marching from his base of operations at Mhow early in January, 1858, he relieved the garrison at Sangor, captured Hatgargh early in February, defeated Tántí Topí on the Betwa River, and stormed Jhansi on the 3rd April. Leaving the fort of Jhansi during the night of the 4th April, the Rání went with a few followers to Kalpi, which also was captured by the English on the 22nd May. The indomitable Rání and Tántí Topí then marched to Gwalior, and drove out Sindhia to Agra. This prince had remained loyal but his army now deserted him. Naná Sáheb was proclaimed as the Peshwá. Realising the danger of a Maráthá rising, Sir Hugh Rose took prompt measures to check the activities of the Rání and Tántí. He recovered Gwalior after defeating the insurgents at Morar and Kotah. The Rání of Jhansi, dressed in male attire as a sáváír, was killed in one of these battles on the 17th June, 1858. Tántí Topí, chased from place to place, was given up to the English, early in April, 1859, by Mán Singh, a feudatory of Sindhia, and was hanged on charges of rebellion and murder and not for complicity in the massacre of Cawnpore, as is often stated. Naná Sáheb was driven into the jungles of Nepal and is said to have died there. Thus ended the episode of the Mutiny, and Canning proclaimed peace throughout India. Many people, both in India and England, demanded the pursuit of a "ruthless and indiscriminate policy of vengeance". Even Nicholsohn spoke for legalising "the flaying alive, impalement, or burning of the murderers of the women and children at Delhi". But Canning, uninfluenced by this clamour, judged the matter with statesmanlike prudence and cool judgment, and arranged for the proper trial and punishment of those only who were really guilty. For this he was described, in derision, as "Clemency Canning"; but it must be admitted that the Governor-General's policy was wise and expedient and he was right in opposing measures whose only effect would have been to add to the bitterness of feeling between the rulers and the ruled.
4. Causes of the Failure of the Mutiny

The Mutiny, though an outbreak of a formidable nature, was bound to fail owing to the defective equipment and organization of the insurgents. Firstly, their military equipment was inferior to that of the English; for example, their old muzzle-loaders were outranged by the newly invented breech-loaders of the English troops. Secondly, while the Sepoys failed to understand the significance of contemporary scientific improvements and even dreaded them, the English fully utilised these advantages for their own benefit. Thus with control over a widespread telegraph system and postal communications, the latter were able to receive and exchange information from different parts of the country and to modify their course of action according to the needs of the situation. Thirdly, the English were fortunate enough to secure the loyalty of most of the feudatory chiefs, with the exception of the Râni of Jhânsi, the Begum of Oudh and some minor chiefs; and, as has already been pointed out, they received invaluable assistance from men like Sir Dinkar Râo of Gâwâlîor, Sir Sahâr Jang of Hyderâbâd, Jang Bahâdur of Nepal, and the Sikhs. In the north-west, Dost Muhâmmad remained friendly. Fourthly, the vast numbers of the civil population of the country, instead of helping the mutineers, were alienated from them, on account of their sufferings under the state of anarchy which followed the risings, and sympathised with the British Government, as it maintained law and order, which the masses in a country always prefer to anything else. Lastly, there was lack of efficient leadership among the mutineers, while the British cause was ably served by a number of wise and brave leaders like Lawrence, Outram, Havelock, Nicholson, Neill and Edwardes.

5. Nature and Effect of the Mutiny

The Mutiny was not a thoroughly organised national movement or "a war of independence", as James Outram, a contemporary, believed it to have been, or as it has been represented by some modern writers. It was in the main a military outbreak, which was taken advantage of by certain discontented princes and landlords, whose interests had been affected by the new political order. The last-mentioned factor gave it in certain areas the character of a popular rising and constituted a menace to the British Empire for several months, particularly in Oudh and Rohilkhand. It was never all-Indian in character, but was localised, restricted and
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poorly organised. Only one of the three provincial armies mutinied, and all the Indian sepoys did not rise against the British Government. As we have already noted, important Indian princes and chiefs sided with the English; and of the thousands of landlords, recently dispossessed of their property, only the Talukdars of Oudh actively helped the insurgents. There was no leader of outstanding ability among the mutineers, except the heroic figure of the Râni of Jhansi, whom Sir Hugh Gough esteemed as "the best and bravest military leader of the rebels". Further, the movement was marked by absence of cohesion and unity of purpose among the different sections of the insurgents. Unfortunately, it was characterised by a disregard of the rules of civilised warfare on both sides, and "was fought with peculiar savagery". If the mutineers were guilty of terrible enormities the British troops also on occasions tarnished the fair name of their country by a severity that was hardly tempered by good sense or moderation.

For more reasons than one, the Mutiny marks a turning-point in the history of India. In a sense it demonstrated that the hold of the Company on India was still rather weak, and its lessons continued to influence British administration in India for several generations. "I wish," remarked the late Lord Cromer, "the young generation of the English would read, mark, learn and inwardly digest the history of the Indian Mutiny; it abounds in lessons and warnings." It directly produced three important changes in the system of administration and the policy of the Government.

Firstly, the control of the Indian Government was finally assumed by the Crown, in spite of protests from the Company. An Act for the Better Government of India was passed on the 2nd August, 1858, which provided that "India shall be governed by, and in the name of the Sovereign through one of the principal Secretaries of State, assisted by a council of fifteen members". At the same time the Governor-General received the new title of Viceroy. This was, however, "rather a formal than a substantial change", because the Crown had been steadily increasing its control over the affairs of the Company since the latter had become a territorial power in India, and the actual control had been exercised so long by the President of the Board of Control, who was a Minister of the Crown. The Directors had functioned as a mere advisory council.

The assumption of the government of India by the Sovereign of Great Britain was announced by Lord Canning at a darbâr at
Allahābād in a Proclamation issued on 1st November, 1858, in the name of the Queen. The Queen's Proclamation, described as the Magna Charta of the Indian people, confirmed the treaties and engagements of the East India Company with the Indian princes; promised to respect the rights, dignity and honour of the native princes and to pay due regard to the ancient rights, usages and customs of India; disclaimed all desire for the extension of British territorial possessions in India through "encroachment on those of others"; granted a general amnesty to "all offenders, save and except those who have been, and shall be convicted of having directly taken part in the murder of British subjects"; proclaimed a policy of justice, benevolence and religious toleration, enjoining the Government to "abstain from all interference with the religious belief or worship" of the subjects; and declared that all "of whatever race or creed, may be freely and impartially admitted to offices in our service, the duties of which they may be qualified, by their education, ability and integrity, duly to discharge".

Secondly, the army, which took the initiative in the outbreak, was thoroughly reorganised; and, for the next fifty years, "the idea of division and counterpoise" dominated British military policy in India. The Presidency armies were kept entirely separate till 1893; the European element in them was strengthened, and placed in sole charge of some essential services; and the number of European soldiers was increased. The Commission on Indian Army Organisation of 1879 observed: "The lessons taught by the Mutiny have led to the maintenance of two great principles, of retaining in the country an irresistible force of British troops and keeping the artillery in the hands of Europeans."

Thirdly, the British Government now took up a new attitude towards the Indian States. These States had henceforth to recognise the paramountcy of the British Crown and were to be considered as parts of a single charge.

One indirect effect of the Mutiny is clearly seen in the birth and rise of extremism in Indian politics. The excesses of the movement engendered a feeling of hostility in the minds of some Indians as well as some Englishmen in India, which, being aggravated by the growing racial discrimination between the two, has been influencing political thought and administrative policy in India in modern times. Russell, the Times Correspondent in India, rightly observed in his Diary that "the mutinies have produced too much hatred and ill-feeling between the two races to render any mere change of the rulers a remedy for the evils which
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affect India, of which those angry sentiments are the most serious exposition. . . . Many years must elapse ere the evil passions excited by these disturbances expire; perhaps confidence will never be restored: and, if so, our reign in India will be maintained at the cost of suffering which it is fearful to contemplate".
CHAPTER VIII

ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANISATION UP TO THE MUTINY

1. The Central Administration

The virtual acquisition of the kingdom of Bengal by the East India Company raised important problems. Could a private corporation be allowed to rule over vast territories without any supervision of Parliament? Was a constitution designed for carrying on trade and commerce equally suitable for the administration of an oriental Empire? These were the questions that agitated politicians and statesmen in England. They were made party issues in Parliament and were also further complicated by the personal interests which were bound up with them. It is beyond the scope of the present work to trace the history of this interesting problem and its effect upon the parliamentary history of England. Suffice it to say that after a great deal of discussion, frequently characterised by vehement denunciations and personal recriminations, Parliament appointed a Select Committee and a Secret Committee and at last in 1773 passed the famous Regulating Act which introduced Parliamentary supervision over the Company and modified its constitution both in England and in India.

The Act restricted the power of vote in the Court of Proprietors by raising the qualification for the same from £500 to £1,000. The twenty-four Directors, who had been hitherto elected each year, were henceforth to be elected for four years, one fourth of their number retiring each year.

The Act provided that "the Directors should lay before the Treasury all correspondence from India dealing with the revenues and before a Secretary of State everything dealing with civil or military administration". Thus the first definite step was taken for providing Parliamentary control over the affairs of the Company. By a Supplementary Act, passed in 1781, all dispatches proposed to be sent to India were to be shown to a Secretary of State.

As regards the administration in India, the main provisions of the Act were as follows:

The Government of Bengal was vested in a Governor-General and a Council of four members. The votes of the majority were
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...to prevail, the President having a casting vote in case of equality of votes. The first Governor-General, Warren Hastings, and the Councillors, Clavering, Monson, Barwell and Philip Francis, were named in the Act and appointed for five years (the term was further extended by Supplementary Acts). Their successors were to be appointed by the Company. The Governor-General in Council could control the subordinate Presidencies of Bombay and Madras in matters relating to war and peace. Further, the Act authorised the Crown to establish, by royal charter, a Supreme Court of Justice consisting of a Chief Justice and three puisne judges.

The Regulating Act was in force from 1773 to 1784 and thus covered almost the entire administration of Warren Hastings as Governor-General. The effects of the Act may, therefore, be best studied in detail in the events of that period. In general, it may be remarked that the Act broke down almost as soon as it was put to a practical test. The subordination of the Governor-General to a majority of the Council introduced weakness and vacillation in the Central Government, which might have proved fatal to British rule in India. The supervision over subordinate Presidencies was an extremely difficult task, and its impracticable character was demonstrated by the events of the First Anglo-Maratha War. The establishment of the Supreme Court led to endless complications as its jurisdiction was not properly defined, and it naturally came into conflict with the existing courts of law. In England also the ministerial control over the actions of the Directors proved illusory in many notable instances. The whole position has been beautifully summed up in the following sentence:

"It had neither given the State a definite control over the Company, nor the directors a definite control over their servants, nor the Governor-General a definite control over his Council, nor the Calcutta Presidency a definite control over Madras and Bombay."

Immediately after the inauguration of the new regime on 26th October, 1774, Warren Hastings was confronted with the opposition of the majority in his Council. The attitude of the new Councillors was far from friendly from the beginning, and they attacked the Governor-General's policy on various points. Francis, who came to India with a preconceived notion that the administration was honeycombed with abuses and needed radical reforms, was the leading spirit of the opposition against the Governor-General. The virulent and persistent attacks of the Councillors made Hastings powerless in his Council for a few years till the death of Monson on 25th September, 1777, and severely
affected his prestige, with the result that charges of bribery and defalcation were brought against him by his enemies.

This is strikingly illustrated by the case of Nanda Kumār, a Brāhmaṇa of high rank, who had held an important position in the Nawāb's Government (p. 661). On 11th March, 1775, Nanda Kumār, whom Hastings had offended by depriving him of his house and by showing special favour to his foe, Mohan Prasād, the executor of an Indian banker, charged Hastings with taking presents, worth many lacs, among them Rs. 3,54,105 from Mumi Begam, the widow of Mir Jafar, for placing her in control of the Nawāb's household. It is very difficult to say definitely whether the charges were true. Hastings unwisely refused to meet the charges and to be put on trial before his Council, with one as prosecutor whom he detested most and considered to be "the basest of mankind". But the Councillors, full of suspicion and dislike for the Governor-General, concluded that the charges against him were true and that he should pay the money into the Company's treasury. In 1776 the law officers of the Company in England declared that these charges, even on the ex parte case before them, were false.

Meanwhile, in the month of May, 1775, Mohan Prasād charged Nanda Kumār with forgery in connection with a will executed five years before. He was tried by the Supreme Court and a jury, found guilty, sentenced to death and hanged.

There is no doubt that Nanda Kumār did not receive a fair trial and there was a "miscarriage of justice" at least in respect of the capital punishment inflicted on him. Sir James Stephen states that "if he had to depend upon the evidence called for the prosecution, he would not have convicted the prisoner". Again the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court over the indigenous population was doubtful, and the fact is that "the English law making forgery a capital crime was not operative in India till many years after Nanda Kumār's alleged forgery had been committed". Further, the judges took the unusual course of themselves cross-examining the defence witnesses "and that somewhat severely".

It is sometimes said that the execution of Nanda Kumār "was a judicial murder". It was openly asserted by some at that time that Mohan Prasād was a creature of Hastings, who influenced the judicial decision against the accused. Nanda Kumār wrote to Clavering that he was the victim of a conspiracy between the Governor-General-in-Council and the Supreme Court. But it should be noted that Impey was not the only judge who tried the case and there were also his colleagues and the jury; and that there is no positive evidence to prove Hastings' conspiracy with Impey, with
whom he was not always on good terms. The conduct of the Council in not trying to save Nanda Kumar seems to be rather mysterious. Francis suggested the idea of appealing for a reprieve, but it was opposed by Clavering and Monson. "It casts," observes Roberts, "the darkest and most sinister shadow over the reputation of the men who used him for their own purpose and then callously and contemptuously flung him to the wolves."

In the course of a few years the glaring defects of the Regulating Act became apparent, and fresh attempts were made to devise suitable remedies. The matter was brought to a head in 1783, when the Company was obliged to approach Parliament for financial relief. Burke only voiced the general opinion when he claimed that the relief and reformation of the Company must go together.

The first proposal for reform advocated by Dundas came to nothing. The bill introduced by Fox was passed in the House of Commons after a long and acrimonious debate, but was defeated in the Lords mainly as a result of the intervention of King George III. Pitt succeeded Fox and introduced a new bill in January, 1784, and it was passed in August of the same year.

Pitt's India Act established six "Commissioners for the affairs of India", viz. a Secretary of State, the Chancellor of the Exchequer and four Privy Councillors appointed by the King. The body, known popularly as the Board of Control, was to exercise an effective supervision over the Board of Directors. They had access to all the papers of the Company and no dispatches other than those that were purely commercial could be sent without their approval. The power of the Court of Proprietors was considerably reduced, as they could not annul or suspend any resolution of the Board of Directors which was approved by the Commissioners. These Commissioners were also empowered to send urgent or secret orders through a Secret Committee of the Directors, the approval of the latter being of course a mere formality. The supreme authority thus passed into the hands of the Commissioners, and the Directors retained only their patronage, viz. the right to appoint and dismiss their own servants.

Important changes were at the same time introduced in the Indian administration. The members of the Governor-General's Council were reduced to three and only the covenanted servants of the Company were made eligible for these posts. The control of the Governor-General in Council over the Presidencies of Madras and Bombay was clearly defined and rendered more effective. By a supplementary bill, passed in 1786, the Governor-General was
authorised in special cases to act against the majority of the Council, and also to hold the office of Commander-in-Chief.

The constitution set up by Pitt's India Act did not undergo any fundamental change during the existence of the Company's rule in India. We may therefore pass in rapid review the minor changes that occurred between 1786 and 1858. It may be noted that legislative changes during this period were always associated with the renewal of the Company's Charter in 1793, 1813, 1833 and 1853.

As regards the Home Government, the most notable changes were in regard to the Board of Control. Its powers were gradually concentrated in the hands of the President, who thereby virtually became the Cabinet Minister for India.

The Charter Act of 1813 abolished the monopoly of the Company's Indian trade and laid down "the undoubted sovereignty of the Crown" in and over the possessions of the East India Company. The Charter Act of 1833 abolished the trading activities of the Company and henceforth it became a purely administrative body under the Crown.

In India, the powers of the Governor-General over the subordinate Presidencies were further enlarged by the Charter Act of 1793, which enabled him to proceed in person to Madras and Bombay and exercise the same authority over their administration as in Bengal. The Charter Act of 1833 not only gave the Governor-General and Council the superintendence, direction and control over the subordinate Presidencies, but also took away from the latter all powers of making laws, and concentrated all legislative authority in the former. Henceforth, with certain necessary exceptions, the Governor-General and Council could make laws and regulations for all persons, whether British or Indian, and for all courts of justice, whether established by His Majesty's charters or otherwise.

In order to enable the Council to discharge these important functions efficiently, a new member with expert knowledge of law was added to it. The Law Member must not be a servant of the Company and could speak and vote only at meetings of the Council which discussed legislative business.

In order to emphasise the superior role which the Governor-General and Council would play over all the Company's possessions in India, the supreme authority in the country was henceforth designated as the Governor-General of India in Council. The Governor-General in Council also constituted the Government of Bengal, and the Act permitted a member of the Council to be appointed Deputy-Governor of the Province.
The Charter Act of 1853 introduced further changes. The number of Directors was reduced to eighteen, of whom three (later six) were to be appointed by the Crown. It took away from them the power of patronage by instituting an open competitive examination for the recruitment of civil servants. The salary of the President of the Board of Control was made equal to that of a Secretary of State, and the approval of the Crown was necessary for all appointments of Councillors, both central and provincial.

As regards the Government of India, the most important changes concerned its legislative function. The Law Member was made an ordinary member of the Governor-General's Council and no law could be enacted without the assent of the Governor-General. The Council itself was enlarged for legislative purposes by the addition of six new members, called "legislative councillors". These included four nominees of the four provincial Governments (Bengal, Bombay, Madras and the North-Western Provinces) and the Chief Justice and a puisne Judge of the Supreme Court. The nominated members must be civil servants of at least ten years' standing. A Law Commission was appointed in London for the codification of Indian laws, and it ultimately led to the enactment of the Penal Code, the Criminal Procedure Code, and the Civil Procedure Code.

The changes made by the successive Charter Acts merely sought to carry to its logical conclusion the process that had been begun by North's Regulating Act and Pitt's India Act, viz. gradual transference of power and authority from the Company to the Crown. The relation between the two was, throughout this period, a complicated one, and depended to a large extent upon the personality of the President of the Board and his influence with the Cabinet. In addition to initiative, direction and control, a strong President could coerce the Directors into submission in almost every matter, but the latter always possessed, to a large extent, the power of resisting and putting obstacles in his way. The right of recalling the Governor-General was always an important instrument in their hands, and no President would lightly risk their determined hostility and desperate resistance. But the inevitable chain of events pointed to the extinction of the Company as the only logical end. After the Charter Act of 1833 the main privilege and justification for the existence of the Company was the appointment of civil servants—a powerful patronage which could hardly be transferred to the Cabinet without danger to British democracy. With the institution of competitive examination for the recruitment of civil servants, this last vestige of effective
power was gone, and the way was made clear for the abolition of the Company and the transfer of its powers to the Crown. This end was already visualised by many and must have shortly been realised in the ordinary course even if the Mutiny had not suddenly brought it about in an abrupt manner.

2. Provincial Administration

Bengal, the First Phase (1765-1793)

Although the Company was granted the Diwānī of Bengal, Bihār and Orissa in 1765, the actual collection of revenue was left till 1772 in the hands of two Naib-Diwāns, Muhammad Rezā Khān in Bengal and Shitāb Rāy in Bihār. Out of the revenues collected, the Company had to pay twenty-six lacs to the Emperor, as stipulated in the Treaty of Allāhabād, and thirty-two lacs (originally fifty-three lacs) to the Nawāb of Bengal for the expenses of the administration, retaining the surplus for their own use. This is the famous system of Dual Government associated with the name of Clive.

The result of this system was disastrous both to the Company as well as to the people of Bengal, while the servants of the Company and the Naib-Diwāns amassed great wealth. The Company's authorities at home were fully alive to the abuses of the system and in 1772 appointed Hastings Governor of Bengal with full powers to reform the administration.

Hastings abolished the Dual Government and carried into effect the declared policy of the Company to "stand forth as the Diwān". In reality, however, he did much more than simply exercise the powers of the Diwān, i.e. collection of revenue by his own agents. He made the Company responsible for almost the entire civil administration of the province.

He abolished the posts of the Naib-Diwāns and removed the treasury to Calcutta. The minority of the Nawāb made the transition easy. He appointed, as the guardian of the Nawāb, Muny Begam, originally a dancing girl, on whom he could fully rely. The annual allowance of the Nawāb was at the same time reduced to sixteen lacs. These and similar other measures transferred the real power and authority in the administration from the hands of the Nawāb to those of the Company, and Calcutta became henceforth the real seat of government instead of Murshidabād.

After thus having assumed the powers of government, Hastings set himself to evolve a system of administration. The task, however,
proved a most formidable one. The administrative machinery of the Company, so long intended solely for commercial pursuits, had to be adjusted to an altogether different purpose, and the hopeless fabric of the Nawāb's Government could scarcely supply any solid foundation for a new structure. Besides, the morale of the Company's Indian servants was very low, and a tradition of public service had yet to be built up. The ignorance of the language of the people and of their laws, manners and customs added to the difficulty of the task. No wonder, therefore, that the British authorities in Bengal had to pass through long and weary processes and to engage in tedious and bitter experiments in order to find a solution to the stupendous problems that confronted them. The twenty years (1772-1793) that covered the administration of Hastings and Cornwallis may be regarded as the first eventful chapter in the history of Indo-British administration in Bengal. After numerous experiments, some definite principles were formulated towards the close of this period, and they formed the foundation of the mighty structure of the British-Indian administration which we see around us today. It would be convenient, therefore, to begin with this period and study the gradual evolution of this administrative system, mainly under the two heads, the administration of revenue and the administration of justice.

A. The Administration of Revenue

The main sources of revenue at this period were:

(a) Land-revenue
(b) Monopoly of salt and opium trade
and (c) Customs, tolls, excise, etc., called Sair.

Of these the first was undoubtedly the most important and demands our chief attention. As already noted above, the land-revenue was collected up to 1772 by the two Naib-Diwāns. This was almost inevitable at the beginning, as the British entirely lacked the knowledge of revenue matters. In order to remove this deficiency "supervisors" were appointed to study the method of collecting the revenue and obtain a knowledge of the local customs and usages in this respect. The requisite knowledge was, however, confined to the zamindārs, who collected the revenues from the ryots, and the Qinūngoes or officers in charge of records. None of these were willing to communicate the information to the British officials and so the appointment of supervisors bore but little fruit.
In 1772 the posts of the Naib-Diwāns were abolished and the revenue administration was placed under the direct control of the Governor and Council, who thus formed a Board of Revenue. The lands were farmed out by public auction and the assessment was made for a period of five years. A Collector and an Indian Diwān were appointed in each district to supervise the revenue administration.

The result of the system was disastrous from every point of view. Unprincipled speculators made rash bids and succeeded in ousting the zamindārs in most cases, but they soon found themselves unable to collect the stipulated revenue. Having no permanent interest in the land, they oppressed the ryots in order to exact as much as possible during the period of their tenure. In spite of this, they were heavily in arrears and were imprisoned by the Collectors for failure to make the stipulated payment. Thus the zamindārs, farmers and ryots, all suffered, while the Company also incurred serious losses.

In 1773 a new experiment was tried. A Committee of Revenue, consisting of two members of the Board and three senior servants of the Company, was established in Calcutta. The post of the European Collector was abolished, and the revenue administration of each district was placed under an Indian Diwān. Six Provincial Councils were established, and arrangements were made for occasional inspection by special Commissioners.

The change did not improve matters much, so that when the five years' settlement expired the Company adopted the method of annual assessment by public auction, but special instructions were issued to the Provincial Councils to give preference to the zamindārs in making these annual settlements of land revenue.

In 1781 a new plan was adopted for the administration of revenue. The essence of the new plan was to centralise the whole business of revenue collection in Calcutta. A new Committee of Revenue was set up, consisting of four members assisted by a Diwān. The Provincial Councils were abolished, and although European Collectors were reappointed in each district, they had no real powers and were merely figureheads.

The scheme suffered from all the evils and abuses of over-centralisation and soon broke down. In 1786 a rational scheme was adopted. Districts were now organised into regular fiscal units, and the Collector in each district was made responsible for settling the revenue and collecting it. At first the whole province was divided into thirty-five districts, but in 1787 the number was reduced to twenty-three. The Committee of Revenue was now reconstituted as a Board of Revenue with a member of the Council
as its President. The duties of the Board were clearly defined and consisted mainly in "controlling and advising the collectors and sanctioning their settlement". A new officer, Chief Sheristādār, was appointed to deal with the detailed records of land-tenure and land-revenue, so that the requisite knowledge might be available to the Government, instead of remaining a secret monopoly of the Qīrinīnggoes.

The system of annual settlement continued till the beginning of A.D. 1790. It was obviously a temporary expedient and recognised as such, but had to be continued as the requisite data had to be collected before embarking upon a system of a more permanent character. The problem was further complicated by the varying theories about the ownership of land. The different views on this subject were crystallised into the opposing theories of Grant and Shore, two senior servants of the Company, who had specially applied themselves to the thorny question of land-revenue. Shore maintained that the zamindārs were the proprietors of the land and were only liable to pay a customary revenue to the Government. Grant, on the other hand, was of opinion that the proprietary right of the land was vested in the Government, and they had unrestricted rights to make settlements with anybody, zamindār or farmer, on any terms they liked. The authorities in England adopted Shore's views, and accordingly instructed Cornwallis to make settlement with the zamindārs, as far as practicable. The settlement was to be made at first for a period of ten years only, but with a definite idea of making it ultimately permanent.

In pursuance of these instructions, Cornwallis appointed Shore President of the Board of Revenue, and some steps were taken with a view to making a long-term settlement. The necessary preliminaries were not completed till 1790, but during this interval Cornwallis' views underwent an important change. Instead of a provisional settlement for ten years to be ultimately made permanent, he decided upon launching immediately a plan of permanent settlement. His views were opposed by most of his advisers, including both Shore and Grant. Grant naturally wanted to postpone an irrevocable measure of this type till a further and exhaustive study of the records was made to decide the question of the proprietary right of the land. Shore wanted to postpone it till a proper survey could enable the Government to make the perpetual assessment on a sound and equitable basis.

Cornwallis, on the other hand, maintained that enough material was already in the possession of the Government to decide the issue, both as regards the theoretical aspect of the question, as
well as the more practical one, viz. fixing the total amount of the
revenue to be demanded from zamindars. He further held that
at present revenue matters were taking so much of the time and
energy of the Government that nothing but a permanent measure
of this type would enable them to devote the proper share of atten-
tion to the more important duties of the Government like adminis-
tration and justice. Among the beneficent effects of a permanent
settlement of land Cornwallis laid particular stress upon the
encouragement it would give the zamindars not only to develop
their lands but also to reclaim waste lands which extended at
that time over a large portion of the whole province.

On the 10th February, 1790, Cornwallis announced the settle-
ment of land-revenue for ten years, to be made permanent if
approved by the Court of Directors. The approval of the Directors
reached Cornwallis in 1793, and on 22nd March of that year the
Decennial Settlement was declared permanent. Its effect was to
make the zamindars permanent owners of the land, subject to the
payment of a fixed annual revenue to the Government.

A thorny problem was thus solved after various experiments
had been tried for more than twenty-five years. As to the justice
and equity of this solution and its ultimate effect upon the country,
opinions have always differed, as they differ even to-day. There
is no doubt that it ultimately, but not without many years of
suffering, created a class of loyal land-holders who formed a stable
element in the State, and a steady source of a fixed amount of
revenue. But it deprived the Government of the benefit of a
gradually expanding income from the land, which forms the most
valuable source of revenue in Bengal. Further, while it fully
conceded the claims of the zamindars, it altogether ignored those
of the cultivators, who were placed absolutely at the tender
mercies of the zamindars. Cornwallis certainly issued regulations
to limit and control the authority of the zamindar over his
tenants, but these bore little fruit, and further legislation became
necessary to remedy this grave defect of the Permanent Settlement.

A few words may be said regarding the other sources of revenue
referred to above.

The revenues of salt and opium were at first managed by the
system of auction, as in the case of land-revenue, the settle-
ment being made with the highest bidder. In 1780 the manu-
facture of salt was directly taken up by the Government and a small
establishment was set up to manage it under the control of the
Supreme Council. The Sair revenue was managed by the same
agency as the land-revenue.
B. The Administration of Justice

In India the administration of civil justice was closely associated with the management of revenue, and the grant of Diwâni rights in 1763 comprised both these functions. As in the case of revenue, repeated experiments were made before a definite system of administration of justice was evolved. These experiments were closely connected with, and may be said to form almost an essential part of, those in connection with the land-revenue. In any case, both passed through the same process of evolution, and the judicial system at each stage during this experimental period can only be understood with reference to the system of revenue administration.

The question was first definitely taken up in 1772. Two courts were established in each district, the Diwâni Adâlat with a civil and the Faujdâri Adâlat with a criminal jurisdiction. In addition to these, two superior courts were established in Calcutta, viz. Sadar Diwâni Adâlat, as a court of appeal in civil cases, and Sadar Nizâmat Adâlat for revising and confirming sentences. The Diwâni Adâlat in each district was in charge of the Collector, and the Sadar Diwâni Adâlat was presided over by the President and members of Council. The criminal courts remained in charge of Indian judges, according to old customs and precedents, but the Collectors and the Council exercised some control respectively over the district courts and the Sadar Nizâmat Adâlat.

The changes in the system of revenue administration in 1773, 1781 and 1786 brought about corresponding changes in the administration of justice. In 1774 the district courts were placed in charge of Indian officers called Amils. ‘An appeal lay from their decision to the Provincial Councils and, in important cases, from them to the Sadar Diwâni Adâlat.

In 1775 the Sadar Nizâmat Adâlat was transferred to Murshidâbad and placed in charge of the Naib-Nâzin. A Faujdâr was appointed in each district to bring criminals to justice.

In 1780 the judicial powers of the six Provincial Councils were transferred to six courts of Diwâni Adâlat each presided over by a covenanted servant of the Company. In 1781 the number of these courts was increased to eighteen and all civil cases were tried by them. In other words, the old district courts under European supervision were revived. But except in four districts, where the Collector presided over these courts, they were placed under separate judges. Their decision was final up to 1,000 rupees, but where the amount in dispute was larger, an appeal lay to the
Sadar Diwānī Adālat. At the same time the Faujdāri system of 1775 was abolished and the powers and duties of the Faujdārs were transferred to the judges of the district courts. The criminal courts were, however, tried in the Faujdāri or criminal courts under Indian judges, under the ultimate control of the Naib-Nāzim at Murshidābād.

In the meanwhile a new element had been introduced by the establishment of the Supreme Court in Calcutta, in 1774, by virtue of the Regulating Act. This court, established by the Crown and consisting of a Chief Justice and three Puisne Judges, was vested with jurisdiction over British subjects only, but in practice it led to enormous difficulties. The court claimed, and actually did exercise, jurisdiction over all persons, and not only ignored the authority of the Company's courts but even entertained cases against the judges and officers of these courts for acts done in their official capacity. The legal principles and procedure which they followed were foreign to India and extremely vexatious. The Select Committee very truly observed that “the court has been generally terrible to the natives and has distracted the government of the Company”. The pretensions of the Supreme Court reached their climax in the famous Cossijurā Case, which brought the matter to a head. A judge of the Supreme Court issued a writ against a zamindār, the Rājā of Cossijurā, but the Supreme Council denied the right of the Supreme Court to exercise jurisdiction over a zamindār, as he was neither a British subject nor a servant of a British subject. Accordingly when the officers of the Supreme Court proceeded to arrest the zamindār, the Council sent sepoyse to arrest them. There was thus an almost open war between the highest executive and judicial authorities in Bengal. But a final catastrophe was averted by an ingenious device of Hastings'. He appointed Impey, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, as President of the Sadar Diwānī Adālat, with a high salary, and the tension was immediately relieved.

This procedure, which is usually regarded as a bribe to Impey, was open to serious objections. One of the avowed objects for creating the Supreme Court was to have any complaints against the Company's servants dealt with by an independent tribunal. This object obviously could not be fulfilled so long as the head of the Supreme Court held office, with high emoluments, at the pleasure of the Governor-General and Council. The only relieving feature in this otherwise dark picture is that, apart from putting an end to the deadlock, it made the Sadar Diwānī Adālat, the highest appellate court in the province, a much more efficient
institution than it could ever have been under the presidency of
the Governor-General, who had little time, and perhaps less
knowledge of law, to enable him to discharge the duties of the
high office in a satisfactory manner.

But this arrangement was upset by the Home authorities
Impey had to refund the salary and was impeached. A new Statute
passed in 1781 defined more clearly the jurisdiction of the Supreme
Court, exempting from it the official acts of the Governor-General
and Council, the zamindārs or farmers, and all matters concerning
revenue collection.

During the period of Cornwallis’ administration, important
changes were made in all branches of administration, including
the judicial system. In 1787 the district courts were again placed
under the Collectors except in Dacca, Patna and Murshidābād.
The Collectors were vested with the powers of a magistrate and
could try criminal cases within certain limits. The more important
criminal cases were tried, as before, in district criminal courts
and Sadar Nizāmat Adālat. The Collectors could not deal with
revenue cases, which were transferred to the Board of Revenue.

Further changes were introduced in 1790. The experiment of
making the Board of Revenue responsible for revenue cases proved
a failure, and new local courts were instituted in each district
under the Collector for trying these cases. Most far-reaching
changes were made in the administration of criminal justice. The
Sadar Nizāmat Adālat was again removed from Murshidābād to
Calcutta (it had been done once before by Hastings) and in the place
of a Muhammadan judge it was presided over by the Governor-
General and Council, assisted by experts in Indian laws. The
district criminal courts were abolished and their place was taken
by four courts of circuit, established at Calcutta, Murshidābād,
Patna and Dacca. These courts were presided over by two servants
of the Company, assisted by Indian experts, and they were to
tour through the area of their jurisdictions twice every year.
The powers of the Collectors, as magistrates, were further increased.
They were made responsible for the custody of the prisoners and
execution of the sentences passed on them by the four provincial
criminal courts.

The famous Cornwallis Code of May, 1793, partly by defining
the changes already made and partly by introducing new ones,
shaped in the system which formed the steel frame of British-
Indian administration. The changes proceeded on two principles.
First, the necessity of reducing the multifarious duties of the
Collector, which gave him almost unlimited authority and made
him the sole representative of British authority in a district. Accordingly the Collector was divested of all judicial and magisterial powers, which devolved upon a new class of officers called Judges. The separate revenue courts for each district as well as the judicial powers of the Board of Revenue were abolished and the Judges tried all civil cases.

In addition to the twenty-three district courts and three city courts in Patna, Dacca and Murshidabad a large number of courts of lower grade were also set up to cope with the business. The lowest court was that of Munsifs which could try cases up to 50 rupees. Next was that of the Registrars, a class of officials attached to the Zilla courts, who could try cases up to 200 rupees. From the decisions of all these courts an appeal lay to the district court.

The four provincial courts of circuit set up in 1790 were reorganised. Each of them now contained three, instead of two, English judges, and not only served as criminal courts of circuit as before, but also heard appeals from the decisions of the district judges. From them appeals lay in more important cases to the Sadar Diwani Adilat in Calcutta. In order to curb the authority of the Collectors still further and to protect Indians from oppression at their hands, the Collectors and all the officers of the Government were “made amenable to the courts for acts done in their official capacities”, and even Government itself in case of any dispute with its subjects over property had to “submit its rights to be tried in these courts under the existing laws and regulations”.

The second principle on which Cornwallis proceeded was to divest the Indians of any real authority or responsibility in matters of administration. He had already deprived them of any real power in the administration of criminal justice, over which they had formerly supreme and almost absolute control. He now deprived the zamindars of the power and responsibility of maintaining peace within their jurisdiction. They were forced to disband their police forces, and their duties were entrusted to a number of Darogas in every district, each working within a defined area under the direct supervision of the Magistrate.

The net result of the changes introduced by Cornwallis was to divide the entire administrative work in a district between two European officers, one acting as a Collector of revenue, and the other as a Judge and Magistrate. Indians were deliberately excluded from offices involving trust and responsibility.
Bengal, the Second Phase (1793-1828)

For a period of thirty-five years the system of Cornwallis was adopted as the guiding principle, and the Government were merely engaged in remedying the defects that gradually forced themselves on their attention. In connection with the Permanent Settlement, the main difficulties were about the regular collection of the stipulated dues. These fell heavily in arrears, with the consequence that lands were frequently sold and the ideas of a stable revenue and a loyal contented class of zamindars were not realised to any considerable extent. Another defect of the Act was the insufficient protection it gave to the tenants against the oppression of the zamindars. The establishment of the law-courts was expected to give the tenants the needed relief, but in practice it proved futile: in the absence of any regular survey of land and a definite record about the tenure of lands the law-courts could afford but little relief.

But even the protection of the courts soon proved illusory. For the law-suits multiplied so rapidly that the courts were unable to cope with them. The proverbial law’s delay proved so serious in this instance that justice was practically denied, for, in the ordinary course, a case was not expected to be decided during the lifetime of a man. Lastly, crimes increased enormously and there was no security of life and property.

It is needless to describe in detail the various measures taken by the successive Governors-General to cope with these serious evils. It will suffice to indicate the main lines of policy adopted by them.

As regards the Permanent Settlement, attempts were made to compile records of tenure and the Regulation VII of 1819 clearly defined the rights of the various classes of tenants. Greater power was given to the zamindar to collect rents from his tenants and he was made liable to arrest on failure of the annual rent. To cope with the enormous increase in law-suits, the number of district judges was increased, the number and the powers of the lower courts were enhanced, and Indians were appointed as Munsiffs (with larger powers than those of 1793) and Sadar Amins to try civil cases within a prescribed limit. As regards criminal cases, the magistrate’s power to try them was enlarged and he was authorised to delegate it to his assistants. The Collectors were again empowered to try certain classes of revenue cases, and a few selected among them were vested with the powers of magistrates. Suitable changes were made in the procedure of the
provincial appellate courts, so that appeal cases might be tried even when the judges were on circuit. The number of judges in these courts was increased from three to four. The Sadar Diwān Adālat was entirely reconstituted. Instead of the Governor General and Council, three judges were placed in charge of it and their number was gradually increased to five. In 1797 an appeal from the decision of this body to the King in Council was permitted in cases where the amount in dispute was over £5,000.

In order to maintain law and order, an efficient police system was organised both in large towns as well as in the headquarters of every district. They worked under the supervision of four Police Superintendents, stationed in Calcutta, Dacca, Patna and Murshidabad.

Bengal, the Third Phase (1829–1858)

The first radical change in the system of Cornwallis was effected by Lord William Bentinck in 1829. The new scheme of administration centred round a class of officials called Commissioners, each of whom was placed in charge of a division comprising several districts. The Provincial courts of appeal and the posts of Superintendents of Police were abolished and their duties were transferred to the Commissioner. In addition to these, he had to supervise the work of the Collectors, magistrates and judges of the district under him. Experience, however, soon proved that these tasks were too much for a single individual, and as a result of the reshufflings made in 1831 and 1837, the duties of the sessions judge were transferred to the district judge, and the latter was relieved of his magisterial functions by the creation of new posts for that purpose. Thus the district administration was carried on by the judge, the Collector, and the magistrate, with assistants, belonging to the covenanted Civil Service, under the supervision of the Divisional Commissioner.

Another important feature of the change was to entrust Indians with a larger share in administrative work. For this purpose Deputy-Magistrates and Deputy-Collectors were recruited from among them, and, for hearing civil cases, a new post of Principal Sadar Amin was created, from whose decisions, in certain cases, an appeal lay directly to the Sadar Diwān Adālat of Calcutta and not to the District Judge as was hitherto the practice.

Lord William Bentinck also created the posts of Joint Magistrates and placed them in charge of sub-divisions. Gradually the Deputy Magistrates were also appointed as sub-divisional officers.

The most notable change in the administration of Bengal took
place in 1854. Up to that year the Governor-General and Council were also responsible for the administration of Bengal, and naturally the local needs of Bengal yielded in importance to the greater imperial issues that almost always confronted that body. By the Charter Act of 1853 Bengal, Bihar, Orissa and Assam were placed in charge of a Lieutenant Governor, and Mr. F. J. Halliday was appointed to this post on 28th April, 1854.

Madras

In Madras, as in Bengal, the chief administrative problem was the collection of land-revenue, which was the main source of the income of the State. Unlike Bengal, however, the British territories in Madras were acquired in different times from different powers and had different laws and usages. The administration of land-revenue had, therefore, to be based on different principles in order to suit the local needs.

In general two different systems were adopted. In the Jâgîr and Northern Sarkârs each village was owned by a number of Mirasdârs, who possessed heritable shares, and the principal persons among them had long been accustomed to act as the representatives of the village. Accordingly settlement of the whole village was made with a committee of the principal Mirasdârs in return for a lump sum.

An altogether different system prevailed in Baramahal, which was conquered from Tipu in 1792. Here the village headman collected dues from each cultivator, and paid them to the State. Alexander Reid and Thomas Munro studied the details of this system and gradually evolved what is known as the ryotwâri settlement. The essence of the system, which was not fully developed till 1865, is that the settlement is made with small farmers who enjoy all rights in the land subject to the payment of a fixed revenue which is collected by the State directly by its own servants. The settlement is made and renewed for specified periods, usually thirty years, during which the ryot is not liable to be ousted from the land or to pay any additional charge. In this settlement the Government share is limited to half the net value of the crop.

The two systems described above were usually adopted, and applied to territories added from time to time by conquest or possession. But the ryotwâri system found greater favour, especially as the Mirasdâri gave scope for the principal people to exert oppression upon the rest of the villagers.
After the introduction of the Permanent Settlement in Bengal, the system was also introduced in Madras. The Poligar system, who corresponded to the zamindars of Bengal, were more like feudal chiefs with military retainers, exercising extensive judicial and executive authority within their jurisdiction. The settlement was made with them in perpetuity, on the lines followed in Bengal and they were deprived of their military and judicial powers. So far the experiment was on the whole a success. But there were many parts of Madras which had no Poligars and here the Government tried to obviate the difficulty by creating a new class of zamindars. A number of villages were grouped into a fairly large estate and it was then sold by auction to the highest bidder. The result was extremely unsatisfactory and the system was gradually dropped, at first in favour of the Mirasdari and ultimately in favour of the ryotwari system.

The ryotwari system soon came to be the recognised form of settlement. But the Zamindari system prevailed in about a fourth part of the province, and the Mirasdari, though officially abandoned, prevails in a few isolated areas.

Along with the Permanent Settlement, the judicial system of Cornwallis was also introduced in Madras. The evolution of the administrative machinery followed here nearly the same course as in Bengal. The province was divided into a number of districts and each district into Taluks. At first the District Judge was also vested with magisterial and police authorities but these functions were soon transferred to the Collector. Gradually the office of the Collector became a very important one, and in addition to the duties of a Bengal Collector, he had important functions in connection with the assessment and collection of land-revenue.

Other Parts of British India

The system of administration evolved in Bengal was similarly extended to other parts of British India and need not be described in detail. As regards land-settlements, the ryotwari system was adopted in Bombay, and in the Upper Provinces, roughly corresponding to the modern United Provinces, the settlement was made with the village community and resembled the Mirasdari system of Madras. The village community does not necessarily mean a collective ownership of all the villagers, but usually that of a group of persons more or less closely connected, who were responsible both jointly and severally for the payment of the revenue, fixed for periods of thirty years. The names of Mountstuart Elphinstone
and James Thomason are associated with the evolution of the
system in Bombay and the U.P. respectively.

The system of the U.P. was adopted in the Punjab with slight
modifications, and in both these provinces steps were taken to
safeguard the interests of cultivators who were not members of
the village community. In practice, a cultivator who occupied a
holding continuously for twelve years was deemed to possess
permanent and heritable right in it, subject to the payment of a
judicially fixed rent. This right was legally recognised by the
Punjab Tenancy Act of 1868. The Oudh Tenancy Act, passed in
the same year, did not proceed so far, but it granted occupancy
rights to nearly one-fifth of the cultivators and introduced more
equitable principles in respect of compensation for improvements
and increases of rents.

The judicial system of Bengal was extended to Benares, Oudh
and the Doab respectively in 1795, 1803 and 1804. On account
of the great distance from Calcutta separate courts of Sadar Diwān
Adālat and Sadar Nizāmat Adālat were set up in Allahābād in
1831.

As regards Bombay, the regulations of 1799 set up a system
of judicial administration like that of Bengal, but it was revised
in 1827 under Mountstuart Elphinstone. The new scheme set up
Zilā courts presided over by one judge from whose decision an
appeal lay to the Sadar Diwān Adālat. Smaller cases were tried
by lower courts in charge of Indians. Thus Elphinstone forestalled
to some extent the reforms of Bentinck which were introduced all
over British India, generally on the lines adopted in Bengal.

Supreme Courts

Reference has already been made to the establishment of a
Supreme Court in Calcutta, and its early history. In 1797 the
number of judges was reduced to three. A Supreme Court, with
similar powers, constitution and jurisdiction, was set up in Madras
in 1801 and in Bombay in 1823.

In 1853, the jurisdiction of these courts was limited to (a) British-
born subjects, (b) persons residing within the boundaries of the
three cities or having any dwelling-house and servants therein,
and (c) all persons who were directly or indirectly in the service
of the Company.

The law followed by these courts was the English law of 1726
as subsequently modified expressly with reference to India and
the Regulations made by the Indian Government. But as regards
inheritance, succession and contract, Hindu laws and usages were to be applied to the Hindus, and Muslim laws and usages to Muslims.

An appeal lay from the decisions of these courts to the King-in-Council where the amount in dispute was above Rs. 4,000 (Rs. 3,000 in Bombay). The Statute of 1833 transferred the entire appellate jurisdiction of the King-in-Council to the newly constituted Judicial Committee of the Privy Council which consisted of the President, the Lord Chancellor and other members, including two who held judgeships in the British dominions beyond the seas.

Finally we may refer to the two most notable landmarks in the judicial administration of India, viz. the codification of laws and the establishment of High Courts, the foundation of which was laid during the administration of the Company though the completion had to be deferred till India passed under the Crown.

The idea of a systematic code of law in place of varying laws and usages is traceable to an early period of British history. Not less than five different bodies of statute law were in force in the British dominions, and the position was always regarded as extremely unsatisfactory. The Charter Act of 1833 provided for their consolidation and codification, and accordingly a Law Commission was appointed in the year 1834. Macaulay, the leading spirit of the Commission, prepared a draft of the Indian Penal Code, but little was done after his departure, and the Commission was finally abolished.

The Charter Act of 1853 led to the appointment of a new Commission. It submitted plans for the creation of High Courts by the amalgamation of the Supreme Court and Sadar Diwānī Adālat and also for a uniform code of civil and criminal procedure applicable to these High Courts and inferior courts of British India.

The recommendations were accepted and in 1861 the Indian Provincial Councils Act authorised the establishment of a High Court in each of the following towns, namely Calcutta, Bombay and Madras in place of the old Supreme Court and the Sadar Diwānī Adālat, which thus disappeared after nearly ninety years. In pursuance of the same policy, a High Court was established in Allahābād and a Chief Court in the Punjab in 1866.

Macaulay’s Penal Code was revised and passed into law in 1860 and a Code of Civil Procedure and a Code of Criminal Procedure were promulgated respectively in 1859 and 1861.
CHAPTER IX

TRADE AND INDUSTRY.¹ 1757-1857

One of the most important facts in the history of India during the first century of British rule is the decay of her flourishing trade and industry. In order to understand properly the extent to which British rule was a contributory cause of this decay it is necessary to begin with Bengal, the part of India where British rule was first effectively established.

Reference has already been made to the activities of European trading companies in Bengal. The Portuguese had developed an extensive foreign commerce in Bengal in the early seventeenth century, but their trade in the eighteenth century was practically negligible. The Danes had never had any important trade in Bengal. The French commerce in Bengal was also very small until Duplex was appointed Intendant of Chandernagore; but with his transfer to Pondicherry in 1741 the French trade rapidly declined. The Dutch and the British alone carried on a flourishing trade in Bengal during the first half of the eighteenth century. After the acquisition of political authority in Bengal by the British East India Company, the Dutch were ousted from the field and the English Company enjoyed the monopoly of foreign commerce in Bengal. As already noted above, the Charter Act of 1813 abolished the monopoly of the Company’s Indian trade, and the Charter Act of 1833 finally put an end to the commercial activities of the Company.

The volume of inland and foreign trade of Bengal, other than that carried on by the European Companies, was also very large during the first half of the eighteenth century. The Hindu, Armenian and Muhammadan merchants carried on a brisk trade with other parts of India and with Turkey, Arabia, Persia and even Tibet. The balance of foreign trade was, however, always in favour of Bengal, and the surplus value of its exports had to be

¹ In view of the controversial nature of the subject, I have thought it safe to follow the authority of Dr. J. C. Sinha, who has made a critical study of the subject in the light of materials not available to preceding writers. The facts stated in this chapter are mostly taken from Dr. Sinha’s book, Economic Annals of Bengal (Macmillan, 1927).
paid for in gold. As a matter of fact, during the period 1708–1756, bullion formed nearly three-fourths of the value of total imports to Bengal.

The most important articles of export from Bengal were cotton and silk piece-goods, raw silk, sugar, salt, jute, saltpetre and opium. The fine cotton cloths, especially the Dacca muslin, were in great demand all over the world. Bengal cotton goods were exported in large quantities by the European Companies and went overland to Isphahan and by sea to the markets of Basra, Mocha and Jedda. The Dutch exported annually three-quarters of a million pounds of Cassimbaazar raw silk either to Japan or to Holland in the middle of the seventeenth century, and a large quantity was exported to Central Asia. Even in 'Alivardi Khan's time, nearly seventy lacs of rupees' worth of raw silk was entered in the Customs Office books at Murshidabad exclusive of the European investments.

Bengal was the chief centre of the sugar industry and exported large quantities of the commodity even in the middle of the eighteenth century. Down to the year 1756, a considerable trade in Bengal sugar was carried on with Madras, the Malabar coast, Bombay, Surat, Sind, Muscat, the Persian Gulf, Mocha and Jedda. The jute industry of Bengal also began to develop in the middle of the eighteenth century.

An eminent English authority has observed that even in the year 1756 there was a large volume of trade flowing to Bengal from "the coast of Coromandel and Malabar, the Gulf of Persia and the Red Sea, nay even Manilla, China and the coast of Africa". Thus down to the eve of British rule there was a rich and prosperous trade in Bengal due to its flourishing agricultural and manufacturing industries.

The battle of Plassey was, however, a great turning-point, not only in the political but also in the economic history of Bengal. Apart from the resulting misrule and confusion, which had an adverse effect upon trade and industry, several causes directly operated in impoverishing the country and ruining its rich and prosperous trade and industry.

1. To begin with, there was the large economic drain. Mir Jafar and Mir Kasim had to pay enormous sums of money to the Company and its servants for gaining the throne of Bengal. During 1757–1765 it amounted to more than five millions sterling. From 1765 when the Company received the Divani, the surplus revenue of Bengal was invested in purchasing the articles exported from India by the English East India Company. By 1780, when this drain of wealth finally ceased, its amount had exceeded ten millions. There were, besides, exports of bullion to China, and the huge
private fortunes of the servants of the Company, a substantial part of which must have found its way, in some shape or other, to England. It has been estimated that the total drain from Bengal to England during the period 1757 to 1780 amounted to about thirty-eight million pounds sterling. It is immaterial whether this wealth was transferred in the form of bullion or in the shape of articles of export in exchange for which Bengal received nothing. The fact remains that Bengal became poorer in the course of twenty-three years by nearly sixty crores of rupees (which was equivalent to three hundred crores of 1900, the purchasing power of the rupee being then at least five times as high). This heavy drain must have greatly impoverished the province, and crippled its capital wealth to the serious detriment of its trade and industry.

2. Abuse of Dastaks. In 1656, the East India Company obtained from Prince Shuja, the governor of Bengal, exemption from payment of the usual customs duty of 2½ per cent in return for an annual payment of Rs. 3,000. Murshid Quli Jâfar Khân having refused to make this concession, the English Company obtained a fresh Charter from the Emperor Farrukhsâyâr in 1717, renewing the same privileges. The Nawâb, however, stipulated and the Company agreed, that the Company’s passports or dastaks could not be used for internal trade, and that they should cover the cases of only such articles as were either imported, or intended to be exported, by sea.

But the concession was abused in two ways. In the first place the servants of the Company used the dastaks for their private trade, and secondly the dastaks were sold to Indian merchants to enable them to evade the customs duty. In spite of the vigilance of Murshid Quli and Ālîvârdi, the abuses became very extensive, and were subsequently complained of by Sirâj-ud-daulah. With the accession of Mir Jâfar, these abuses became widely prevalent, and the servants of the Company also claimed exemption from the payment of duties in respect of inland trade. Mir Jâfar made piteous complaints to the English Governor in Calcutta, but with no success. The result was that the Company’s servants monopolised the inland trade of Bengal and amassed huge fortunes, while the Nawâb lost a large amount of revenue and the Indian traders were ruined by this unfair competition. In addition to this, the servants of the Company made unjust and illegal profit by oppressing the poor people. About them Mir Kâsim wrote to the Company’s Governor in 1762: “They forcibly take away the goods . . . for a fourth part of their value; and by way of violence and oppressions, they oblige the ryots to give five rupees for goods which are worth but one rupee.” Official documents of the Company confirm this state
of things, and add that those who refused the unjust demands of the Company’s servants were “flogged or confined”.

Mir Kæsim protested against these iniquities more vigorously than his predecessor, and when the Council refused to grant any redress, he abolished the inland duties altogether, so that all the traders should be on an equal footing. As we have seen above, this led to his quarrel with the English and cost him his throne.

3. Virtual monopoly enjoyed by the Company. The oppressions of the Company’s servants soon took a new turn. In order to ensure a regular and abundant supply of cotton goods, the Company entered into forward contracts with the weavers to supply stipulated quantities of cloth at fixed dates. This became a new source of oppression in the hands of their servants. Armed with the authority of the Company, they forced the poor weavers, on pains of flogging, to sign most iniquitous bonds. The latter were paid for their good much less than their usual price, sometimes even less than the cost of materials, while they were forbidden to work for any other parties on pain of corporal punishment. A similar policy was adopted towards the workers in raw silk.

The story is current in Bengal that, in order to avoid being forced to weave for the Company, many weavers used to cut off their own thumbs. This story is perhaps merely a popular invention, but there is not the slightest doubt about the great misery and oppression suffered by the poor weavers at this time at the hands of the Company’s servants. Verolst, writing in 1767, refers to the unusual scarcity of weavers, a great number of whom deserted their profession. Thus the monopolistic control of the Company and the misconduct of its servants, paved the way for the ruin of cotton and silk weaving, the two flourishing industries of Bengal. Cornwallis made an earnest effort to revive the trade by stopping the two evils, but almost irreparable mischief had already been done.

4. English competition. The ruin of the weavers in Bengal was completed by the unfair competition of manufacturers in England. As soon as cotton and silk goods exported by the East India Company became popular in England, the jealous British manufacturers wanted to kill the industry by legislation. By the two laws passed by Parliament in 1700 and 1720, cotton and silk goods imported from India “could not be worn or otherwise used in England.” There was, however, a great demand for these things in other European countries, and hence all the goods imported by the Company to England used to be exported to various other countries of Europe. But on account of the hostilities between England and other European powers, first during the War of American
Independence and again during the Napoleonic wars, this re-export of Indian goods suffered a severe setback, and in 1779 there was a sudden fall in the import of cotton goods from Bengal. Further, on a memorial of the British calico printers in 1780, the Court of Directors agreed to stop the importation of printed cotton goods from Bengal for a term of four years.

Artificial restriction of imports by legislation gave a fillip to the cotton industry of England. By a series of inventions, the English cotton manufacturers improved the quality of their goods, and the Court of Directors observed in their letter of 20th August, 1788, that the duty and freight on the Company's imports had already enabled the English manufacturers to undersell Indian cotton goods in the British market. Hence the Company followed the policy of importing raw materials, viz. cotton, in place of manufactured goods. Next, they exported Manchester cotton goods to Bengal. With the perfection of the power loom, Manchester began to produce immense quantities of cheap cotton goods, and soon they flooded the markets of India. The average value of cotton goods annually exported from England was about £1,200,000 between 1786 and 1790. By 1809 it had increased to £18,400,000. Its subsequent progress was still more phenomenal.

Thus, at the very moment when the efforts of Cornwallis and the end of European war might have revived Bengal's cotton industry, it was killed by the application of power-spinning and power-weaving to the manufacture of cotton goods in England. No attempt was made to protect the Bengal industry from inevitable ruin either by legislation or by the introduction of improved methods.

Thus within half a century of the battle of Plassey, the phenomenal prosperity of Bengal suffered a serious setback from which it has not recovered even to-day. The circumstances under which the flourishing industries of Bengal were ruined, and the inland trade passed into the hands of a privileged class, almost completely crushed out of Bengal even the very spirit of trade and industry. The lack of capital, caused by the enormous drain of wealth, and the unsettled condition of the country owing to the misrule of the early period of British supremacy, made the revival of trade and industry well-nigh impossible. At the same time, the Permanent Settlement gave an impetus to agriculture and investment of capital in land. Thus while the loss of industry drove the poor people more and more to agriculture, the available capital was sunk mostly in land. The trade of the country passed into the hands of Europeans, who gradually built up their own system of commerce and banking in which people of the soil had little share.
In a word, we find here the genesis of the entire economic system which prevails to-day in Bengal.

What has been said of Bengal in respect of trade and industry, applies in a general way to the rest of India. The general impression that India has never been an industrial country is misleading in the extreme. Indian arts and crafts have been an important contributory factor to her immense wealth from time immemorial. "Even at a much later period," so runs the Industrial Commission Report, "when the merchant adventurers from the West made their first appearance in India, the industrial development of the country was, at any rate, not inferior to that of the more advanced European nations." The finished products of Indian industry as well as her natural products such as pearl, perfumes, dye-stuff, spices, sugar, opium, etc., were exported to distant countries and she imported gold, copper, zinc, tin, lead, wine, horses, etc. But there was always an excess of exports over imports, which meant necessarily the influx of a large quantity of gold. In the first century Pliny bitterly complained of the drain of gold from the Roman Empire caused by the use of Indian luxuries. A similar complaint was made in the eighteenth century even by Englishmen.

The chief industry in India was the weaving of cotton, silk and wool. Outside Bengal, Lucknow, Ahmadabad, Nagpur and Madurai were important centres of cotton industry, and fine shawls were manufactured in the Punjab and Kashmir. Brass, copper and bell-metal wares were manufactured all over India, some of the notable centres being Benares, Tanjore, Poonah, Nasik and Ahmadabad. Jewellery, stone-carving, filigree work in gold and silver, and artistic work in marble, sandalwood, ivory and glass formed other important industries. In addition, there were various other miscellaneous arts and crafts such as tannery, perfumery, paper-making, etc.

The carrying trade was also largely in the hands of the Indians. Down to the beginning of the nineteenth century A.D. the ship-building industry was more developed in India than in England. Like the Indian textile industry, it roused the jealousy of English manufacturers and its progress and development were restricted by legislation.

As in Bengal, the decay of trade and industry in the rest of India set in towards the close of the eighteenth century and its ruin was well-nigh complete by the middle of the nineteenth century.

The prominent causes of the decay were the same as those operating in Bengal: the policy of the British Parliament, the competition of cheap goods produced by machinery, and the
willingness or inability of the Indian Government to protect or encourage Indian arts and crafts. The extent to which the policy of the British Government in India was responsible for the decay of her trade and industry is a debatable point. Some writers think that it was the Industrial Revolution in England, with the application of power-spinning and power-weaving to the production of cotton goods, which ruined Indian manufacture of cotton goods, and it was impossible for the ruling authorities to make any successful effort to protect the industry, as they were quite unable to offset the enormous disparity between power and hand manufacture. Rushbrooke Williams, who holds the above view, further adds: "Those who would blame the British authorities for not taking steps to protect Indian cotton manufactures against the new and overwhelming advantages enjoyed by the power-driven British industry, are obliged to assume that contemporary statesmen regarded these problems from a purely modern standpoint."

On the other hand, eminent writers, both Indian and English, have pointed out that the Industrial Revolution in England was itself "a consequence of the plundered wealth of India", and that not only did the British authorities not take any step to protect the declining Indian industries but they actually threw obstacles in their way, and at least in some cases, discouraged Indian manufactures in order to promote those of England.

As to the last remark of Rushbrooke Williams, it is necessary to remember that even as early as 1700 (and ever since), British statesmen had enough idea of the modern economic system to protect English industry by legislation from Indian competition. That similar steps were not taken to protect Indian industry, cannot, therefore, be explained by lack of statesmanship, and may, not unreasonably, be attributed to the desire on the part of the ruling authorities to promote English industry at the cost of Indian. One can, of course, entertain reasonable doubts about the success of any attempt to stem the tide of English competition. But it is a hypothetical question and raises important issues which cannot be discussed here. The broad fact remains that, during the first half of the nineteenth century, India lost the proud position of supremacy in the trade and industry of the world, which she had been occupying for well-nigh two thousand years, and was gradually transformed into a plantation for the production of raw materials and a dumping-ground for the cheap manufactured goods from the West. All the while the Government responsible for the welfare of its teeming millions looked on and did not take adequate steps to avert the calamity.
CHAPTER X

THE DAWN OF NEW INDIA

1. The New India and Râjâ Râmmohan Roy

In spite of political convulsions and economic retrogression the first century of British rule in India (1757–1858) is in certain respects a memorable epoch in her history. The period witnessed a remarkable outburst of intellectual activity in India and a radical transformation in her social and religious ideas. As a result of all these, India passed from the "medieval" to the "modern" age.

The impetus to these changes came from the introduction of English education. Through this channel came the liberal ideas of the West which stirred the people and roused them from the slumber of ages. A critical outlook on the past and new aspirations for the future marked the new awakening. Reason and judgment took the place of faith and belief; superstition yielded to science; immobility was replaced by progress, and a zeal for reform of proved abuses overpowered age-long apathy and inertia, and a complacent acquiescence in whatever was current in society. The traditional meaning of the Śāstras was subjected to critical examinations and new conceptions of morality and religion remodelled the orthodox beliefs and habits.

This great change affected at first only a small group of persons, but gradually the ideas spread among larger sections of the people, and ultimately their influence reached, in greater or less degree, even the masses.

The new spirit of this age is strikingly illustrated by the life and career of Râjâ Râmmohan Roy, a remarkable personality, the centenary of whose death (1833) was recently celebrated all over India.

The Râjâ began his reforming activity by preaching the unity of God, and assailing the prevalent Hindu belief in many gods and the worship of their images with elaborate rituals. He tried to demonstrate that his views were in accordance with the old and true scriptures of the Hindus, and that the modern deviations from them are due to superstitions of a later age without moral and religious sanction behind them. Râmmohan's views stirred Hindu society to its depths, and bitter controversies followed.
Râmmohan published Bengali translations of ancient scriptures in order to defend his thesis, and carried on the contest, almost single-handed, by the publication of a large number of Bengali tracts. Towards the close of his life he founded, in 1828, an organisation for furthering his religious views. This organisation ultimately developed into the Brāhma Samāj and will be dealt with in a later section. An indirect result of his campaign was the impetus given to the development of Bengali prose literature and Bengali journalism.

Râmmohan was a great pioneer of English education. Not only did he himself found institutions for that purpose, but he always lent a helping hand to others who endeavoured to do so.¹

Râmmohan's reforming activity was also directed against the social abuses of Hindu society, notably the rigours of caste and the degrading position of women. The part he played in abolishing the self-immolation of widows will be described later on. He also endeavoured to ameliorate the condition of helpless widows in various ways, notably by changing the Hindu laws of inheritance about women and giving them proper education. He was opposed to polygamy and various other abuses in the social system of Bengal. He also advocated re-marriage of widows under specified circumstances. His ideals of womanhood and of man's duty towards them, preached in forceful language in various tracts, were far ahead of his age and were inspired by the memories of the golden age of India. On the whole, he struck the true keynote of social reform in India by upholding the cause of women and denouncing the rigours of caste rules, the two main lines on which all social reforms have proceeded since.

In the field of Indian politics also, Râjâ Râmmohan was the prophet of the new age. He laid down the lines for political agitation in a constitutional manner which ultimately led to the birth of the Indian National Congress half a century later. His views on political problems are surprisingly modern, and in essential features represent the high-water mark of Indian political thought of the nineteenth century.

The basic principles of Râmmohan's politics were "love of freedom, amounting to the strongest passion of his soul," and a sincere belief that the people of India have the same capability for improvement as any other civilised people. The political ideals of the Râjâ are thus described by his English biographer:

"The prospect of an educated India, of an India approximating to European standards of culture, seems to have never been long absent from Râmmohan's mind; and he did, however vaguely,

¹ See page 817.
claim in advance for his countrymen the political rights which progress in civilisation inevitably involves. Here, again, Ram Mohan
stands forth as the tribune and prophet of New India.”

Reference may be made to some concrete views of the Raja, illustrate the currents of political thought of the day.

“The Raja was a great champion of the liberty of the Press.
Ever since 1799 there had been a strict censorship on the publication
of journals. In 1817 Lord Hastings abolished the censorship, for
laid down regulations, which, among other things, prohibited the
discussion of certain matters.” Mr. Adam, who acted as Governor-
General after the resignation of Lord Hastings, issued ordinances
prohibiting the publication of newspapers or other periodicals with
out a Government licence. Raja Rammohun presented petitions
against the new Press Regulations both to the Supreme Court
and to the King-in-Council. The petitions were rejected but
they form a “noble landmark in the progress of Indian culture.”
We may again quote from his English biography. “The appears
one of the noblest pieces of English to which Rammohun put
his hand. Its stately periods and not less stately thought recall
the eloquence of the great orators of a century ago. In language
and style for ever associated with the glorious vindication of liberty, it invokes against the arbitrary exercise of British power
the principles and traditions which are distinctive of British
history.” Rammohun’s labours bore fruit, though he was not
destined to witness it. In 1835 Sir Charles Metcalfe removed all
restrictions on the Press.

The Raja similarly drew up petitions against the Jury Act of
1827. The provisions of the Act and the grounds of the Raja’s
objection thereto may be gathered from the following extract:

“In his famous Jury Bill, Mr. Wynn, the late President of the
Board of Control, has, by introducing religious distinctions into
the judicial system of this country, not only afforded just grounds
for dissatisfaction among the natives in general, but has excited
much alarm in the breast of every one conversant with political
principles. Any natives, either Hindu or Muhammadan, are ren-
dered by this Bill subject to judicial trial by Christians either
European or native, while Christians, including native converts, are
exempted from the degradation of being tried either by a Hindu
or Mussulman juror, however high he may stand in the estimation
of society. This Bill also denies both to Hindus and Muhammadans
the honour of a seat on the Grand Jury even in the trial of fellow-
Hindus or Mussulmans. This is the sum total of Mr. Wynn’s late
Jury Bill, of which we bitterly complain.”
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The Rājā had a clear grasp of the political machinery by which India was ruled and fully realised the importance of presenting India's case before the Home authorities when the question of the renewal of the Company's Charter in 1833 was being considered by Parliament. This was one of his main objects in undertaking the voyage to England. He was invited to give evidence before the Select Committee of the House of Commons, and although he declined to appear in person, he submitted his considered views in the form of several "communications to the Board of Control". These documents enable us to gather the view-point of Rājā Rāmmohan and of the advanced Indian thinkers of his time, on the burning questions of the day.

The Rājā strongly championed the cause of the peasants. He pointed out that under the Permanent Settlement, the zamindārs had increased their wealth, but the exorbitantly high rents exacted from their tenants had made the lot of the ryots a miserable one. He advocated a reduction of the rent to be paid by the tenants by means of a corresponding reduction in the revenue payable by the zamindārs. The consequent loss of revenue, he suggested, should be met by a tax upon luxuries or by employing low-salaried Indians as collectors, instead of high-salaried Europeans. The Rājā favoured the Permanent Settlement but he rightly urged that the Government should fix the maximum rent to be paid by each cultivator.

Among the other measures advocated by the Rājā may be mentioned the Indianisation of the British-Indian army; trial by jury, separation of the offices of judge and magistrate, codification of civil and criminal laws, consultation with the Indian leaders before enactment of new laws, and the substitution of English for Persian as the official language of the courts of law.

A careful perusal of the above fully justifies the claim that "Rāmmohan Roy laid the foundation of all the principal movements for the elevation of the Indians" which characterise the nineteenth century. His English biographer truly remarks that the Rājā "presents a most instructive and inspiring study for the new India of which he is the type and pioneer... He embodies the new spirit... its freedom of enquiry, its thirst for science, its large human sympathy, its pure and sifted ethics, along with its reverent but not uncritical regard for the past and prudent... disinclination towards revolt".
2. Introduction of English Education

While the British took over the administration of Bengal, all higher education was confined to a study of classical Sanskrit, Arabic, and Persian in 

*toks* and *madrasās*. Vernaculars were sadly neglected, and neither natural science nor subjects like Mathematics, History, Political Philosophy, Economics or Geography formed part of the curriculum. Grammar, Classic Literature, Logic, Philosophy, Law and Religious Texts formed the main elements of higher study, while elementary education, imparted in *pāṭhāsāls* and *maktabs*, consisted of the three Rs and religious myths and legends. As to the world outside India, and the great strides Europe had made since the Renaissance, Indians had little knowledge and less interest. In matters of education and intellectual progress India was passing through a period analogous to the Middle Ages of Europe.

The British Government at first took but little interest in the development of education. Warren Hastings encouraged the revival of Indian learning and to him we owe the foundation of the Calcutta Madrasā (1781). Inspired by the same spirit, Sir William Jones founded the Asiatic Society of Bengal in Calcutta in 1784, and a Sanskrit College was established at Benares by the Resident Jonathan Duncan in 1792. But there was no proposal or even a remote suggestion of establishing a system of education under Government supervision or control.

The idea of setting up a network of schools for teaching English was first mooted by Charles Grant, a Civil Servant of the Company. He rightly held that the social abuses and the moral degradation of the people were "the results of dense and widespread ignorance and could be removed only by education, first of all by education in English." Grant, on his return to England, tried to persuade the House of Commons and the Court of Directors to his view, but without success.

What Grant failed to do through Government, the Christian missionaries undertook to accomplish in Madras and Bengal. Among these noble bands of workers to whom India owes the beginnings of English education, one name stands foremost, that of William Carey. Originally a shoe-maker by profession, he became a Baptist Missionary in later life, and came to Calcutta in 1793. Missionary schools had already been established in Madras with Government support, but Carey and his friends, although denied any such help in the beginning, set up schools and published Bengali translations of the Bible. Thus they laid the foundations of English education.
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and Bengali prose literature. It is along lines laid down by them that intellectual development has taken place in subsequent times.

Carey's example was followed by other missionaries and liberal Indians, the most notable among them being David Hare and Rājā Rāmmohan Roy. These two were mainly instrumental in establishing several English schools, including the Hindu College which afterwards developed into the Presidency College.

Government could not altogether ignore the new spirit. At the time of the renewal of the Company's Charter in 1813, Parliament asked the Company to take measures for the "introduction of useful knowledge and religious and moral improvements", and further directed that "a sum of not less than a lac of rupees should be set apart each year, and applied to the revival and improvement of literature and the encouragement of the learned natives of India, and for the introduction and promotion of a knowledge of the sciences among the inhabitants of the British territories in India". Unfortunately no immediate or important results followed. It was not until 1823 that a Committee of Public Instruction was appointed in Bengal, and then steps were taken to establish a Sanskrit College in Calcutta. Against this a spirited protest was made by Rājā Rāmmohan Roy in the form of a petition to the Governor-General, Lord Amherst. This historic document admirably sums up the views held by advanced and progressive minds of the time. Referring to the proposed Sanskrit College the Rājā remarks, "The pupils will here acquire what was known two thousand years ago, with the addition of vain and empty subtleties..." "The Sanskrit system of education," continues the document, "would be the best calculated to keep this country in darkness if such had been the policy of the British legislature. But as the improvement of the native population is the object of the Government, it will consequently promote a more liberal and enlightened system of instruction, embracing mathematics, natural philosophy, chemistry and anatomy, with other useful sciences which may be accomplished with the sum proposed, by employing a few gentlemen of talents and learning educated in Europe, and providing a College furnished with the necessary books, instruments and other apparatus."

The petition brings into prominent relief the divergent views of the Government on the one hand and advanced thinkers, both Indian and European, on the other. While the Committee of Public Instruction spent its resources in printing Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian works and maintaining the Sanskrit College and the Mādrāsā, the missionaries, helped by liberal Indians, set up
schools and colleges for education on Western lines and establish a School-Book Society for selling English books. The prevalent spirit of the time is clearly indicated by the fact, noted by Trevelyan, that “upwards of 31,000 English books were sold by the School-Book Society in the course of two years, while the Committee did not dispose of Arabic and Sanskrit volumes enough in three years to pay the expense of keeping them for two months, to say nothing of the printing expenses”.

The new ideas soon made their influence felt even in the Committee of Public Instruction. It was gradually divided into two parties known popularly as the “Orientalists” and the “Anglicists” or the English party. The latter held that public funds should henceforth be devoted only to the imparting of liberal education on Western lines through the medium of English. Although the could naturally reach only a limited number of pupils, it was argued that ultimately this knowledge would spread through them to the masses by means of vernacular literature. This is the famous “filtration theory” advocated by the “Anglicists”.

The appointment of the famous missionary, Alexander Duff, on the Committee of Public Instruction strengthened the hand of the English party and it scored its first triumph when Lord William Bentinck established the Medical College in Calcutta. The appointment, in 1834, of Thomas Babington Macaulay, the new Law Member, as President of the Committee completed the discomfiture of the Orientalist party. By his vehement denunciation of classical Indian learning and eloquent pleadings in favour of Western education he carried Bentinck with him and on 7th March 1835, the Council decided that henceforth the available public fund should be spent on English education. The existing oriental institutions like the Sanskrit College and the Madrasa were to continue but fresh awards of stipends to students of these institutions and the publication of classical texts must cease. The funds then released were to be spent “in imparting to the native population a knowledge of English literature and science through the medium of the English language”.

The cause of English education was still further advanced by the regulation introduced by the first Lord Hardinge that all public services were to be filled by an open competitive examination held by the Council of Education (the successor of the Committee of Public Instruction), preference being given to the knowledge of English. Virtually English education was made the only passport to higher appointments available to the Indians, and hence its popularity and rapid progress were equally assured.
The chief defect of the system, as it was worked out in Bengal, was the disproportionate attention paid to the English education of the middle-class gentry as against the education of the masses through vernacular schools. William Adam, who was appointed by Bentinck's Government to investigate the condition of indigenous education, wrote a valuable report on the subject. He described the miserable condition of the vernacular schools and the widespread ignorance and superstition prevailing among the masses. But Government relied on the "filtration theory," and little was done to improve the system of primary education for the masses.

This evil, however, was not so acute outside Bengal. In Bombay, Madras, and the North-Western Provinces, English education developed on similar lines, thanks either to the enterprise of the missionaries or the initiative taken by the Government. But there was less keeness for English education and naturally more attention was paid to the improvement of indigenous schools and the spread of education through the vernaculars.

The advantages of English education were resented mostly by the middle-class Hindus. The Hindu aristocracy and the Muslim community generally held aloof from it. But although confined to a few, English education produced memorable results. It not only qualified Indians for taking their share in the administration of their country, but it also inspired them with those liberal ideas which were sweeping over England and led to such momentous measures as the Catholic Emancipation Act (1829), the Reform Bill (1832), the Abolition of Slavery (1833), and the New Poor Law (1834). Unfortunately some grave defects characterised the new system of education from the very beginning. In the first place it was too literary, and, secondly, it was entirely divorced from religious and moral instruction. The first may be ascribed to a great extent to the personality of Macaulay, and the second was entirely due to the peculiar circumstance that the Government had to steer clear of the Christian zeal of the missionaries on the one hand, and the deep-rooted religious ideas of the Hindus and Muslims on the other. Their decision not to interfere in religious matters in any way was, in the circumstances, a wise one.

Although the beginnings of English education on a sound basis are to be traced to the momentous decision of 1835, the evolution of a comprehensive and co-ordinated system of education had to wait for nearly twenty years till the next revision of the Charter. A Parliamentary Committee was appointed on that occasion to examine the whole subject. The result was the memorable Despatch of Sir Charles Wood, President of the Board of Control, dated 19th July,
1854, which laid the foundations on which the educational system in British India has since developed.

The most characteristic feature of the new scheme was the creation of a properly co-ordinated system of education from the lowest to the highest stage. There was to be an adequate number of efficient teaching institutions such as primary schools, higher schools, and colleges, each leading to the next higher step. A regular system of scholarships was instituted to enable meritorious students to prosecute the higher course of study, and educational institutions founded by private efforts were to be helped by grants from Government funds.

In order to carry out the above objects, a special Department of Education was to be created in each province and an adequate system of inspection would be provided for by the appointment of a sufficient number of inspectors.

For co-ordinating higher education a University should be established in each Presidency town. It would be mainly an Examining Body on the model of the London University. But while the higher teaching would be chiefly imparted through colleges, the University might institute Professorships in Law, Civil Engineering, Vernaculars and Classical languages.

Stress was laid upon the importance of mass education, female education, improvement of the vernaculars and the training of teachers. Every district was to have schools "whose object should be not to train highly a few youths, but to provide more opportunities than now exist for the acquisition of such an improved education as will make those that possess it more useful members of society in every condition of life."

Finally it was definitely laid down that the vernaculars should be the medium of instruction. "It is neither our aim nor desire", so runs the Despatch, "to substitute the English language for the Vernacular dialects of the country... It is indispensable, therefore, that in any general system of education the study of them should be assiduously attended to, and any acquaintance with improved European knowledge which is to be communicated to the great mass of the people can only be conveyed to them through one or other of these Vernacular languages."

As regards religious instruction in the Government institutions, the Despatch clearly lays down that as these "were founded for the benefit of the whole population of India... the education conveyed in them should be exclusively secular."

Lord Dalhousie lost no time in giving effect to the policy outlined in the Despatch. Within a few years Departments of Public
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Instruction were established in all the provinces. The first University in India, that of Calcutta, was founded in 1857, and between 1857 and 1887 four new Universities, at Bombay, Madras, Lahore and Allahâbad, were added. But before any substantial progress could be made, the great Mutiny broke out and the government of the East India Company came to an end.

3. The Government and Social Reform

From the very beginning the British Government in India assumed a policy of benevolent neutrality in religious and social matters. In spite of strong pressure they refused to encourage, far less actively help, the religious propaganda of the Christian missionaries in India. The same policy induced them to dissociate religious instruction from the educational institutions maintained by the Government.

On the other hand the British Government not only tolerated all the rites and customs of the Indians, but sometimes even went so far as to evoke the criticism that they honoured and encouraged them by their favour. Two specific instances may be quoted. Under the Hindu law, a convert to Christianity forfeited his inheritance and was subject to other disabilities, and this was sanctioned by the British Government. Again, extreme deference was shown by the Government to many Hindu festivals and religious ceremonies, and on some of these occasions there was even a display of troops and firing of salutes.

This benevolent attitude was, however, shortly given up. A law passed in 1832, supplemented by another in 1850, removed all disabilities due to change of religion, and instructions were issued by the President of the Board of Control in 1833 that Government should cease to show any special favour or respect to Indian religious ceremonies. These instructions, including others requiring the abolition of the pilgrim tax and official control of temple endowments, were enforced by Lord Auckland.

But even the policy of benevolent neutrality was bound to come into conflict with the humane and progressive ideas that animated liberal Englishmen. In spite of their repeatedly declared policy of not interfering with the social and religious practices of the Indians, English rulers were impelled by considerations of humanity to co-operate with advanced Indian reformers in removing some gross evils which prevailed in Hindu society under the sanction of religion or long-standing usage.

The first to be attacked was the curious practice of infanticide.
It was a long-standing custom among certain Hindus to throw a child into the sea at the mouth of the Ganges, in fulfilment of religious vows. A childless woman, for example, praying for progeny, would take a vow that if she had more than one child, one would be offered to Mother Ganges. Although not very widely prevalent, this inhumanity was too glaring to be ignored by anyone whose feelings were not totally blunted by religious superstition.

Another form of infanticide was far more widely spread, especially among the Rajputs, Jats and Mewati in Central and Western India. Here, the difficulty of marrying girls led the parents to kill them, while infants, by refusing proper nourishment, or sometimes even poisoning the nipples of the mothers' breasts. Enlightened and philanthropic British officers tried to stop this practice by persuasion, but this proved unsuccessful.

Ultimately laws had to be passed prohibiting both these forms of infanticide. Bengal Regulation XXI of 1795 and Regulation VI of 1802 dealt respectively with the second and first forms of infanticide, declaring both as murder.

But even the legislation of 1795, extended to newly added provinces by another Regulation in 1804, failed to remove at once the gross abuse of secret murder of girls, as by the very nature of the case it could often avoid detection. The practice, however, slowly died out, as a result of the influence of Western education and Western ideas.

The reforms of these abuses were followed by the suppression of another horrid custom. This was the so-called "Suttee" (Śātī). The word means a chaste and virtuous woman but has by a curious process been applied to the practice of burning chaste women along with the dead bodies of their husbands.

Among primitive peoples of many lands there was a belief that life after death is more or less a continuation of the present life and subject to the same material needs. Accordingly a man needs his wife and attendants in the other world, and so the death of a king or a leading chief was followed by the immolation, either voluntary or forcible, of his wives, concubines, attendants and servants, so that they might keep company with their deceased lord and serve him in the same way as on earth. This custom prevailed in India, China, Babylonia and many other countries, and its traces linger in Japan where the death of the ruler is sometimes followed by the Hara-kiri or suicide of devoted subjects.

The burning of the wife is in one aspect the last remnant of this widely spread primitive custom. It must have been prevalent in
India from a very early period, and Greek writers have preserved
detailed accounts of a case that occurred in the fourth century B.C.
But still it was not enjoined as a sacred religious duty until centuries
later. The practice is not referred to in the earliest law-books,
and is merely permitted as an option to widows in later books. It
is only towards the close of the Ancient period, or perhaps even
later, that the practice was definitely enjoined as a religious duty.
The last stage in this tragic drama was reached when the scriptures
laid down self-immolation on the funeral pyre of her
husband as the only meritorious course that a virtuous woman
could follow. Not only would such a woman enjoy eternal bliss
in heaven along with her husband, but her action would expiate
the sins of three generations of her husband’s family, both on his
father’s and mother’s side.

Such hopes and encouragements both to the victim and her natural
protectors produced the inevitable consequences, and every year
hundreds of women met with a cruel death in the name of religion.
In many cases the material interests of the male relations, added
to religious faith, induced them to persuade, sometimes even to
force, the unhappy victim to the tragic course. Sometimes opium
and other drugs were used to benumb the senses of the woman,
so that she might be easily persuaded to adopt the fatal resolve.
Cases are on record when the woman fleeing from the first touch
of fire was again forcibly placed upon the funeral pyre. To prevent
such incidents the male relations often took care to cover the
body of the widow with wood, leaves and straw and then pressed it
down by means of two bamboos before setting fire to the pyre. At the
same time the thunderous noise of the crowd mingled with sounds
of drums ensured that the cries of agony from the wretched girl
would not be heard by any spectator.

The very fact that such practices could endure for centuries
among an intelligent and cultured people, illustrates in a striking
manner how faith in a supermundane existence, instead of enlighten-
ing and purifying the ideas and sentiments of man, at times warps
his judgment and paralyses his noble instincts and human feelings.

It is gratifying to note that enlightened Mughul rulers like
Akbar not only raised their voice in protest but also took effective
steps to prevent the obnoxious practice. But the absence of an organ-
ised and sustained effort led to no permanent result. From the early
days of British rule both officials and missionaries appealed to the
Government to stop this baleful custom, and an agitation was set
on foot in England to force the hands of the authorities at home.
But hampered by their declared policy of laissez-faire in matters
of religion, and afraid to offend the religious susceptibilities of a large class of subjects which might ultimately affect the military; the British Government in India long hesitated to take any decisive step. The Supreme Court, however, refused to tolerate it within the precincts of Calcutta, and the Dutch, the Danes and the French prohibited it respectively in Chinsurah, Serampore and Chandernagore.

The Government at first instructed its officers to take no further step than dissuading the intended victims by gentle persuasion. In 1789 the Collector of Shâhâbâd referred the matter to Lord Cornwallis in the following words: "The rites and superstitions of the Hindu religion should be allowed with the most unqualified tolerance, but a practice at which human nature shudders I cannot permit without particular instructions." In reply he was told that his action must be "confined to dissuasion and must not extend to coercive measures or to any exertion of official powers."

The letter of the Collector and the reply thereto typify the early official attitude on the question. When a similar letter was written by the Magistrate of the Bihâr district in 1805, Lord Wellesley referred it to the Court of Nizâmât Adâlat. On the basis of the replies received, the Government framed regulations on the subject in 1812 and supplemented them by others in 1815 and 1817. The net result of these regulations was to prevent the burning of widows who were either of tender age, or were pregnant or had infant children. They also made it criminal to compel a woman to burn herself or to drug or intoxicate her for that purpose.

These regulations bore but little fruit and reliable evidence shows that in the districts round Calcutta alone the number of "Satis" averaged more than five hundred each year. British officials were never tired of urging upon the attention of the Government the necessity of abolishing the practice altogether. The Government, however, was unable to take its courage in both hands and preferred to rely upon the gradual enlightenment of Indian opinion for the ultimate abolition of the practice.

The signs of this progressive spirit were not lacking. Thanks to the unwearied efforts of Râjâ Râmmohan Roy enlightened Indian opinion gradually asserted itself. When the orthodox Hindus protested against the regulations of 1817 and sent a petition to the Government for their repeal, a counter-petition was submitted by the Râjâ and his coadjutors. After describing the horrors of the "Suttee" in vivid terms, they declared that "all these instances are murders, according to every Shâstra as well as to the common sense of all nations". To educate public opinion Râjâ Râmmohan
wrote a pamphlet on the subject and organised a vigilance committee in order to ensure that the Government regulations were followed in each instance. The Rājā was bitterly opposed by orthodox Hindus under the leadership of Rājā Rādhā Kānta Deb. Feelings at last ran so high that even Rājā Rāmmohan’s life was threatened.

When things had reached this acute stage, Lord William Bentinck was appointed Governor-General and was instructed by the Home authorities to consider definite measures for the immediate or gradual abolition of Sati. After carefully studying the situation he decided to abolish it immediately. His zeal for reform was not shared by many. Even Rājā Rāmmohan advised caution, believing that immediate abolition might cause great discontent and excitement. Bentinck’s ardent desire for reform, however, brooked no delay. On 4th December, 1829, was passed the famous Regulation XVII which declared Sati illegal and punishable by courts. Not only the persons who used inducement or compulsion of any kind, but even those who were associated in any way with the voluntary act of a Sati were to be regarded as criminals.

As expected, Bentinck’s measures evoked loud protest. A largely-signed petition of remonstrance was presented to the Governor-General, and an appeal was made to the authorities in England. To counteract these measures Rājā Rāmmohan sent a congratulatory petition to the Governor-General, signed by 300 residents of Calcutta. One of the reasons which induced him to visit England was to thwart any attempt to have the new Regulation repealed by the Privy Council. Rāmmohan’s attempts were crowned with success. The new Regulation was upheld by the Home authorities and thus the inhuman practice was at last definitely brought to an end. Bentinck’s efforts were nobly supplemented by the first Lord Hardinge, who was mainly instrumental in suppressing Sati and infanticide in the Indian States.

Another great reform standing to the credit of Lord William Bentinck is the suppression of the organised bands of Thugs. These secret assemblages of criminals had peculiar modes of initiating their members, who, travelling in disguise, murdered helpless travellers, mostly by strangulation with a handkerchief or scarf used as a noose. Although the members were recruited from both Hindus and Muslims, the Thugs were reputed to be devotees of the goddess Kāli, and carried on their heinous trade of murder under the mistaken belief that it had the sanction of the goddess. The organisation spread almost all over India and there are reasons to believe that they secured active help from certain chiefs, landholders and merchants. Sir William Sleeman and a number of able
officers were specially selected to crush the organisation, and Bentinck passed a series of special acts to regulate their proceedings. More than three thousand Thugs were caught during 1831-1837 and as a result of these vigorous measures India was soon rid of this great scourge.

A momentous reform, which created, however, very little sensation, was the abolition of slavery by Act V of 1843. Contrary to the general popular belief, slavery was a very ancient institution in this country, and even in 1843 "there were many millions of slaves in India." Still the Act which "refused to recognise slavery as a legal status" and thereby automatically set the slaves free without any compensation to the owners provoked neither opposition nor excitement. This is an evidence of the high moral tone infused by Western education and liberal English tradition. The abolition of State lotteries in the Presidency towns about the same time furnishes one more instance of the liberal spirit that actuated the Government of the day. An attempt was made to justify them on the ground that the proceeds were spent on local improvements, but the serious objection to the practice on moral grounds prevailed against any idea of pecuniary gain.

To the first Lord Hardinge's Government belongs the credit of taking steps to stop the human sacrifices practised by the Khonds in Orissa under the erroneous belief that thereby the fertility of the land was increased. Although the results achieved during Hardinge's Governor-Generalship were not very satisfactory, the cruel and atrocious practices were definitely stamped out by the energetic efforts of Campbell and other officers specially appointed for the purpose during 1847 to 1854.