CHAPTER I

THE ARGUMENT

India has added a thrilling chapter to the Englishman's national romance—a chapter which more, perhaps, than any other in our annals, abounds in interest and pathos—in dark, tragic scenes, strange episodes—the success of splendid daring—the supremacy of the constant mind over adverse fate—the determined mood which gains reinforcement from hope and consolation from despair. It has been the arena in which the qualities which Englishmen most prize in themselves and their fellow-countrymen have been exhibited on a grand scale—the iron will—the unwavering purpose—the practical aptitude for the management of human affairs—long-enduring fortitude—devotion to duty—the generous contagion of self-sacrifice, when courage glows into heroism and the commonplace becomes sublime.

With no original design which looked beyond a mercantile profit, the warding off of imminent danger, or the coercion of a troublesome rival, the English found themselves, after a century of unexampled
vicissitudes,—the import of which they were unable, at the time, to comprehend,—the paramount power among the unstable governments and shattered nationalities of Hindustán.

Destiny had driven them—much against their will—to discard their counting-houses and ledgers for an Imperial task. Dupleix's bold conception of employing one set of natives to subjugate another had been employed to good effect. Again and again Indian troops, drilled and led by Englishmen, had triumphed over an Indian foe. One great State after another had succumbed, and—effete, prostrate, moribund—had been converted into component parts of a living organisation. The robber communities—'jackals tearing at the carcase of the Mughal Empire'—had been tamed into order or scared to flight. There had been fierce struggles in which Maráthás or Sikhs had tested the prowess of the Western conquerors to the utmost—dark hours in which it had seemed doubtful whether those Western conquerors were destined to hold their own. But their ascendancy was now complete. Dalhousie's masterful will and firm hand had crushed the last serious effort of the fiercest of the races who had ventured to contest it. The Sikhs, after a crushing defeat at Gujarát, had bent in submission to the fated conqueror, and their Afghán allies had fled cowering through the Kháibar Pass. From the Himálaya to Cape Comorin no power questioned the supremacy of the English Ráj.

On such a theatre it was inevitable that the idiosyn-
crasies of individual character should stamp themselves on particular epochs, and give a special colour to the area of their influence. The progress of the English Empire was, in one sense, continuous; for it was the result of great causes which transcended alike human insight and human will. But its rate varied with the convictions and temperament of the ruler, who, for the time being, embodied the policy of England in the East.

One powerful character after another swayed the growth of Empire this way or that, gave it a momentary check or urged it with new-born impetus on its onward course. One school of rulers emphasised a policy of forbearance, cautious abstention, sympathy with the venerable fatuity of Eastern beliefs and the picturesque ineptitude of Eastern institutions. Another favoured a forward policy, and made no secret of the creed that the regeneration of India was to be found in unflattering application of Western methods and the prompt and vigorous infusion of Western ideas.

At the close of the eighteenth century the Marquess of Wellesley exhibited the programme of conquest and supremacy in its most imposing light, and with bold hand traced the lineaments of a British Ráj which should be paramount in India. Hastings gave daring realisation to Wellesley's dreams, crushed the Pindáris, tamed the great Maráthá Confederacy, and proclaimed England as an Eastern Power by sending an Indian army to co-operate in Egypt against an European foe.
In Lord Dalhousie the policy of progress found its most impressive exponent. His powerful intellect saw a new India, fashioned to the last model of modern improvement. He carved it and its institutions unflinchingly to the desired pattern. He pulled down, he built up, he changed the squares of obsolete tradition for the rounds of civilised enlightenment. Nothing was proof against the indefatigable energy of this determined reformer. To trample down open hostility with the red heel of war—to crush factious opposition—to carry beneficent civilisation to scenes of anarchy, oppression, and suffering—to proclaim order, and order’s long train of blessings to communities shattered by war, devastated by rapine or convulsed by internecine strife—to give full swing to trade, locomotion, and education, and set human intelligence free for triumphs redounding in advantages to humanity—to develop new industries, discover new resources,—to lop away with firm, unsparing hand such parts of the body politic as were incompatible with a régime of improvement, or refused to lend themselves to its advance—such was Lord Dalhousie’s rôle, and he played it in a fashion which filled onlookers with the awe due to superhuman efficiency, and his sympathising and applauding countrymen with delight.

Eastward and westward the tide of conquest flowed. Year by year the red line which marked the confines of British rule embraced a wider area and newly-acquired subjects. The conquests of the sword were supplemented by a less hazardous but not less
effectual method of acquisition—the rule definitely enunciated and vigorously enforced, that, on failure of natural heirs, the sovereignty of subordinate States should not descend to an adopted son, but lapse to the paramount authority. By virtue of this policy, various important Principalities passed from traditional and hereditary rulers to become mere items in an ever-increasing Imperial total. The closing hour of Dalhousie's rule had been marked by an annexation which, alike from the prestige of the Sovereign dispossessed, the richness of the annexed territory, and the historical interest attaching to it, had placed the policy of annexation in a striking light, and had obliged every Native Prince to recognise the fact that it was a doom that, sooner or later, was likely to overtake the most dignified and loyal of Native States. Such a conviction could scarcely fail to produce a general sense of uneasiness, and to weigh with the leaders of Indian society, when confronted with the embarrassing alternative of standing by the Government or of aiding the cause of rebellion.

In the zest of triumphant progress, Dalhousie ignored—perhaps he overlooked—certain important considerations—one—that, however unquestionable may be the abstract advantages of a reform, change in itself is a painful process to the majority of mankind, and no feeling more distasteful than that of a world that is tumbling about one's ears:—another—that to many individuals and even classes good government, in the English sense of the word, is a very doubtful blessing—
is not, on the whole, a desideratum, and is likely, when opportunity offers, to be resisted: a third—that "so many overthrown estates, so many votes for troubles"; a fourth,—that the beneficent despot, who assumes the prerogative of deity in exalting the meek and sending the rich empty away, brings upon himself the inconvenient consequence of powerful enemies, and feeble, half-hearted and unsympathising friends, and may not improbably be called to defend his reforms against the combined assault of both classes. He will learn the full hatred of men to those who would fain do them good against their will, in ways they do not understand and by changes in which they disbelieve.

Such a ruler, it is safe to predict, will have some rough times to encounter. He will, not improbably, find his work of benevolent despotism arrested by unexpected outbreaks, and will be obliged to pause in the congenial task of improvement to resist the frantic efforts of communities actuated by unforeseen and incalculable impulses, or of individuals who see in a general convulsion of society the only chance of personal rehabilitation. He is sailing in unexplored seas, of whose shoals and rocks, currents and tides, treacherous calms and sudden tempests the charts of statesmanship can give no hint. He may be a courageous, skilful and fortunate navigator; he may sail boldly and well: but the probability of disaster is never far removed, and the disaster may leave the fair vessel of his hopes little better than a wreck.

One of these tremendous episodes broke, while yet
he was new to the task of Empire, upon Lord Dalhousie's successor. There are those who regard Lord Canning as having merely reaped in danger and gloom the harvest which Dalhousie had sown in hope, confidence and joy, and as having confronted the dire reaction which awaits premature projects of reform.

Other, and perhaps more trustworthy, guides hold that such a view is scarcely justified by the facts of the case. Those who saw most of the Mutiny, who studied it with profoundest attention and with the best opportunities for its right understanding, considered that it took its rise in a military panic, was a military outbreak, and was in no material respect dependent on popular support or popular grievances.

Whatever its origin, an unexampled and appalling crisis had to be met. Lord Canning met it in a manner of which every Englishman may be proud—with firmness, confidence, magnanimity, with calm inflexible justice. On a stage, crowded with heroic personages, he stood—an impressive central figure—too unmoved and too undemonstrative, too completely master of himself to suit the excited tempers and unbalanced judgments of an epoch rife with unprecedented catastrophe; but rising above the onset of ephemeral hostility with a dignity, which, as the scene recedes and we are able more justly to appreciate its proportions, places him high on the list of those great officers of State, whose services to their country entitle them to the esteem and gratitude of every loyal Englishman.
The crisis passed. As the din of battle died away it became apparent that a great work of pacification and reconstruction had to be accomplished. The fight was over, but, none the less, peace, in the sense of the civic good-will, which makes society possible—the friendly order that holds communities together—had to be restored. European and native stood glaring at each other—their swords still stained with kinsman’s blood. In some parts of the Empire the entire fabric of British administration had temporarily disappeared. In many, it had been grievously dislocated. The task of governing an alien race—always difficult—had become harder than ever. There were dreadful, maddening recollections which had to be obscured; fierce animosities to be assuaged, a fierce spirit of revenge to be exorcised. The English were in no placable mood. They had been stirred by an agony which had gone to their very heart’s core. They had suffered long and acutely, again and again, with little to support them but a stern purpose of vengeance or the desperate resolve to sell their lives as dearly as possible. They had fought against odds, which seemed to render destruction inevitable. There had been the supreme efforts of daring, of endurance—long, staggering marches under the cruel Indian sun—desperate encounters—the hair-breadth escapes of some, the tragic end of others, the suffering of all. It was difficult for men, with such experiences fresh in their minds, to pass to the tame legality of peaceful existence and to regard their recent antagonists with
the amity due to a fellow-citizen. Order was indeed restored, but the body politic still quivered with its recent convulsion. Every part of the great administrative machine required change, renovation, adaptation to new times, new wants. The Army, the Courts, the Finances, the very structure of the government had to be recast. The time had arrived for discarding some dignified simulacra, whose life and use had long departed—some fictions which had long ceased to serve a useful end. It was no easy task which confronted Lord Canning, and he had to perform it, throughout, amid a tempest of animadversion. From every quarter came the fierce blasts of disapproval, dissatisfaction, dislike. The tendency to hasty criticism of remote matters—about which it is easy for those who know little to feel strongly—becomes uncontrollable, when national sentiment is profoundly stirred. It was uncontrollable in Lord Canning's time, in high quarters and low. In Calcutta public opinion ran high. In England, in Parliament and in society, its tone was menacing. Lord Ellenborough's ungovernable mood found vent in an onslaught so unmeasured, unreasonable, unjust, that its very extravagance operated to defeat its end: but such onslaughts try the nerve of the strongest. Lord Canning stood unmoved and immovable—just, tenacious of purpose, conscious of its rectitude—not to be driven from it by the vituperation of a minister or the murmurs of an irritated community. It is possible that a man of a more effusive, less self-contained
temperament might have been more fortunate in carrying the sympathies of his countrymen fully with him, and concentrating upon himself the enthusiastic loyalty which Englishmen layish on a ruler in whom they feel confidence. But it is by no means certain that such a statesman would have met, as completely as did Lord Canning, the general requirements of the situation. He had to lay down the lines for the future, not only of the English sojourners in India, but for two hundred millions of native inhabitants; and his wisdom during the struggle and after it,—his calm assurance in the ultimate triumph of his country, his impartial mood, his unwavering resolution to be just, his hatred of violence and excess secured the result that the disaster left behind it so little that an Englishman need regret, or a native resent—that the breach between the conflicting nationalities, though deep and serious, was not irremediable—that extravagance and ferocity in the stern work of retribution were the exception and not the rule—that, as the flood of anarchy subsided, it left a soil rich with the materials of orderly progress and friendly co-operation, and that the generation, which followed the Mutiny, has witnessed European and native labouring, hand in hand, at the task of national development.

How, in the face of much to discourage, disturb and disappoint, this work was accomplished, it is the object of the following pages to narrate.

It is their object, too, to throw light on the character of the task which the English nation has
undertaken in the government of India, its problems, its difficulties, its frightful risks. They will show the liability of great aggregates of ignorant folk to groundless panic, the recklessness which such panics induce, their unexpected and inexplicable effect on the conduct of individuals or communities which suddenly become proof alike against the demonstrations of logic, the teaching of experience, even the strong sway of lifelong usage. They will show how small is the insight into men's temper and conduct which the best skill and experience can achieve in the case of races whose hereditary temperaments and beliefs differ essentially from our own, and who unconsciously shroud their real feelings in impenetrable reserve. Now that a generation has passed away and the subsiding dust of contemporary controversy has given place to a clearer atmosphere, some principles of statesmanship stand out distinctly as established by the events of the Mutiny. It was a tremendous lesson. It strained our resources at home; it weakened our position in Europe; it imperilled the very fabric of our Indian rule. It was written in blood, in tears, in a vast aggregate of human sorrow and suffering. Its stern truths were branded, as it were, with a hot iron upon the national conscience. It is well that the English nation—which, amid the excitements of popular government, is apt to be indifferent to remote dangers, and the causes which produce them—should lay those truths to heart.

The history of the government of dependencies, a
cynic has observed, is mostly the history of failures. It is easy in such a case to fail. The problems involved in the task of ruling remote and alien populations are complicated, abstruse, subtle, and likely to betray those who solve them carelessly into deplorable mistakes. Such mistakes lie thick in the annals of the Mutiny. Such a mistake, for instance, it was for the rulers of a country such as England—with vast interests to protect in every quarter of the globe, and with two wars on hand—to have so far yielded to the Parliamentary pressure for economy as to cut down its army to a level below the ordinary peace estimates, so that the effort necessary to preserve India left England practically defenceless. Such a mistake, again, was it for the Rulers of India to allow the proportion of English to native troops to sink far below the level which every good authority pronounced to be compatible with safety, and to pigeon-hole in some comfortable bureau alike Lord Dalhousie’s demonstrations of danger and his projects for removing it. As it was, the utter defencelessness of the English position in many parts of India—the light-heartedness with which large arsenals, commanding forts, dangerous centres of native disaffection, important European communities, wide stretches of territory had been left without an English soldier, seemed, when once the outbreak had occurred, like the reckless audacity of a race doomed to self-destruction.

Such a mistake, again, was the hasty judgment
pronounced by English statesmen on Lord Canning's action, and allowed by its publication, at a most critical moment, in India to aggravate the intensity of the crisis. Good sense and right feeling in the end prevailed, but not till grave risk had been incurred, and the difficulty of pacification had been seriously enhanced. It seems hardly credible to us who read of it in cold blood, that responsible politicians should have acted and spoken as they spoke and acted then, and that the head of an English Ministry should, in ignorance of the real facts, have condemned his Sovereign's representative in the presence of a mutinous army and a half-suppressed insurrection. But the dangers of Parliamentary government of dependencies are great, and, in the hot air of a party fight, or the pressure of a party emergency, the interests of England in India, and the claims of those who represent them, are apt to become obscured. Such an episode is a warning how easily the forms of popular Government may lend themselves to rash judgment, violent tone, unjust and ill-considered action, and how seriously the aberrations of a popular assembly may embarrass the fulfilment of an imperial task.
CHAPTER II

BIOGRAPHICAL

In the fourteenth century Lord Canning's ancestors were great people in Bristol. William Canynges, a wealthy cloth-worker and ship-owner, was Bailiff of that city in 1361, was six times its Mayor, and its representative in three successive Parliaments. His son was also Mayor. Of his grandsons, one, Thomas, became Lord Mayor of London, and took an active part in the suppression of the tumults headed by Jack Cade. Another grandson, William, maintained the family prestige by being four times Mayor of Bristol. In this capacity he had the honour of entertaining, successively, Margaret of Anjou and Edward the Fourth, and established a more lasting claim to the gratitude of posterity by restoring the beautiful church of St. Mary, Redcliffe, which had been damaged by a thunderstorm. His monument is still to be seen there, and 'Mr. Canynges cofre,' long preserved in the Muniment Room of the church, acquired unexpected celebrity by supplying the material with which Chatterton constructed the most curious literary fraud of modern times, the Rowley forgeries.

His nephew, Thomas Canning, by his marriage with Agnes Salmon, heiress of Foxcote in Warwickshire,
acquired a position in that county, and his lineal descendants continued to reside there till, in the course of the present century, the estate passed, in default of heirs male, to another family.

At the beginning of the seventeenth century (1618), George, the youngest son of one of these Foxcote Cannings, received a grant of the Manor of Garvagh, in Londonderry, from James I. A branch of the Canning family was thus established in Ireland, and had some rude experience of the popular dislike of the intrusive Saxon. William, the son of the original grantee, was killed by the Papists in O'Neill's rebellion. His son, George, was attainted in King James the Second's Parliament at Dublin. Despite these vicissitudes, the family stuck sturdily to their estate, and strengthened their position by various good matrimonial connections. Stratford Canning, fourth in descent from the original grantee, was the father of three sons, George, Paul, and Stratford. He was an austere and irascible parent, whose creaking shoes sounded a note of terror, in after years, in his children's recollection. Both George and Stratford aroused his wrath by lovers' entanglements, and were turned loose upon the world. Both died early, but both left sons who were to fill a large space in contemporary history. Stratford defied his father's ire, married the lady of his choice, settled as a banker in London, and at his death left behind him a six months' infant, who, half a century later, made the name of Stratford de Redcliffe a potent factor in
Eastern diplomacy. George was admitted to the English Bar, lived in a cultured coterie, achieved some success in the lighter branches of literature, and enhanced his personal embarrassments and his father's resentment by marrying a beautiful but portionless young Irishwoman. In the midst of family troubles and bootless prospects of rehabilitation, he became the father of a son who was destined to become famous in the annals of English statesmanship. Little, indeed; did the Fates seem then to promise that this child of sorrow should be Prime Minister of England, and the embodiment of all that was most brilliant in the politics of his day.

The genius of George Canning soon soared above family misfortunes. His uncle, Stratford, came to his aid. Eton and Christ Church smiled upon the accomplished scholar; London society welcomed a brilliant acquisition: the discrimination of Pitt secured a valuable recruit. Good Tories were rejoiced to have their views enforced by the wit which flashed in the best of political squibs. He had now climbed the dizzy heights of office, and held the portfolio of Foreign Affairs.

The successful statesman's fortunes were crowned in 1800 by his marriage with Joan, daughter, and co-heiress with the Duchess of Portland, of General Scott, a gentleman whose successes at the whisttable had made his daughters wealthy women. In 1812 George Canning was living in the enjoyment of great domestic happiness at Gloucester Lodge, an
Italian villa which lay between Kensington and Brompton, and which derived its name from its first owner—the Duchess of Gloucester. From the Duchess it passed to her daughter, the Princess Sophia, and from her to Mr. Canning.

Here, on the 14th of December, 1812, George Canning’s third son—the subject of the present biography—was born. He was named Charles John. At this time his two elder brothers, George Charles and William Pitt, were alive. A daughter, who became Marchioness of Clanricarde, was born in 1804. When Charles Canning was ten years old, and a student at Mr. Carmalt's, a famous private school in those days, at Putney, an event occurred which was very nearly altering the whole current of his father’s life. In 1822, Mr. Canning,—whose refusal to prosecute the Queen had mortally offended his royal master, and, for the time, ruined his Parliamentary prospects, accepted the post of Governor-General of India, about to become vacant on Lord Hastings’ retirement. His experience at the Board of Control, where it had been his duty to watch, sometimes to curb, and finally to sanction Lord Hastings’ daring programme, may have reconciled him to the change. It was not fated, however, that Canning should quit the scene of his many triumphs. In the following autumn, while he was paying a farewell visit to his constituents at Liverpool, Lord Castlereagh’s tragic end brought

\(^1\) Canning, when at Liverpool, was a frequent guest of Mr. Gladstone of Seaforth House. It stood on a flat stretch of country,
about a new series of political combinations, and obliged the King to accept Canning as leader of the House of Commons. His appointment as Foreign Secretary put an end to all thoughts of India. Thirty-three years later his son had the same offer, and accepted it.

In 1824, Charles Canning was sent to Eton, where his father’s brilliant reputation as statesman, man of letters and wit, ensured him a cordial reception. Dr. Goodall, the Provost, ordained that the Minister’s son should undergo his entrance examination, not, as was usual, at his tutor’s, but in his father’s house,—a questionable privilege, so far as young Canning’s feelings were concerned, for it involved the consequence that the dreaded ordeal should be passed in his father’s presence. Mr. Chapman, afterwards Bishop of Colombo, the official on whom the duty devolved, has recorded the anxiety with which the father watched the boy’s progress through his examination. The passage selected was the description, in the Aeneid, of the storm which shattered the fleet of Aeneas, and the famous aposiopesis in which Neptune turns away from punishing the outbreak of the rebel winds to the gentler task of calming the waves and restoring peace to the ocean—

‘Quos ego—sed praestat motos componere fluctus.’

The trial—a severe one for youthful nerves—was north of the town, overlooking the sea. Here he would sit, enjoying the prospect, while a son of the house, William Ewart Gladstone, was playing on the strand below.—Bell, 321.
safely passed; the anxious father pronounced approval with a 'not so bad,' and the young aspirant was pronounced to be fit for the Fourth Form, where, accordingly, he took his place, 4th September, 1824. The superstitious belief that the verses of Virgil, taken by chance, are fraught with prophetic meaning has expired: but a believer in the efficacy of the Sortes Virgilianae might have been confirmed in his creed by the unsuspected appositeness of the verses which chanced to be chosen for the young Etonian's preliminary task. No line that ever Virgil wrote could more aptly embody the main characteristic of Canning's future career—the merging of the duty of punishment in the more congenial process of pacification.

Earl Granville, who had begun a boy's friendship with 'Caro' Canning among the strawberry-beds at Gloucester House, and who was a year or two his junior at Eton, has recorded a grateful remembrance of the protection which Charles Canning extended to him, as a new boy, in the rude experiences of school life, and of his welcome mediation as a pacificator at a fight in the playing fields, which neither combatant was loth to bring to an honourable close. 'His kindness to me,' writes Lord Granville, 'was continuous. His reputation at Eton was high as to ability: the respect and attachment felt for him by his contemporaries the same as has been the case through all his life.'

Charles Canning's Eton career, though marked by
no extraordinary achievements, and not wholly un-checkered by the Olympian wrath of Dr. Keate, was not without distinction. There is evidence of his having attained more than average proficiency in the all-important art of Latin versification.

We have some contemporaneous sketches of the Eton of that day in Mr. Milne Gaskell’s letters to his father, to his friend Arthur Hallam, and others, and in one or two from Canning himself. Sir Francis Doyle, who was at Eton from 1822 to 1827, mentions a debating club, of which Arthur Hallam, Gladstone, Selwyn, Lord Arthur Harvey, Lord Elgin, Lord Canning, and Lord Blachford, were the principal members. ‘The perfect intellectual freedom,’ he writes, ‘bestowed on us by the ease and leisure of our idle school, had its good as well as its bad side.’ It had, certainly, some rough aspects to the new-comer, not least the portentous figure of the Head Master, shaking his red and shaggy eyebrows, so prominent that Kinglake describes him as habitually employing them instead of arms and hands to point out any object to which he wished to direct attention. Before this awful being, one May morning, little Gaskell was summoned. ‘Εκπορευομένου’ is the fatal word that speaks his doom—a doom that sometimes, in this epoch of flagellation, eighty victims underwent in a single morning. Gaskell waits trembling in the ante-room the arrival of the judge and executioner. ‘He first flogged one of the collegers and then called me. I begged him to give me my “first
fault." He answered that I had committed an error very early. I could scarcely refrain from tears, but did, and in his usual harsh manner he said, "Go along, sir, go along."

The epoch of fagging was at its height. One little despot has three attendants; one gets the milk, another the kettle, another the rolls and butter. Sometimes Gaskell has to run to 'Cripps for ham, bacon, bread, chocolate, &c.; then to receive several blows because I was not quick enough—then to boil eggs for Taunton, or employed in the servile offices of brushing Halifax's clothes and tying his shoes.' 'Rolles got spurs, and rode some of us over a leap, positively impossible to be leapt over with a person on one's back, and every time (which is every time) we cannot accomplish it, he spurs us violently; and my thigh is quite sore with the inroads made by this dreadful spur. My Poetae Graeci is destroyed, my new coat completely ruined.' In 1826 Gaskell writes of more agreeable themes. 'Now comes the most gratifying, transporting, edifying, delightful, charming piece of information. I will begin by telling you that Canning is very considerably below me in the school. It is true that I noticed him twice, I mean, invited him to breakfast. It is true that I have done him two copies of verses. From what I have seen of him I think him rather disposed to be idle, but clever, quick, spirited, affectionate. Canning was very much taken with these little civil offices, but, as Horace says, "Di exagitent
me,” if I expected any return.’ Canning, however, made an unexpectedly generous return for his patron’s good services, for, before long, there comes a hospitable letter from Mrs. Canning, inviting ‘Caro’ and his friends to a party at Salt Hill. Thereupon followed many pleasant expeditions to the great statesman’s house, delightful and impressive to the boyish imagination, which continue till Gaskell sees his friend’s father at Chiswick, lying on the couch from which he was never to rise. There is one pretty scene—George Canning walking back with the boys from Salt Hill to Eton, and, near the end of the long field, looking over Caro’s holiday verses, the subject being Panthea and Abratates. An epithet is wanted for ‘alâ’—‘celeri’ is suggested and rejected; then someone suggests ‘faustâ.’ Yes, ‘faustâ’ will do—‘faustâ Victoria protegit alâ.’ So the phantom figures—father and son and friend—pass away into the Olympian shades.

‘Canning looked well at Surly,’ so runs another letter; ‘he rode there, and leapt all the way, on a large black horse. He is twelve years old. I got nothing but some lobster and half a bottle of cider.’ On another occasion we find the young debaters busied with a motion for discontinuing the Morning Chronicle, on the ground of its constant pugilistic reports, and the motion lost by Gladstone’s casting-vote. In December, 1827, we have Charles Canning writing to his friend Gaskell a pleasant school-boy letter:—
Moss will be captain of the boats next year, and I shall pull in the ten-oar. I mess with Hodgson and Moss now: perhaps Cowper will mess with us next half; those three will be my greatest and only "cons" except old Handley. I gave leaving books to Gladstone, Hamilton, Chisholm Ma., Doyle, Lord Bruce, and Sutton Ma. Handley, Gladstone, Mr. Bruce, Lord Bruce, Hodgson, and myself set up a Salt Hill Club at the end of this half. We met every whole holiday, or half, as was convenient, after 12, and went up to Salt Hill to bully the fat waiter, eat toasted cheese, and drink egg-wine. In our meetings, as well as at almost every time, Gladstone went by the name of Mr. Tipple; Lord Bruce, Dr. Roberts; Handley, Miss Judy Myers; Mr. Bruce, Mr. Cranmer; Canning Mr. Coxhead. Hamilton, who was Mr. Demster, would have been in the club, but was prevented by his having to show up a punishment to Keate every day at one, which cut up his "after 12" completely. The punishment was inflicted for his having taken a conspicuous part in all the late riots.

Charles Canning did not remain at Eton for the most interesting period of a public school-boy's career, the last; for, having reached the upper division of the Fifth Form, he became the pupil of the Rev. Thomas Shore, a Bedfordshire clergyman, a nephew of the Governor-General of India who succeeded Cornwallis, and is known to fame as Lord Teignmouth. This gentleman, an accomplished scholar, received a few pupils of distinction, and equipped them—more
assiduously, perhaps, than the genial potentates of Eton—for the arena of academic life. One of Mr. Shore's daughters remembers still the impression created by Canning's air of thoughtful intelligence—his modest tones—his girl-like blushes—his kindness to the little daughters of the house. Here Charles Canning was joined by the grandson of the first Lord Harris, with whom he formed a life-long friendship, by Lord Granville, and Mr. Charles Howard. Here 'ingenious arts' blossomed, as they ought, into gracious behaviour. 'Lord Granville,' says the chronicler, 'made himself as charming to us little girls as ever he did since, I suppose, to the finest ladies or to a public audience.' From this agreeable tutelage Canning passed in December, 1828, to Oxford, and was entered as a student of Christ Church, where his father had resided forty years before. Two of his Oxford contemporaries and associates, Dalhousie and Elgin, were destined, as himself, to occupy the post of Governor-General of India. 'I was about a year with him at Christ Church,' writes Lord Granville, 'where he was one of a brilliant set. Gladstone, Sidney Herbert, Lord Lincoln, James Hope, the present Dean of Christ Church, Lord Selborne, Lord Cardwell, and Lord Malmesbury, had just taken their degrees: but Lord Elgin, Lord Dalhousie, Fred. Bruce, Stephen Denison, were still there.' Among Canning's other associates were Mr. (Sir) Robert Phillimore and Lord De Tabley, whose friendship lasted to the grave.

In this congenial society Lord Canning led a life of
cultured enjoyment—somewhat cold in manner to the outer world, but endeared to the inner circle of his associates by geniality, taste and humour. He devoted himself to the studies of the place, and in 1831 won the College prize for a Latin poem on ‘Caractacus,’ which he recited, standing beneath his father’s portrait, in the great Hall of Christ Church.

‘It was a remarkable scene,’ writes Sir R. Phillimore. ‘In that magnificent banquetting-room are hung portraits of students who have reflected honour upon the House, which reared them, by the distinctions which they have won in after life. Underneath the portrait of George Canning—the recollection of whose brilliant career and untimely end was still fresh in the memory of men—stood the son, still in the prime of youth, recalling in his eminently handsome countenance the noble features of the portrait, while repeating the prize poem which would have gladdened his father’s heart.’

‘Canning,’ writes Earl Granville, ‘was like Hoffner’s picture of his father as a young man—a great gentleman in character and demeanour. He was handsome, with singularly fine eyes. He was fond of sport—hunting, shooting, and especially fishing. . . . He had extraordinary powers of continuous work for months and years, when the occasion arose, together with a faculty for being perfectly idle for long periods.’

In 1827 Mr. Canning had died. His widow was

1 Mr. George Canning’s ‘Iter ad Meccam’ was regarded by contemporaries as the best prize poem ever written.
created a Viscountess, with reversion to George Canning's sons. The eldest son, George Charles, had died in 1820. In September, 1828, the death of the second son, William Pitt, rendered Charles Canning heir to a Peerage, and placed him in a position sufficiently independent to justify his resolution to adopt a political career. In 1833 he took his degree, obtaining the honours of a first class in classics and a second in mathematics.

In September, 1833, he married the Hon. Charlotte Stuart, eldest daughter of Lord Stuart De Rothesay, a lady whose many graces and endowments of person and character bound all hearts to her alike in England and India, and whose death invested the closing hours of her husband's career with a pathetic interest.

The pleasures of married life did not still the promptings of ambition. Charles Canning's thoughts were bent on Parliament. In August, 1836, he was returned as member for Warwick. His experience of the House of Commons, however, was brief: for Parliament was prorogued within the month, and on the 15th March, 1837, Viscountess Canning died. In the following month Lord Canning took his seat in the House of Lords.

On Lord Melbourne's resignation in August, 1841, and the formation of Sir Robert Peel's Ministry, Lord Aberdeen received the portfolio of Foreign Affairs, and was glad to nominate Lord Canning to the Under-Secretaryship in a department in which his father had acquired so much distinction. Lord
Canning accepted the offer, nor was he to be tempted from it by an invitation which he received in the following year from Lord Ellenborough—on his appointment to succeed Lord Auckland as Governor-General of India—to accompany him as Private Secretary. The two men were destined, in after years, to come into violent collision on an Indian topic.

Canning worked hard at his duties, but the presence of his chief in the Upper House relieved him of the necessity—indeed deprived him of the opportunity—of Parliamentary explanation. But his character was felt. 'Lord Aberdeen,' says Earl Granville, 'had the most implicit confidence in him, and allowed him to do much of the Secretary of State's work. He was greatly looked up to in the office.'

Early in 1846 Sir Robert Peel, now in the troubled waters of the Corn Law Repeal, took the field again with a reconstituted Ministry, Mr. Gladstone at the Colonial Office, Lord Lincoln in Ireland, Lord Canning at the Woods and Forests. Sir Robert Peel's resignation in June of that year brought Lord John Russell to the Treasury and placed Lord Canning in opposition. He frequently, however, found himself in sympathy with the liberal measures of Lord John Russell's Cabinet, and in May, 1848, was the first to support Lord Lansdowne's motion in support of the removal of Jewish Disabilities, separating himself from almost the entire body of his former associates, and replying to Lord Ellenborough, who had moved an amendment on the second reading of the Bill.
On Lord John Russell's resignation in February, 1851, Lord Canning was invited by Lord Derby to fill a seat in his Cabinet as Foreign Secretary, an offer which, greatly as it was to his taste, he did not feel himself sufficiently in accordance with the Conservative Leader to accept. In Lord Aberdeen's Coalition Ministry of 1852, Lord John Russell became Foreign Secretary, and Lord Canning, not without some natural feelings of disappointment, accepted the unambitious post of Postmaster-General. Here he did good work, instituting numerous reforms and fighting a courageous battle against vested interests which stood in the way of departmental efficiency. Sir Rowland Hill described the years during which he served under Lord Canning at the Post Office as 'the most satisfactory period of his whole official career, that in which the course of improvement was steadiest, most rapid, and least chequered.'

In January, 1855, Lord Aberdeen was defeated on Mr. Roebuck's hostile motion for an inquiry into the conduct of the war, and resigned. Lord Canning was invited by Lord Palmerston to remain in office as Postmaster-General, with the addition of a seat in the Cabinet, an offer which he accepted.

By this time Lord Dalhousie's long and brilliant term of office as Governor-General of India was drawing to a close, and the question of his successor was occupying the thoughts of Ministers. The choice fell on Lord Canning. The son was free to accept the splendid offer from which his father
had, thirty-three years before, been compelled to turn away.

'I was the first person,' Lord Granville writes, 'who told him of the probability of the Governor-Generalship of India being offered to him. He at once discussed it, and seemed inclined to accept it. It was an interesting conversation. We had travelled by rail to Windsor, attended service at St. George's, and rode to Cleveden, where we had tea; and then dined at Salt Hill. His departure, and that of the beautiful and clever Lady Canning, created a great void in a very intimate society. Lord Palmerston gave me leave to write all Cabinet secrets to him while in India.... His departure for India deprived me of the most valuable assistance I ever had in speaking. He always gave me his opinion on my speeches. I knew his criticisms to be exactly what he thought, and I had absolute confidence in his judgment. There was no question, from the most important points of public and private life to the shape of a saddle, on which I did not desire his advice. He was one of my greatest friends. I am not sure that he was the most intimate. He had some natural reserve, and, on the other hand, I should not willingly have told him of things that I had said or done of which I was ashamed.'

On August 1st, 1855, Lord Canning was introduced at a Court of Directors and took the customary oath of office. In the evening he attended the banquet, with which, in that hospitable epoch, the Company
was wont to celebrate the outgoing of a new Governor-General. The speeches delivered on these occasions assumed the character of important political utterances, and were regarded with interest as indications of principle and policy. The Chairman, Mr. Elliot Macnaghten, proposed the new Governor-General’s health. Lord Canning, in his reply, surprised and impressed his hearers by a grave and measured eloquence in every way worthy of the occasion. The remembrance of George Canning—the marked resemblance between father and son—the same handsome features, the noble brow and fine presence—no doubt predisposed the audience in the speaker’s favour. But Lord Canning’s speech was intrinsically excellent—weighty, dignified, imbued with a statesmanlike sense of the greatness and the difficulty of his task. He responded with gratitude to the Chairman’s assurance of the confidence and co-operation of the Directors and of the two great bodies with which he would have mainly to do—the Civil Service and the Army. ‘I know not,’ the speaker continued in terms which, read in the light of after events, have a prophetic ring, ‘I know not what course events may take. I hope and pray that we may not reach the extremity of war. I wish for a peaceful time of office, but I cannot forget that, in our Indian Empire, that greatest of all blessings depends upon a greater variety of chances and a more precarious tenure than in any other quarter of the globe. We must not forget that in the sky of India, serene as it
is, a small cloud may arise, at first no bigger than
a man's hand, but which, growing bigger and bigger,
may at last threaten to overwhelm us with ruin.
What has happened once may happen again. The
disturbing causes have diminished certainly, but are
not dispelled. We have still discontented and hetero-
geous peoples united under our sway; we have
still neighbours before whom we cannot altogether
lay aside our watchfulness; and we have a frontier
configuration which renders it possible that at any
moment causes of collision may arise. Besides, so
intricate are our relations with some subsidiary
States that I doubt whether, in an Empire so vast
and so situated, it is in the power of the wisest
Government, the most peaceful and the most for-
bearing, to command peace. But if we cannot
command, we can at any rate deserve it by taking
care that honour, good faith, and fair dealing are
on our side: and then, if, in spite of us, it should
become necessary to strike a blow, we can strike
with a clear conscience. With blows so dealt, the
struggle must be short and the issue not doubtful.'

The grave and melodious voice rang through the
great assembly and created a profound impression.
Lord Canning's hearers, some of whom had never
heard him speak and others who had only heard his
ordinary Parliamentary replies, felt that they were
listening to no common man. They were noble words,
instinct with a high purpose, a pledge, pure and high-
toned. Nobly was Canning destined to redeem it.
It was decided that Lord Canning should take over charge on March 1st, and his journey to India was so timed as to allow of a short stay in Egypt, and of visits, _en route_, to Bombay, Ceylon, and Madras, where his old school-fellow, Lord Harris, now reigned as Governor. On November 4th, 1855, Lord and Lady Canning sailed from Marseilles; they landed at Alexandria on the 12th, and had their first taste of Eastern hospitality in the somewhat over-splendid arrangements made by the Pacha's order at Cairo for their reception. Some weeks were devoted to the sights of Egypt and a journey up the Nile. On January 26th, 1856, Lord Canning landed at Bombay, and the full tide of official ceremony began to flow. Lord Dalhousie had decreed that his successor should be royally welcomed; but, amid the pomps and festivities of a State reception, the new Governor-General gave early proof of the indefatigable industry which never flagged throughout his whole career. 'I have been unceasingly busy,' he wrote to Mr. Elliot Macnaghten, 'for two-thirds out of every twenty-four hours since our arrival: and by the 5th or 6th I hope to have seen nearly all that calls for ocular inspection in this city and its neighbourhood.'

Landing at Madras, the party spent a few days at Guindee Park, the Governor's country residence, and Lord Canning had an opportunity of renewing the memories of old school days in the society of Lord Harris. On the last day of February, he
disembarked at Calcutta, and proceeded at once to take the customary oaths of office and his seat in Council—'within five minutes after touching land,' as he wrote home—and to be introduced to the members of the Council. Of these Mr. (Sir) Barnes Peacock, a distinguished English barrister, and John Peter Grant, a civilian of exceptional ability, were the most influential. Another member, General John Low, had fought in the last Maráthá War, and since then had enjoyed a prolonged experience of native Courts and unusual facilities for reading native character. He was supposed to be of those who thought that Dalhousie had gone too far and too fast.

The new Governor-General plunged eagerly into business, and commenced from the outset that neglect of all consideration for health which he continued to the end with such disastrous effect. At the end of the first week he writes that, so great had been the pressure of business that he had found time 'only for one look out of doors' since arrival. The opportunities for converse with Lord Dalhousie were, of course, invaluable.

The tide of official work rolled in amain. 'Another fortnight is gone,' Lord Canning wrote towards the end of March, 'and I am beginning to gather up by slow degrees the threads of business, as it passes before me: but it is severe work to have to give up so much time to the bygones of almost every question that comes up; and some weeks more must
pass before I shall feel myself abreast of current events."

Not many weeks had passed before the new Governor-General perceived that his hopes of a peaceful reign were little likely to be realised. The danger threatened from Persia. England was pledged to the independence of Herât; but that independence had always been precarious, more than once actually endangered. In 1852 a Persian force had seized the place, and nothing but the peremptory interference of the English Government had induced her to abandon the project of annexation. The Crimean War seemed to the Teheran politicians to afford an opportunity for reviving a favourite design. Material for a quarrel was soon forthcoming. Mr. Murray, the British representative, found it impossible to remain any longer at his post. A Persian army was presently on the march against Herât. English diplomacy had said its last word. War had become imminent.

Lord Canning watched with regret the lessening chances of a pacific settlement. ‘Do not be afraid,’ he wrote to the President of the Indian Board in April, ‘of my being unduly hasty to punish Persia. Unless the Shah should steam up the Húglí with Murray swinging at his yard-arm, I hope that we shall be able to keep the peace until your instructions arrive.’ The prospects of peace, however, became daily fainter. ‘My hope of an accommodation,’ the Governor-General wrote to the President in August, ‘has almost died out. I contemplate the prospect of
the inglorious and costly operations, which lie before us, with more disgust than I can express.'

The quarrel went briskly forward. In the summer Lord Canning received instructions to prepare for the despatch of an army from Bombay, and in November war was officially declared. The choice of a commander for the expedition and the details of its equipment necessarily involved much thought, talk, and correspondence, and made a formidable addition to the numerous and varied administrative topics which, in the ordinary course, called for the Governor-General's attention.

A war with Persia involved a thorny question as to the aid that should be given to the Amír of Kábul—whether he should be helped at all, and if helped, to what extent and upon what conditions. The English authorities were of opinion that a blister to Persia might, with excellent effect, be applied from the side of Kandahár. Herbert Edwardes, stationed on the frontier, warmly advocated the project of an alliance with the Amír. At the beginning of 1857 a treaty, negotiated by Sir John Lawrence and Edwardes, bound the old Dost by a tie which, happily, he observed conscientiously through times when the hostility of Kábul, in the rear of the English, would have added disastrously to the difficulties of the situation. 'I have made an alliance with the British Government,' he exclaimed, when the treaty was signed, 'and, come what may, I will keep it till death.'
Lord Canning, who at the other end of the telegraph wire at Calcutta had superintended the negotiation, complimented Edwardes on its satisfactory issue with a generous and hearty recognition of good service, which was habitual to him. 'I feel the more bound to do this,' he wrote, 'because the first suggestion of a meeting came from you... It would be a good thing if all diplomatic conferences were conducted as satisfactorily and set forth as lucidly as these have been.'

Persia was not the only anxiety. Within the confines of India itself the course of events did not flow with unbroken smoothness during Lord Canning's first year of office. Outram had welcomed his arrival with a telegram—'All is well in Oudh;' but the announcement had been premature. Outram had now gone away to England, in ill health, and all had certainly not been going well with his successor—a hot-headed official, of the order of those whose destiny it is to be the marplots of diplomacy and thorns in the flesh of their employers. Lord Canning had to taste the bitterness which a refractory subordinate infuses into the cup of high official life. His remonstrances fell on unheeding ears. The progress of dethroning an ancient royalty—necessarily an ungracious one—was made doubly distressful. Complaints became numerous and loud. The Governor-General wrote that his subordinates were placing him in the humiliating position of promising redress which they failed to give; nor was the mischief ended till,
in the following spring, on its becoming clear that Outram would be employed in the Persian Expedition, an unexceptionable substitute was found in the person of Sir Henry Lawrence, who took charge of his duties at Lucknow a few weeks before the first outburst of the Mutiny.

Periods such as that of the Mutiny afford but scanty space for the personal biography of those who play a prominent part in them. Such men lead only a public existence. Their thoughts, their hopes, their efforts, are concentrated on public cares. Lord Canning's life during the fateful years 1857 and 1858 was one unflagging effort to keep pace with the torrential flow of events which followed each other with a rapidity too great even for diligence as phenomenal as his.

It would be difficult to exaggerate the multifariousness or the importance of these demands on his judgment. The general course of the various campaigns which the suppression of the Mutiny involved, was, to a large extent, under his superintendence and control; he was in immediate touch with the principal Commanders throughout, who looked to him for orders. Questions of the utmost difficulty—such, for instance, as the abandonment of Pesháwar, in the critical weeks before the fall of Delhi—were constantly presenting themselves for immediate decision; Parliamentary discussion of Indian topics added intensity to the controversial furnace in which Lord Canning lived. He had to watch the growth of public sentiment,
to guide it in safe channels, and repress its undue violence; and his task had to be performed under conditions well calculated to disturb the most steadfast equilibrium. There were great topics on which the fate of an Empire hung; but little topics swarmed about him—like a cloud of midges—all the more irritating, possibly, for their minuteness. A convulsion which breaks down all ordinary barriers and overrides all ordinary rules of discipline, is certain to entail official blunders and collisions. Stupidity, decently latent in times of peaceful routine, leaps to light. There will be a misapprehension of duties, quarrels more acute than usual; the excited man who does too much; the nervous man who is afraid to do anything; the wrong-headed man who does the wrong thing. Sometimes, moreover, Nature seems to have provided that the men who have greatest capacity for blundering have the largest gifts of insistency in self-defence. Many such men now crossed Lord Canning's path. Many such questions—whose intrinsic insignificance is no measure of the toil and vexation they occasion to those who have to decide them, beset him.

His temperament was that which treats small things and large with the same precise and conscientious care, and so renders official life a burthen too heavy for the strongest shoulders. There is a habit of mind, well known to the student of official pathology, which shrinks in aversion from the rude expedients by which some men get through a vast amount of work. The
just, the fastidious, the scrupulous, are its especial victims. Such a man has a horror of imperfection, of inexactness, of the hardship or mischief which inexactness may easily produce. He will not indite an incorrect sentence, slur over inconvenient difficulty, or pronounce an ill-considered decision. He knows how the thing ought to be done; his conscience forbids him to do it, or to let it be done, in any other fashion. He will not slight it himself; he will not hand it over to another who might be more easily satisfied. One question after another is put aside for further thought, for further knowledge, for the last few touches which an artist loves to give to his work, but which, unhappily, so seldom are the last. Meanwhile, the world does not stand still: the tide of business rolls onward, rude and strong; the impossibility of coping with it becomes obvious; the arrears become so huge that a little more or less is not worth consideration; the offender becomes desperate. The official machine is obstructed at a hundred points; and sturdy workers of the rough and ready order are complaining that, in the research of a too exquisite perfection, the practical work of administration is being brought to a standstill. The offender entrenches himself behind a barricade of office boxes, each of which protests with dumb mouth against the dilatory mood which hinders its contents from disposal. Thence he defies those who preach to him that with statesmen, as with women, hesitation often means ruin.
Such barricades, it is to be feared, rose high in Lord Canning's study. An embassy of his colleagues, on one occasion, brought some friendly pressure to bear upon their too assiduous chief, and urged him to part with some portion of his task, which it was certain that he could never accomplish. The reluctant Governor-General hovered uneasily about the vast accumulation, finding in each instance some especial reason against abandonment, and was at last with difficulty persuaded to bow to the stern destiny which has decreed that human life shall be short, human energy exhaustible, and the art of administration difficult and long.

Canning, however, could be prompt enough when promptitude was evidently essential, and a crisis had now arrived which called imperatively for instantaneous action.

During the early months of the year 1857 various symptoms of a mutinous temper in the troops in the immediate neighbourhood of Calcutta, and at Berhampur, a military post a hundred miles to the north, sounded the first note of danger. Then, when the troubles in Bengal seemed to have subsided, outbreaks of similar character in Upper India, at Meerut and Lucknow, showed that the malady was no merely local one; and, while these were being dealt with, there came the astounding news that the Sepoys at Meerut, the strongest post, as to European troops, in India, had thrown off allegiance, murdered their officers, sacked the Station, and effected their escape,
and that the rebel soldiery were in possession of
the capital of the Mughals. Lord Canning knew
that he was confronted by the gravest emergency
that had ever beset the English in India.

Before dealing with the Mutiny, it will be well to
take a survey of the general situation and of the
conditions under which the Government entered upon
this tremendous trial of its strength.
CHAPTER III

THE INDIA WHICH LORD CANNING FOUND

LORD CANNING's predecessor had on his homeward journey recorded, with almost dying hand, the achievements of his long and prosperous reign. To few, indeed, of the rulers of mankind has such a retrospect been accorded. Success in the ventures of War and the labours of Peace—improvement in every department of administration—progress in every phase of civil life—the triumph of enlightened beneficence—such is the note which rings through the whole exultant strain. Nor was the boast an empty one. But if Dalhousie left India prosperous, orderly, progressive and replete with the outward and visible signs of efficient government, there were quarters in which the cold breezes of adversity might easily arise; and he himself had preluded his narrative with the warning that no prudent man, with any knowledge of the case, would ever venture to predict unbroken tranquillity within our Eastern possessions. Everything, however, in the external relations of India seemed to promise it. Burma had been cowed into the terror which was the best assurance of friendship with a Court too barbarous to know its
own weakness. Nepál, under a sagacious Minister, and with a Thibetan War on hand, was little likely to break the peace she had observed for forty years. The Chieftain whom, in an unlucky moment for humanity, the British Government had placed on the throne of Kashmír had laid hold of the great Pro-consul’s dress in Darbár and cried: ‘Thus I grasp the skirts of the British Government, and I will never let go my hold.’ A treaty concluded in 1855 with the Amír of Kábul bound him to common friends and foes, and Lord Dalhousie could report that every portion of our Western frontier was covered against hostile attack by the barrier of a treaty with a friendly power. But an Empire within whose confines, either by conquest, failure of heirs, or the stern decree of paramount authority, four kingdoms and various minor principalities had in less than a decade been merged, could scarcely fail to contain much smouldering disaffection or to provide the occasion which would fan it to a blaze. Oudh, the latest acquisition, lying in the very heart of the North-Western Provinces, was full of explosive material. The King had yielded without a blow; but the results of a century of anarchy were not to be effaced by the heroic remedy of annexation. The administration had been supremely corrupt; the patrons of corruption were numerous and influential. The disbandment of the royal army sent 60,000 peasants back to their homes, stripped of their livelihood and ripe for disturbance. The local magnates, following the
familiar Indian precedent, had taken advantage of a Court paralysed by profligacy to do what they pleased; and their pleasure was that of sturdy warriors, entrenched in forest fastnesses and followed by small armies of retainers as little compunctious as themselves. For such men might is right, and the doctrine had been, no doubt, rudely applied against rivals and dependants. A British official, who conducted an inquiry, a few years previous to annexation, into the condition of the Province, had travelled through a tract of eighty miles which Nature had designed to be a garden but which one of the Oudh magnates had reduced to a desert. When the British administrator appeared upon the scene, bent on beneficent projects for an oppressed peasantry, backed up by Courts which could not be bribed and forces which it was impossible to resist, the Oudh Tálukdár found himself in a new and uncongenial world. The European officials regarded him with no friendly eye, as an oppressor of the poor and a useless incumbrancer of the soil. His title-deeds were strictly scanned; his vague prerogatives were disallowed. Tenant-rights, of which the tenant himself had scarcely dreamed, were boldly affirmed. Great dissatisfaction, accordingly, existed in the landed classes of Oudh. When the Mutiny came, the tenancy sided with their traditional lords against an alien protector, and the rebel soldiers, themselves for the most part drawn from the peasantry of Oudh, found in the strongholds and jungles of the landholders their
best refuge and in many of the landholders their warmest allies.

Sir James Outram, the Head Official of the newly-annexed Province, had welcomed Lord Canning's arrival with a telegraphic announcement that all was well in Oudh; but failing health had driven Outram to Europe, and his successor had by violent temper and want of judgment materially enhanced the dangers of an already perilous situation. In the meantime, the dethroned Sovereign was established in a suburb of Calcutta, and was consoling himself by the mission of various members of his family to plead his cause before the authorities in London. Those who profess to find elsewhere than in military disaffection the causes of the great outbreak of 1857, are accustomed to point to the presence of the ex-King of Oudh at Calcutta as one of the motive causes of the convulsion. No evidence, however, has ever been produced that the ex-King, either directly or indirectly, took part in the movement; while amongst the circumstances connected with the Mutiny, which favoured the fortunes of the English, may reasonably be counted the fact that, when Oudh threw off its allegiance, the natural centre of local loyalty was not on the spot to afford a nucleus for disaffection.

North-westward across the Doáb, well placed in a commanding position on the Jumna, such a nucleus existed. The historical capital of the Mughals—so the will of Heaven or the fatuity of man had decreed—was now at once a strong fortress, a first-
class arsenal, and the home of the dethroned dynasty. Here Bahádur Sháh—faded image of the great Mughal—still lived, a splendid pensioner, impotent for everything but sensuality, intrigue and crime. Half a century before, when Lord Wellesley and Lake were shattering the confederacy of Maráthá States, the English had rescued his ancestor—a blind, helpless old man—from the oppression of the Maráthás and control of the French. Lord Wellesley, with much respectful language, had reduced him to a puppet, consoled him with a good pension and splendid ceremonial for the loss of all real power, and, repenting of his original intention, allowed him to continue to reside at Delhi. Here, though with ever diminishing prestige, the heir of the House of Timúr lived on in quasi-royal state. The un-wisdom of the arrangement had been recognised and denounced by Lord Dalhousie. ‘Here,’ he said, ‘we have a strong fortress in the heart of one of the principal cities of our Empire, and in entire command of the chief magazine of the Upper Provinces. It lies so exposed both to assault and to the dangers arising from the carelessness of the people living around it, that it is a matter for surprise that no accident has occurred to it.’ The only effectual remedy was, the Governor-General observed, to transfer the stores into the Palace, ‘which would then be kept by us as a British post, capable of maintaining itself against any hostile manoeuvre, instead of being, as it is now, the source of positive danger, and, perhaps,
not unfrequently, the focus of intrigues against our power.'

In 1856 the question was again brought under notice by the death of the King's heir, and Lord Canning strongly enforced his predecessor's view. The phantom dignities of the King were, he pointed out, unmeaning, useless and dangerous. The ultimate decision was that the legal heir to the discrowned monarch should be recognised, but only on condition of surrendering the title of King and of residing elsewhere than at Delhi. The child of the King's favourite wife, whom his mother's ambition destined as his heir, was wholly put aside. The Queen was loud in lamentation and busy with intrigue. The young Prince, her son, was growing up a bitter hater of the English. In 1856, there is reason to believe, these feelings rose higher than usual in the royal circle. A famous priest was poisoning the King's ear, and performing propitiatory sacrifices to hasten the moment of restoration. Exciting rumours filled the air. Russia was to avenge the Crimea by the invasion of India and the re-establishment of the Mughals. Persia was to help. The hundred years' rule by the aliens of the West was about to close.

Vague talk took at last a more solid form, and in March, 1857, a proclamation, posted on the gates of the Great Mosque, announced that the King of Persia was marching to the destruction of the British Ráj, and that it behoved the faithful to be ready to fight the unbeliever. Thus was Delhi prepared to welcome
the mutineers who were soon to seek shelter behind her walls.

Further again to the North-West lay a Province which any one, forecasting the chances of tranquillity, might well have regarded as a likely centre of disturbance. The Punjab, when Lord Canning arrived in India, had been for seven years a portion of the British Empire. Not an hour of those seven years had been wasted by the administrators of the newly-conquered Province, in their task of extending to it the advantages of enlightened government. Under the two Lawrences and the able officials, whom Dalhousie crowded into his favourite acquisition, its prosperity had advanced by leaps and bounds. Yet the history of our connection with the Punjab was full of warning. At the beginning of the century the rising ambition of Ranjít Singh became a menace to Upper India. When in 1806 he crossed the Sutlej, and advanced pretensions to the territory between that river and the Jumna, Lord Minto, abandoning his policy of non-interference, had despatched a mission under Metcalfe and a British force to check the unwelcome intrusion. This combined argument induced the Sikh leader to sign a treaty of perpetual peace with the English, which he faithfully observed. The disorders, which followed on his death, had ended in a Praetorian tyranny. The army governed itself, ruled the State, and assumed a threatening attitude toward the English across the Sutlej. Hardinge massed his forces on the frontier. British victories at
Firozsháh in 1845, and, in the following year, at Aliwál and Sobráon, tamed the ambition of the Sikh leaders and advanced the British frontier to the west of the Sutlej. The infant Sovereign was restored, a Council of Regency appointed; benevolent despotism had full sway. The current of reform ran swift and strong. There was superficial tranquillity. Hardinge left India with the belief that not another shot need be fired for five years. In a few months the bloody fields of Chilianwála and Gujarát attested the vanity of such hopes. The army of the Punjab was conquered and disarmed; but the fact remained that the Sikhs who, under Ranjít Singh, had stood as one good line of defence against an assailant from the North-West—India’s most vulnerable point—had shown themselves our sternest foes, and had cost us some of our bloodiest encounters. The Protectorate established by Lord Hardinge had completely broken down; and Lord Dalhousie having to determine between ‘thorough conquest and incessant warfare,’ had solved the alternative by annexation. But though Gujarát had crushed the Sikh Confederacy, the campaign had demonstrated how formidable a foe the Sikh nation could be, how easily the national feeling might be roused against the English. Seven years of alien administration could hardly have effaced national resentment or the desire of a warlike nation to assert its prowess in the field. ‘The spirit of the whole Sikh people,’ Lord Dalhousie had said, ‘was inflamed by the bitterest animosity against us. . . . It was necessary to
take measures for obliterating a State which could never become a peaceful neighbour.' The experiment proved a splendid success. During the Mutiny the Sikh soldiery rendered invaluable service; but, in calculating the chances of that dire encounter, it is well to remember how easily matters might have gone otherwise—how, by the merest change of circumstances, we might have had the most soldierly population in India arrayed amongst our foes, and how supremely fortunate for the English it was that the annexation of the Punjab—the expediency of which was greatly called in question by the opponents of Dalhousie's policy—had been effectively carried out—the Sikh army broken up—the population disarmed, and that an exceptionally vigorous British administration had got the Province well in hand. Had an army—such as that with which Ranjít Singh threatened Upper India, or as that which Gough confronted at Chilianwála—been hovering in our rear during the siege of Delhi, the whole character of the struggle would have been altered, and the odds against the British immeasurably enhanced. Another fortunate circumstance was that the portion of the Province, through which the route to Delhi lay, was held by Chieftains who owed their escape from absorption by Ranjít Singh to a British Protectorate, and who showed their gratitude by loyal co-operation at a moment when the fortunes of the British seemed at the lowest. The Chief of Patiála lent an army to preserve our communications; and
the troops of the Jind Rájá fought by the side of British soldiers in the breach at Delhi. Fortunate, too, was it that the head official of the Province was a man whose character, temperament and antecedents seemed as though expressly designed to meet a great emergency. Sir John Lawrence had been familiar with Delhi since his first appointment, as a young civilian, twenty-five years before. In 1845 he was its Chief Magistrate, and earned Lord Hardinge's approval by the excellence of his transport arrangements to the battlefield of Sobráon. He had been placed in command of the territory then acquired. On various occasions he had been officially connected with districts on either side of Delhi, and knew them and the people thoroughly. Such knowledge is strength. When the moment arrived he was able to turn it to invaluable account. His colleagues and subordinates formed the strongest body of officials ever concentrated on an Indian Province. Among them were several whose military capacity amounted to absolute genius.

Westward, across the Indus, the wild tribes of the Suláimán hovered on the frontier, ever ready for a fray; and, beyond them, again, was old Dost Muhammad in his Kábul fortress, eagerly watching the course of events and the chances of safety for his little State, dangerously environed by mightier Powers, whose collision might crush it out of existence. Experience had taught him some rude lessons. The British had grievously wronged him—had driven him from a throne into exile and
captivity. He had revenged himself, after his restoration, by sending his best troops to aid the Sikhs, in their struggle for independence. He had now made up his mind that the British were better as friends than foes. The wrongs, which he had received—the assistance which he had given our enemies had been mutually condoned, and a formal agreement of amity had been signed in 1855. In Lord Canning's first year the course of events had tended to strengthen the ties of friendship between the English Government and the Amír. Persia was once again threatening Herát; war with Persia was imminent. There was, fortunately, at this time, an official at Pesáwar who appreciated the importance of the Amír's alliance, and believed that he might be conciliated and trusted. Herbert Edwardes succeeded in convincing Lord Canning that we might with advantage settle the terms on which England would help him in his struggle with the common enemy. The old Chieftain came down to the Kháiber, discussed his resources and necessities with the British envoys, renewed the alliance and received a satisfactory assurance of material aid. 'Now,' he said, 'I have made a treaty with the British, and I will keep it till death'—a promise which, happily for England, he observed with exemplary fidelity at a crisis when its breach would have been disastrous.

But there were dangers nearer home. The great south-easterly bend of the Jumna marked a frontier which seemed boldly to challenge the sturdy tribes of
Rájputána. Delhi, Agra and Allahábád looked out upon a region where, on an arid soil and beneath a blazing sky, some of the fiercest blood in India throbbed in the veins of a warrior race. Southward from Agra towered the rock-built stronghold of Gwalior, where Sindhia recalled the faded glories of Maráthá rule. To the south, again, was Jhánsí, home of a brave and fierce woman, widow of the last of the Jhánsí Rájás, bitterly brooding over Lord Dalhousie’s refusal to allow her to adopt an heir to the title and dignities of her departed lord. Still further to the south—where the Vindhyán Hills look down upon the Valley of the Narbadá—Holkar, another Maráthá potentate, preserved a loyalty which, perhaps, at times derived opportune reinforcement from the neighbourhood of a British cantonment at Mhow. Through this region ran the great high-road from Bombay to Agra and Delhi; and, in case of a disturbance in Upper India, its military significance would be enormous.

The Maráthá Princes had no great reason to love the British. Nowhere had national instincts been more rudely thwarted, or the struggle between anarchy, rapine and oppression, as represented by native rulers, and order and subordination, as enforced by English administrators, been more acute. The antagonism had been long, fierce, inveterate. In the latter half of the seventeenth century Sivájí, founder of the Maráthás, had carved a kingdom for himself out of a dismembered fragment of the Mughal Empire. His successors had
pillaged with indiscriminate ruthlessness north and south of the Narbadá—in the Gangetic valley and in the uplands of the Deccan. His descendants reigned at Sátára, far to the south; but a race of hereditary ministers had eclipsed the lineal heads of the confederacy, and the Peshwás at Poona had won their way to an acknowledged headship. Another powerful subordinate had started an independent principedom in Berár, with Nágpur for his capital; another became a Sovereign at Baroda; Sindhia gathered his retainers at Gwalior; Holkar at Indore. Far and wide, across India, from Gujarát to Cuttack—from the Jumna to the Karnátic—these fierce communities had made the thunder of the Maráthá horsemen a sound of terror. At the beginning of the century their mutual animosities brought a nobler combatant upon the scene, and Arthur Wellesley had crushed a Maráthá army at Assaye. Later victories made the English masters of Delhi, Agra, and a wide tract of country north of the Jumna. The Province of Orissa was taken from the Maráthá Chieftain of Nágpur. Holkar still held his ground, and Lord Wellesley's closing years were chequered by inglorious reverses and baffled schemes. Lord Cornwallis arrived in 1805 with a mission of peace; but the day of peace was not yet dawning. Twelve years later Lord Hastings found himself committed to another Maráthá War. The Peshwá struck a bold blow for his ascendancy—bold, but ineffectual. He was vanquished, lost his kingdom and his Maráthá headship, and retired, a pensioner
of his conquerors, to Bithúr, an estate in the neighbourhood of Cawnpur, where his adopted son, forty years later, was destined to take a terrible revenge for his father’s reverses. The Berár Sovereign tempted his fate with a like result. His kingdom was shattered and dismembered. Holkar received a crushing blow at Mehidpur. The Maráthá States bent their stubborn neck beneath the yoke, and owned themselves feudatories of the conquering Power. Such a history leaves no kindly recollections; nor had subsequent intercourse tended to induce a more friendly mood. Southward of Bombay, behind the Western Gháts, lay a tract, known as the South Maráthá Country, reaching from Sátára to Dhárwár. Here there was at work a special cause of animosity, the proceedings of a Commission, whose function it was to inquire, with the exactness of an English Court, into the validity of various titles and privileges purporting to emanate from former dynasties. The holder of a title, which has served well enough for his fathers before him, naturally resents official intrusion into his muniment room. The ‘Inam Commission’ and its agents were odious, especially to those whom their proceedings ruined. There was, moreover, one Maráthá, whose hatred toward the English was tinged with a deep personal animosity. The last of the Peshwás had lived on at Bithúr till 1851. His adopted son, known to infamy as Náná Sáhib, petitioned to have the ex-Peshwá’s life-pension continued to himself. The claim had no legal basis, and Lord Dalhousie con-
sidered that the claimant, who inherited a large sum from his adoptive father’s savings, was generously treated in being constituted owner of the Bithúr Estate. The Nána sent an envoy to move the English authorities in his behalf; but the Directors were as immoveable as Dalhousie. He nursed his grievance. Shortly before the outbreak of the Mutiny, he made a tour in Upper India, and paid a visit to Lucknow, which so unfavourably impressed Sir H. Lawrence that he wrote to communicate his suspicions to the General commanding at Cawnpur—a warning, which, unhappily, was not believed till tragic experience confirmed its truth.

There were other considerations, of wider range and stronger import even than nationality, which at this time influenced the public mind in India. One was religious disquietude. The pious conservative has generally ample grounds for deploring his lot as born in evil days and a revolutionary epoch. But the classes who, in the India of Lord Dalhousie, wished to stand in the old ways of custom and creed, may well have felt something like consternation at changes which threatened the whole structure of society and struck at the very heart of religion. Creed and custom and institution seemed to be tottering to their fall. Popular education, a prominent feature of Dalhousie’s programme, had been inaugurated by a brilliant essay, in which Macaulay assumed as his standpoint the thesis that Hindu mythology was a mere tissue of absurdities.
With cheerful but ruthless lucidity he pointed out that the first lesson in physics must satisfy the Bengali student that his sacred cosmogony was a childish myth. The hopes of missionaries rose high. Their language was confident and courageous. Some of their manifestoes sounded like invitations to general apostacy. Their influence on legislation was unmistakeable. The Hindu system visits apostacy with tremendous penalties, and declares the renegade to have forfeited, not merely the social communion of his fellow-men, but his share of the inheritance. An Act of the Governor-General’s Council had swept away these penalties, and allowed the deserter from his creed to share with believers in the property and privileges of the family estate. A strong sentiment, embodied in a sacred text and a widely-spread custom, prohibited the Hindu widow from a second marriage. A British enactment—declaring that this was not the Hindu law, and that the widow was free to marry again—had been prepared in Lord Dalhousie’s time, and was passed by his successor. Another measure of the legislature, promoted in the early days of Lord Canning’s reign, under the patronage of influential members of the Government, for the purpose of restraining certain odious forms of polygamy, was resented by Brâhmans, whose privileges it curtailed, and dreaded by Hindu conservatives, who saw in it only another blow at existing institutions. When the legislature was thus courageous, it was not likely that the zeal of indi-
viduals would be checked by authority or tempered by discretion. There were many in India at this time, not mere fanatics or enthusiasts, who regarded the conversion of the people of India as a not improbable event, and the endeavour to promote it as a duty, which no human mandate could overrule. One officer had openly preached to the soldiers of his regiment at Barrackpur: another had inscribed the Lord's Prayer on pillars on the main road entering the capital of his district.

It is significant that, on so important an occasion as the banquet given by the Directors of the East India Company to Lord Canning on his appointment as Governor-General, Lord Palmerston had used language, which alarmists in India might not unreasonably interpret as suggestive that the conversion of the people was among the hopes, if not the immediate projects, of the Government. 'Perhaps,' he said, 'it might be our lot to confer on the countless millions of India a higher and nobler gift than any mere human knowledge; but that must be left to the hands of Time and the gradual improvement of the people.'

The hands of Time seemed moving very quick; the pace was becoming dangerous. 'The faster the current glides,' wrote Sir H. Lawrence in 1856, 'the more need of caution, of watching the weather, the rocks and shoals.' Even while he wrote, the breakers were close a-head. What—millions of anxious hearts were asking—did all these changes portend to the social and religious ascendancy of the Bráhman, to his prestige,
his sanctity, his caste? There was fear in the high quarters of Bráhmanism, and Bráhmins were a ruling power in the Sepoy army.

The Musalmán had a personal grievance. He was feeling the dull pain of humiliated authority and tarnished prestige. In the days of the great Mughal Emperors the Muhammadan rule had stretched far and wide. Eastward and southward—across the rich delta of Bengal, the rice fields of Dacca, the fat homesteads of Arcot, Muhammadan rulers had exercised sway, and Muhammadan soldiers and officials had enjoyed the pleasant privileges of victorious rule. Those halcyon days had passed. The Muhammadan had now to compete on equal terms with the race which he had conquered and despised.

His temperament, his creed, his education, disabled him from contending successfully with the subtle and quick-witted Hindu. The present was distressful. He brooded gloomily over the past. His lawful Sovereign sat with his sham Court at Delhi, more prisoner than prince—a pale shade of his former greatness. He was humbled. His conquerors were now devising fresh humiliations for his son. Haidar-ábád and Lucknow alone remained of the mighty kingdoms which derived their sovereignty from Delhi; and now the suppression of the Lucknow Court once again sounded in the Musalmán’s ears the knell of departing glory. In his dreams of the future, the fall of the British rule presented itself to the eye of faith as opening a possibility of restoration. The Musalmán’s
acquiescence in an infidel ruler is always contingent on the impossibility of rebellion. If a favourable opportunity offered, it would not be for pious believers to let it pass unused. A stimulus was afforded to disloyalty by a colony of fanatics from India, who had established themselves at Sitana, in the mountain ranges beyond the Indus, with the alliance of a local ruler, the Akhond of Swát. They issued incendiary proclamations, while the Múlvies of Patná secretly co-operated, and kept up a train of political converts from that city to the British frontier.

Apart from race or religion there were large classes in India on whom the British rule weighed heavily, or who had old scores to settle with the new régime, or who were sufficiently uneasy to wish for change. There were other great landholders besides those of Oudh, who had experienced a rude transition, and come out of it with lessened dignities and a lighter purse. Lord Dalhousie’s Government had rigorously enforced the principle that the right of an Indian Prince to transmit sovereignty to his adopted heir was contingent on the permission of the paramount Power. That permission had been on several notable occasions refused. The princely families of India could not fail to recognise that, as failure of natural heirs is a continual incident in an Eastern magnate’s family, their absorption in the Empire was, sooner or later, inevitable.

Such feelings in high quarters may have tended to unsettlement, and in any case have weakened the
dislike of change natural to a privileged class. So, too, there were men to whom the introduction of a regular judicial system and strict procedure had proved a capital misfortune. Immemorial estates pass away to successful decree-holders, and a time-honoured family is sunk in ruin. To such men the hour of revolution sounds a hopeful note. There were, no doubt, men in such a mood in 1857, who reflected that the Centenary of Plassey was at hand, and recalled with secret satisfaction the prophecy that the hundredth year of British rule was to see its close.
CHAPTER IV

THE NATIVE ARMY

The native army, with which Lord Canning had to deal, had been winning its laurels for a century. The French and English, ranging themselves on opposite sides in the War of the Austrian Succession, had carried their quarrel to the Coromandel Coast, and had soon learnt the valuable secret that native troops, disciplined and led by European officers, might be effectively employed against a native or a European foe. The English had turned the discovery to good account, and, when Clive started to rescue Calcutta from Siraj-ud-Daulah and to win his great victory at Plassey, he led with him, besides his 900 English soldiers, a well-drilled force of 1200 Sepoys. Since then the Sepoy army had shown its mettle on a hundred well-fought fields. It had carried the standards of England to victory against the greatest armies and most famous commanders of the East—before the ramparts of Seringapatam, in the forest swamps of Burma, on the banks of the Sutlej, in the burning plains of Sind. It had enabled Wellèsley to crush the Maráthás at Assaye, and Gough to shatter the Sikh battalions at Gujarat. It had
shared our reverses as well as our triumphs. Native soldiers had suffered and died by the side of their English comrades on the banks of the Chambal, in the defiles of Kábul, and behind the crumbling earth-works of Jalálábád.

The English leaders of this force, in its earlier days, appear to have wielded a strange spell over their followers. Romantic stories are told of the devotion with which the native soldier regarded his European officer, and the chivalrous loyalty with which he obeyed him. On one occasion the Sepoys had stood by Clive against a mutiny of English officers and troops. On another they had, when food was running short, given up their own rations in order that the Europeans of the garrison, less inured than themselves to privation, might not feel the pinch of hunger.

An honourable record of meritorious service had embodied itself in the tradition that the Sepoy, if properly led, would go anywhere and do anything that his officer enjoined. The officers, on the other hand, were proud of their men, careful of their well-being, confident in their loyalty—a confidence, which, in many instances, was not to be shaken by the clearest evidence, and which cost many lives by the delay of precautions till it was too late to strike a blow. Some signal instances, however, had proved that the Sepoy was capable of a mutinous mood. At Vellore, in 1806, discontent—aroused by certain innovations in drill and dress, which were regarded as
a menace to caste and religion, and aided, probably, by Tipú Sáhib's family, who were detained there—had shown itself in overt insubordination. In a few hours Gillespie's Horse Artillery, galloping from Arcot, had brought the offenders to account, and military order had been vindicated by a sudden and terrible retribution.

Eighteen years later, on the occasion of the first Burmese War, a native regiment, the 47th, alarmed lest the vicissitudes of the journey to Burma might imperil the integrity of the terms of their engagement, refused to march. Discipline was again sternly asserted. A sudden discharge of artillery swept the ranks of the offenders; the surviving leaders were hanged, and the name of the guilty regiment disappeared from the Army List.

Subsequent events had not tended to improve the temper of the Sepoy, or diminish the grounds of disaffection. The conquests of Wellesley, Hastings, and Dalhousie had enlarged the area in which the Sepoy was bound to serve without the extra allowance granted for foreign service. The victories, which the Sepoy helped to win, were thus turned to his disadvantage. The ill-feeling had on more occasions than one assumed a dangerous form. The 34th Regiment, ordered to Sind, had refused to march beyond Firozpur without the usual addition to its pay. Several other regiments had followed the example. The Government was afraid or unable to strike the necessary blow; and though the 34th
Regiment was ultimately struck out of the Army List, the Sepoy had learned the mischievous lesson that insubordination might enjoy impunity and even effect its object.

The conquest of the Punjab once more raised the question of the extra allowance for foreign service. In 1849 two regiments of the Army of Occupation showed overt signs of discontent. A soldier of nerve and resolution was, happily, on the spot to meet the emergency. Sir Colin Campbell's mood was not encouraging to incipient mutineers, and the difficulty, for the moment, passed away.

In December of the same year General Hearsay, an officer destined a few years later to play a prominent part in the opening scene of the Mutiny, found himself confronted by a similar manifestation. In January of 1850 the 66th N. I. broke out at Govindgarh, the fort which dominated Amritsar, the sacred city of the Sikhs. The outbreak was promptly crushed by some native Cavalry which, luckily, stood firm. The guilty regiment was disbanded: its name was erased from the Army List, and its place taken by a regiment of Gūrkha Hill-men, whose military value was now beginning to be realised.

At this stage of the story a conflict of opinion between the Governor-General and the Commander-in-Chief tended to obscure the merits of the controversy, and to impede the application of remedial measures. Neither Lord Dalhousie nor Sir Charles Napier were men to sleep upon their rights. Napier, in a more
than usually independent mood, thought proper to rescind a departmental order, which had been passed in 1845 as to some details of the Sepoys' pay, and to denounce it as 'impolitic and unjust.' Dalhousie at once responded to the challenge, and in incisive language reproved the attempted encroachment on his authority. Napier, angry and rhetorical, declared that he had acted in 'a moment of great public danger,' and that he was dealing with 'an army of 40,000 men, infected with a mutinous spirit.' Dalhousie denied the mutinous spirit and derided the alleged danger. The result was to commit Dalhousie to the theory that the condition of the native army was satisfactory. He received, however, some serious warnings as to the soundness of such a view. Once again Burma supplied the occasion. In the second Burma War the 38th N.I., a distinguished regiment, was invited to embark for Arakan. Such a journey was beyond the terms of its engagement. It would imperil caste. The men declined to go. Dalhousie was unable to compel them. They were in their right. The Great Lord Sáhib was known, in soldiers' circles, to have suffered a repulse. Such triumphs are dangerous to those who win them. The Sepoy was tasting the pleasure of having his own way, and was learning how to get it. The difficulty was one of the troublesome legacies which Dalhousie bequeathed to his successor. When Lord Canning arrived in India, it had become acute. The conquest of Pegu necessitated a permanent Burma
garrison; but only a twelfth part of the Bengal Army was available for foreign service. The rest could refuse to cross the sea. The land journey to Burma was practically impossible. The problem pressed for solution. Of the six regiments available for general service, three were in Pegu, and would have shortly to be relieved: the other three had but recently returned, and could not be again called upon for such unwelcome employment. Lord Canning appealed for help to the Madras Government, whose army did not, by the terms of enlistment, enjoy the exemption from service across the sea. But the Madras Government objected that the general employment of its troops as a garrison for Burma would render the army unpopular, check enlistment, and impair the morale and discipline of the force. Thus foiled, Lord Canning resolved that the only course was to act in the direction which had, several years before, been indicated by the Directors—to assimilate the terms of enlistment for the whole Bengal Army to those in force in the Bombay and Madras Armies and in the six 'General Service' regiments of Bengal. It was decreed, accordingly, that, for the future, the terms of recruitment for the whole of the Bengal army would involve the obligation of service beyond the sea. The announcement produced no manifestation of disapproval, and Lord Canning wrote home in the autumn of 1856 that there was no symptom that the change was unpopular, or that the Sepoys, enlisted on the old terms, regarded it as a first step towards
breaking faith with themselves. There is reason, however, to believe that the measure was unfavourably regarded by the Bengal Army and the classes from which it was recruited. That army was, to a large extent, a hereditary body. The existing Sepoys regarded the future position of their sons with as much anxiety as their own. Sir Henry Lawrence, writing early in May, 1857, reported that the enlistment oath ‘for general service’ was frightening the Sepoys and deterring the Rájput recruits. It is possible that this, among other topics, was urged on the Sepoys by the propagandists of disaffection as a ground for the belief that their privileges, caste and religion were not as secure as heretofore. The uneasiness of the native army may have been increased by the rumour that the Government contemplated a large addition to the Sikh troops in their employ, and would thus become, to some degree, independent of the army, by which hitherto its Empire had been extended and sustained.

A source of chronic danger existed in the personnel of the Bengal Army. It was mainly recruited from districts in Oudh, in which Bráhmans and Rájputs form the bulk of the fighting population. The men were of fine, stalwart physique, such as a commanding officer naturally selects as promising material. The orders of Government, accordingly, which had from time to time enjoined the necessity of composing regiments of diverse castes and classes, had been too generally overlooked. The son stepped proudly and
gladly into the father's place, and found himself surrounded by kinsmen. The result was that two-thirds of the Bengal Army, and of the 'Contingent Forces' maintained by Holkar, Sindhia and other semi-independent States, consisted of men drawn from the same locality, inspired with the same ideas, and bound together by strong ties of creed, custom, and feeling. In one of the regiments near Calcutta, in which in 1857 disaffection first disclosed itself, it was ascertained that, out of a total of 1083 men, more than 800 were Hindus, and of these no less than 335, including 41 officers, were Brāhmans. An army so composed could scarcely fail to engender forces subversive of its discipline as a military machine, and calculated to give to the sentiments of any influential section the dangerous universality of an epidemic. The seriousness of such a state of things was enhanced by the fact that the Bengal Army garrisoned a territory which stretched from the Trans-Indus frontier on the west to Pegu and the Malay Peninsula on the east, and that it outnumbered the combined numbers of the other two Presidential armies. In 1856 it consisted of seventy-four regiments of Infantry, ten regiments of regular, and eighteen of irregular Cavalry. Part of the Bombay Army, also, was recruited from the same districts in Oudh, and shared the susceptibilities of their fellow-tribesmen in Bengal.

It is possible, also, that the annexation of Oudh may have fostered disaffection in the native soldiery, largely recruited from that country. Some, no doubt,
felt aggrieved at the extinction of a dynasty, which, whatever its offences, had the merit of making Oudh a kingdom. When the order of effacement came, the shortcomings of the deposed Sovereign—his debased surroundings—the outrages of his officials—the reign of cruelty, impotence, and wrong—passed, no doubt, into a generous oblivion. A soldier, whom oppression scarcely touched and certainly did not shock, would feel but languid enthusiasm for the new and impersonal régime, which replaced the picturesque splendours of an Oriental Court by the dull preciseness of English administration; and which lowered his personal status by bringing within the reach of the community at large legal rights which had previously been the privilege of the soldiery.

In the army itself there was a serious deficiency of European officers. Lord Dalhousie's administrative system necessitated the free employment of European officers for civil work. A semi-military, semi-civil régime answered the wants of a newly-conquered Province. It was cheap; it was effective; it rendered the head of the organisation more completely master of the situation—to do what he pleased, unchecked by technicalities. But it involved a large reduction in the staff of European officers doing duty with their regiments. In April, 1857, Lord Canning had written to England an urgent request for an addition to the officers in each Infantry regiment—four for each European, two for each native regiment. He explained that the application was submitted in a
bald shape because 'the necessity of immediate increase is urgent, and I have no time to go into the complicated question of our military wants generally.' An influential party in England, however, deprecated any such addition in native regiments as tending to lead the officers to form a class apart, and to live a too completely European life, and so to lose touch of their troops.

Administrative changes, moreover, introduced with the object of improved discipline and efficiency, had lowered the status of the officers in native regiments, and had substituted for a small body of European officers, specially adapted to their work and closely associated with their men, the conventional staff of an English regiment. A system of appeal to Headquarters had grown up, which taught the Sepoy the dangerous lesson that his officer's decision was liable to be revised and set aside.

Altogether it may be said that many causes had tended to undermine the Sepoy's respect for authority, his loyalty to his officers, his sense of discipline, and to accustom him to the idea of carrying his own way against his superior. All these bad influences are more or less conjectural; but there was one evil, affecting the native soldiers before the Mutiny, which admitted of arithmetical demonstration. There were too many of them.

In 1838, when the Afghan War broke out, the native army was under 154,000 men. Lord Hardinge's preparations to meet the Sikhs had raised the numbers
to 245,000. At the close of Dalhousie's reign, the numbers were still 233,000. On the other hand, the European force had been gradually lowered from 48,709 men in 1852 to 45,322 at the moment of Lord Canning's arrival. He found, accordingly, an approximate ratio of one European to five native soldiers. In the Artillery there were more than 12,000 native Gunners, as compared with 6500 Europeans. The European force was very unequally distributed, a preponderating number being employed in garrisoning newly-acquired territories, the Punjab, Sind and Oudh. Twenty years before there had been no less than six European regiments between Calcutta and Allahábád. In Dalhousie's time there were only two, and when the Mutiny broke out, Lord Canning found that, for the 750 miles between Barrackpur and Agra, there was only a single European regiment, stationed about half-way, at Dinápur.

This numerical disproportion had occasioned anxiety to Lord Dalhousie, and he had brought the subject strongly before the Home Government. In 1853, Parliament had sanctioned an increase of the European local force from 12,000 to 20,000 men. Unfortunately, advantage had been taken of this permission only to the extent of an addition of three regiments. Under the pressure of the Crimean War, two European regiments from the Indian garrison had been demanded, a request which provoked a vehement protest from the Governor-General. Such a transfer would,
he objected, give rise to an impression that in our conflict with Russia we had grappled with too powerful an antagonist: it would reduce the European force below the standard recognised as safe in ordinary times. ‘If, further,’ he added, ‘we should be called to despatch an army to the Persian Gulf . . . then indeed I shall no longer feel, and can no longer express, the same confidence as before that the security and stability of our position in the East will remain unassailed.’

Despite this protest, two European regiments were transferred in 1854. They were never replaced; and when the Mutiny broke out, another important fraction of the European force was engaged in the Persian expedition.

One of Dalhousie’s last acts in India had been to lay on his Council table a series of Minutes, the general purport of which was a reduction of Sepoy regiments, an increase of European regiments, an addition to the Irregular and Gúrkha forces, and of the European officers with native regiments. The warning fell on unheeding ears: the Minutes were pigeon-holed, and never reached Parliament or the English public. Some of them were irretrievably mislaid. The subject dropped out of notice; and the outbreak of 1857 found the Government with an European force wholly inadequate to meet the barest requirements of the situation

Dalhousie’s protest did not stand alone. Sir Henry Lawrence in 1855 had written in no faltering terms of
the defects which at that time impaired the efficiency of the native army. He called attention to the dangerous numerical disproportion of the native to the European force. He insisted on the danger of high military commands being entrusted to men whose only claim rested on seniority, and whose incompetence was, in many instances, notorious—on the 'sullen discontent' which the existing rules excited in aspiring native soldiers—the inadequate pay—the scanty and long-deferred pension, the narrow possibilities which bounded the ambition of 'the man who lives and rots without hope.' He pointed out how 50,000 soldiers of the King of Oudh, turned adrift for no fault of their own, and an equal number of his dependents, were all looking to the British Government for compensation—and how Oudh, with its 246 forts and innumerable smaller strongholds, hidden in impenetrable jungles, afforded a congenial refuge for despair and disloyalty. 'We shall be unwise,' he said, 'to wait for the occasion. Come it will, unless anticipated.' The Sibylline leaves were scattered to the winds, and even while he wrote, the hours, during which anticipation would be possible, were passing rapidly away.