CHAPTER XXI

THE CAUSES OF THE OUTBREAK

1. Mutiny

The successful mutiny of the sepoys was the precursor of the outbreak of the civil population. If there were no mutiny, there would have been no revolt. It is, therefore, necessary to find out, first, the causes of the mutiny of the sepoys.

Mention has been made above of the grave discontent and disaffection towards the British rule among all classes of people.¹ There is no doubt that the sepoys were largely affected by them. But in addition there were special grievances felt by the sepoys, as described above.² It has also been shown how they gave public exhibition of their strong resentment and disaffection, and not infrequently local units broke out into mutiny.

The sensitiveness of the sepoys to their religious beliefs and practices and the dread of conversion to Christianity worked as a nightmare upon their minds. Several mutinies were caused by such apprehensions, however ill-founded they might be. There can be hardly any doubt that this was the most potent cause of distrust and discontent. In 1856, one year before the Mutiny, the annexation of Awadh served as another serious cause of discontent. The sepoys, who were mostly recruited from Awadh, were provoked, beyond measure, by the unjust and forcible seizure of the State in violation of treaty rights, and considerations of equity, long-standing alliance and never-failing loyalty.

Since the mutiny of 1857 there have been long discussions and much speculation regarding its causes. Among the numerous statements that have appeared regarding the discontent and disaffection of the sepoys, special importance attaches to those of contemporary native officers of the British army. We possess a long memorandum³ on this subject prepared by Shaikh Hidayat Ali, Subadar and Sirdar Bahadur, Bengal Sikh Police Battalion, which was commanded by Captain T. Rattaray. It is dated 7th August, 1858, and was submitted to the Government of India. Its purport is given below.

In addition to the effect of the Kabul expedition mentioned above,⁴ Hidayat Ali laid stress on the following as causes of discontent among the sepoys:
1. Indignation of the sepoys at the annexation of Awadh to which province many of them belonged.

2. When recruiting sepoys after the annexation of the Panjáb, the Government promised both the Sikhs and Muslims that they would not be asked to remove their beard or hair. But, later on, orders were passed for removing them, and those who refused to do so were dismissed.

3. The messing system in jails, forcing the purdah ladies to go to the newly built hospital at Shaharanpur, and the general missionary propaganda created alarm and suspicion. The sepoys thought that the missionaries would not have dared to preach such things as giving up purdah, early marriage, circumcision, etc. without the consent of the Government.

4. This suspicion was confirmed by the issue of a general order in September, 1856, to the effect that all new recruits must take an oath that they would be prepared to go wherever they were required.

5. Lastly came the greased cartridge which convinced them that the Government was determined to make them lose caste and embrace Christianity.

According to Hidayat Ali, the grievances of the sepoys might be divided into three categories, viz. political or sentimental (No. 1), material (non-payment of extra-allowances), and religious (Nos. 2-5). Without minimising the importance of the first, he leaves no doubt that the main cause was the religious.

Incidents, almost immediately preceding the mutiny, seem to prove it beyond doubt. There was an incipient mutiny at Bolarum near Hyderabad in 1855. Brigadier Mackenzie had issued a cantonment order, prohibiting processions on Sunday, September 23. But as the Muharram procession of the Muslims was due to be taken out on that day, the order was withdrawn. But the new order did not get sufficient publicity and processions were prohibited in many localities. The cavalry men as a protest took the procession along the road on which the Brigadier's house was situated, although this route was prohibited even by the revised order. The Brigadier personally met the processionists and asked them to disperse. The processionists made an insolent reply to the effect that the road was theirs, and the angry Colonel snatched away two of their flags. Shortly afterwards, when he was taking his evening drive along with some ladies and gentlemen, a murderous attack was made on them. It is significant to note that the cavalry men bluntly told a military officer that their religion was dearer to them than their lives, that it had been insulted, and that they would never lay down
their arms until they had brought the Brigadier and the Brigade Major to a court. The sepoys fully shared the general apprehension and suspicion that it was the deliberate object of the Government to convert the Indians into Christianity by subtle means, fair or foul. The danger was specially brought home to them by missionary propaganda within the military cantonments. Col. Wheler, the Commanding Officer of a sepoy Regiment at Barrackpur, used to distribute religious tracts among the sepoys and openly addressed them with a view to proselytise. He is also known to have met the sepoys at his bungalow and tried to persuade them to accept Christianity. It is on record that for these kinds of activities he was once violently expelled by the sepoys from their lines, and on another occasion ordered off the parade of a Regiment at Delhi. He wrote to the Christian Tract Society in 1840 that 'he had several applications from different officers for native tracts in order to distribute to the villages through which they were about to march.' Referring to this the Englishman of Calcutta, in its issue of 2nd April, 1857, commented as follows: 'Unless we are very greatly misinformed, he continues the practice even with increased zeal to the present day. It was no wonder, therefore, that the men should be in an excited state specially when such efforts at conversion are openly avowed, and that they would discover what they considered a plot to betray them into a loss of caste'. The name of another military missionary, Major Mackenzie, may be referred to in this connection. Sir Thomas Munro raised a strong voice of protest against this business of distributing religious tracts by the military, but the Government did not take the guilty officers to task. No wonder, therefore, that in spite of professions to the contrary, the sepoys would regard the Government as playing false with them and really aiming at their wholesale conversion to Christianity.

In a letter to Lord Canning, dated May 9, 1857, Sir Henry Lawrence gives an account of his conversation with a Brahman Native Officer of Oudh Artillery, who was most persistent in his belief that the Government was determined to make the people of India Christians. He alluded specially to the Order, recently promulgated, to the effect that, 'after the first September, 1856, no native recruit shall be accepted who does not, at the time of his enlistment, undertake to serve beyond the sea whether within the territories of the Company or beyond them'. Lawrence says that with all his arguments and persuasions he was unable to convince the Officer that the Government had no such intention.

This was mainly due to the repeated breaches of pledges by the Government mentioned above. The facts and circumstances
that created in the minds of the people a vague dread of mass conversion to Christianity, strengthened by the letters of Edmond and activities of Wheler, brought home to the mind of the sepoy the grave and imminent peril which threatened their religion.\footnote{8} And this feeling worked upon minds thoroughly disaffected against the British for many years past. A discerning eye could see that the mine was loaded and the train prepared, and the spark might be easily furnished by any inflammable passion.\footnote{9} The story of the greased cartridge supplied the spark and caused an explosion which shook the British Empire in India to its very foundations.

There is hardly any doubt that the story of the greased cartridge was not only the apparent, but also the real, cause of the Mutiny.\footnote{9c} All available evidence indicates that it had a tremendous repercussion on the sepoys scattered over this vast country. The story spread like wildfire and produced excitement and consternation all over the sepoys world. There is no doubt that letters were exchanged between sepoys, widely separated in localities far distant from one another. Many of these letters, intercepted by the Government, indicated a strong belief on the part of the sepoys that it was a deliberate device adopted by the Government to destroy their religion, and a grim determination to resist it even at the cost of their lives.

In judging the effect of the story of greased cartridges on the minds of the sepoys, and the justice or reasonableness of their obstinate refusal to use them, we must remember the very essential fact, often ignored, that the story was undoubtedly a true one. The Government as well as the high military officials denied the allegation that the cartridges were prepared with any objectionable materials, but the sepoys refused to believe them. It is now definitely proved that the sepoys were right, and the military officers undoubtedly suppressed the truth,—whether deliberately or through ignorance, it is difficult to say.

In a book entitled "Mutiny of the Bengal Army",\footnote{10} written by a military official in India immediately after the Mutiny, we read: "The Enfield Rifle required a particular species of cartridge which was greased with lard made from the fat either of hog or ox".

Field-Marshal Lord Roberts states:

"The recent researches of Mr. Forrest in the record of the Government of India prove that the lubricating mixture used in preparing the cartridges was actually composed of the objectionable ingredients, cow's fat and lard, and that incredible disregard of the
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soldiers' religious prejudices was displayed in the manufacture of these cartridges".11

Reference may be made in this connection to a letter written on March 23, 1857, by Anson, the Commander-in-Chief at the time of the Mutiny, to Lord Canning. "I am", says he, "not so much surprised at their (sepoys') objections to the cartridges, having seen them. I had no idea they contained, or rather are smeared with such a quantity of grease, which looks exactly like fat".12 When the sepoys were forced to taste this abhorrent mixture, it is hardly a wonder that they broke into mutiny. Lecky has very properly observed that "English writers must acknowledge with humiliation that if mutiny is ever justifiable, no stronger justification could be given than that of the Sepoy troops".13 Though many eminent British officials have admitted that the cartridge question was the immediate cause of the Mutiny, others have sought to cloud the real issue by bringing forward other factors. Some have stressed the defects in the military organization such as the relaxed discipline, lack of intimate personal touch between the sepoys and their officers, the considerable curtailment of the power of the latter over the former due to recent change of regulations, removal of regimental officers to staff and civil employments, the paucity of European troops, the new system of the recruitment of sepoys by which each regiment was filled in with the members of a few families, and the inferior and humiliating position of the sepoys and their native officers. Some have regarded the sepoys as mere tools of reactionary Brahmans and designing politicians; others have laid emphasis on the annexation of Awadh. All these and other causes of discontent, mentioned above, were undoubtedly contributory causes that facilitated the outbreak, but it may be reasonably doubted whether there would have been a general mutiny, if there were not the question of greased cartridges.

As a matter of fact, so far as public records are available, it is only this ground which the sepoys repeatedly urged before their superior officers as the cause of their discontent, and it was only in relation to those cartridges that they showed open defiance against their officers. The other causes might be regarded as, more or less, contributory, in a rather remote sense, but the direct and the most important cause must have been the religious scruples to which the Hindus and Muslims are peculiarly sensitive. There is no reason to think that the sepoys were animated, at least to begin with, either by any nationalist sentiments or by a sense of patriotism, or even by any strong desire to restore the Mughul rule in India. The last one might have been added at a later stage. but
at the beginning of the outbreak it did not play any part in exciting the sepoys. The utmost that can be said is that in their excitement over the greased cartridges they might have imbibed some sort of a blind fury against the British, and a determination to drive them and to destroy their rule and authority in India. But there was nothing new in such attitude, and the cry of ‘drive away the feringhees’ was raised in Awadh, the centre of the Mutiny of 1857, as far back as the days of Chait Singh (1781). But the conduct of the mutinous sepoys towards the Indians, to which detailed reference has been made above, belies the theory that they were actuated by any patriotic motive and nationalist sentiment. It is significant that all the contemporary Indian writers, without any exception, have represented the sepoys as enemies of the people, and not as patriotic fighters for their country’s freedom. These writers leave no doubt that the sepoys were dreaded, not loved, by the general population.

Of all the Indian witnesses who deposed at the trial of Bahadur Shah, Ahsanullā seems to have been the most straightforward and best informed. Being a confidential physician of the King, he had ample opportunities of knowing the facts, and his long detailed statement has a ring of truth. His views therefore carry special weight. Among other things he said:

"The mutinous troops would not appear to have won over the people of the country, because if they had, they would have treated them with consideration, and would not have oppressed and plundered them as they did. The sepoys had not, before their breaking out into mutiny, united to themselves the Mussalman population of Delhi. If they had, they would not have oppressed and plundered the Mahomedans of Delhi in the manner they did. The abandoned classes of the city required no instigation to rise up. The confusion and disorder of the time in itself encouraged them to unite with the sépys".

There might have been individual sepoys who were animated by high and noble motives, but as a class they cannot be regarded as a band of patriots or nationalists fighting for their country.

2. The Outbreak of the Civil Population

One might regard it as a somewhat strange phenomenon that although there was no general conspiracy or organization, the mutiny of sepoys should have been followed by a popular rising on a wide scale, at least in certain areas. A variety of reasons have therefore been assigned for the outbreak. Some of these are puerile in the extreme, such as Russian intrigue, divine punishment for not spreading Christianity, and belief in a prophecy that the British empire would come to an end after 100 years. Others are merely guessworks such as the Muslim conspiracy to restore the Mughul Empire
and Brahman conspiracy to retain their power. The real cause is, however, not far to seek.

There is a French proverb that if you want to seize a murderer look for the woman behind the crime. Similarly if you want to go to the root of a revolt, look for the elements of discontent and disaffection among the people. These have been described in detail in Chapter XIII.

It is not necessary in the present context to discuss whether or how far the discontent was reasonable and justified. But that it was genuine and profound is proved by a deep-seated hatred against the British among nearly all classes of people. Many Englishmen could discern this long before 1857. Bishop Heber wrote in 1824 that the "natives of India do not really like us...if a fair opportunity be offered, the Mussalmans, more particularly, would gladly avail themselves of it to rise against us". The Government seems to have been fully aware of this fact, for Lord William Cavendish Bentinck, the Governor-General of India, in a minute dated 13 March, 1835, refers to the peril of the British Government in India "when one hundred millions of people are under the control of a Government which has no hold whatever on their affections". Many other Englishmen have testified to this state of feeling from their own experience and observation. Nothing perhaps illustrates this spirit of hatred better than the following story recorded by Mrs. Coopland. "An Officer, when trying the prisoners, asked a sepoy why they killed women and children. The man replied: 'When you kill a snake, you kill its young'".

But neither discontent nor hatred, by itself, leads to an outbreak. A suitable opportunity is necessary for their manifestation in overt acts. Such an opportunity presented itself when the sepoys, the chief prop of the British power in India, openly broke out into mutiny and seemed to hold their ground against their late masters. It was not till then that all the latent or pent-up feelings could be canalised into revolutionary activities by local leaders to serve their own interests.

That the course of events actually followed the line implied in this supposition has been made abundantly clear in Chapters XVII, XVIII, and XX. Thus the successful mutiny of the sepoys may be looked upon as the direct and proximate cause of the revolt of the people. The elements of discontent and various other so-called causes were merely the conditions favourable to the origin of the revolt; in other words, they made the revolt not only a possibility but a very probable contingency. Some of these conditions were also conducive to the development and temporary success of the revolt.
They not only sustained the movement but supplied the dynamic force to its progress.

Among these contributing causes or favourable conditions emphasis has justly been laid by contemporary and later writers upon the dread of a mass conversion of both Hindus and Muslims to Christianity. It has already been pointed out, that the Indians had very reasonable grounds for such a fear, and that they were very seriously perturbed by the dreadful prospect. Almost all the proclamations which were issued by the rebellious chiefs laid special emphasis on this point, and the action of the sepoys shows the extent to which it must have affected the minds of all classes of Indians. Even if we admit that there were designing persons who acted upon this fear of the public to serve their own personal political ends, we indirectly acknowledge the truth of the view that the fear of losing caste and religion was one of the most potent factors in the general revolt of the civil population. It cannot be denied also that material grievances under which the people smarted and the hope of material gain served as a great incentive. The noble and patriotic idea of securing freedom from alien rule might have inspired individuals, but there is no reason to suppose that it served as an incentive to the people at large. It should be remembered that the ideas of patriotism and nationalism in the sense in which they are used now were conspicuous by their absence among the Indian masses in 1857.

It is not difficult to trace the stages by which the passive discontent and disaffection of the people were transformed to active rebellion. A contemporary observer, Charles Raikes, to whom reference has been made above, has analyzed the situation in North-Western Provinces somewhat as follows:

"Now of these sixteen millions (of people in N.W.P.) not one-twentieth part resided in districts which had any European soldiers stationed within their limits. The mass of the people knew and acknowledged the supreme power of their English masters, but they attributed that power entirely to the bayonets of the Bengal Native Infantry, which held the forts, arsenals, and treasuries throughout the country. Therefore, when the native soldiers rose, as one man, to burn and slay, to pull down the halls of justice, and to break open the jails, the people at large, who knew little and thought less of the distant resources of England, concluded naturally enough that our day had gone by.

"The catastrophe was viewed with very different feelings by the various bodies of our quondam subjects. The predatory class, the Goorja, the Mewaties, felt instinctively that their day had come. Their natural enemy, the Magistrate, had perished at the hands of the mutineers, or was flying before them, protected only by the people over whom he lately presided. Forthwith, they girded on the sword and buckler, seized the matchlock and sallied forth to pursue their hereditary vocation of plunder. In pursuit of this instinct they played no partizan's part, but with the utmost impartiality robbed alike the stragglng European running for his life, or the sepoy carrying off his booty. As a matter of course, there was an
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end of police, telegraph, postal communication, and every other symptoms of civilisation, wherever these harpies were found.

"The green flag of Islam, too, had been unfurled. The mass of the Muslim community 22, rejoicing to believe that under the auspices of the great Mogul at Delhi their lost ascendancy was to be recovered, their deep hatred to the Christian got vent, and they rushed forth to kill and destroy.

"But, making deduction for these classes, the great agricultural communities, the Jat, the Brahmín, the Rajpoot, looked on the English race, under whose auspices they had so long tasted peace and security, with unfeigned compassion. Like the robber tribes, they considered our case hopeless, but unlike them they at first lamented lost order. Such was their first impulse; they showed it in a hundred instances, by helping our straggling countrymen, and protecting them from Sepoys or rabble, often at the risk of their own lives. But as the course of events hurried on, as Magistrate, Cutcherry, revenue process, subsided alike, these men, who, as forming the bulk of the agricultural class, had been saddled with a very full share of the public imposts, began to think it no bad change if only they could avoid revenue payments for the future. In common with the rest of the mankind they were not fond of paying taxes, nor were they long disconsolate when the tax-collector disappeared from the scene. If there was no Government, there was no quarter-day. It requires no special knowledge of India to comprehend the rapid spread of passive disaffection (not active hostility), under such circumstances as these. When disaffection means more money, more power, and no taxes, its growth is a mere necessity of human nature".

There is one grave defect in this otherwise brilliant analysis, namely, that Raikes has not given sufficient importance to the already existing discontent and disaffection of the people, leading to the hatred of the British. The successful mutiny undoubtedly gave the needed opportunity, but it certainly would not have been availed of to the extent that it actually was, unless there were grave discontent and disaffection of the people. But Raikes seems to have accurately marked the gradual stages of development. Confirmation and illustration of his views meet us at almost every step as we read the detailed account of the civil rebellion in different localities. It is fully confirmed by the Rani of Jhansi herself, who was not only faced with the revolt of the local chiefs, but had to fight against a neighbouring ruler who took advantage of her difficulties to feed fat an old grudge and invaded Jhansi. Such was the state of things in what is regarded as one of the centres of India's first War of Independence.

As noted above, it was mainly in Awadh and Rohilkhand, which formed a part of Awadh until its Nawab was forced to cede it to the British, that the popular upsurge reached its maximum momentum. This is easily accounted for by the annexation of Awadh and the circumstances attending it to which reference has been made above. All this sorely wounded the sentiments of all classes of people and seriously affected the vested interests of the Chiefs, Talukdars and scions of the royal family. These were recent events, hardly a year
old, and the strong discontent and severe resentment felt by the people were therefore very keen and quite fresh.

If the outbreak of popular revolt in Awadh may be easily accounted for by these special circumstances, two others gave it a vitality and momentum which are found nowhere else. The first is the possession of forts and armed retainers by the Chiefs and Talukdars which emboldened them to break into revolt and enabled them to carry on a sustained struggle.

The second is the famous Proclamation of Canning which, though drafted earlier, was issued immediately after the British had re-captured Lakhnau. As noted above,²³ this Proclamation decreed the confiscation of the lands of all the Talukdars and land-lords, with the exception of only six, specifically named. As General Innes observed: "Lord Canning raised the whole province gratuitously and needlessly into desperate hostility. The chiefs rose en masse in active rebellion."²⁴ The view that the Proclamation caused the rebellion of the Talukdars is not true, but there is no doubt that the threat of confiscation embittered the feelings of the Chiefs and led them to offer a desperate resistance to which they would not have probably been otherwise goaded. Outram, the Chief Commissioner of Awadh, was of the same view. He declared "that if nothing more than their lives and freedom from imprisonment were offered, they would be driven to wage a guerilla war, whereas if the possession of their lands were guaranteed to them, they would assist in restoring order."²⁵ Dr. Sen also observes: "Outram did his best to conciliate the people threatened with confiscation but they had as yet no reason to place their faith in British justice; and British mercy to them was a fiction. To lose their land was to live without honour and the talukdars determined to fight for their barony as their ancestors had done in the days of the Nawabs. Hostilities at once broke out afresh and over a much wider area than before"²⁶ It would thus appear that the heroic resistance of the Chiefs and people of Awadh were not mainly, far less solely, due to the solicitude for their king and country, and the number of 'patriots' who fought for them alone could not be very large. The true situation in Awadh seems to have been best realized in the most unexpected quarter. On April 19, 1858, Lord Ellenborough, the President of the Board of Control, wrote a long and spirited letter to Canning, full of adverse—almost caustic—comment on his Proclamation. The following extracts quoted from it may be read with interest:

"We cannot but express to you our apprehension that this decree, pronouncing the disinheritance of a people, will throw difficulties almost insurmountable in the way of the re-establishment of peace. We are under the impression that the war
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in Oudh has derived much of its popular character from the rigorous manner
in which, without regard to what the chief land-holders had become accustomed
to consider as their rights, the summary settlement had, in a large portion of the
province, been carried out by your officers.

"The landholders of India are as much attached to the soil occupied by their
ancestors, and are as sensitive with respect to the rights in the soil they deem
themselves to possess, as the occupier of land in any country of which we have a
knowledge.

"Whatever may be your ultimate and undisclosed intentions, your proclama-
tion will appear to deprive the great body of the people of all hope upon the
subject most dear to them as individuals, while the substitution of our rule for
that of their native sovereign, has naturally excited against us whatever they may
have of national feeling.

"We cannot but in justice consider that those who resist our authority in Oude
are under very different circumstances from those who have acted against us in pro-
vinces which have been long under our government. We dethroned the king of Oude
and took possession of his kingdom. Suddenly the people saw their king taken
from amongst them, and our administration substituted for his, which, however
bad, was at least native; and this sudden change of government was immediately
followed by a summary settlement of the revenue, which, in a very considerable
portion of the province, deprived the most influential landholders of what they
deemed to be their property; of what certainly had long given wealth, and dis-
tinction, and power to their families.

"We must admit that under these circumstances, the hostilities which have
been carried on in Oude have rather the character of legitimate war than that of
rebellion, and that the people of Oude should rather be regarded with indulgent
consideration than made the subjects of a penalty exceeding in extent and in
severity almost any which has been recorded in history as inflicted upon a sub-
ddued nation."27

This letter of Ellenborough cost him his high office. It might have
been injudicious and against convention, but it certainly blurted
out the truth, a rare thing in British official correspondence.

We may sum up the views, stated above, in the shape of the
following propositions.

1. If there had not been the sudden, and perhaps unpreme-
ditated, rising of the sepoys at Mirat on May 10, 1857, there would
not probably have been any Sepoy Mutiny, at least at the time and
in the form in which it occurred.

2. If there had been no Sepoy Mutiny, there would have been
no outbreak of the civil population.

3. This outbreak or popular revolt was the direct outcome of
the initial success of the Mutiny, and was fed by the volume of dis-
content and resentment existing against the British, and facilitated
by other circumstances.

4. Although these factors sustained the general revolt, it was
originally inspired, in the main, by the considerations of personal
advantages of individuals or material interests of groups who took the initiative.

5. The extent and character of the popular revolt was determined to a large extent by local conditions and the personality of leaders.

6. The movement of 1857-8 comprised several distinct elements, such as the mutiny of sepoys, sporadic outburst of civil commotion, organized outbreak by predatory tribes and goonda elements, and the popular revolt, in some cases partaking of the character of a legitimate warfare. But as there was no coherence among them, each being limited in extent and objectives, and there was no definite plan, method, or organization, it cannot be regarded as a national rising, far less a war of independence, which it never professed to be.

1. Cf. Chapter XIII.
3. MS. L. Vol. 727, pp. 759-68.
7. Roberts—II, 436 f.n.
8. See p. 432.
9a Whether the apprehensions of the sepoys were well-founded or not—evidence now available shows that they were not—they were real and very widely spread. The men of the 34th N.I., with whom the whole trouble began, were almost convinced that they would sooner or later be converted to Christianity. It was said that Lord Canning, the Governor-General, left England under a pledge to Lord Palmerston that he would do his best to convert the whole of the native population of India (The Times, 10 June, 1857). A correspondent from N.W.P. wrote to the Englishman of Calcutta (1 May, 1857): “All classes of natives imagine that they were to be converted by force....Amongst the native soldiery this erroneous imagination dangerously exists”. (Quoted by Dr. P.C. Gupta in J. N. Banerjea Volume pp. 262-3).
9b Captain Martineau wrote to one of his colleagues on 5 May, 1857: “I am afraid to say I can detect the near approach of the storm...but can’t say how, when or where it will break forth...here are all the elements of combustion at hand, 100,000 men, sullen, distrustful, fierce with all their deepest and inmost sympathies as well as worst passions roused and we thinking to cajole them into good humour by patting them on the back and saying, what a fool you are for making such a fuss about nothing. They no longer believe us, they have passed out of restraint and will be off at a gallop before long.” (Home Miscellaneous Series, Vol. 725, pp. 1015-54), quoted by P. C. Gupta in J. N. Banerjea Volume, p. 264.
9c This point has been fully discussed in Majumdar, pp. 247 ff. Cf. also P. C. Gupta, op. cit. 260, which also gives the history of the Grease Question from 1854.
10. It was published in London in 1857 and is generally known as the Red Pamphlet. The passage quoted occurs in p. 8.
14. See pp. 506-10, 519-20, 615.
15. See pp. 603-4.
16. TB, 225.
20. These causes are enumerated by various writers. Cf. Holmes, Appendix U, pp. 630 ff. For the long list of Norton, cf. Majumdar, 260-1. Mr. Martin has given a list of the causes leading to the outbreak. These include, among others, oppressive and pauperising tenure of land, free press, inefficient administration of justice, exclusion of natives from all shares in the Government, aversion of Englishmen to the natives, recent annexations, western education, missionary operations, Muhammadan conspiracy, and Russian and Persian intrigues.
21. These have been discussed in detail in Chapter XIII.
21a. Raikes, 156 ff.
22. The actual words used by Raikes are likely to wound the religious susceptibilities of the Muslims; hence I have changed them.
23. See p. 574.
25. CHI, VI. 200.
26. Sen, 244.
CHAPTER XXII

THE CAUSES OF FAILURE

Whatever one may think of the nature of the outbreak in 1857, there is no doubt that it constituted a grave peril for the British dominion in India. The sepoys, trained and equipped by British officers, exceeded the European soldiers in numerical strength in proportion of seven to one. The sudden and unexpected rising of the sepoys forced the British officials, civil and military, to leave Awadh and Rohilkhand which passed almost entirely out of British control. The civil population of a wide-spread region also rose in revolt. Almost everything was in favour of the Indians. The British Government in India could not hope to muster, by all possible endeavours, and within a reasonable period, more than a combined force of Europeans and Indians, which in any case would be far inferior in number to the opposing sepoys. Even within this tiny force of the Government, the allegiance of a large element of Indians was at best doubtful. Further, while the Indian forces gained accession of strength by fresh mutinies and outbreaks following one another in rapid succession, the British authorities had their meagre resources crippled by the constant endeavour to keep in check the prospective mutineers, and their plans and schemes were foiled by fresh mutinies and outbreaks cropping up at unexpected places. It was a very difficult task for them to maintain communication with distant centres, as the people of the intervening regions, at least some sections of them, were often openly hostile. The triumph of the British in the face of all these handicaps is indeed a great marvel, and it is, therefore, necessary, to inquire into the causes of the failure of the revolution.

The most important cause was the lack of a general plan and a central organization guiding the whole movement. A number of isolated outbreaks without any link or common plan between them could hardly succeed against the British forces, directed with a strong will and determination by a central organization which could command the resources of India, and later, of Britain.

Nothing illustrates more forcibly the great contrast between the unity of command on the side of the British, and the utter lack of it on the other side, than the successful relief of Lakhnau and recovery of Kanpur by the British, and the lack of any effort to relieve the siege of Delhi by Nana or any other leader. It is admitted on
ail hands that Delhi could not have been captured by the British without the constant flow of men and equipment from the Panjáb; yet the only communication between the Panjáb and Delhi was along a narrow track to the north-west of Delhi running along the border of U.P., the region most affected by the revolutionary spirit. If there were a well-knit organization in U.P., not to speak in India as a whole, or some able military leader in this region, serious efforts should have been made to intercept the flow of men and equipments from the Panjáb to Delhi. But very little was done in this respect.\(^1\) Similarly, no earnest effort was made to prevent the British troops coming from Calcutta to the west. Danapur and Mirat were the only two cantonments with British troops between the borders of Bengal and the Panjáb. The overwhelming number of sepoys in the intervening region, backed by the sympathy and support of the general people, had a unique opportunity of keeping them separate, but they did not care to utilize it.

The inferiority in generalship, strategy, military skill, and discipline of the mutineers was another important cause of the failure of the outbreak. It is only necessary to contrast the siege of Delhi with that of Kanpur, Lakhnau, and Arrah to prove this point. Delhi was a walled city with good fortifications, and was defended by a large army, fully equipped, and with free communication with the outside territory. Yet it fell after a siege of four months. At Kanpur, the English took shelter in an improvised camp with a frail entrenchment hastily thrown up. The besieged garrison consisted of a few civilians, a small band of faithful sepoys, and about four hundred English fighting men, more than seventy of whom were invalids. The besieging army, on the other hand, numbered some three thousand trained soldiers, well fed, well lodged, well armed and supplied with all munitions of war, aided by the retainers of Nana Sahib and supported by the sympathies of a large portion of the civil population. In spite of all this, Nana, who is credited with great leadership and organizing ability, failed to reduce the place during twenty days, and at last accomplished by treachery what his valour and heroism failed to achieve. At Arrah the small garrison of 50 Sikhs and 15 Europeans and Eurasians\(^2\) defended themselves in a small building, originally intended for a billiard room, and held out against the attack of Kunwar Singh at the head of ‘some two thousand sepoys and a multitude of armed insurgents, perhaps four times the number of the disciplined soldiery’.\(^3\) The successful resistance of the garrison at the Residency in Lakhnau against enormous odds for a long period is only too well-known and has been described above.\(^4\) Here, again, in a hastily improvised
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defence post, the British had less than seventeen hundred soldiers, a large proportion of which were sepoys, some of whom were regarded with suspicion, while others were infirm old men. They were besieged by at least six thousand trained soldiers, who were soon reinforced by a large and constantly increasing number of Taluksars and their retainers till the number exceeded one hundred thousand. At a later stage, Outram successfully defended Alambagh with four thousand four hundred and forty-two men, against this vast enemy force, nearly thirty times in number, and the besieged Residency also successfully held out from the beginning of July, 1857, to September 25, when Havelock joined the garrison, and again till the middle of March, 1858, when it was finally relieved. The heroic defence of Lakhnau Residency shows the British valour, heroism, resourcefulness and strategy at their best, and those of the Indians at their worst. The prolonged siege of Lakhnau kept inactive many thousands of sepoys and armed soldiers who might have been more fruitfully employed elsewhere, e.g., preventing the advance of Neill and Havelock, thereby possibly turning the scale of the whole operation in their favour.

The long and heroic resistance of Lakhnau Residency offers a great contrast to that of the strong forts of Jhansi and Gwalior. The garrison at Jhansi numbered some ten thousand Bundelas and Velaitees and fifteen hundred sepoys. When Sir Hugh Rose invaded the city and fort on March 22, 1858, with his small force of about two thousand, the Rani and her followers must have been astounded at his daring. The Rani heroically defended it till March 31, when Tantia Topi arrived with twenty thousand men to relieve the town. In spite of the magnitude of the peril Sir Hugh did not lose heart. He left a part of his small army to continue the siege and attacked Tantia Topi with the rest. Tantia was defeated on April 1, and fled across the Betwa, being hotly pursued by the British cavalry. On April 3, Sir Hugh entered the fort by direct assault, and next evening the Rani stole out of the fort with a few attendants. It was a signal for a general retreat, and on the 6th the British forces were masters of the city and the fort. It is very surprising indeed that while Tantia had attacked the besieging British army from the rear, and the major part of this small force was engaged in fighting with his twenty thousand men, the troops inside the fort, more than ten thousand in number, did not make a sortie and try to destroy the small British army, less than a thousand in number, left before the fort. One wonders what more favourable situation than this could the besieged expect for ultimate success against the British or as a means of immediate relief?

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The defeat and flight of Tantia and the fall of the strong fort of Jhansi illustrate the hopeless inferiority of the Indians both in defensive war and pitched battles. To a large extent this inferiority in military skill rendered useless some strategic moves on the part of the sepoys. This was well illustrated in the early days of the Mutiny when the sepoys advanced from Delhi to check the progress of the troops from Mirat towards that city. The plan was well conceived and the sepoys occupied a strategic position, but they were successively defeated at the battles on the Hindun on May 30 and 31, and again at Badli-ka-Serai on June 8, although their number and artillery were superior to those of the enemy. The same story was repeated at Najufgarh when they tried to intercept the siege-train sent from the Panjáb.

The successive victories of Hayelock on his way from Allahabad to Kanpur also reveal in a striking manner the superior skill and morale of British troops. He had a thousand European infantry soldiers, one hundred and thirty Sikhs and a little troop of volunteer cavalry consisting of eighteen horsemen, and was on the way joined by Reinaud's small detachment. Though his troops were weary and footsore, he won four successive battles against fresh forces of the enemy. In the last battle near Kanpur Nana himself led his force, five thousand strong, and occupied a very strong strategic position prepared beforehand. Nevertheless the daring, valour and superior skill of the English won for them a brilliant victory. Nana's last battle ended in disaster and the loss of Kanpur.

The strength and weakness of the Indian leaders are best illustrated by the campaigns of the Rani of Jhansi and Tantia after the fall of Jhansi, which have been described in detail above. In spite of successive defeats, the Rani and Tantia conceived the bold plan of seizing the fort of Gwalior. It was a master stroke of strategy, the best that the Indian leaders showed during the whole campaign. But though they easily seized Gwalior with the help of Sindhia's troops who deserted their master in the battlefield and joined them, the failure to take proper measures to arrest the progress of the British army showed a deplorable lack of military strategy and foresight. The surrender of such a strong fort, at the very first assault, practically without any resistance, can only be described as most ignominious.

The Indians, no doubt, scored some little successes now and then, mainly due to their superior numbers and tactical advantage. Illustrations are afforded by the reverses sustained by the small reconnoitring forces of Lawrence at Chinhut near Lakhnau, and the troops of Dunbar at Arrah, as well as the defeat of Windham at
Kanpur and Le Grand near Jagdishpur. Both Kunwar Singh and Tantia Topi also displayed skill and energy, specially in guerrilla warfare. But taking into consideration not only the episodes referred to above, but also the military campaigns as a whole, narrated in Chapters XVI, XVII and XVIII, it seems to be quite clear that the Indian sepoys, bereft of their European officers, were no match for the British troops, either European or Indian.

Finally, the failure of the great outbreak must be chiefly attributed to the absence of a great leader, who could fuse the scattered elements into a consolidated force of great momentum, with a definite policy and plan of action. History shows that genuine national movements have seldom failed to throw up such a leader in the course of their progress, not unoften even from most unexpected quarters. Unfortunately, no such leader arose in India during the great outbreak of 1857-8, perhaps because it was not a national movement, in the true sense of the term.

Nana Sahib, Bahadur Shah, Rani Lakshmibai of Jhansi and Kunwar Singh are popularly regarded as great leaders of the 1857 movement. Of these the first, though best known and most talked of, seems to be least deserving of the high honours usually bestowed upon him. As we have already seen, there is nothing to show that he organized a great political movement, and even if he attempted to do so, he achieved no conspicuous success. As a military commander he was an absolute failure, as is proved by his inability to reduce Kanpur and defeat in the hands of Havelock near the city. The part he played in dissuading the sepoys from proceeding to Delhi, and his subsequent activities indicate his narrow and selfish outlook and vainglorious attitude. On the whole, there is nothing in the life and death of Nana Sahib which entitles him to the rank of a hero, a martyr, or a great leader. Enough has already been said of Bahadur Shah to indicate that he was even worse than Nana, and not only absolutely worthless, but also a traitor to the cause he professed to serve. There is, however, one common point to be considered about them. Greatness was forced upon them, and they had to accept it much against their will. This is certainly true in regard to Bahadur Shah, and probably true also of Nana. That might soften one's judgment about them, but does not take away from their lack of qualification as leaders.

The Rani of Jhansi undoubtedly stands on a far different footing. Once she decided to rise against the English, she showed unbounded energy and resolution, combined with heroism and daring which we miss in Nana. But we cannot regard Rani Lakshmibai as having organized the great revolt, or played the part of its leader.
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Her activities were confined to a narrow area and extended over a very brief period, towards the end of the movement. Even then she achieved no conspicuous success against the British on the battlefield, and cannot be said to have contributed, in any substantial measure, to the cause of the Indians. Her title to fame rests more upon her personal character than upon her outstanding position as a great political or military leader.

The position of both Kunwar Singh and Tantia Topi is analogous to that of the Rani of Jhansi. They obtained more successes against the English in the battlefield and carried on more vigorous and prolonged campaigns. But their activities also were confined within narrow limits, and none of them has any claim to be regarded as a leader of the movement of 1857 in any sense of the term. Nor had they contributed anything substantial to shaping the general course of the great movement.

The most glaring fact to be noted in this connection is that though the revolt was most widely spread in Awadh, there was not a single leader who exercised any control over the vast but scattered rebel forces, or had any voice in shaping the general course of the great movement. Neither Maulavi Ahmadulla nor the Begam of Awadh, nor any of the heroic Talukdars or Chiefs can really claim such a position.

To the lack of leadership must be attributed the serious, almost incredible errors committed by the sepoys which in many cases saved the British from great disasters. Devout Englishmen could only explain them as divine dispensation. Sir Henry Lawrence observed:

"Many thoughtful and experienced men now in India believe that it has only been by a series of miracles that we have been saved from utter ruin. It is no exaggeration to affirm that in many instances the mutineers seemed to act as if a curse rested on their cause. Had a single leader of ability arisen among them, nay, had they followed any other course than that they did pursue in many instances, we must have been lost beyond redemption. But this was not to be".

The failure of the outbreak may also be attributed to the fact that neither the leaders, nor the sepoys and the masses were inspired by any high ideal. The lofty sentiments of patriotism and nationalism, with which they are credited, do not appear to have had any basis in fact. As a matter of fact, such ideas were not yet familiar to Indian minds. A strong disaffection and hatred towards the English, and hopes of material gain to be accrued by driving
them out, were the principal motives which inspired and sustained the movement. The spirit of defending religion, which kindled the fire, soon receded into the background, and though it formed the slogan or war-cry for a long time, a truly religious inspiration was never conspicuous as a guiding force of the movement. On the other hand, the British were inspired by the patriotic zeal for retaining their empire and profoundly moved by the spirit of revenge against the Indians who had murdered their women and children.

But even though, for reasons aforesaid, the great outbreak of 1857 ended in failure, it would be a mistake to minimize its importance, or underrate the gravity of its danger to the British. In spite of all their defects and drawbacks, the sepoys and Indian rebels, by their number and favourable situation, threatened to destroy the whole fabric of the British empire. Its fate hung on a thread as it were, and it was almost a touch and go.

In Indian rulers like Sindhia and Nizam joined the Mutiny, the consequences might have been very serious to the British. Lord Canning is reported to have said that “if Sindhia joins the rebels I will pack off tomorrow”. A contemporary Englishman referred to the general feeling that “if Hyderabad had risen we could not escape insurrection practically over the whole of Deccan and Southern India”. The same writer continues: “Similarly the situation would have been very critical if there were no friendly ruler in Nepal. Lastly, we must also acknowledge with thankfulness the debt we owe to the educated natives”.

There is a great deal of truth in all this. In particular, the lack of interest shown by the intellectuals in the movement was a serious drawback, the full extent of which will perhaps never be known. History of modern times shows that all great political movements have an intellectual background and draw their nourishment largely from that source. The outbreak of 1857 not only lacked any such intellectual background but ran counter to the views of the intellectual classes who never looked upon it with sympathy.

The outbreak of 1857 would go down in history as the first great and direct threat to the British rule in India on an extensive scale. It must be admitted by all unprejudiced critics that the British Government and people bravely faced the situation and proved equal to the occasion. The resourcefulness, organization, and statesmanship of the Government, backed by devotion to duty, courage, and a spirit of fellow-feeling and sacrifice which never yielded to privations and sufferings, however great, enabled the British to survive the fiery ordeal. Tribute also must be paid to British diplomacy which could gather round their banner the solid
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phalanx of the Sikhs—a proud nation of heroes who believed in their heart of hearts that the British had defrauded them of their dominions and independence by most ignoble means. And this took place less than ten years back, within the living memory of those who shed their blood for the British cause. Similarly, the Pathan hill-tribes on the North-West frontier, against whom the British had been waging bitter fight for years, were enlisted to support their cause, and these along with their mortal and hereditary enemies, the Sikhs, were fighting side by side to preserve the dominions of their common enemy, the British. A race which could successfully employ the sepoys against the Sikhs, and then the Sikhs against the sepoys, the sepoys against the Pathans and the Gurkhas, and then the Pathans and the Gurkhas against the sepoys, certainly deserves an empire. Similarly, credit is due to the British for having retained the allegiance of the Sindhia, who was so shabbily treated by Ellenborough in 1843-4, and of the Nizam who was compelled to cede Berar by force and fraud in 1853. Whether these examples redound to the credit of the British diplomacy, or merely betray the utter lack of national spirit among the Indians, may be questioned. But in either case, they point to one important factor, often ignored by historians, which contributed largely to the success of the British and the failure of the Indians.

1. See above, p. 566
2. See p. 551.
5. See pp. 581 ff.
7. See p. 565.
10. This is proved by the statements of all the contemporary Indians, whose writings are so far known. See above, pp. 603-4.
BOOK I.
POLITICAL HISTORY

PART III.
INDIA UNDER THE BRITISH CROWN (1858-1905)
CHAPTER XXIII

INTRODUCTION

I. SUCCESSION OF GOVERNORS-GENERAL (1858-1905)

The ability with which Lord Canning steered the ship of State through the troubled waters of the Mutiny has secured him a very high place among the Governors-General of India. His memory has lived down the calumnies and criticism of his contemporaries, and his contributions to the maintenance and consolidation of British rule in India have obtained a juster appreciation than in his own times. Her Majesty Queen Victoria, who assumed the direct administration of India in her own hands after the Mutiny, showed her high appreciation of Canning's work by appointing him the first Viceroy and Governor-General of India under the Crown.

The suppression of the Mutiny and the revolt of 1857-58 and the pacification of the country thereafter were undoubtedly the two great tasks to which Canning devoted himself. But great as they were, they should not be allowed to overshadow his administrative reforms, some of which were of permanent value. Two of these were the direct outcome of the bitter experience of the Mutiny. Syed Ahmad and other Indian leaders pointed out that one of the principal reasons of the outbreak was that the Indians had no place in the Council of the Government of India and had therefore no means, short of rebellion, to bring their grievances to the notice of their rulers. The Indian Councils Act of 1861 partly remedied this by admitting non-officials and Indians to the Legislative Council. The other reform was the reduction in the disproportion between the numbers of Indian and British troops in the army, and its proper reorganization. The introduction of a new procedure by which each member of the Governor-General's Council was placed in charge of a separate department, was also an important innovation, practically introducing the principle of Cabinet System in Indian administration. Canning's financial measures included the imposition of direct taxes which was a bold step to meet the heavy deficit caused by the Mutiny. The establishment of the High Courts and the introduction of the Penal Code were two other great reforms.

Lord Canning, like his predecessor, was broken down in health by his heavy work and, curiously enough, the same domestic calamity, the death of wife, overwhelmed both of them while in India.
Canning handed over charge of his office to Lord Elgin in March, 1862, and left for home a week later. He returned home only to die within three months.

The Earl of Elgin and Kincardine, the first Viceroy of that name, was successively the Governor of Jamaica and Governor-General of Canada, and played a distinguished part in China, during the imbroglio with that country from 1856 to 1862. Immediately after his return home he was appointed Viceroy and Governor-General in India. His tenure of office was cut short by death at the hill station of Dharmshala on November 20, 1863. A short expedition against the Yusufzai tribe is the only important event during his administration.

During the interval between the death of Lord Elgin and the assumption of the office of Viceroy by Sir John Lawrence in January, 1864, Sir Robert Napier and Sir William T. Denison carried on the duties of the office.

Sir John Lawrence, who succeeded Lord Elgin I, was the only one, besides Warren Hastings, to rise from the ranks of the Civil Service of the East India Company to the high office of Governor-General. His appointment naturally recalls the strong opinion expressed against such appointment in connection with Sir Charles Metcalfe. John Lawrence had arrived in India in the year 1830, at the age of nineteen, and served in Calcutta and Delhi before he was appointed to administer the territory between the Beas and the Sutlej conquered from the Sikhs after the First Sikh War (1846). He gave evidence of his tact and ability when troubles naturally brewed among the Sikh chiefs under his charge on the eve of the Second Sikh War. As they showed signs of rebellious spirit, Lawrence personally visited the affected areas. At every halting place he placed a sword and a pen before the village headmen, who assembled in scores, and asked them to select by which instrument they wished to be ruled. They are said to have taken the pen without exception. This scene was later immortalized in the famous statue of Lawrence at Lahore.

After the annexation of the Panjāb Lawrence was appointed one of the three administrators who were placed in charge of the Province, but later he was put in sole charge. For the brilliant services he rendered in this capacity he was created a knight. The services he rendered as Chief Commissioner of the Panjāb during the dark days of the Mutiny have been referred to above. It was generally recognized that he saved India for England, and the Viceroy's laconic reference, "Through him Delhi fell," hit the real issue.
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Lawrence was appointed the first Lieutenant-Governor of the Panjāb in 1859, but he left for home almost immediately. He was appointed a member of the India Council and worked as such till he was appointed Viceroy of India. But the chief work of Lawrence lay behind and not before him. His Viceroyalty was more or less uneventful save for the Bhutan War and the terrible famine in Orissa in 1866. His interest was mainly focussed on the peasantry and its outcome was the ‘Punjab Tenancy Act’ and the ‘Oudh Rent Bill.’ He also paved the way for the Bengal Tenancy Act which was actually passed after he left. Lawrence relinquished the office of Viceroy and handed over charge to Lord Mayo on January 12, 1869. As a reward for his eminent services Lawrence was created a Peer.

Lord Mayo, who succeeded Lord Lawrence, had a parliamentary career of twenty-one years in course of which he thrice held the office of the Chief Secretary of Ireland. His success in this office was mainly responsible for his choice as Viceroy when Lord Lawrence vacated his office. One of the first tasks which engaged his attention was to impart proper education and training to the younger members of the aristocracy of India, i.e., sons and relatives of the ruling chiefs and great landed proprietors, in order to fit them for their duties and responsibilities. The result was the Rajkot College in Kathiawar, and the Mayo College at Ajmer in Rajputana. His attempt to conciliate the Amir of Afghanistan took a practical shape in the magnificent Durbar held in Ambala in honour of that distinguished guest. This was the beginning of a new frontier policy based upon friendship with neighbouring States. Lord Mayo took keen interest in internal administration and was in the habit of making extensive tours to make himself personally acquainted with the work of the district officer. On February 8, 1872, he visited the great convict settlement in the Andamans. In the evening he returned after an inspection of the proposed site for a sanatorium to his ship at Hopetown. He had reached the jetty and actually stepped forward to descend the stairs to the launch waiting to carry him to his man-of-war, when a convict sprang from behind some stones where he had been crouching, and plunged his knife into the back of the Viceroy. The assassin was immediately pulled off, but the wound he had inflicted proved fatal. In a few minutes Lord Mayo was dead. His body was carried first to Calcutta and then to his home in Ireland.

After the sudden death of Lord Mayo, Sir John Strachey and Lord Napier of Merchistoun successively carried on the duties of the office for three months till Earl Northbrook took over charge
in May, 1872. He had a successful parliamentary career, having held various appointments such as Lord of the Admiralty, Under-Secretary in three Departments, and Secretary to the Admiralty. His period of office in India was marked by the visit of the Prince of Wales (future king Edward VII) and the trial of the Gaekwar of Baroda on a charge of poisoning the Resident. But the most important problem confronting him was the political relation with Afghanistan in view of the rapid advance of Russia in Central Asia. As his views were not accepted by the Home authorities he tendered his resignation in 1875, but continued in his office till he was relieved by Lord Lytton in April, 1876.

Edward Robert Bulwer-Lytton, Earl of Lytton, held various diplomatic posts between 1850 and 1875. He served first as Second and then as First Secretary in English embassies at various European capitals. Early in 1875 he was offered the Governorship of Madras, but declined. When Disraeli nominated him Governor-General, it came as a great surprise upon the English public, for this son of a great novelist was 'hitherto known only as a graceful poet and courtly diplomatist'. But Lytton displayed in his new office unexpected vigour and resolution. His tenure of office was marked by the assumption of the title “Empress of India” by Queen Victoria, and the magnificent Durbar held at Delhi on January 1, 1877, to proclaim it to the people and chiefs of India. But soon he was involved in the disastrous Afghan War to which his own aggressive imperialistic policy contributed in no small degree. His internal administration was marked by reactionary measures like the Vernacular Press Act and the Arms Act. His career in India was cut short by the fall of Disraeli’s Ministry. The new administration under Gladstone reversed the Afghan policy of Lytton and Disraeli. Lytton thereupon tendered his resignation (April, 1880) and Marquess of Ripon took charge from him in June, 1880.

The Marquess of Ripon had a successful parliamentary career of nearly thirty years during which he held the offices of Secretary for War, Secretary of State for India and Lord President of the Council. On the return of Gladstone to power in 1880, he sent out Ripon as Viceroy of India “for the purpose of reversing Lord Lytton’s policy in Afghanistan, and of introducing a more sympathetic system into the administration of India.” Unexpected happenings in Afghanistan prevented Ripon from giving full effect to the policy of reversal for which he was sent out to India. But he adopted conciliatory measures for the settlement of Afghan affairs which kept up good relation between the two countries for nearly forty years. Ripon is, however, better known for reversing, more completely,
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the policy of Lytton in internal administration. He introduced a more sympathetic tone into the administration of India which endeared him to her people more than any other British ruler who preceded or succeeded him. He repealed the obnoxious Vernacular Press Act of Lytton, laid the foundation of a system of local self-government, and passed various beneficent measures for the improvement of the people. He restored Mysore to its old ruling family after fifty years of British administration—a unique thing in the history of British India. He proposed to extend the jurisdiction of Indian magistrates over Europeans, accused of criminal offences. The Bill proposed for this purpose, known as the Ilbert Bill after the Law Member of his Council, who introduced it, raised a storm of indignation among the Englishmen in India who publicly insulted Ripon and even made a plot to remove him forcibly from India. On the other hand, when he left India in December, 1884, he received unique ovations from the Indians all along his way to Bombay.

The Marquess of Dufferin who succeeded Lord Ripon in December, 1884, had begun his career in diplomatic service, but later held the offices of Under-Secretary for India and Under-Secretary for War. In 1872, he was appointed Governor-General of Canada. Later he was Ambassador to Russia and Turkey. Lord Dufferin's administration in India saw the Third Burmese War in 1885, ending in the annexation of Upper Burma and the final extinction of Burma as an independent power. Another event, big with important consequences in the future, was the inauguration of the Indian National Congress in the same year. In the north-west, the Panjdeh incident on the border of Afghanistan brought Britain to the verge of war with Russia. Fortunately, an amicable settlement was arranged and the war was averted. But as a result of the incident the total strength of the Indian army was raised by 10,000 British and 20,000 Indian troops, and Quetta was connected by railway. The chances of any future war with Russia were, however, considerably reduced by the delimitation of the northern boundary of Afghanistan by a joint Anglo-Russian Commission.

The Marquess of Lansdowne, who succeeded Dufferin in December, 1888, held offices as Under-Secretary of War and Under-Secretary of India, and was the Governor of Canada from 1883 to 1888. During his rule in India there was the so-called rebellion in the petty State of Manipur on the north-eastern frontier in 1891, which has been discussed in detail in Chapter XXVII. The Indian Councils Act of 1892 was an important event, marking a definite stage forward in the evolution of Indian constitution. In 1893 the frontiers
of Afghanistan and British India were clearly defined by a joint agreement between the two Governments.

Earl of Elgin and Kincardine II, son of the Viceroy of that name, who succeeded Lord Lansdowne as Viceroy in January, 1894, did not distinguish himself in any way. His administration in India during the next five years was troubled by the rising of the frontier tribes in the north-west.11 This was due to the establishment of military posts into tribal territory which alarmed the hardy and independence-loving clans. The Waziris and Swatis successively rose in arms against the British in June and July, 1897, and the Mohmands shortly followed their example. They were joined by the Afridis who closed the Khyber Pass. The Tirah campaign, which put down these tribes, proved to be a very costly one in both men and money.

George Nathaniel, Baron Curzon of Kedleston, who succeeded Lord Elgin II in January, 1899, is generally regarded as one of the ablest Governors-General of India. He distinguished himself as a student in Oxford and served as Under-Secretary for India in 1891-92, and for Foreign Affairs in 1895-98. He showed great promise even in these subordinate posts and educated himself by extensive tours in Central Asia, Persia, Afghanistan, and the Pamirs on the one side, and Siam, Indo-China and Korea on the other. He was an eloquent speaker and good writer.

As the Viceroy and Governor-General of India, his untiring industry enabled him to undertake large measures of reform in almost every branch of administration. The risings of the frontier tribes in 1897-98 led him to formulate a new policy of conciliation and create a new province called the North-West Frontier Province, though he had to undertake a campaign against the Mahsud Waziris in 1901.12 He sent a military expedition to Tibet which advanced as far as Lhasa.13

He established the Imperial Cadet Corps and forced the Nizam to agree to the permanent cession of Berar. He created a new Department to look after commerce and industry, reorganized the Archaeological Department, and took steps to preserve and protect the ancient monuments of India. He passed some beneficent measures like the reduction of Salt-tax and Income-tax. But his reform of the Calcutta Municipality and the Indian Universities was highly unpopular. His crowning act of folly was the partition of Bengal in the teeth of almost universal opposition. The agitation against this measure grew in volume after his departure, and led to the great national movement which ultimately secured freedom for India. On the expiration of the customary term of five years Curzon was re-appointed Viceroy and Governor-General, but he was soon in-
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involved in an acrimonious controversy with the Commander-in-Chief, Lord Kitchener, regarding the position of the military member of the Viceroy's Council. As Lord Curzon's views were not upheld by the Home Government he resigned in 1905.14

II. GENERAL REVIEW OF THE PERIOD (1858-1905)

A. Effect of the Mutiny

The great outbreak of 1857 brought about fundamental changes in the character of Indian administration and the future development of the country. Its immediate effects were the gradual alienation and growing distrust between the rulers and the ruled, and the re-orientation of the policy of the former.

The first fruit of this re-orientation was the extinction of the rule of a private trading company over India, and the assumption of the Government of India by the British Crown to which detailed reference will be made in Chapter XXVIII. But it ushered in other changes in its train.

The changed attitude of the Government was strikingly manifested in the reorganization of the army. The increase in the proportion of the British soldiers, the practical reservation of the artillery for them, and the mixing up of different classes of sepoyos divided from each other by social and religious creed, in order to prevent united action by them, were undoubtedly the results of the Mutiny and will be described in detail in Chapter XXVIII, Section XI. It will suffice here to say that the policy of balance and counterpoise was deliberately pursued in the military administration. Various groups in the army were so arranged as to check the growth of any sentiment of national unity among them, and tribal and communal loyalties were deliberately encouraged. The army was, as far as possible, kept in isolation from the people and Indian newspapers were not allowed to reach them. It is hardly necessary to add that all the key positions were kept in the hands of Englishmen and even the oldest and most experienced non-commissioned Indian officer held a status inferior to that of a raw English subaltern. For additional protection the more effective weapons of warfare were not given to the Indian forces; they were reserved for the British troops in India. These British troops were always kept with the Indian regiments in all the vital centres of India to serve as 'internal security troops' for suppression of disorder and to overawe the people. While this internal army, with the predominance of British personnel, served as an army of occupation for the country, the greater portion of the Indian troops were part of the field army organized for service abroad. There was a general feeling of distrust.
also against the Indian civil population, and their right of using firearms was seriously restricted.

But the new policy was not confined to measures of defences. It had its repercussions on the attitude towards the Indian States. The outbreak of 1857 had emphasized the potential strength of the Indian States, both for good and evil. It was obvious to everyone that the Indian States might have easily turned the scale against the British during the great outbreak, and it was the British policy of annexation that supplied a strong motive power to the Mutiny and civil revolt that followed it. So the British rulers adopted a new policy towards them. On the one hand, they took all possible steps to render them militarily weak and harmless. On the other hand, they tried to conciliate the ruling families and guaranteed their future stability by recognizing adoption and repudiation of annexation in future. An offshoot of this new policy was the formal declaration of British suzerainty over the whole of India. The full significance of this measure and the change from British paramountcy to Imperialism will be described in Chapter XXX. As Lord Lytton said, the Royal Titles Act of 1876, by which Queen Victoria was proclaimed Empress of India, marked the beginning of "a new policy by virtue of which the Crown of England should henceforth be identified with the hopes, the aspirations, the sympathies and interests of a powerful native aristocracy"—by implication, not of the people at large. A thin wedge was driven between the welfare of the masses and the vested interests of the ruling families, landlords and other aristocratic classes of India. This gave a fillip to the autocracy and tyranny of the Indian rulers and their definite alignment with the British rulers as against their own people.

This was but one phase of the policy of Divide and Rule which has been followed by Imperialism in all ages and countries. Another phase of the same policy was the deliberate encouragement of the split between the Hindus and Muslims. It is true that the vital differences between the two communities were always there and not the creations of the British, but the latter fully exploited the situation to their advantage.¹⁶

The relations between the Indians and the Britishers underwent a visible change.¹⁶ The horrible atrocities committed by both sides, to which reference has been made above,¹⁷ created a river of blood between the two communities. Each had a highly exaggerated notion of the crime and delinquencies of the other, and nursed bitter memories of a one-sided character. This mainly accounts for the growing isolation and arrogance of the British community in India, mentioned later in this section. So far as the Indians were concer-
ed, the terrible ruthlessness with which the outbreak of 1857 was suppressed left them so hopelessly weak and incapable of taking vengeance, that they could only brood upon their misery and nurse sullen resentment in their heart. As an indirect consequence of this, the tide of westernization brought about by English education ebbed to a considerable degree. The glamour of western culture and civilization was gradually dimmed and a new type of orthodoxy took its place. This was facilitated by the reluctance of the British Government to pass any liberal social legislation, or to interfere in the religious customs in any way, as many believed that such action on their part was one of the important causes of the outbreak of 1857. Thus the pledge of neutrality on the part of Government in regard to social and religious questions, given in the Queen's Proclamation of 1858, probably helped the reactionary element and partly explains the revival of orthodox ideas during the period under review.

While reactionary Hindu orthodoxy once more raised its head, the British officials indirectly helped it by a positive dislike for the progress of the Indians on western lines. It was a fundamental departure from the policy of their predecessors. In order to achieve this purpose they tried to curtail the spread of English education, which they rightly regarded as the fountain-head from which flowed all liberal and progressive ideas. This would be clear from the following statement of Sir William Wedderburn, an eminent member of the I.C.S.: "Unfortunately, following the Mutiny, official opinion appears to have suffered a reaction on the question of popular education, and he (Hume) expressed his concern that many 'entirely disapprove of any efforts to cultivate the native mind; many condemn, as unconditionally, a merely secular education'". The reactionary spirit showed itself shortly afterwards in a Government circular of 28th January, 1859, in which objection was taken to the employment of native agency for the promotion of education, and the Collector was warned not to attempt to persuade the people to send their children to the schools or to contribute to their maintenance. Mr. Hume, another senior member of the I.C.S., protested against it in a letter dated 30th March, 1859.

Other changes in the official attitude will be described in detail in Chapter XLVIII. Generally speaking, the officials became less sympathetic and more aloof, and there was a new spirit in administration marked by a keener sense of racial discrimination and a nervous excitability ready to take quick and drastic action on the least indication of disaffection and disloyalty. As the transfer of authority to the Crown removed, to a large extent, all checks and restraints on the British officials in India in their routine work, there
was a growth of hide-bound bureaucracy which practically usurped the functions of the Government of India. This bureaucracy was, generally speaking, highly efficient, and the machinery of administration devised by them must be regarded as one of the greatest achievements of British rule in India. It may also be conceded that the Indian bureaucracy meant to do good to the people as they understood it. But their efforts were doomed to failure because of their supreme hatred for the educated Indians, rank ignorance of the real wants and needs of the people, and the fixed policy of subordinating the interests of India to those of England.

The extinction of the East India Company's rule brought in grave economic peril to India. For henceforth India became the field of economic exploitation, not of a single trading concern, but of the entire British people. The trading and other interests outside the Company had hitherto exercised a sort of scrutiny over its transactions, thus providing a safeguard, howsoever weak, for Indian interests. The British people, who were now masters of India, not only gave up this critical attitude, but used their political power to further their own interests, both political and economical. The impeachment of a Governor-General for his misdeeds, or a periodical review of the Indian affairs every twenty years—all these became things of the past, and a spirit of indifference and complacency about the nature of their rule in India, so long as their own interests remained unaffected, was the prevailing mood of the British people at large. But the Britishers were not at all indifferent to the economic potentialities of India. India now became a dumping ground of British manufacture, and an almost inexhaustible field for investment of capital, for it offered unlimited scope for commercial and industrial enterprises like railways, steamer, tea and coffee plantation, etc. The number of Englishmen seeking their fortunes in India, both private individuals and members of the civil and military services, also rapidly increased. Although their services as well as their enterprises and examples went a great way towards modernizing India on the western model, the Indian masses were deprived of a substantial portion of its benefit, and had to purchase the remainder at an almost prohibited cost which they were unable to bear.

The great outbreak of 1857 had also other permanent results. The success of the tiny British forces in quelling such a wide-spread revolt generated a sense of security and stability of the British dominion in India, not only in the minds of the British but also in those of the Indians. The futility of armed resistance against British rule was demonstrated in a convincing manner, and the assumption of Indian Government directly by the Crown, with all the resources
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at its command, seemed to put such an attempt beyond the range of practical politics. At the same time the solemn promises in Her Gracious Majesty's proclamation of 1858 held out hopes of removing many of the grievances and causes of discontent which combined to produce the great conflagration. The idea of offering armed resistance against the might of the British gradually came to be generally discounted and Pax Britannica prevailed for nearly half a century. This was not seriously disturbed in spite of occasional uprisings. The Wahabis, from their remote outpost of inaccessible hills in the northwest frontier, waged a relentless struggle against the British, and fears and rumours of impending revolution haunted the British mind almost throughout the period. The spirit of resistance flared up among Indigo-cultivators of Bengal, and minor rebellions broke out here and there. But in spite of all these it must be admitted that after the sixties the disturbances in India became exception rather than the rule, and there cannot be any doubt that the unsuccessful attempt in 1857-8 to oust the British from India put them more firmly on the saddle. The last embers of the chaos and confusion bequeathed by the political disintegration of the eighteenth century were finally extinguished. A new era began in Indian history.

An immediate effect of the Mutiny was the growing hatred of the Englishmen towards the Muslims. As Lyall has observed: "After the Mutiny the British turned on the Muhammadans as their real enemies.... They forfeited for the time the confidence of their foreign rulers". But it was not long before the growing nationalism of the Hindus alienated the British from them and the Muslims were taken back into confidence and favour.

A word may be said about the long-term effect of the Mutiny. It has been said that Julius Caesar, dead, was more powerful than when he was alive. The same thing may be said about the Mutiny of 1857. Whatever might have been its original character, it soon became a symbol of challenge to the mighty British power in India. It remained a shining example before nascent nationalism in India in its struggle for freedom from the British yoke, and was invested with the full glory of the first national war of independence against the British. Nana Sahib, the Rani of Jhansi, Bahadur Shah and Kunwar Singh became national heroes and champions of national freedom, and stories of their heroic struggle animated the fighters for freedom more than half a century later. Popular songs and ballads kept their memory alive and made it a powerful force to reckon with.
B. Unredeemed Pledges

To many Indians one redeeming feature of the Mutiny was that it brought about the end of the Company’s rule and the taking over of the administration by the Queen herself. Abundant goodwill was created by the gracious proclamation of Queen Victoria (1 November, 1858) enunciating the liberal principles by which India was to be ruled in future. If these principles had been strictly adhered to, a new chapter might have opened in Indian history. But these principles were followed more in breach than in observance.

The Queen declared: “We desire no extension of our present territorial possessions”. But this was violated by the annexation of Upper Burma and Berar, and other territorial acquisitions to which reference will be made in Chapters XXIV, XXV and XXVII. The following comment of Herbert Spencer, the great English philosopher of the 19th Century, is as true of the first half as of the second half of the 19th Century.

“As remarked by an Indian Officer, Deputy Surgeon-General Paske, all our conquests and annexations are made from base and selfish motives alone. Major Ravery, of the Bombay army, condemns ‘the rage shown of late years for seizing what does not and did never belong to us’, because the people happen to be weak and poorly armed, while we are strong and provided with the most excellent weapons. Resistance to an intruding sportsman or a bullying explorer, or disobedience to a resident, or even refusal to furnish transport coolies, serves as sufficient excuse for attack, conquest and annexation.”

The scope of annexations was limited after 1858, for very little remained to be annexed after Dalhousie had completed his task with a thoroughness which was the envy and despair of his successors. But the spirit remained and the best use was made of the few opportunities that presented themselves.

The Queen guaranteed status quo to the Native Princes of India. But they were considerably reduced in rank and status, legally and theoretically, by the Royal Titles Act of 1876, and in practice by the constant unauthorized interference in their internal affairs by the Resident and the Government of India.

Another declaration of the Queen that raised high hopes in Indian minds was her pledge of equal treatment to all her subjects, Indian and European. “We hold ourselves” said she, “bound to the natives of our Indian territories by the same obligations as duty, which bind us to all our other subjects”. How actual facts belied this promise, in every respect, from beginning to end, will be described in detail in Chapters XLVII and XLVIII. Apart from the general arrogant attitude of Englishmen towards the Indians which emboldened every Tom, Dick and Harry to insult the Indians of
every rank, and enabled them to do so with impunity, the Ilbert Bill agitation, the conduct of the indigo- and tea-planters in India, and the treatment meted to the Indians in the Crown Colonies and other possessions of the British Empire, highlight the manner in which the Queen's declaration was given effect to by her Government at home and Viceroy in India. The sham of equal treatment was further exposed by the economic strangulation of India for the sake of enriching England.

Then there was the specific promise of admitting all Indians "freely and impartially" to all offices. This was merely the repetition of a clause in the Charter Act of 1833. Never, perhaps, was an Act of Parliament or a royal pledge so openly violated as this. The subject has been fully dealt with in Section IV of Chapter XXVIII.

Whether these promises were intended to be kept, or deliberately made only to pacify the Indians by false hopes, it is difficult to say. But we have it on the authority of no less a person than a Viceroy that every Englishman knew that "these claims and expectations can never be fulfilled", and so the Government, both of England and India, took "every means in their power of breaking to the heart the words of promise which they have uttered to the ear." These are the words of Lord Lytton who frankly admitted that they had "cheated" the Indians.229

The period of administration by the Crown was thus a period of broken pledges. The disillusionment and frustration caused by breaches of pledges was the most potent factor in changing the goodwill of the Indians to a spirit of hatred and animosity against the British rule, and gave a fillip to the nascent spirit of nationalism, the growth of which was the characteristic feature of the period.

C. The Era of Nationalism

The failure of the outbreak of 1857 ushered in a new phase in Indian politics, for although the spirit of violence was not altogether dead, it was driven underground, and the intellectual movement of a non-violent nature now dominated Indian mind. The rapid spread of English education increased the number of that class of Indians who were inspired by the political principles and technique of political agitation prevalent in England. The political ideas and organizations, of which the beginnings may be traced before 1857, now developed apace and one can mark clearly the birth of a new political consciousness and of a new sense of nationalism in India.

This was mainly due to the grave and steadily growing discontent of the intelligentsia against the British rule. The economic
ruin of the country, caused by the selfish policy of England, was emphasized by chronic poverty of the people and repeated occurrence of famines on a wide-spread scale. Men like Dadabhai Naoroji in India and William Digby in England exposed, by a brilliant array of facts and figures, how the British policy was really responsible for this state of things. The educated Indians were not in a mood to judge their views in a detached critical spirit, but were deeply moved by the picture drawn by them, which they believed to be a true representation of facts. The Indian opinion was rudely shocked when the import duty on cotton goods was removed for satisfying Manchester, though it imposed a heavy strain on Indian tax-payers and seriously hampered the infant cotton industry of Bombay. But as the saying goes, there is no cloud without silver lining. The selfish economic policy of Britain brought into the political field a new class of Indians slowly emerging into limelight. In spite of many handicaps Indian industry of the modern type was slowly forging ahead during the latter half of the nineteenth century. The cotton textile industry, financed and managed mainly by the Indians, showed a progress which must be held as remarkable when it is remembered that the State extended its hand not to help, but to retard its growth. "In 1853 the first successful cotton mill was started in Bombay. By 1880 there were 156 mills employing 44,000 workers. By 1900 there were 193 mills employing 161,000 workers."[23] The new capitalist class joined the English-educated middle class—lawyers, teachers, doctors etc.—in their national demands as they felt that even their narrow class interests could not be properly served without merging them into the broader political interests of the country.

The growing poverty of the people cast a gloom over the whole country. "While in the first half of the nineteenth century there were seven famines with an estimated total of 1½ million deaths, in the second half of the nineteenth century there were twenty-four famines with an estimated total of 28½ million deaths, and eighteen of these twenty-four famines fall into the last quarter of the nineteenth century".[24]

A no less disconcerting feature (indirectly helping the growth of Indian nationalism) was the racial arrogance of the English which reached its climax during the period under review. The outbreak of 1857, and particularly the stories of horrible massacres on both sides, strained the relations of, and produced hatred and ill-feeling between, the Indians and Englishmen. Time might have healed up the sores and restored the cordiality and goodwill between the two which bitter memories of Mutiny had disturbed. But unfortunately other forces
were at work and the situation, far from improving, was rendered still further worse. The opening of the Suez Canal and facilities of communication between England and India produced a great change in the attitude of Englishmen towards Indians. As the Englishmen now lived with their families in India, and could frequently visit England, they ceased to look upon India as their adopted home, and gradually developed an exclusive attitude. The free intercourse between Indians and Englishmen was considerably lessened and almost a caste-barrier was raised between the two.

What was worse still was the rudeness cum violence manifested by the Englishmen in India. They not only assumed an attitude of a patronizing and superior character, but also used to look upon the Indians as niggers to whom rules of decent conduct need not apply. Rude behaviour towards Indians, sometimes accompanied by brutal assault, striking servants and common men on the slightest provocation, turning even respectable Indians out of Railway compartments, became the order of the day. While the Englishmen got away scot-free or with very light punishment even for murder and serious crimes, the Indians were most severely punished for the slightest offences or discourtesy to them. The Indians felt deeply wounded by the humiliation they were liable to suffer at any moment in the hands of the Englishmen, and there was an increasing bitterness of feelings between the two. It may be said without much exaggeration that the racial arrogance of the Englishmen made the English rule more unpopular and hated in India than probably any other single factor.

The political causes of discontent were also deep-seated. For nearly half a century the Indians had been agitating for representative government and for admission into higher services, but all in vain. The very inadequate measures adopted by the Government to remove these grievances will be described in Chapter XXVIII, Sections II and IV.

These and other causes of discontent, noted in Chapter XIII, which were only partially removed, in some cases, during the period under review, gave rise to a vigorous political agitation. It was based on a sincere faith in the democratic traditions and sense of justice of the English people. The Indian leaders fondly believed that the Englishmen at home need only be convinced of the justice and genuineness of Indian aspiration for advancement of political status, in order to freely grant all their demands. The disillusionment was not long in coming. It is not generally recognized how much the administration of British India was influenced by the tenor of the policy of the Home Government at the time. So long as the
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Liberal party was ruling England we find some liberal measures adopted also in India. The educational and social reforms of Bentinck may be cited as examples. But the Conservative Government of Lord Beaconsfield introduced a new policy which is typified by Lord Lytton's administration in India, and the harsh and oppressive measures adopted by him, such as the Vernacular Press Act, the Arms Act, and by the Home authorities such as the abolition of duty on imported cotton goods and the lowering of age for Civil Service candidates. These stimulated the political activities of Indians which found new channels of expression, big with future consequences. History records how the tyranny of foreign rulers often proves to be a blessing in disguise by promoting the cause of freedom. The administration of Lord Lytton from 1876 to 1880 and that of Lord Curzon, a quarter of a century later, may be cited as apt illustrations from Indian history.

The unpopular acts of Lord Lytton set, for the first time in British Indian history, the stage for political agitation on an all-India basis. The agitation retained its old constitutional character, although Lord Lytton's administration gave a rude shock to the robust faith of the Indian leaders in the sense of justice of the English people. But the scope of political agitation and its tone underwent a great change. Insistent demands for the abolition of unjust and repressive measures were urged in forceful language, and vigorous protests were made against the autocratic attitude of the Viceroy. The tone of the Indian press was also in keeping with the newly awakened political consciousness of the people. They criticized in strong language the various administrative measures of the Government which adversely affected the interests of India, and made trenchant remarks even on such subjects as the Afghan War, military expedition to Egypt, and the favouritism shown to Manchester at the cost of the poor Indian rate-payers. The Press and the Platform took the position of a permanent, though ineffective, Opposition to Indian Government. The agitation was also carried on in England where a small number of liberal Englishmen sympathized with the views and political aspirations of India. Indian question was also raised in the House of Commons by Fawcett and Gladstone.

The Indian Association of Calcutta had already ushered in a new era of political agitation on all-India basis, which paved the way for a clear recognition of India as one political unit. The practical realization of this ideal was facilitated by the agitation of the Anglo-Indians over the Ilbert Bill and the imprisonment of Surendra Nath Banerji. The latter strengthened the growing bonds of fellow-
ship and good feeling between the different Indian provinces, while the former taught the Indians the great value of political agitation carried on the basis of a united front. The need was thus felt of a closely knit political organization for the whole of India. This led to the foundation, in 1883, of National Conference in Calcutta, the precursor of Indian National Congress founded in 1885, which will be described in details in Chapters LII and LIII.

One of the novel features of the new era of political agitation was the enthusiasm it evoked among the public. Half a century before, Indian leaders constantly complained that the public took little interest in political questions. While addressing an important, but thinly attended, political meeting, Dwarakanath Tagore had observed: "Let Hindu College turn out more educated men in future as it has done in the past, and in a few years these meetings will be attended by ten times the number". His prophecy was more than fulfilled. Even the biggest halls proved too small for public meetings in the seventies, and they were held in open parks and squares. This was the beginning of what was usually styled monster meetings in later days. The technique of political agitation was also now fully developed. Political mass meetings all over the country, political associations at centres with branches in mofussil areas, memorials and petitions both to Indian and Home Governments, and organizations or individual efforts to educate public opinion in England and interest it in Indian affairs— all these were fully developed and remained the standard form of political activity in India during the period under review.

The political ideals and organizations ending in the National Conference and Indian National Congress were sustained by the growing sense of nationalism and patriotism among the Indians. The basis of this nationalism has been discussed in Chapter LI. It found noble expression in vernacular literature. A number of distinguished writers in Bengal, who have permanently enriched her literature, were inspired by the highest patriotic feelings and noblest national sentiments, and preached them through the medium of novels, poems, essays, and songs. These are still prized as the most precious intellectual legacy of the last century and have proved for more than three quarters of a century the most valuable aid in the struggle for freedom that Bengal waged against the British. The same thing is more or less true of other parts of India. This has been discussed in Chapter XLIII. The Freedom Movement in India is really based on the nationalism which was born during the period under review. So far as a historian's vision goes, this national and patriotic spirit, on an all-India basis, is probably unique in the annals of this coun-
try, as no clear trace of this is available in earlier periods. The
growth of this nationalism has been described in Chapters LI and
LIV, and in a sense it guided and modified the character of the
struggle for freedom till it was finally won. Though born in peace-
ful environments, and mainly due to impact of Western ideas, it
has proved to be the most dominant factor in India's Freedom Move-
ment, and with each advancing year cast its lengthening shadow
over the fortunes of the British rule in India. The birth and growth
of this nationalism constitute the chief glory of India during the
period under review. Thus the year 1857 may be looked upon as
the great divide between the two great landmarks in Indian history—
that of British paramountcy in the first half, and that of Indian
nationalism in the second half of the nineteenth century.

One discordant note has to be struck in this glowing account of
nationalism. It is the growing cleavage between the Hindus and
Muslims who formed the two major communities in this country.
In spite of considerable amity and fellow-feeling, historic, social
and religious causes have always operated as a barrier between the
two and prevented their real fusion into a common nationality.28
Political necessities and vicissitudes occasionally brought them to-
gether, when they presented a common united front in various
spheres of life. Nevertheless the line of cleavage remained. It slowly
widened during the period under review, for reasons described in
Chapter XLVI. It formed at first a tiny speck of cloud in the other-
wise brilliant national firmament of India. Towards the close of the
period under review the cloud had grown no bigger than a man's
hand. But in less than half a century, it overcast the sky, and ere
long there came out of it thunder, lightning and storm which drench-
ed the country in blood, and rent in twain the great fabric of free
India, which was the dream of Indian patriots and for which they
lived and died. That tragedy was still in the womb of the future,
but its roots lay deep in the soil even during the period under review,
as will be discussed in Chapter XLVI.

1. See p. 289.
2. Sketches, I. 94-5.
3. For the different forms of Land-settlement, cf. Chapter XXVIII, section VII.
4. For Afghan policy cf. Ch. XXV.
6. Cf. Ch. XXV.
7. Cf. Ch. LII.
8. Ibid.
9. Chapter LIII.
10. Cf. Ch. XXVIII, section II.
11. Cf. Ch. XXXI.
12. Ibid.
13. Cf. Ch. XXXIII.
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14. The real point of difference has been discussed in detail in Chapters XXVIII, section XI.
15. Cf. Ch. XLVI.
16. This has been discussed in detail in Chapters XLVII, XLVIII and XLIX.
17. Cf. Ch. XIX.
20. Cf. Ch. XXIX.
21. Cf. Ch. LIII.
22. Cf. Ch. XXIX.
22b. The whole passage has been quoted, with references, in Ch. XXVIII, section IV.
23. RPD, 255.
24. Ibid.
25. This is fully discussed in Ch. LII.
CHAPTER XXIV

POLITICAL HISTORY AND EXPANSION OF DOMINIONS (1858-1905)

The Act for the Better Government of India, passed on August 2, 1858, transferred the Government of India from the hands of the East India Company to the Crown, and this was announced by Lord Canning at a darbar at Allahabad. A proclamation issued in the name of the Queen on November 1, 1858, was read at the darbar to convey to the chiefs and peoples of India the main features of the change in the system of administration and the new spirit in which the Government of India was to be carried on in future.\textsuperscript{1} It was expressly said in this proclamation that the Queen desired 'no extensions of the present territorial domains in India.' There can be hardly any doubt that the "lessons of the Mutiny" were at the root of this change of policy. For, the great outbreak had demonstrated the folly of the annexation in two ways. In the first place, there was a strong body of opinion which regarded the annexations of Dalhousie as one of the main causes of the outbreak of 1857. Secondly, it was generally agreed that the loyalty of the rulers of Native States and the services rendered by them, were of inestimable value in suppressing the revolt. Thus there was a general appreciation of the views of those servants of the Company who regarded the Native States as a bulwark of British rule in India.

This change of policy left little scope for further expansion of British dominions in India. Nevertheless, there was one notable exception in the conquest of Upper Burma in 1885. The course of events leading to it will be fully dealt with in Chapter XXVI. It will suffice to state here that, as in 1852, there was a persistent cry for annexation on the pretext of ill treatment to British traders. To this was added a more substantial ground, namely, alarm at the rapid extension of the French influence and dominion in that region. At least on two occasions the Government of India were anxious to pick up a quarrel with Burma on one ground or another, but the Secretary of State firmly put his foot down. This was during the administration of the Liberal Party under Gladstone when the 'Forward Policy' had received a severe blow in the Second Afghan War. It may not be, therefore, a mere coincidence that it was during the short period of Conservative rule under Salisbury, during the interval between the Second and the Third Gladstone Cabinet, that war
was declared against Burma, on November 13, 1885. Fifteen days later king Thibaw surrendered, and Lord Dufferin annexed Upper Burma to the British dominions on January 1, 1886. There was no legitimate ground for the war, and it was an act of aggression, pure and simple. Its only justification lay in the moral ground that Burma was saved from the tyranny of a cruel despot. But how far it can be regarded as a justification for seizing other's territories is a moot question, and has been discussed above.\(^2\)

Among minor conquests may be mentioned those acquired from the hill-State of Bhutan. Although British relation with Bhutan goes back to the days of Warren Hastings, political connection between the two arose only after the annexation of Assam in 1826. It was then found that Bhutan was in unlawful occupation of the Duars in the Darrang District which formed a part of Assam. The matter was settled amicably on Bhutan's agreeing to pay a small tribute. But these often fell in arrears and the Bhutanese committed deprivations in British territory. Negotiations having borne no fruit, the Assam Duars were annexed in 1841, and the Government of India agreed to pay a sum of one thousand rupees to Bhutan per annum for maintaining peace.

As the Bhutanese raids in British territory continued unchecked, Sir Ashley Eden was sent as an envoy in 1863 to demand reparation. But the envoy was not only insulted but forced under duress to sign a treaty giving over the disputed territory to Bhutan. Eden, however, managed to escape, and the Viceroy, Lord Lawrence, disavowed the treaty. As the Bhutanese refused to restore the British captives, a British force invaded Bhutan in 1865. Although the Bhutaneses surprised an English garrison and caused some loss, they were soon compelled to sue for peace. By a treaty concluded in November, 1865, Bhutan ceded all the Duars of Bengal and Assam, with other territories, and released all kidnapped British subjects. It was also agreed that disputes between Bhutan on the one side and Sikkim or Cooch Behar on the other should be referred to the British Government. The British Government undertook to pay an annual allowance so long as the Bhutanese refrained from unlawful action.

There were troubles in the petty State of Manipur, which came into existence as a result of the First Burmese War, as mentioned above.\(^3\) The British possessed no legal right of suzerainty over this small hilly State, and kept a Political Agent there. Troubles arose in this State in 1890 when the reigning king was forced to flee from the kingdom as the result of a palace revolution, and his younger brother was placed on the throne. The Government of India, after some time, recognized the new ruler, but insisted that his
brother Tikendrajit, the Commander-in-Chief, should be banished from the kingdom. The Chief Commissioner of Assam laid a trap for seizing Tikendrajit in the public darbar where the order of the Government of India was to be announced. Tikendrajit, however, scent ed danger and did not attend the darbar. The Chief Commissioner demanded of the new Raja that Tikendrajit should be immediately deported outside the kingdom. The king asked for some time as Tikendrajit was ill. The Resident personally visited Tikendrajit and satisfied himself that he was really very ill. Nevertheless, the British force suddenly attacked the house of Tikendrajit in the early hours of the next morning, but was repulsed after a whole day's fight. The Chief Commissioner, finding his position very risky, asked for cease-fire which was immediately granted by Tikendrajit, though he was then in a position of vantage. The Chief Commissioner then went with four companions to the palace to arrive at an amicable settlement. The negotiations, however, failed and the five Englishmen left the palace, accompanied by a brother of Tikendrajit. When the party had reached near the gateway, a crowd of Manipuris, infuriated beyond measure by the acts of violence perpetrated by the British forces during their attack of the palace, suddenly rushed towards the Englishmen and assaulted them. One of them was killed by a spear and the other four were rescued and kept inside the darbar hall, closely guarded. Tikendrajit gave positive orders that the Englishmen should not be harmed in any way, but taking advantage of his absence, Tongol General, an old man who wielded great power in the palace, had all the Englishmen beheaded by the public executioner. In the meantime the British at the Residency, after waiting in vain for the return of the Chief Commissioner and his party, left Manipur without any molestation. To avenge the outrage an English force captured Manipur and arrested the king, Tikendrajit and many others. They were tried by a Special Court and the king, his brother Tikendrajit and Tongol General were ordered to be hanged. The current account of the rebellion of Manipur, generally accepted on the authority of the British historians, is inaccurate and misleading, and there are good grounds to believe that an absolutely unjust and unprovoked attack by the British forced Tikendrajit to take measures for legitimate self-defence, and that he was not guilty of the crime for which he was hanged. The whole episode has been discussed in detail in Chapter XXVII.

There were troubles in the north-western frontier. After the First Afghan War, with its disasters still fresh in memory, the first generation of British statesmen, both at home and in India, adopted a policy of strict non-interference. They severely let alone Dost
Muhammad, even though he helped the Sikhs in the Second Sikh War. But gradually, mainly at the instance of Herbert Edwardes, the Commissioner of Peshawar, a successful attempt was made to win over his friendship. Events soon showed its value; for throughout the outbreak of 1857-58 Dost Muhammad refrained from taking advantage of the perilous situation of the English to wreak vengeance against them for the wrongs he had suffered in their hands. Then, for a long time, the Government of India were well content with the friendship and refused to commit themselves any further with the internal affairs or external policy of Afghanistan. This policy of 'masterly inactivity' was carried faithfully by Lord Lawrence when, though requested for help by various claimants for the throne of Kabul after the death of Dost Muhammad, he refused aid to one and all, and recognized as Amir anyone who for the time being succeeded in seizing the throne of Kabul.

This policy of neutrality was looked upon with disfavour by a small section of Englishmen who were alarmed at the rapid advance of Russia and advocated the old "Forward Policy" which led to the First Afghan War. The School came to the forefront, when Disraeli came into power in 1874. He inherited the anti-Russian policy of Palmerston, and found an able lieutenant in Lord Lytton, whom he appointed Viceroy to succeed Lord Northbrook when the latter chose to resign his office rather than carry out a policy towards the Amir which he did not approve. Lytton, who dreamt of planting British flag in Central Asia, pursued a deliberately aggressive policy like Auckland before him. He forced the hands of the British Government, and plunged headlong into a war with Afghanistan (November, 1878). Like Auckland, again, he had the supreme satisfaction of seeing his efforts crowned with success, which was ere long followed by a tragedy that differed in degree, but not in kind, from the earlier disaster. The British envoy at Kabul, Cavagnari, and all his attendants were murdered by an infuriated soldiery; once again the British army restored the lost honour and prestige, and then left the country to itself. The net outcome of the war was the possession of two small strips of territory, Pishin and Sibi, on the frontier, in return for an annual allowance to the Amir. A detailed account of this expedition has been given in Chapter XXV.

The subsequent relations between India and Afghanistan have, on the whole, been friendly during the period under review, and have little bearing upon the internal administration of India. They really form a part of the foreign relations which will be dealt with in Chapter XXXIII.
But there is one aspect of the Anglo-Afghan relations which claims a brief notice here. Since the Second Afghan War the Government of India took steps to bring under more active control the wild tribes inhabiting the borderland between the British dominions and Afghânistân. By religion and nationality they belonged to Afghânistân and the Amir exercised a vague kind of suzerainty over them. Really speaking, these freedom-loving peoples owed allegiance to none, except when compelled by force. The Government of India now turned their attention to this no-man's land, and tried to force the tribal peoples to submit to the British authority. It was the revival of the Forward Policy in another form. Unable to establish political authority in Afghânistân, the British adopted the next best course of creating a buffer-state in the shape of a wide belt of hilly tribes under their direct political authority.

The geography of this area was but vaguely known, and as the Amir claimed a sort of suzerainty over the tribes, the military activity of the British on their frontier was a source of alarm and anxiety to him. As a matter of fact, during the nineties of the last century the relations between the Amir and the British were often so much strained, that on several occasions war seemed to be almost within sight. In order to remove all sources of friction between the two countries, the boundary between British India and Afghânistân was clearly demarcated after a very careful local survey on the basis of an agreement reached by a mission led by Sir Mortimer Durand to Kâbul in 1893. Though the Amir positively disliked the very idea of delimitation of the boundary, he accepted the 'Durand line', as the boundary ultimately fixed on the basis of the Durand agreement came to be called. It was agreed by both the Amir and the Government of India that neither of them would interfere in any way across the line.

But while the delimitation of the boundary irritated the Amir, it positively alarmed the hill tribes on the British side of the line. They had hitherto enjoyed autonomy, but now that they were definitely included within the British territory they naturally apprehended a far more rigid control by the new suzerain power than the Amir was ever in a position to exercise over them. This fear of the loss of independence, which they cherished above all things, seems to be the real reason for the widespread and violent risings of the wild tribes like the Afridis, the Waziris, the Mahsud, the Mohmands, and others, which continued throughout the last decade of the period under review and to which a detailed reference will be made in Chapter XXXI. There are good grounds to believe that
the tribal risings were also instigated by the Amir himself or his followers.

The first serious trouble took place at Chitral. In the opinion of the Government of India it occupied a strategic position of military importance, and they wanted to maintain effective control over its northern passes. An opportunity occurred in 1892 when the death of its ruler Aman-ul-mulk was followed by a struggle for succession. Sher Afzal, living at Kabul as a pensioner of the Amir, succeeded in capturing the throne, but was driven away by Nizam-ul-mulk. He was not only recognized by the Government of India, but at his request a British force was sent to his aid under Dr. Robertson. Sher Afzal, who had taken refuge in the camp of Afghan Commander-in-Chief, reappeared on the scene after Nizam-ul-mulk was murdered in January, 1895. There was a general rising of the tribes mainly at the instigation of Umra Khan, chief of Jandol and a partisan of Sher Afzal, who had proclaimed a Jihad (holy war) in Dir, Swat and Bajaur. Robertson and his small garrison of British and Sikh troops were besieged in the fort for a month and a half till relief came (April, 1895). The fate of Chitral was hotly debated and became a question of party politics in England. Ultimately it was decided to keep British control over it.

Then came the conflagration of 1897 which, though consisting of local risings in detached regions, was usually regarded as a general revolt or common fight for independence against the British. It was met by sending to the disturbed areas numerous military (generally referred to as punitive) expeditions which were neither connected with each other nor controlled by a central base of operations within easy reach. Lord Curzon inaugurated an altogether new policy which has been briefly referred to above and will be described in detail in Chapter XXXI.

1. For the texts of the Act and Queen's Proclamation of 1858, cf. Keith, I. 370-86.
2. See pp. 112-3.
CHAPTER XXV

THE SECOND AFGHAN WAR

Dost Muhammad, who was restored to the throne of Kabul after the disastrous end of the First Afghan War, could not be expected to entertain any goodwill towards the British. But though he was in a mood of sullen resentment, he did not adopt any hostile attitude till he found his opportunity during the Second Sikh War. He sent a military contingent of 4,000 troops to aid the Sikhs against the British, but it shared the discomfiture of the latter in the battle of Gujarat (1848) and returned home, perhaps in a more chastened mood.

Ere long incidents occurred which demonstrated the need of Dost Muhammad for British friendship. As noted above, the Persians were forced to raise the siege of Herat in 1838 under the threat of the British. But the Persians seized the city in 1852 and once more had to withdraw by the interference of the British Government. Two years later the Persians again attacked Herat. It was well known that the Persians were backed by the Russians. Their repeated attempts to take possession of Herat were, therefore, a matter of no less concern to Dost Muhammad than to the British. So Lord Dalhousie, through the instrumentality of Herbert Edwardes, Commissioner of Peshawar, seized this opportunity of winning over the goodwill and friendship of the erstwhile enemy, Dost Muhammad. The proposal was coldly received by Lawrence, the Chief Commissioner of the Panjāb, but under the instruction of Dalhousie, Edwardes tactfully induced Dost Muhammad to make overtures and a treaty was concluded at Jamrud in March, 1855, between the Government of India and the Amir of Afghanistan. It was a general treaty of mutual alliance. The Government of India "undertook to respect the independence of the territories, then in the Amir's possession", and "never to interfere therein". The Amir, on his part, gave a pledge that he would be "the friend of the friends and the enemy of the enemies of the British." One point in the negotiation of this treaty demands our special notice in view of its importance in the subsequent course of history. The Amir desired very much to secure a guarantee that the Government of India would never send an envoy to Kabul, but had to be satisfied merely with the assurance that they had at present no intention or wish to do so.

The value of the treaty was soon put to the test. In 1856 Persia seized Herat and immediately the Government of India and the
Amir of Kabul jointly declared war against her, and concluded a treaty in January, 1857. The Government of India not only sent a force from Bombay, but also helped the Amir with eight thousand stand of arms and a subsidy of £10,000 a month for the duration of the war. The Persians soon came to terms and the hostilities were concluded by a treaty signed at Paris on 4 March, 1857. By the new treaty with the Amir, he agreed to maintain his own vakil at Peshawar and accept a British envoy, of Indian birth, at his court. Henceforth the Government of India kept a Muslim agent, called vakil, at the court of Kabul. But the Amir withdrew his agent in 1858 and did not appoint any successor.

The friendship of the Amir, restored by the treaty of 1855, and further strengthened by the war with the Persians and the new treaty of 1857, stood the Government of India in good stead at the great crisis of 1857. During the great outbreak of that year, constant pressure was being brought upon the Amir by his own sardars, to seize this heaven-sent opportunity of recovering Peshawar, if not of exterminating the British power in India. But the Amir remained firm to his friendship with the British. If he had attacked Peshawar, the least he could do was to stop the flow of men and arms from the Panjāb to the besieging army at Delhi. That must have prolonged the siege of Delhi, and this might have turned the scale against the British. As a matter of fact, Sir John Lawrence, the Chief Commissioner of the Panjāb, actually proposed to relinquish all the territories to the west of the Sindhu, and it was the firm determination of Canning that alone saved the situation. So, although it is highly speculative to discuss what might have happened in case Dost Muhammad invaded Peshawar in 1857, there can be hardly any doubt that his benevolent neutrality during that fateful year was highly beneficial to the Government of India.

In 1862, Dost Muhammad wanted to complete the consolidation of his kingdom and attacked Herat. His action was disapproved by Elgin, the Governor-General of India, who consequently recalled his Muslim vakil at the court of Kabul. But Dost Muhammad ignored this protest and seized Herat in 1863.

It was the crowning achievement of a romantic career, but it was also the last. Dost Muhammad was aged eighty and died shortly after. Immediately the whole of Afghanistan was convulsed by a war of succession among his sons, sixteen in number. Although one of these, Sher Ali, was designated as heir by his father, the other brothers contested his claim. At one time Sher Ali was driven from both Kabul and Kandahar, but he recovered them in 1868.
During this long period of fratricidal wars the Government of India, though approached for help by several claimants to the throne of Kabul, held severely aloof from Afghan politics. This policy of non-interference, inaugurated by Canning in his minute of 1857, was actively pursued by the new Governor-General Sir John (Lord) Lawrence. The latter was held in such esteem on account of the part he played in the great outbreak of 1857, that his views carried great weight both with his Council and the Secretary of State for India. They whole-heartedly approved of Lawrence's Afghan Policy, which is generally called—or miscalled—'Masterly Inactivity'. Its essence was absolute non-interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan. He proceeded on the principle that no true friendship could subsist between the Government of India and the Amir of Kabul, and therefore, without trying to seek alliance with any claimant to that office by offering help, he should recognize anyone who happened to actually occupy the throne of Kabul or establish himself in any part thereof at any moment. He, therefore, refused any help to Sher Ali, who thrice asked for it in 1866, and also to another brother Afzal Khan.

Lawrence's policy was certainly one of 'inactivity,' but whether it was 'masterly' may be justly doubted. For unfortunately, there were other powers, like Russia and Persia, to which the disappointed applicants for British help might turn for support. As soon as Lawrence came to know that they did so, he immediately realized his error and enunciated in 1867 the policy of countering such help from Russia or Persia by offering British aid to the rival candidate. The Home Government having approved of it towards the end of that year, he immediately paid a subsidy to Sher Ali who was thereby able to defeat his rivals and establish his undisputed sway over the whole kingdom. Thus towards the close of his Viceroyalty Lawrence's views underwent an important change. In partial modification of his policy of keeping severely aloof from the affairs of Afghanistan, he recommended a new one to the Secretary of State on January 4, 1869, to the effect that the Government of India "should be empowered to give to any de facto ruler of Kabul some arms and ammunition and substantial pecuniary assistance, as well as moral support, as occasion may require, but without any formal or defensive alliance".

The alliance with Sher Ali did not come a moment too soon. For the rapid advance of Russia towards the frontier of Afghanistan constituted a great danger to that country, and was consequently regarded by the Government of India as a menace to the security of India itself.
THE SECOND AFGHAN WAR

With her authority firmly established in Tashkent (1865), Samarkand (1868) and Bukhara (1869), Russia had now reached the frontiers of Afghanistan, bringing about a crisis which a section of the British statesmen and military strategists had apprehended years ago. They did not regard Afghanistan as a buffer State, but looked upon its western and northern boundary as constituting the real frontier of India against the aggression of their most formidable rival, Russia. This policy had brought about the First Afghan War but did not die with it. Along with the policy of strict non-interference in Afghan politics, a more active and daring policy was also advocated by a few. As early as 1854, Brigadier-General John Jacob offered a scheme to push forward the frontier of India through Bolan Pass to Quetta, foreshadowing its ultimate advance to Herat, a key position which commands the two main routes from the west to India through Kabul and Kandahar. With the progress of Russian advance, mentioned above, Sir Henry Rawlinson gave a definite shape to what may be called the ‘Forward Policy’ in a memorandum written in 1868. He started with the premise that the Russian advance to the Oxus was a challenge to the supremacy of the British in South Asia and constituted a grave danger to the security of Indian dominions. As a safeguard against this it was necessary to have strong and friendly powers to the west and north-west of Indian frontier. This could only be achieved by giving up the policy of ‘Masterly Inactivity’ and substituting in its place a positive policy in Persia and Afghanistan. As immediate practical measures towards this end, Rawlinson suggested that the Amir of Kabul should be granted an annual subsidy and supplied with arms and British officers for training the army. Besides, Quetta should be occupied and a British envoy should be maintained at Kabul.

The first indication of a swing to this new policy may be seen in the change of Sir John Lawrence’s policy towards Afghanistan, mentioned above, followed by an arrangement of a conference between the two powers to discuss the political situation. The policy of ‘Masterly Inactivity’, though thus seemingly given up after reigning supreme for more than a quarter of a century, had still a short lease of life. The change to the ‘Forward Policy’ was a very slow process and was not effected till six years later, under a new British Cabinet.

The conference proposed by Lawrence did not actually take place till after he had left, and the new Governor-General, Lord Mayo, who continued the Afghan policy of Lawrence, met the Amir, Sher Ali, at Ambala in March, 1869. The Amir was anxious to conclude a definite treaty binding the English to support him against any foreign aggression or internal rebellion. He also demanded from the British
the recognition of his younger son, Abdulla Jan, as his successor, and assistance in the shape of supply of arms and ammunitions, whenever asked for, in addition to a fixed annual subsidy. But the Governor-General was not prepared either to grant any fixed subsidy or assistance in other ways, or to commit his government to any definite policy of unconditional guarantee to Sher Ali's family and kingdom. The Home Government having concurred in this view, he wrote a letter to the Amir saying that the British would make an endeavour to strengthen the government of Kabul, and "view with severe displeasure", any attempt by any rival to disturb the position of the Amir. These were vague words which did not really mean much and could hardly satisfy the Amir. Although the Viceroy was authorized to promise money, arms and ammunition to the Amir at the full discretion of his advisers, Lord Mayo only told the Amir that his application for assistance would be received always "with consideration and respect." Mayo also evaded the question of recognizing Abdulla Jan as successor of the Amir. Naturally the Amir was very much discontented. The only effect of the conference was to remove the iron curtain which had hitherto separated the two States and the growth of a friendly feeling between them.

Mayo thus fully endorsed the policy enunciated by Lawrence in 1867-68. Such a cold attitude on the part of the British towards an arrangement which, ere long, they were so anxious to conclude, may appear somewhat puzzling. The real explanation seems to be that the British statesmen thought that they could check Russian menace to India more effectively by direct diplomatic negotiations with Russia than by any alliance with Afghanistan which was sure to alienate that power. It was hoped that Russia might be induced to accept a definite limit to her expansion. It was accordingly proposed that the Oxus should be fixed as the boundary between the spheres of interest of the two countries. To this Russia did not agree, but in 1873, the Russian foreign office categorically stated, and Gorchakov gave "positive assurance", that His Imperial Majesty looked upon Afghanistan as completely outside the sphere within which Russia might be called upon to exercise her influence. It meant security of Afghanistan from Russian attack, but gave a free hand to Russia to extend her dominions up to the border of Afghanistan. Russia took full advantage of the position and in 1873 added to his vast Asiatic dominions the Khanate of Khiva on the other side of the Oxus.

In spite of the guarantee given by Russia to Britain not to encroach upon any territory in Afghanistan, the Amir could hardly be expected to view with equanimity the advance of Russian outpost to
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the very border of his kingdom. So he once more sought for a definite promise of British help in case of Russian attack. A conference was held at Simla in July, 1873. Lord Northbrook, the Governor-General, being deeply impressed by the reasonableness of Amir's request, proposed to assure him "that if he unreservedly accepts and acts on our advice in all external relations, we will help him with money, arms, and troops, if necessary to expel unprovoked invasion. We to be the judge of the necessity."

The Home authorities, however, did not accept Northbrook's proposal. They reiterated the view that as Russia guaranteed the neutrality of Afghanistan, the Amir had no cause of alarm from that quarter. Northbrook was therefore asked to give the Amir merely a general assurance that "we shall maintain our settled policy in Afghanistan." The Amir could hardly be blamed if he interpreted it to mean that the British Government would do nothing to help Afghanistan so long as its own interest was not affected.

The Amir was naturally annoyed at the British for the complacency with which they viewed the advance of Russia towards his kingdom. Two other causes soon increased the bitterness of his feeling. In an evil moment the Government of India had undertaken the thankless task of arbitrating on the boundary disputes in Seistan between Afghanistan and Persia. Their decision "sorely displeased Sher Ali, who felt—as many Anglo-Indians felt with him—that in that transaction his interests had been sacrificed to the cause of Anglo-Persian amity."

The Amir was further offended by the refusal of the Government of India to support the claim of a younger son, Abdullah Jan, whom he had chosen his heir apparent in supersession of his eldest son Yakub, who had rebelled against his authority. The Amir also took exception to the proceedings of the British in Kalat, to be noted later, and the assistance which, he believed, his rebellious son Yakub Khan was receiving from the British.

As a result of all this Sher Ali commenced friendly overtures with Russia. The nature of his correspondence and the motive behind it are alike involved in obscurity. It is impossible to determine whether he meant to establish a definite alliance with Russia, or merely intended to use his overtures as a means to alarm England and thereby force her to concede those demands which she had hitherto refused to grant; or whether he tried to gain security by balancing one great power against another. So far as can be judged from available records, the correspondence was of a complimentary nature such as could be normally expected between two neighbouring States who seek to remain at peace with each other. There was
nothing in such exchange of letters to which the Government of India could reasonably take exception. But the views of that Government towards Afghanistan underwent a radical change by a change of Ministry in Britain.

In the general election of 1874 the Liberal Party under Gladstone suffered a crushing defeat and Disraeli was returned to power with a large majority. While Gladstone's Cabinet adhered to Lawrence's policy in Afghanistan, Disraeli, like Palmerston, was a strong Russophobe, and an ardent advocate of the 'Forward Policy' mentioned above. Lord Salisbury, the Secretary of State for India in the new Cabinet, also shared his views. The result was a violent swing in the Afghan policy of the Government of India.

Nothing illustrates more forcibly the effect of the telegraphic communication between India and England than the increasingly dominant part taken by the home authorities in shaping the policy of the Government of India. In those days when a correspondence between India and England was a question of months, the Government of India had, and was tacitly authorized, to take decision on urgent matters on their own responsibility, without any reference to, far less approval of, the authorities at home. Now the Government of India had to take every important decision after full consultation with, and the approval of, the home authorities.

The Afghan policy of the Government of India is a good illustration of the above point. It is only a truism to say, as Morley said about thirty years later, that England cannot have two foreign policies, one at home and another in India; so, with the facilities afforded by telegraphic communication, the home authorities dictated the foreign policy to the Government of India which was reduced to the position of merely carrying out the orders. The initiative had definitely passed from India to Britain.

The new British Cabinet of 1874 had adopted a new imperial policy in Central Asia as will be explained in Ch. XXXIII. It was also unnerved by still further advance of Russia. The Russian expedition against the Tekke Turcomans and the occupation of Kizil Arvat portended the conquest of Merv and possibly also of Herat. The Cabinet therefore decided upon a total reversal of the policy hitherto adopted towards Afghanistan and its ruler. Salisbury revived the old projects of occupying Quetta as a frontier post, and stationing a British agent permanently in Afghanistan.

Northbrook knew full well that nothing was more distasteful to the Amir than accepting a permanent British envoy. So when Salisbury directed him to take steps to establish a British agent at Herat,
he pointed out that it was not only unnecessary, particularly at the present moment (when the Amir was sorely offended at the British as mentioned above), but it might even lead to very unpleasant consequences. He also referred to Lord Mayo's undertaking that "no European officers should be placed as residents in his cities." But Salisbury insisted that his orders must be carried into effect. Thereupon Northbrook resigned and was succeeded by Lord Lytton (April, 1876), who was an ardent advocate of the 'Forward Policy', and soon became its most extreme exponent. He had learnt the lessons of imperialism only too well at the new school of politics headed by Disraeli as will be described in Ch. XXXIII.

The effect of the new appointment was immediately perceived in the affairs of the Khan of Kalat in Baluchistan. The treaty concluded by Major John Jacob with Nasir Khan, Chief of Kalat, on May 14, 1854, "admitted the ruler of that country" and his successors into the Indian protectorate on terms of subordinate co-operation. The Khan agreed to admit British garrison in his country and not to enter into communication with any other State. In return for an undertaking to provide for free commerce and the protection of British territory from plunder and outrage, a subsidy of Rs. 50,000 a year was guaranteed to him and his successors. On the death of Nasir Khan in 1857 his half-brother Khudadad Khan succeeded him, though not without disputes and dissensions. The Government of India doubled the subsidy in order to strengthen his hands, and the grateful ruler was obliging enough to grant a lease of the Quetta District, and make other important concessions, such as the extension of telegraph lines through his territory to strengthen the frontier of India. He also agreed to a demarcation of the Sindh-Kalat frontier.

The internal disorder in Baluchistan, however, continued. It was mainly due to the rival claims of the Khan and his chiefs. The former claimed to be the supreme ruler of the State, while the latter maintained that he was merely the head of a confederacy of chiefs. Lord Mayo, true to his frontier policy, tried to compose the differences between the two parties in order to establish a stable and permanent central authority. He authorized a high British officer to act as arbitrator between the Khan and his chiefs. During the Viceroyalty of Northbrook there was a prolonged fight between the Khan and the chiefs, and the Government of India intervened in order to open the Bolan Pass for purposes of trade. Major Sandeman was sent on a goodwill mission, and he succeeded in reconciling the Khan to his rebellious chiefs. But as soon as Sandeman withdrew from the scene, quarrels broke out again and he returned with
a military escort of 1,000 men. It was a very good opportunity for securing possession of Quetta, but Northbrook, true to the policy of Lawrence and Mayo, did not take any action in that direction. Sandeman confined his attention to the settlement of disputes and the restoration of peace, and succeeded in his efforts. But before he actually started on his return journey, Lord Lytton took charge of his office as Governor-General. He was against the withdrawal of the mission led by Sandeman, and sent his Private Secretary, Col. G. P. Colley, with instructions to conclude a secret treaty with the Khan of Kalat. With a British force to back up the negotiations, the Khan was, of course, obliging enough to sign the Treaty of Jacobabad (December 8, 1876) which provided “for the permanent occupation” of his territory by a British military force, and the right to station troops at Quetta. Under instructions from the Viceroy, Colley occupied Quetta in 1877. The British influence was also strengthened in Chitral and Gilgit at the same time.

Lord Lytton was definitely instructed to establish a permanent British envoy in Afghanistan, and in order to gain the consent of Sher Ali, he was to be offered the terms which he had asked for, but did not get in 1873. So, within a month of his arrival in India, he communicated to Amir Sher Ali, on 10 May, 1878, his intention to depute Sir Lewis Pelly to Kabul. The letter was discussed for days in the Kabul darbar. In his reply, dated 22 May, the Amir pointed out that the political questions were sufficiently discussed at the Simla conference and there was, therefore, no urgency or necessity of sending a British agent to Kabul. If necessary, he would send a confidential agent to the Viceroy. The Amir then reiterated his old objections against receiving a British envoy which were fully discussed at the Kabul darbar. The Amir wrote to say that he was not in a position to guarantee the security of life to the envoy, a fear—it may be remarked in passing—that was fully justified by events which occurred both before and after it was written. Secondly, the Amir pointed out that if he allowed a British envoy at Kabul he could not very well refuse the same privilege to Russia. Thirdly the Amir was also afraid that the British envoy might make demands upon him which he would be unable to accept, and thereby worsen the situation. In reply to Amir's letter Atta Muhammad, the Muslim vakil of the Government of India at Kabul, was instructed to point out that the first point was not worthy of credence, the third was groundless, and the second had no force as the Russian Government had given a pledge not to interfere in the affairs of Afghanistan. It was ultimately suggested by the Amir that Atta Muhammad should visit the Viceroy, and the proposal was accepted.
Atta Muhammad visited Simla and fully explained the nature of Amir's objections to the proposal of receiving a British envoy. Lord Lytton took the opportunity of formulating his views very definitely on October 10, 1876. He would agree to give the Amir an annual subsidy and military assistance in case of unprovoked aggression of his territory. He also agreed to recognize the heir nominated by the Amir. In return he would expect the Amir (1) to accept a British Resident at Kabul or special missions whenever required; (2) allow British agents to reside at Herat and elsewhere; (3) open Afghanistan freely to all Englishmen, officials or non-officials, providing for their safety as far as practicable; and, lastly, (4) not to hold any communication with a foreign power, specially Russia, without the knowledge of the British.\textsuperscript{14}

In course of his interviews with Atta Muhammad, Lytton adopted a haughty and dictatorial attitude and threatened the Amir with dire consequences if he failed to fall in with his views. He broadly hinted that Russia was willing to enter into an agreement with Britain about the partition of Afghanistan between them. He then told Atta Muhammad with brutal frankness that if the Amir did not immediately grasp the hand of alliance extended to him, England might come to an understanding with Russia "which might have the effect of wiping Afghanistan out of the map altogether."\textsuperscript{14a}

Apparently as a result of Atta Muhammad's representation on his return to the Kabul darbar, a conference was arranged at Peshawar in January, 1877, between the British plenipotentiary, Sir Lewis Pelly, and the Afghan envoy, Nur Muhammad. It dragged on for days together on the preliminary question of keeping a permanent British envoy in Afghanistan. The Government of India regarded this as the basis of all further proposals, and the Afghan Government treated it as altogether unacceptable.

The point was ably debated on both sides when Nur Muhammad, who was ill throughout the negotiations, suddenly died on March 26, 1877. Lytton closed the conference four days later, though he knew that a fresh envoy, nominated by the Amir, was already on his way to join the conference at Peshawar, with authority, it was believed, "to accept eventually all the conditions of the British Government". Lytton's action is difficult to understand and can only be explained on the ground that he did not trust the 'savage' prince, as he used to call the Amir, who, in his opinion, had gone towards Russia beyond all redemption.\textsuperscript{14b} There was, however, no basis for such an assumption, though it seems to have been an innate belief of Lytton from the very beginning. The parley at Simla and
the conference at Peshawar must, in that case, be regarded as pretext for precipitating hostilities.

Sir Lewis Pelly left Peshawar on April 12, 1877, and the British native agent at Kabul was withdrawn. There was thus a complete break in political relations between India and Afghanistan, which lasted for several months.

The break-down of the Peshawar conference was viewed with great indignation, real or pretended, by Lord Lytton. He penned an elaborate minute, in course of which he observed: "The British government now considers itself free to withdraw from the present Amir of Kabul, if further provoked by him, the support of its friendship and protection." What the "friendship and protection" actually amounted to, it is not easy to determine. But the withdrawal of one or both probably meant, in the eyes of Lytton, a free hand given to him to try other means to serve his purpose, such as political disintegration of Afghanistan. For a time he applied himself to this task, and there is no doubt that he was making preparations for an actual war with Afghanistan. For the occupation of Quetta was followed by other measures which could have no other object than facilitating a military expedition against Afghanistan. Roads were constructed or repaired, new bridges were made and old ones expanded, and huge military stores were accumulated at Rawalpindi and Kohat.

Lytton's bellicose attitude was favoured by circumstances in Europe where a war broke out between Russia and Turkey, and it seemed inevitable, almost imminent, that Great Britain would declare war against Russia. It can hardly be wondered at, therefore, that as soon as troubles with England began in Europe, Russia sought to strike England in Asia. So she tried to develop the friendly intercourse with Afghanistan which had already begun, and even made an ostensible display to rouse the fears of England. Kaufmann, the Russian Governor of Turkestan, ordered three columns of troops to advance from Tashkent towards Afghan border and intimated to the Amir in June, 1878, that he was sending a Russian officer, Stolietoff, to inform him of all that was hidden in his mind. The Amir immediately issued orders forbidding the Russian envoy to enter his country. The latter, however, ignored the order, and arrived at Kabul on 22 July.

In the meantime a European Congress had met at Berlin on June 13, and a political settlement was effected among the great powers in Europe by a treaty at Berlin, which was signed on July 13, 1878. As soon as this news reached Kaufmann, he recalled the troops
and sent an intimation of the settlement to Stolietoff, asking him not to commit Russia to any positive engagement with the Amir.

But though, as in the case of the first Afghan War, the *casus belli* was removed, the outbreak of hostilities was not averted. For, in both cases, the British Government wanted to take advantage of the situation in securing a foothold in Afghanistan, and though ostensibly causes of enmity were removed, they were unwilling to let slip the opportunity. Lord Lytton wrote to Lord Cranbrook, the Secretary of State, that the Treaty of Berlin created the most favourable opportunity of coercing the Amir, presumably because it had removed the danger of Russian intervention. The British position, he pointed out, was strengthened by the occupation of Quetta. "From our commanding position at Quetta," wrote he, "we could now at any moment lay our hands swiftly upon Candahar, where our superior weapons and organization would sweep away, like flies, the badly armed, badly drilled and badly disciplined troops he (the Amir) could oppose to us."\(^{19}\)

The origin of the war that ensued thus bears a close resemblance to that of the Crimean War that England waged against Russia twenty-five years earlier. There, too, the withdrawal of the Russian troops from the trans-Danubian territories of Turkey left England (and France) apparently with no *casus belli*, but a ‘defensive’ (?) war was waged all the same against Russia, although there was no attack from that side. For, as has been wittily, but very correctly, observed, "it is easier to let loose the dogs of war than to catch and kennel them again."\(^{20}\) British history in India is replete with instances of this kind.

As soon as Lytton heard the news of Stolietoff's arrival at Kabul he insisted on Sher Ali's acceptance of an English mission, and selected Sir Neville Chamberlain to lead it.\(^{21}\) An Indian emissary, Gholam Hussain, was sent in advance to notify the Amir of the mission. He arrived at Kabul on 17 August. Abdullah Jan, the favourite son of Sher Ali whom he nominated heir apparent, died on that very day, and this naturally caused a delay in the despatch of Amir's reply.

In the meantime Chamberlain, the British envoy-designate, was asked to start for Kabul on September 16, and was definitely instructed to force his way against all resistance short of armed opposition. In conformity with these instructions Waterfield, the Commissioner of Peshawar, wrote to the Governors of Ali Masjid, Dakka and Jalalabad—the three fortified posts on the way to Kabul—that "any refusal of a free passage to the mission or any interruption of its
progress would be regarded as an act of hostility." This direct communication to the Amir's officers, over his head, was justly regarded by the Amir as a slight to his authority. He was naturally angry and, though he did not altogether refuse permission, he plainly told Gholam Hussain that he did not like the manner of sending the mission which was highly objectionable. By way of contrast, he pointed out that the Russian mission had come with his permission. The real position was clarified by his Wazir in a private conference with Gholam Hussain, the very next day. The Wazir represented that his master had been compelled by the exposed state of the country and the estrangement of England to allow the Russian envoy Stolletoff to proceed. But "he chose to cover his weakness by a voluntary and dignified acceptance of the inevitable," meaning that the Russian envoy was not welcome, but tolerated as a necessary evil in order to avoid the public scandal of appearing to yield to his forcible entry. The Wazir went on to say that the Amir would do the same as regards Sir Neville Chamberlain and his companions, if the Government of India would but give him the chance. The Wazir also informed Gholam Hussain that as soon as some servants of the Russian mission, who were lying ill, had recovered, the remaining members of the mission would be suitably dismissed, and that the Amir would then send a confidential messenger to conduct the British mission to Kabul and make himself responsible for its safety and good treatment.

Gholam Hussain sent a gist of this conversation in a letter written on 13 September, in which he added his own opinion that the dismissal of the Russian and the reception of the English mission would take place soon after the Id ceremony. Two days later, on 15 September, he again wrote that Afghan ministers were still hopeful that matters would be satisfactorily arranged and that it was his own belief that there was still a chance left for further discussions if the entrance of the British mission into Afghan territory were delayed.

But this was not to be. Already on 12 September, Cavagnari had commenced negotiations with the headmen of the tribes occupying the route along the Khyber Pass for a free passage through their territories. As all these tribesmen were subjects of the Amir, such secret negotiations with them were a direct violation of good faith and all international etiquettes and conventions. Probably the British mission wanted to follow in the footsteps of the Russian. Unfortunately for them, Faiz Muhammad, the Afghan Commandant of the fort of Ali Masjid, which guarded the Khyber Pass, was a man of a sterner stuff. As soon as the negotiations of Cavagnari came to
his knowledge, he sent peremptory orders to the tribal headmen to retire to their own territories. Cavagnari was in a great dilemma, as the tribal headmen would not dare disobey the orders of Faiz Muhammad unless the British immediately and unequivocally enlisted them on their side, of course, for a good consideration. So he referred the matter to the Viceroy. Lytton, in reply, ordered Cavagnari to inform Faiz Muhammad that the British mission would start immediately and ask him whether he would guarantee a free passage through the Khyber Pass. "If he say 'yes', the headmen might depart. If he say 'no', or send an evasive reply, then settle matters with the tribal headmen and advance". So ran the Viceregal command. Faiz Muhammad met the British Officers and told them in a friendly spirit that like them, 'he was merely a servant whose duty was to carry out orders of his master.' If the Amir sent permission, he himself would safely lead the mission through the Pass and no other escort would be necessary; but so long as such permission was withheld, it would be his duty to oppose the missions' entry into the Pass, and he would fire if the British tried to advance without such permission.

The letter of Gholam Hussain, dated 15 September, reached Chamberlain on the 19th September. Instead of accepting his advice to wait, Chamberlain wired to Lytton objecting to delay. He proposed, however, that instead of the mission as a whole making a forcible entry into the Pass, Cavagnari would proceed to Ali Masjid with only a few men. If they were refused permission to advance further, Cavagnari should consider the refusal as tantamount to having been fired on and return to Peshawar. Lytton having accepted this proposal to make a test case, Cavagnari advanced with a few followers, but they were stopped about a mile from Ali Masjid. Cavagnari and his party immediately returned to Jamrud. As soon as this news reached the Viceroy he dissolved the mission.

It is a debatable point how far, throughout these transactions, Lytton had 'overrun the wishes' of Beaconsfield and Salisbury, as has been claimed by some. Both of them were advocates of the Forward Policy, though as noted in Ch. XXXIII, Salisbury was more moderate than Beaconsfield. In his letter dated 4 October, 1877, Salisbury asked Lytton not to put any hostile pressure on the Amir. Beaconsfield, however, backed up Lytton. He wrote to the Foreign Secretary on April 1, 1877: "We must completely and unflinchingly support Lytton; we chose him for this very kind of business." Further, Beaconsfield said in his annual speech in the Guildhall "that though the Government were by no means apprehensive of an invasion of India from its north-western frontier", yet that frontier was
a "haphazard and not a scientific one" and "stood in need of rectification."24 Further, as noted in Ch. XXXIII, there are good grounds to believe that Lytton derived his inspiration from the Prime Minister, who fully shared his ambitious designs. On the other hand, according to Beaconsfield's own assertion, Lytton had exceeded his instructions. On September 26, Disraeli wrote to Cranbrook: "He (Lord Lytton) was told to wait until we had received the answer from Russia to our remonstrance. I was very strong on this, having good reasons for my opinion. He disobeyed us. I was assured by Lord Salisbury that, under no circumstances, was the Khyber to be attempted. Nothing would have induced me to consent to such a step."24a There is no doubt that Lytton adopted a high-handed and dictatorial attitude. He "had come to regard the Amir with an animosity almost personal," and "preferred to coerce him."25 As regards the frontier, Lytton recommended in his despatches to the home authorities "that, though for political reasons the Indian Government should exercise influence up to the Oxus, it should regard the Hindu Kush as the real boundary, and strengthen itself by the occupation of various points at the debouches of the passes."26 In his minute to his Council, dated 4 September, Lytton put forth as his dream and ideal the British dominance over the whole of Central Asia.27

Both Beaconsfield, the Prime Minister, and Salisbury, the Foreign Secretary, tried to secure the goodwill of Russia by peaceful means and avoid, or at least postpone for a year, any flare-up in Afghanistan. On receipt of Lytton's telegram dated June 7, 1878, about the despatch of a Russian envoy to Kabul, followed by other telegrams, the home authorities permitted him to demand of the Amir the reception of a British mission, but they "desired that the mission should proceed not by the Khyber Pass where it was expected and likely to be stopped, but by way of the Bolan and Kandahar where opposition would have been more difficult and unlikely." But Lytton, to whom the final choice of the route seems to have been left, chose the more provocative one,28 and deliberately precipitated the crisis. Anyone who reads without prejudice the narrative of events given above, ending with the retreat of Cavagnari from Ali Masjid to Peshawar, cannot but regard Lytton's whole action as a deliberate provocation to war. This was also the general view in England shared even by a prominent section of the British Cabinet. When the Ali Masjid incident was telegraphically communicated by Lytton, "Salisbury and the Lord Chancellor severely attacked Lytton's conduct and urged the expediency of curbing his future proceedings. Cranbrook, the Secretary of State for India, strongly defended the Governor-General."29
Like the Cabinet, the public opinion in England was also divided on the question. "The affair of Ali Masjid was at first reported as an 'insolent rebuff,' though subsequent explanations showed that the behaviour of the Afghan officer had been correct. Military men declared that acquiescence in the incident would be fatal to British prestige, and that view obtained with the London Press. Lord Lawrence upheld the cause of peace." "Have not the Afghans a right," he wrote, "to resist our forcing a mission on them, bearing in mind to what such missions often lead, and what Burnes's mission in 1837 did actually bring upon them?" 30

The future course of action was hotly debated in the British Cabinet. The Prime Minister proposed, by way of compromise, the occupation of the Kurram Valley, not as an act of war, but as "a material guarantee for the granting of the English demands," but "Cranbrook refused to have anything to do with so half-hearted a measure." The Cabinet's hands were forced by the 'Jingo' politicians, both in India and England, "who were calling in chorus for the immediate chastisement of a half-savage ruler who had proved truculent as well as treacherous." 31 The Cabinet did not sanction an immediate declaration of war, but authorized the Viceroy to write to the Amir, demanding "an apology and an undertaking to receive a permanent British Mission within his territory, failing which his intentions were to be regarded as hostile and he was to be treated as a declared enemy of Great Britain." The letter was delivered to the Afghan Commander at Ali Masjid on November 2, and no reply having been received within the time limit fixed, November 20, three British forces were set in motion to invade Afghanistan. 31a

Though the war which thus broke out was not very popular in England, and ominous forebodings were uttered by veteran statesmen like Gladstone, both the Houses of Parliament not only approved of the war, but also gave their acquiescence in the ungracious step of throwing the expenses of the operations on the revenues of India. 32

Before describing the details of the campaign it is necessary to discuss, at some length, the justification offered by some British historians to this aggressive campaign. The basis of this justification is the assumption that Sher Ali displayed manifest hostility by his acceptance of Russian alliance, and it was due to Russian instigation that he refused to accept the British mission, fully relying on Russian help against the English. 33 It is to be remembered, however, that no authentic account is available of the proposals made by Russia to the Amir and his response thereto, and there is no evidence
to show that Sher Ali sought alliance with Russia or entered into any positive engagement with her. It has also been urged that Sher Ali had actually concluded a "treaty of close alliance with Russia which would have given the Russians virtual control over the internal rule and external affairs of Afghanistan." The only evidence in support of it is a statement made after the war by two ministers, who wrote from memory the terms of the treaty which were corroborated by Yakub. If we remember that Yakub was placed on the throne of Kabul after Sher Ali had fled to Russia, that even Cavagnari described him as fickle of purpose, ignorant of business, and weak of mind, and also that his character and activities were such that he was thought unworthy of the throne and had later to be removed to India by the British themselves, it is difficult to put any faith in him or his ministers who could not produce any documentary evidence but merely quoted from memory the terms of a treaty which hardly fit in with the spirit of independence throughout displayed by Sher Ali. Besides, from its very nature, the treaty must have been of such a confidential nature that Sher Ali would be hardly likely to communicate it to his rebellious son and his adherents. It may be added that other assertions about Russian influence on the Amir, specially those referred to above, are also mostly based on Yakub's information. It is hardly necessary to point out that as all this information was supplied by Yakub long after the commencement of the Afghan War, it cannot be cited as a justification for that campaign, even if it were true. But against all this story of Sher Ali's intrigues with Russia, based upon very doubtful source of information, one may quote the testimony of Prince Lebanooff, the Russian ambassador in London, who told Granville in 1881 that all correspondence in the archives of Russian government prove that "Sher Ali was neither Russian nor English, but an Afghan, desirous of preserving the independence of his country." Every unprejudiced student of history is bound to admit the truth of this view, so far at least as it is possible to form a judgment from the records available to us. Even Disraeli admitted that the Russian mission to Kabul was not a very serious matter. There is hardly any doubt that the war was forced upon Afghanistan by Lord Lytton in pursuance of his grandiose policy of extending British dominions to Central Asia, referred to above. What the Amir did or failed to do is of little consequence, as this cannot but be treated merely as excuses which have never been wanting even for the most wantonly aggressive campaign when once it was decided upon.

Reference may be made in this connection to an observation made by Lord Clarendon in 1869, in connection with the progress
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of Russia in Central Asia. "Plausible reasons", said he, "were sel-
dom wanted for the acquisition of territory which the home govern-
ment never thought it expedient to reject, and could not therefore
condemn the motives or the means by which it had been acquired."37
How far this is applicable to Russia, it is beyond the scope of the
present work to inquire. But the general principle, so clearly laid
down, is strikingly illustrated by the activities of the Government
of India in Burma, Sindh and Afghanistan described in this volume.

As noted above, on 20 November, 1878, the very day on which
the ultimatum to Sher Ali expired, three British forces advanced,
one destined for Kandahar and the other two to march on Kabul,
through the Khyber and Kurram Passes. There was hardly any
opposition; Kandahar was occupied without any resistance and Ali
Masjid and Jalalabad were occupied (December 20) by the Khyber
force without much difficulty. The Kurram column under Roberts
had some hard fighting before it dislodged the Afghans from their
strong position on the Peiwar Kotal. The enemy deserted the Shut-
targardan Pass without any fight, leaving the road to Kabul open to
the British force. It seems that while the Government of India
made all preparations for the war, the Amir was not at all ready for
the contingency. On 22 December, he publicly announced his de-
parture for Russia, and left his country, but suddenly died at Mazari-
Sharif on 21 February, 1879. A treaty was concluded at Gandam-
mak on 26 May, 1879, with Yakub, the son of Sher Ali, whom the
British recognized as the new Amir. By this treaty Yakub agreed to
hand over to the English the control over the Khyber and Mishni
passes as well as the actual administration of the districts of Kurram,
Pishin and Sibi,38 regulate his foreign relations in accordance with
the advice of the Governor-General, and to accept a permanent Bri-
tish envoy at Kabul. In return the British promised to support the
Amir against foreign aggression and grant him an annual subsidy
of six lakhs of Rupees.

Cavagnari, who had conducted the negotiation, was nominated
Resident at Kabul. He arrived at that city on 24 July, 1879, with
about 200 men, including servants and followers, and fixed his resi-
dence at Bala Hissar.33 Things passed quietly for some days, but
troubles began with the arrival of a body of troops from Herat. A
swaggering and violently anti-British attitude marked their activi-
ties from the very beginning. At last on 3 September, they attack-
ed the Residency which was defended by only four British office-
and a handful of native soldiers. The Amir did not despatch any
troops to protect the Residency but only sent Daud Khan, the Com-
mander-in-Chief, to remonstrate with the rebel sidiery. Daud
was bayoneted, though the injury, either by design or by chance, was very slight. Cavagnari made a brave resistance, but was killed with all his followers, and his head was paraded through the streets.

The retribution was swift. Kandahar was re-occupied, the Shutargardan Pass was seized, and Roberts crossed over it into Kushi, when the Amir arrived at the British camp as a fugitive. Roberts met with little opposition until he reached within ten miles of Kabul where the Afghans were routed, after a sharp engagement, at Charasia. They evacuated Bala Hissar and the strongly fortified cantonments at Sherpur in its neighbourhood. Roberts occupied Kabul on 11 October, and after issuing a formal proclamation took provisional possession of Afghanistan. The ring-leaders of the late insurrection, eighty-seven in number, were executed, and Yakub abdicated the throne. There was, however, a general rising of the Afghans, chiefly at the instigation of the Mulas. They found a leader in Muhammad Jan and repulsed the British troops at Chardeh valley, forcing them to take refuge within Sherpur cantonments. Muhammad Jan proclaimed Musa Jan, the son of Yakub, Amir of Afghanistan. It was a critical moment for the British forces, for they were forced to withdraw from the Shutargardan Pass, thus cutting off communication with India, and Kandahar was threatened by Ayub Khan, the brother of Yakub, who was in possession of Herat. The siege of Sherpur continued from December 11 to 23, but reinforcement having arrived from Jagdulak, Roberts took the offensive and re-occupied Kabul. Although a British force advancing from Kandahar captured Ghazni on 21 April, 1880, the city of Kandahar itself was in great danger. Ayub Khan left Herat at the end of June, 1880, for Kandahar, and General Burrows moved out to meet him. He joined Sher Ali, the newly appointed Governor of Kandahar, on July 11 at Girishk. But four days later Sher Ali’s troops mutinied and Burrows had to fall back. On 27 July he marched to Maiwand to intercept Ayub’s army, but suffered a crushing defeat, leaving nearly a thousand dead on the field. The remnants of the British force retreated to Kandahar amid great difficulties, but were forced to abandon the cantonments and shut themselves up in the fortress of Kandahar which was besieged by Ayub Khan.

As soon as the news of this terrible disaster reached Kabul, Roberts marched with 10,000 soldiers to relieve Kandahar. He left Sherpur cantonments, near Kabul, on 8 August, and reached Robat in the vicinity of Kandahar on the 28th, covering a distance of 303 miles in 20 days. He reached Kandahar on 31st August, 1880, and next day defeated Ayub Khan, forcing him to raise the siege and
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retire. There was no further armed opposition to the British in Afghanistan after this.

Two aspects of this campaign deserve a passing notice. The first is the "barbarities" committed by the British troops. The Afghans were treated as rebels and, in spite of General Roberts's denial, the policy of "indiscriminate hanging and burning of villages," was long continued. "A military Commission was set up in Kabul, which began operations in the spirit of the Government's order that 'punishment should be swift, stern, and impressive'. This was taken to justify the hasty execution of anyone whom an informer chose to accuse of complicity in the events of September 3, or of taking any part in the fighting at Charasia. An account left by Colonel MacGregor, a member of the Commission, shows that men were hanged on the most trivial evidence, sometimes of their avowed enemies. Troops were sent into the neighbourhood to collect prisoners, and also to forage. They burnt any village where there was the least show of opposition".40a

The second was the complete breakdown of the military accounts department. "The original estimate for the war had been under six millions. A further actual outlay of five millions had been incurred without the knowledge of the financial department, and another seven millions were required for the second campaign".40b The Indian exchequer had, of course, to foot the bill.

The settlement of Afghanistan now engaged the attention of the Government of India. As noted above, Yakub had abdicated the throne. According to the British authorities it was a voluntary act on his part, but Yakub himself declared that he was forced to abdicate by ungenerous and cruel pressure of the British, and wanted to get back the throne.41 But whatever may be the truth, he was no longer regarded as eligible to the throne of Kabul. A committee of inquiry, set up shortly after the occupation of Kabul by Roberts, absolved him of any direct responsibility for the insurrection of the Herat troops, resulting in the murder of Cavagnari and his followers; but according to its finding he was "culpably indifferent to the fate of the envoy and his companions, and totally disregarded the solemn obligations he had undertaken to protect the British embassy".42 Yakub was removed to India on December 1, followed, a week later, by all the important sardars (chiefs) save one, who had been arrested on October 12. Some have regarded this as the cause of the general rising of the Afghans, mentioned above.43 But whatever that may be, there was a demand on the part of the Afghans for the restoration of Yakub or nomination of his son as Amir. Lytton
definitely set his face against one who was even indirectly responsible for the murder of Cavagnari, and threatened to resign if Yakub were restored.44

Lytton’s first idea immediately after the occupation of Kabul by Roberts was to disintegrate Afghanistan. Portions of it had already come into the possession of the British by the Treaty of Gandammak with Yakub Khan. It was now proposed to create Kandahar into a separate principality, hand over Herat and Seistan to Persia, while Kabul, reduced in importance, and controlled by a garrison at some point beyond the Shutarg-rdan Pass, was to be handed over to a dependable Afghan sardar. The Cabinet having concurred in this view, Wali Sher Ali Khan of the Sadozai clan was recognized as the ruler of Kandahar and negotiations were begun with Persia about Herat.45

There was some difficulty in finding out a suitable ruler for Afghanistan. But a very unexpected candidate appeared in the person of Abdur Rahman, a nephew of Sher Ali and grandson of Dost Muhammad, who had left his country in 1868 after Sher Ali’s accession to power, and had been living since mainly at Samarkand, under the protection of Russia. Early in 1880, with the permission of Russian authorities, he set out with a small party to fish in the troubled waters of Afghanistan.

This adventurer “told the tribesmen on his arrival at the frontier, that he would take them all with him to fight against the British”.46 At the same time he entered into negotiations with Lepel Griffin, the English Political Agent at Kabul, for the throne of Afghanistan, and gave evidence of his friendship for the English by despatching letters to all Afghan chiefs to help Roberts to retrieve the disaster of Maiwand, thus facilitating his march from Kabul to Kandahar.47 He gave evidence of the strength of his character by objecting, from the very start of his negotiations with Griffin, to the separation of Kandahar from Kabul.48

Equally shrouded in mystery is the attitude of Lord Lytton to Abdur Rahman. There were two points against the latter which must have seriously weighed with the Viceroy. He was too intimately associated with Russia, and he had too strong a personality to accept the position of an obedient vassal to the Viceroy of India. It is therefore difficult to believe, as has been represented by some,49 that Lytton looked kindly on his candidature for the throne as soon as he heard of his arrival. The probability rather is that Lytton had no confidence in Abdur Rahman, as is definitely asserted by some authorities.50
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There is, however, no doubt that negotiations were opened with Abdur Rahman. But before any final decision could be taken, Lytton had to quit the scene of his activities. As a result of the general election in Britain, Disraeli's ministry was replaced by that of Gladstone, and Ripon, who was appointed the Governor-General of India, took charge on June 8, 1880.

The new Ministry in Britain was at first disposed to reverse entirely the Afghan policy of its predecessor, and, relinquishing all the territories that had been gained, to fall back upon the old frontier. In accordance with this policy the evacuation of Sibi and Pishin was promised in the Queen's speech in the opening session of 1881. But as had often happened in the past, the new Viceroy, who had come out to India with a determination to carry out the new policy, changed his views as soon as he was amid new environment.

So, ultimately a compromise was effected. The scheme of disintegrating Afghanistan was abandoned, but Pishin and Sibi were retained by the British. Terms were offered to Abd-ur-rahman by which he would undertake not to hold any relations with any foreign powers save with the approval of the Government of India; which on its part assured the Amir that "if any foreign power should attempt to interfere in Afghanistan, and if such interference should lead to unprovoked aggression on the dominions of your Highness, in that event the British Government would be prepared to aid you to such extent and in such manner as may appear to the British Government necessary in repelling it".51

Abdur Rahman accepted these terms in a conference at Zimma (31 July-1 August, 1880). Three years later the Viceroy, Lord Ripon, renewed the assurance of protecting the Amir against unprovoked aggression and also bestowed on him an annual subsidy of twelve lakhs of Rupees.

1. In writing the names Herāt, Kandāhār, Kābul, Afghān, and Afghānistān, dia-critical marks have not been used to indicate long a (ā).
1a. The credit for this treaty is wrongly given by some to Lawrence (Repington, Policy and Arms, p. 228), and by others to Edwardes. The first supposition is definitely wrong as Lawrence was opposed to the idea and took no part in the treaty save signing it. Nor is the entire credit for initiating the policy due to Edwardes as is supposed by many (CHI, VI. 404). The initiative and instructions of Dalhousie in the matter should not be ignored (Warner, II. 82 ff).
2. Tytler, 130; Sketches, I, 37.
3. Tytler, 128.
4. CHI, VI. 407.
5. For fuller details cf. Ch. XXXIII.
6. This may be deduced from the instructions to the Russian ambassador in London, in 1884 (quoted in CHI, VI. 408).
7. For an exposition of the 'Forward Policy', cf. Tytler, 130 ff.; Wyllie, Chs. I-III;
Eastwick. It has been further discussed in Chapter XXXIII, which may be regarded as supplementary to this Chapter.

7a. CHBFP. III. 74-5.
7b. PHE. XII. 304.
8. Telegram to the Secretary of State for India, dated 24 July, 1873 (Parl. Papers, 1878-79, LVI, 482).
9. Telegram to Northbrook dated 26 July, 1873 (ibid). According to CHBFP (III. 77), Northbrook was authorized to give such an assurance. But this is evidently a mistake. Cf. CHI, VI, 410-11, which is a later publication, and quotes the telegrams referred to in fn. 8 and 9.

9a. CHBFP. III. 76.
11. PHE. XII. 305.
11a. Warner. II. 102.
14b. Ibid, 35.
15. PHE. XII. 306. A British historian has justly observed: "Yet Sher Ali's reluctance to receive a British Mission was genuine, and when viewed by the light of subsequent events it must be pronounced reasonable. He felt that its presence would diminish his authority, while, in the event of an outbreak, he would be unable to protect it" (ibid).

16. Hannah, I. 118.
18. This point was emphasized in the instructions referred to in fn. 6 above.
19. CHI, VI. 417.
19a. Ghose, op. cit., 42.
21. The account that follows is based on Hannah, Vol. I, pp. 200-226. The accounts given in CHI, VI(417-8), and CHBFP, III (pp. 85-8), are very brief and inaccurate.

22. CHI, VI. 418, confines this observation to the despatch of the mission. cf. PHE. XII. 306.
24a. G. E. Buckle, Life of Disraeli, VI. 382. Disraeli even remarked that by disobeying the orders of the Government Lytton had mutinied (ibid).
25. PHE. XII. 306.
26. Ibid, 307. For a fuller exposition of this policy cf. Ch. XXXIII.
28. CHI, VI. 418.
29. Ibid, 418-9. "For the moment the new policy lent itself to the accusation that the Indian Government was picking a quarrel with the Amir in order to rob him of his territory" (PHE, XII. 307). For the discussion in the Cabinet, cf. Ghose, op. cit., 42.
31. CHBFP. III. 86; CHI. VI. 418-19.
31a. CHBFP. III. 87. Even before the ultimatum expired the British Prime Minister declared in his Guildhall speech that the decision for war had been taken (Buckle, Life of Disraeli, VI. 390).
32. PHE. XII. 307. Trotter has very rightly observed: "India was saddled with the whole cost of an enterprise decreed by an English Government in furtherance of England's fancied interests alone". (History of India under Queen Victoria. I. 89).
33. "Stolitoff urged the Amir to delay matters and if necessary prevent the English mission from reaching Kabul" (CHI, VI. 417). The only authority cited for this statement is Robert's report based on Yakub's information. The value of this evidence will be discussed later.

33a. Hannah, I. 190-91.
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34. Tytler, 148; Balfour, 370; PHE, XII. (306) refers to such a treaty being concluded by Sher Ali on March 29, 1879, but as Sher Ali died before this date, 1879 is probably a printing mistake for 1878.

35. Balfour, 370.
35a. Ibid, 322. Lytton also referred to Yakub as 'incompetent ruler' and 'slippery customer'. Ghose, op. cit., 47.
36. Quoted in Hannah, I. 191.
37. Quoted in Tytler, 161.
38. For the terms of the treaty cf. Hannah, II. 349.

"The Scientific frontier" was instituted by the arrangement that the Kurum, Pishin and Shibi valleys would be assigned to the Indian Government though the surplus revenues were to go to the Amir, together with complete authority in the Khaibar and Mishni Passes, and over the independent tribesmen who occupied them. For the negotiations leading to the treaty, cf. Ghose, op. cit., 52-4. Lord Lytton was not favourably inclined to Yakub Khan, but was persuaded to accept him by Sindhia who argued that unless this was done public opinion in India would be greatly shocked (ibid, 52).

40. According to Hensman (pp. 50-51). The date is given as 10th October, in PHE, XII. 310, and 7th October in CHI. VI. 420.
40a. THG, 522-3; Life of Sir MacGregor, II. 140; Hensman, 134.
40b. THG, 522-3.
42. Quoted in PHE, XII. 309. For a critical account of this episode, cf. Ghose, op. cit., 71-8.
43. "The departure of the Amir and his ministers was followed by a general rising of the tribes round Kabul" (Balfour, 388).
44. Balfour, 396-7.
45. Tytler, 149; CHI. VI. 420; PHE, XII. 310-11.
46. The Life of Abdur Rahman, II. 173; quoted in PHE, XII. 313.
47. CHI. VI. 121-22. THG quotes evidence of Abdur Rahman's successful intervention (p. 524 f.n. 2.).
48. PHE, XII. 313.
49. CHI. VI. 421.
50. PHE, XII. 312.