

and the Nabob of Arcot and his French ally had cause to rue the bad faith by which they had uncaged such a foe.

Clive, and others who escaped, betook themselves to Fort St. David's—a small English settlement a few miles south of Pondicherry. There Clive prepared himself for the military vocation for which nature had clearly destined him. As an ensign in the small force commanded by Major Lawrence he prepared not only himself, but the native soldiers, for the deeds waiting to be done. A comrade in the civil service, Haliburton, had devoted himself to making good soldiers of the disorderly band of peons who were in Fort St. George when it was taken by the French; but Haliburton, become a lieutenant for this object, was murdered on parade by a sepoy who was instantly cut to pieces by his comrades. Clive seems to have been deeply affected by the event, for he declared in after years that his success in securing the fidelity of the sepoys was owing to his care “to entwine his laurels round the opinions and prejudices of the natives.” It does not appear that Haliburton had offended those “opinions and prejudices;” nor is there evidence that Clive had exercised his sagacity in considering what must be the issues of a military system based on the principle he professed, and how those issues must be dealt with. Our present concern is only with the facts of

how he felt, and how he acted in inaugurating a native soldiery.

At Fort St. David's the English intrigued with the native chiefs, much as the French had done, and not more creditably. They took sides, and changed sides, in the disputes of rival claimants to the province of Tanjore, under the inducement of the possession of Devi-cottah, a coast station at the mouth of the Coleroon. There was no great honour in the results, any more than in the conception, of this first little war. We obtained Devi-cottah; but we did not improve our reputation for good faith, nor lessen the distance between the French and ourselves in military prestige. But Dupleix was meantime providing the opportunity for Clive to determine whether the Deccan should be under French or English influence.

It was disconcerting to Dupleix for the moment that peace was made between France and England. It seemed to break up his scheme of converting the Deccan into a French dependency; but he presently resolved not to shape his actions by the policy of his own government, but by that of his Mahratta neighbours. The greatest of the southern princes, the Nizam al Mulk, Viceroy of the Deccan, died in 1748; and rivals rose up, as usual, to claim both his throne and the richest province under his rule—the Carnatic. The pretenders on one side applied to the French for assistance, and obtained reinforce-

ments to the extent of 400 French soldiers and 2,000 trained sepoys. This aid secured victory; the opposing prince was slain; and his son, the well-known Mohammed Ali, "the Nabob of Arcot" of the last century, took refuge, with a few remaining troops, at Trichinopoly. In a little while, the French seemed to be supreme throughout the country. Dupleix was deferred to as the arbiter of the destinies of the native princes, while he was actually declared Governor of India, from the Kistna to Cape Comorin—a region as large as France, inhabited by 30,000,000 of people, and defended by a force so large that the cavalry alone amounted to 7,000 under the command of Dupleix. In the midst of this dominion, the English looked like a handful of dispirited and helpless settlers, awaiting the disposal of the haughty Frenchman. Their native ally had lost everything but Trichinopoly; and Trichinopoly itself was now besieged by the Nabob of the Carnatic and his French supporters. Dupleix was greater than even the Mogul sovereign; he had erected a column in his own honour, displaying on its four sides inscriptions in four languages, proclaiming his glory as the first man of the East; and a town had sprung up round this column, called his City of Victory. To the fatalistic mind of the native races it seemed a settled matter that the French rule was supreme, and that the English must perish out of the land.

Major Lawrence had gone home; and the small force of the English had no commander. Clive was as yet only a commissary, with the rank of captain, and regarded more as a civilian than a soldier. He was only five-and-twenty. His superiors were in extreme alarm, foreseeing that when Trichinopoly was taken, the next step would be the destruction of Madras. Nothing could make their position worse; and they caught at every chance of making it better. Clive offered to attack Arcot, the capital of the Carnatic, in the hope that this would draw away the besiegers from Trichinopoly; and the offer was accepted. The force consisted of two hundred British and three hundred native soldiers, commanded, under Clive, by four factors and four military men, only two of whom had ever been in action. Everything was against them, from numbers and repute to the weather; but Clive took Arcot, and (what was much more difficult) kept it. The garrison had fled in a panic; but it was invested by 10,000 men before the British had repaired half its dilapidations and deficiencies, or recruited their numbers, now reduced to 320 men in all, commanded by four officers. For fifty days, amidst fatigue, hunger, and a hundred pressing dangers, the little band sustained the siege. It was then that the sepoys made their celebrated proposal about the division of food—an anecdote which is usually impaired

in the telling by the omission of the main circumstance, of the entrance of caste considerations into the case. The sepoys represented to Clive that, though they could not eat food cooked by Christians, the Christians could eat food cooked by natives; and therefore it would be best that the sepoys should cook the rice, pledging themselves to hand over to the Europeans every grain of the rice, and keeping for themselves only the gruel—the water in which the rice was boiled. This was in consideration of the ordinary high feeding of flesh-eating Europeans. At length a rival Mahratta force took heart on seeing that the English could fight, after all, and moved to their relief. The besiegers made haste to storm the fort before succours could arrive. They were repelled with desperate gallantry, under chances which were something more than desperate; and, to the amazement of Clive, the foe decamped in the night, leaving guns and ammunition as booty to the English.

A series of victories followed, and men and opinion came round to the side of the victors. There was no energy at headquarters to sustain Clive in his career; and the consequence was a prevalent belief among the Mahrattas that Clive had a particular species of English about him, unlike all others. In his absence, the enemy appeared again before Fort George, and did much

damage; but Clive came up, and 100 of the French soldiers were killed or taken. He uprooted Dupleix's boasting monument, and levelled the city to the ground, thereby reversing the native impression of the respective destinies of the French and English. Major Lawrence returned. Dupleix's military incapacity was proved, and his personal courage found wanting as soon as fortune deserted him. Trichinopoly was relieved, and the besiegers were beaten, and their candidate prince put to death. Dupleix struggled in desperation for some time longer before he gave up the contest; and Clive had his difficulties in completing the dislodgment of the French. Newly raised sepoy and vagabond recruits were given him to work with; and he had to make his tools and do his work at the same time. He did it; but nearly at the sacrifice of his life. When the British supremacy in the Deccan was completely established, he returned in bad health to England. He had gone out in 1742 a headstrong boy, whom everybody was glad to get rid of. He returned in 1752, a gallant young victor, whom his country delighted to honour. He had begun our military career with the capture of Arcot. He left behind him Dupleix, for whom a summons home in disgrace was on the way, and who died broken-hearted after ten years of conflict with the accusations of his employers and the ingratitude of the State. There

was another whom Clive left behind, the romantic orphan, now a youth of twenty, who had heard, at his desk at Calcutta, of the deeds of Robert Clive, and who was just now moving up the river to an improved position in the factory near the Nabob of Bengal, where he no doubt saw his way opening more favourably to his project of becoming, one day, Hastings of Daylesford. The two young men were soon to meet.

## CHAPTER VII.

## BEGINNING OF A POLICY.

1740—1760.

“Therefore let any prince or state think soberly of his forces, except his militia of natives be of good and valiant soldiers.”

BACON.

“Our acts our angels are, or good or ill,  
The fatal shadows that walk by us still.”

JOHN FLETCHER.

THE French policy in India during the period just reviewed made the Madras Presidency the centre of English interests for the time. After the discomfiture of Dupleix, and his return in deep adversity to Paris, Bengal became the scene of conflict, and the ground on which the English established a power and prestige as wonderful as Dupleix had ever proposed to achieve for France. A few particulars must be noted about Madras, and then we must follow the interest of the story to Calcutta.

In the midst of his glory as the hero of Arcot, and the patriot who had humbled Dupleix and his French policy, Clive met with disappointments in England which disposed him to return to India at the very



time when the Directors were anxious to send him. Three years after his return home, there was a prospect of war with France; and Clive's presence on the Coromandel coast was considered the best security to our Indian establishments that could be provided. So the Directors appointed him Governor of Fort St. David, and the administration made him lieutenant-colonel in the British army; and he went out for the second time in 1755.

The first notice of sepoy in British pay occurs in connection with the early history of Bombay. The first occasion on which they are mentioned with honour is the defence of Arcot, when Clive inspired all his followers with the military spirit which made him a hero from the moment when he left his desk for the field. The sepoy were delighted to see him back again at Fort St. David, and were ready to do anything under his command. At that time none had been enlisted but men of high military tribes—part Mohammedans and part Hindoos, the latter chiefly Rajpoots.\* They were small men (from five feet three to five feet five), active, strong, patient and brave in temper, and temperate in diet, but while possessing most of the great qualities of the soldier, requiring peculiar management. As long as no suspicion was awakened in their minds, they were devoted, trustful, patient, and even upright under stress; but when once their

\* A warlike race of the first order, originally derived from Rajastan.

high honour was touched, or they suspected deceit or ridicule, they were enemies for ever, as implacable and vindictive as devils. Every mistake on the part of the English, every lapse into forgetfulness that English methods alone will never answer with Asiatic soldiers, has been marked by a mutiny, for above a century past. An order to go round by sea to Bombay produced a mutiny, the natives having an extreme horror of "the black water," as they call the ocean; whereas, when an officer whom they knew told them that he and his European soldiers were going on an enterprise overland, and needed a force of volunteers, there were always enough ready to go. An order to shave is never obeyed, for reasons of native feeling which no commander should be ignorant of; and an attempt to enforce the order has repeatedly induced mutiny. Very few persons in England have any idea of the number of sepoy mutinies which have occurred between the defence of Arcot, which opened our military history in India, and the present calamity, of which the entire series should have forewarned us. It would be too much to say that on all these occasions the British were totally wrong; but it may be safely declared that a sufficient knowledge of the native mind would have explained to us how it was that the mutineers always were vehemently persuaded that they were right. Some promise was supposed to be broken, something was required of them which they could not do, some

insult was offered to their pride or their affections, or some novelty was introduced to which they could not commit themselves till they understood its bearings. They would serve without a murmur while their pay was two or three years in arrear; they would endure famine and other hardship with unsurpassed generosity of spirit; but they required peculiar consideration from their peculiarities of mind and training. It was for the English to consider whether it was worth while to make soldiers of them under such conditions; but neither party is to be blamed for the existence of the conditions. It might be burdensome to have to cultivate the language, and learn the mind, of the native soldier; but he could not be a trustworthy soldier on other terms. Such pains have always been found to answer. Clive succeeded entirely with them; so did Sir Eyre Coote; and so did many more good commanders, during a long series of years. They had them well in hand. They did not waste their authority in making a point of shaven chins and compulsory sea voyages; but they allowed no hesitation or question about such orders as they gave. They carefully studied their men; and they took care that their men should know them. The consequence was that a native officer here and there—such as Mohammed Esuf, Cawder Beg, Sheik Ibrahim, and several others, rose into companionship of fame with distinguished European officers, and that officers who were fit to command them, from

Clive and Gooté to Lake, Ochterlony, and Christie, could do anything with them, and had little other difficulty than to restrain the enthusiasm of their obedience. Whatever may be the issue of the present mutiny, the memory of a better time will be preserved among the sepoys in two sacred forms—the native traditions of the deaths and funerals of popular European officers, and the monuments—the “regimental shrines”—which grateful rulers and commanders have from time to time erected or countenanced, to the memory of heroic native officers.

The Body-guard at Madras has always held a high rank among the native soldiery—a hundred strong, always expected to be foremost in zeal and efficiency, and always found in its place. It was such a soldiery as that that Clive was greeted by when he re-appeared at Fort St. David, and that he took with him when he was presently after summoned to Bengal.

Just at the time that Nadir Shah was sacking Delhi, in 1739, a remarkable man, of Tartar descent, obtained from the miserable successor of Aurungzebe the post of Viceroy of Bengal, and the added provinces of Orissa and Berar. This man, Aliverdi, met with little resistance within those provinces; and he presently overcame such as was offered. His rule appears to have been singularly good, for the country and the time—spirited, just, and humane; but he could not make his people prosperous and

happy while the Mahrattas were abroad. It has been related that the Mahrattas extended their predatory expeditions to Bengal, tempted by the rich products of the district; and that they left all bare unless they were bought off. The salt of the low coasts and islands supplied a want which has always pressed heavily on the vegetarian population of India. The rice crops were unparalleled—to say nothing of the spice and sugar; and the products of foreign trade were stored up along the rivers. It was on account of the Mahrattas that the English had fortified Calcutta. When Aliverdi was going home to Moorshedabad, after humbling his last domestic enemy, he heard that the Mahrattas had come through the passes from Berar to invade Bengal. He met them bravely with his small force; but some of his troops did not support him well, and he ran fearful risks in getting home. The enemy had been there before him, pillaging the suburbs, and, among other places, Cossimbazar, where Warren Hastings worked at his desk. The enemy chose to remain during the rains; and what they saw of the wealth of the soil gave them all possible inclination to help themselves to it as often as convenient. They collected the revenue of almost the whole country south of the Ganges. Aliverdi beat them out with great slaughter as soon as the weather permitted. Of course they returned next year; and Aliverdi unfortunately paid ransom for his fields and

commerce. The approach of a marauding force is a hideous thing in Bengal. The inhabitants bury their heaviest chattels, and fly to the nearest refuge—the jungle, the hills, or a fortress. The husband carries a bag of grain, the wife the young children; and the growing crops must take their chance. In course of time it was discovered that this ruin need not always be incurred—that the peasantry need not be “wulsa” when British troops were coming, unless, indeed, they brought Indian allies with them; but in Aliverdi’s time there was no exception to the rule of flight and ruin when any soldiery was on the march. His subjects were as poor as could well be in the best times; any hostile incursion brought on famine and destruction, and desperate means of prevention were used. One year the Mahratta leader was inveigled and assassinated; another year, the Mahratta leader was killed in battle; but the enemy still came back; and, in a third year, Aliverdi’s discontented subjects went over to the Mahrattas, and all seemed over; but he again beat them off, even recovering the capital of Orissa, which he had considered lost. But when he died, in 1756, in old age, he had only impoverished his people by annual levies of blackmail, without purchasing with it any security from danger. Leaving no sons, he was succeeded by a youthful grandson—the Surajah Dowla, whose name was so familiar to English ears during the latter half

of the last century. It is enough to say of him that he was one of the worst known specimens of the worst known order of men—Asiatic princes who are not nomades. He had always hated the English; and his first act, after securing the property of all his relations for his own use, was to quarrel with the British. He demanded that the finance minister of his deceased uncle, the Governor of Dacca, should be delivered up to him from his refuge at Calcutta, with the treasure he was supposed to have saved; and he remonstrated with the English governor for improving the British defences, in anticipation of a war with France. Instead of accepting the explanation afforded, he seized the factory at Cossimbazar, and captured its chief, Mr. Watts. The English had no Clive among them at the moment, and resistance does not seem to have occurred to them. They offered an abject submission; and the Nabob marched to Calcutta, to seize the enormous wealth which he supposed to be laid up there, and to show himself a great man in comparison with the contemptible foreigners.

It is an interesting thing to pause, at this point of the history, to see how those personages were engaged who were to shape and control coming events, or to be controlled by them. Dupleix was off the scene. He had originated the scheme of European supremacy in India, and had handed it over to the

rival power. His colleague in presidential government, Labourdonnais, had created the instrument of a sepoy force, which also remained in English hands. Both were to suffer from the ingratitude of the State at home, and to die in misery. Thus it was with the rival European party. As for the natives—Surajah Dowla (the actual sovereign of Bengal, while called Viceroy) was getting drunk, killing flies, putting beasts and birds to the torture, for pastime, and merchants, when he wanted their treasure. He informed his courtiers that there were not 10,000 men in all Europe, and he should treat the English as he pleased.

He had very close relations with a few wealthy men, as needy and despotic sovereigns are wont to have. One of the rich merchants whom the Viceroy cultivated for the sake of his usefulness was Omi-chund, an able intriguer, living at Calcutta, who played off his arts on his sovereign and on the English as suited his convenience, now promising the Viceroy to cast all the British wealth into his treasury, and then agreeing with the English to depose the Viceroy, and put Meer Jaffier, the native commander-in-chief, in his place. Another of these rich and powerful subjects was the well-known Nuncomar—the Hindoo Brahmin, who was, perhaps, the greatest Bengalee of his time—politic, wealthy, sacred in a religious view, and invested with all possible secular deference. Meer Jaffier was at the head of the army, hardly yet, perhaps,



conceiving of his approaching sovereignty, any more than Surajah Dowla of his own abasement. A Mussulman, Mohammed Reza Khan, able and active, was always engaged in affairs; but he little dreamed that he should soon be for seven years the most powerful subject and agent in the Bengal territory. These were the native gentlemen who were unconsciously awaiting their respective wonderful changes of fortune. As for the British, above a hundred of them, dreaming of returning home in splendour, after having made haste to be rich, were being precipitated towards as fearful a doom as any on record. In a few nights they were to die together, in an agony from which the imagination recoils at the distance of a century. One more, Warren Hastings, was refusing the ordinary time-killing amusements of his countrymen, in order to recreate his intellect with geometrical studies, and to charm his imagination by exploring the beauties of Persian literature. He did not anticipate a meeting with the famous and lucky Robert Clive, nor indulge in greater dreams than the old one of redeeming the estates of his ancestors. As for Clive, he had recently landed at Fort St. David, and had no conception that men of so many natures were unconsciously waiting for him at Calcutta—waiting for the creation, under his hand, of a British policy in India.

Surajah Dowla was as cowardly as cruel tyrants usually are; but he thought he might safely drive

away the English, and take possession of their wealth, keeping a few of their chief men to torment, for the gratification of his hatred; and there was not so much rashness in his scheme as might appear. In Bengal it was still believed, as not long before in Madras, that the British were only traders, and could not fight. Their conduct, when Surajah Dowla marched his great army to Calcutta, justified this notion. It appeared before the fort on the 18th of June, 1756: and as the fort really was very weak, and no Clive was there, everybody was in favour of retreat to the ships. The Governor fled first and fastest, and the military commander next: no proper arrangements were made for the embarkation, and all was confusion and selfish panic. Surajah Dowla was presently seated in state in the great hall of the factory, triumphing over the English captives who were brought before him. He complained of the smallness of the treasure, but promised to spare the lives of the prisoners. He went to rest without giving orders as to what was to be done with them. There was an apartment which had been sometimes used as a strong-room for prisoners—unobjectionable in itself, but, being only 18 feet square, fit only for two or three persons at once, in such a climate as that of Calcutta. It had two windows, was above ground, and in no respect like “a dungeon” or “a black hole.” Yet it will be called “the Black

Hole of Calcutta" as long as the language lasts, on account of what happened there that night. The prisoners, in number 146, were ordered into this apartment; and when it was declared to be full, more and more were driven in at the point of the bayonet: and there they were kept through the summer night. No entreaties or frantic cries for release or air were of any avail: the Viceroy was asleep, and must not be disturbed. While he was enjoying his airy rest, the English were dying off fast; and when he drew near his waking, their shrieks had sunk into a few low moans. When the door was at length opened in the morning, 23 of the 146 were alive, but so shrunk and ghastly that their own families would not have known them. Of the dead, some were as far gone into decay as if they had been buried for days. The murder was not intentional: but there was cruelty enough without that. The guards came with lights to the barred windows to laugh at the delirious wretches struggling within; the Viceroy threatened the survivors with impalement if they did not confess where the treasure was; and he caused them to be ironed and half starved. The surviving Englishwoman he took into his own hareem. He boasted, in letters to Delhi, of having expelled the English, and abolished the very name of Calcutta, which he named Aliganore—*God's port*. It was August before the news reached Madras;

and, in spite of Clive's impatience, it was October before the forces were off, and December before they reached Calcutta, having found the fugitive English collected at Fulta, a small place further down the river.

Surajah Dowla came down from his capital, and, already pining after the profits of the English trade, proposed terms. He offered to reinstate the British, with compensation for their losses. Clive was almost the only person concerned who was not disposed to accept the terms at once. The Company's agents, the Madras Government, and, as he was well aware, the Directors at home all considered reinstatement to be all that could be desired. But he was aware that Surajah Dowla was intriguing with the French, with the intention of bringing them down upon the British, on all convenient occasions. This was the time, Clive decided, to establish the English in Bengal, as on the Coromandel coast; and he obtained the concurrence of the naval commander, Admiral Watson, in his scheme for humbling the French first, and then deposing the Viceroy. In the attack on Chandernagore, Admiral Watson operated by water, and Clive by land, with complete success. The French settlement, with all its stores, at once fell into their hands.

The agents in the other scheme were Omichund, the great Hindoo merchant already spoken of, and Mr. Watts, who was taken at Cossimbazar. A plot already existed among the Viceroy's subjects, in

which his finance minister, his commander-in-chief, Meer Jaffier (already mentioned), and other conspicuous men were implicated; and Clive overbore all the scruples of the committee at Calcutta about embracing the scheme. When the Viceroy was distrustful, Omichund soothed him; and he was so ready to do the same thing on the English side, that Clive not only put no faith in him, but deceived and betrayed him as he deceived and betrayed one master, if not more. Clive even stooped so low as to interpolate a duplicate deed, and to forge a signature, in order to retain the great Hindoo's services as long as they were wanted. When all was ready, Clive wrote an upbraiding letter to the Viceroy, who at once marched to Plassey to meet the British. There would have been no difficulty in beating him, vast as his forces were, if Clive's native confederates could have been trusted to fulfil their engagements. But they did not come over; and the British had only 3,200 men to oppose to the 68,000 assembling on the opposite bank of the river. For the only time in his life, Clive held a council of war. It was decided to retreat, and he acquiesced—in all sincerity at the moment; but his spirit rose as the night drew on. He transferred his force to the left bank of the river, and the next day, June 23, 1757, fought the battle of Plassey, which revolutionized Bengal, and inaugurated the English policy in Hindostan. Surajah Dowla fled. Meer Jaffier, who had held back till

he saw which way the battle would go, came forward with hesitation and fear as to his reception. Knowing that nobody better was to be had, Clive received him as the new Nabob of Bengal. He was the tool by whom the British were to govern the whole north-east of Hindostan. On the first conference after the installation of the new ruler, Omichund was present in all his dignity, expecting to receive his promised honours and rewards. He was abruptly told that he had been outwitted in his treachery; and the instant consequence was a fit, ending in idiocy. After a few months of childishness, most affecting in one so conspicuous for sagacity, and the ability which the natives admire most in their eminent men, he died. Clive had not contemplated this, if we may judge by his offers to Omichund of public employment, on the recovery of his health by a devout pilgrimage; but the great English captain considered it enough to say in after-times that he had only turned the intriguer's own arts against himself in an emergency which required all means of security.

The new Nabob caused his predecessor to be murdered, and placed the treasures of Surajah Dowla at the disposal of Clive and the committee. Clive accepted prodigious wealth; but he might have had ten times as much by merely refraining from refusal. The circumstances were new, and no rules or orders existed to meet the case. We hear now of "Lord Clive's Fund." This fund is the income of the great

legacy left him by his puppet Nabob, Meer Jaffier; and the proceeds were from the first applied to the relief of the invalids of the service. The Company lodged supreme power in his hands as soon as they heard of the battle of Plassey, and the virtual acquisition of Bengal by the British. Clive had much to do to work the new policy of ruling great Asiatic countries by means of native princes. At one time he had to sustain the Nabob against attacks from without; at another, to humble the Dutch as he had humbled the French; and not seldom to guard against the conspiracies between his own tool and enemies who bribed him from his allegiance; but he did it all—partly through the attachment of his adoring sepoys, whom he had brought from Madras, and multiplied into a considerable force—partly through the consciousness which existed all round that he alone could uphold the new order which he had created; but chiefly because he himself willed it. It will be seen that he had not looked forward enough, while meeting difficulties as they arose; and he had scarcely sailed for England, in 1760, when embarrassments appeared which made his successor and the committee aware that he would probably have to come out again.

Where was young Hastings during these years? He had joined Clive's expedition with enthusiasm when it came up from Madras in December, 1756. But Clive soon discovered that Hastings had abilities

which marked him out for political business; and he appointed him resident agent at the new Nabob's court. Soon after Clive's departure in 1760, Hastings was wanted at Calcutta, as a member of council. He was in full training for his future work.



## CHAPTER VIII

## BEGINNING OF A GENERAL GOVERNMENT.

1760—1774.

“Mais, en connaissant votre condition naturelle, usez des moyens qui lui sont propres, et ne prétendez pas régner par une autre voie que par celle qui vous fait roi.”—PASCAL.

“We are not roasting; and already we are basting.”—*Proverb.*

It is a recognised fact that a bad odour hangs about our connection with India, even at this day, among peoples and generations who can give no clear account of the grounds of their unfavourable impressions. Among the continental nations, in the United States, and throughout whole classes at home, and among the elderly generation in particular, a vague notion exists that there is something disgraceful in our tenure of India; that the native population has been somehow sacrificed to our ambition and cupidity; and that the great Asiatic peninsula has always been a land of license to us, where selfish men could indulge their passions, and extort luxury at the moment, and wealth for the future, from an inferior race, made to suffer

for our gratification. While the great multitude have held some such notion as this, a very small minority has wondered how so enormous a mistake could exist. The few who have taken an interest in the India of our own day have dwelt upon the features of modern Indian life till they wonder whether the history of any nation presents a picture of a more virtuous devotion to public duty. They point to the honourable mediocrity of fortune of Indian officials, the small salaries, the refusal of gifts from natives, the hard work, the *désagrémens* of life in such a climate, and, above all, to the succession of great and good men who have grown up, lived, and too often died, in India; and they ask whether history has anything better to show in regard to any great dependency of any empire. There is, as usual, reason at the bottom of both persuasions; and we have now arrived at the period of Indian experience which reconciles the two. The more advantageous view is now true in the main; and the other was true a century ago. The state of things was, moreover, as inevitable as it was detestable.

It was the transition period between native despotism and British government. Territorial possession (to the extent which made us rulers of the people) was suddenly obtained, almost without intention, and altogether without preparation. Principalities and peoples became ours before any

one had thought how they were to be ruled, or how the structure and movement of society were to be sustained at all. If the question was by chance asked, what was to be done with the provinces and their inhabitants, the readiest answer was that they would be governed by the native princes, under us; the supposition being that the various tribes had some sort of constitution which bridged over all intervals, and all turmoils incident to princely government. Here was the great mistake. No such constitutions existed. The rule of the princes, whether hereditary or usurping, was a simple absolutism, with which the spirit of Mohammedanism was thoroughly congenial, and to which even the old religious institutions of Hindooism were made subservient; and our plan of using the native princes as our deputies merely rendered their subjects dependent, one and all, on our will. Every Englishman was master of every native he came across, for there was no constitution, no appropriate law, no organization whatever to be appealed to. The few of our countrymen who had gone out in the service of the Company, on very small salaries, and with no very elevated objects, suddenly found the treasure-chambers of absolute princes thrown open to them; and when those were emptied, there remained the sources whence they had been filled. The competitors for native thrones begged for British support,

promising in requital the wealth of the ruler who was to be unseated; and every such petty revolution brought its own premium to those who could effect it. English traders had not only the pick and choice of all markets, but they held all producers in their grasp; and they could lay hands on all products at their own price, and make it a condition of all transactions that presents should be offered to the powerful party. They could always patronize robbers, and ruin everybody, unless propitiated by gifts; and it may be doubted whether the Danes in England, the Spaniards in Mexico, or the Mahrattas in Aliverdi's time, were more disastrously oppressive to a harassed multitude of native inhabitants than the Englishmen who were making their fortunes in Bengal while Clive was in England recruiting his health, from 1760 to 1765. The people who were within reach of the hills went there, and became robbers. The peasants fled to the jungle—not from British troops, but from the face of a British merchant traversing the country in state. Whole villages were deserted when a European was coming along the road. The country was going out of cultivation, and the native manufacturers were discontinuing their industry from year to year, just when it was necessary to raise more and more money for the Company at home; and hence new and more stringent methods of extortion were perpetually devised. No party concerned was less aware of all this than the Direc-

tors in London. They saw how rich the English became in India, from Clive who returned at thirty-four with an income of 40,000*l.* a year, to the humblest agent who, not liking India, came home at five-and-twenty with a competence for life. The Directors heard, as other people did, of the pomps and splendours of the native courts, and also of the prodigious fertility of the soil in Bengal; and they naturally expected to derive a handsome revenue from both land and commerce. They could not fully know how their servants grew rich by private trading; and they were naturally the last to hear of the bribes and oppressions by which the people were sunk in poverty. They shaped their demands in proportion to what they saw; and their urgency was so extreme as to cause constant embarrassment to their own governors at the presidencies. Their blindness and the little monopolies of their servants must come to an end, sooner or later, as every adventurer in the whole set well knew: the great object with them all was to delay the disclosure of the poverty of India as long as possible; and under the strength of this overwhelming temptation the greatest men sank as well as the meanest. Clive and Hastings committed crimes as well as the little tyrants who took the poor weaver's finest muslins, and paid less than the price of the cotton.

If our young people desire to know how the Anglo-Indians of ninety years ago were regarded in

England in their own day, they may find the evidence in short compass in Cowper's poem of "Expostulation," where the national view is fairly expressed in a dozen lines :

"Hast thou, though suckled at fair Freedom's breast,  
 Exported slavery to the conquered East ?  
 Pulled down the tyrants India served with dread,  
 And raised thyself, a greater, in their stead ?  
 Gone thither, armed and hungry; returned full,  
 Fed from the richest veins of the Mogul,  
 A despot big with power obtained by wealth,  
 And that obtained by rapine and by stealth ?  
 With Asiatic vices stored thy mind,  
 But left their virtues and thine own behind ?  
 And, having trucked thy soul, brought home the fee,  
 To tempt the poor to sell himself to thee ?"

Worse even than the cupidity was the treachery. Clive's treatment of Omichund was truly a national calamity. Recent times have so fully proved the value in India of our good faith, so remarkable a contrast to the prevailing policy of native rulers, that there is no need to say a word of the benefits we have derived from an Englishman's word being the only security the natives know. It is referred to only to illustrate the mischief caused by Clive's interpolation and forgery in Omichund's case. As thieves have a keen sense of the convenience of honesty, so have intriguers of the dignity of good faith; and Clive inflicted more injury on our Indian empire than many years could repair when he (as he said with shocking levity) turned the arts of the great

Hindoo against himself. During the same interval, the ignorant traders who were representing us in Bengal were over-riding the native tribunals, jesting at the native faith and customs, and setting aside all observances for their own convenience or amusement; so that a state of anarchy was inevitable, and Clive was as much wanted at the factory at Calcutta as he had been before the walls of Arcot, or on the field at Plassey.

Everything was going wrong when the Company applied to Clive to return to Bengal. The confusion was too much for the capacity of successive governors. Meer Jaffier and a rival pretender to the vice-royalty were set up and pulled down in turns; and at every see-saw the adherents of the one pillaged those of the other, to bribe the English. Nothing more could be levied from the people, and the Company could obtain no adequate remittances. Princes outside the frontier rose against us; and the native soldiery mutinied.

The sepoys complained of various breaches of promise, and refused to obey orders. Their coolness under sentence, and the singular dignity with which some of the condemned claimed to be blown away from right-hand and not left-hand guns, because they had always fought on the right, and considered it the post of honour, melted their executioners, and witnesses who had been less moved at Admiral Byng's last scene. While the troops were resisting orders, their com-

manders were quarrelling. In every department of the Company's affairs, there was nothing but confusion, failure, and prospect of total disorganization.

Clive returned with a title, and with the dignity of Governor and Commander-in-Chief of the British possessions in Bengal; and the first thing he discovered was that though the Company had, as they supposed, put a stop to the traffic in presents between their servants and the political intriguers of the province, the throne of the Viceroy was virtually put up to sale, and jobbed by the Company's agents. He at once enforced the Directors' command that all presents and gratuities, in any shape, received from natives, should be handed over to the Company, when the value exceeded 4,000 rupees; and that every gift under that amount and exceeding 1,000 rupees, must be sanctioned by the President and Council. He put a stop to private commercial speculation; and when some of the angry gentlemen struck work, he wrote to Madras for substitutes, and sent the malcontents home. He enlarged the incomes thus suddenly restricted by awarding the salt monopoly to the Company's agents—the Directors being resolved against increasing their salaries. The military officials carried their resistance to reform so far as to conspire for his discomfiture, and resign on the same day, to the number of two hundred. It was then that Lord Clive found the advantage of his policy in attaching the sepoy. He separated them from their



mutinous superiors, and threw himself upon them, while awaiting the arrival of European officers from Fort George, and training some civilians from the Calcutta service. He could not have carried his points if he had been hampered by the "assistance" of the pre-existing committee of management, and he therefore named as his select committee himself and the two gentlemen who had attended him from England.

His territorial policy was soon declared. He wrote home that he had long foreseen the approach of the time when the Company must determine whether they should or should not "take all" into their own hands, and rule with an army at their back. The native states expected this, he said; and the English must be the real Nabobs, under a merely nominal vassalage to Delhi; whether they assumed the name, or still allowed a puppet to wear it. The Mogul sovereign was applied to, with presents; and he granted (because he could not refuse) a warrant whereby the Company was authorized to collect the revenues of the whole territory of Bengal, with its adjuncts of Orissa and Behar. This demonstration, and the mere presence of Clive, intimidated the neighbouring viceroys: and they at once drew back from the frontier they had intended to invade. He seemed to have set matters to rights in the course of a year and a half, when his state of health compelled him to go home. He had seven years more to live. They were years of great

trouble and failing powers of body and mind ; and he died by his <sup>own</sup> hand at the age of forty-eight.

He was no sooner gone home than it was discovered that affairs were much further from being settled than he had supposed. He had mistaken the influence of his own strong will for the working of his machinery, as strong-willed men are apt to do. Neither he nor any one else could have an idea of the accession of another man of strong will and extraordinary ability, by whom the work he had left should be carried on as vigorously as it could be by himself. Warren Hastings had taken a disgust to India, and had gone home as soon as he was rich enough to do so—that is, in 1764, the year before Clive's last voyage out ; and Clive had been nearly two years at home again before Hastings had lost his money by speculation, and found it necessary to go forth again, if he was ever to be owner of Daylesford. In the interval it became clear that Clive's methods would not work well in any department of administration, though his reforms had improved the moral strength and reputation of the English body. It was impossible that the fiction of subservience to the Mogul sovereign could run parallel with the exercise of absolute power for any length of time. It could be nothing more than a device for passing over from one territorial tenure to another ; and it embarrassed both the foreign and domestic policy of Bengal. It was in reality our English strength which dominated

over the neighbouring viceroys, while the empty name of the Delhi sovereign was used. The internal management of the territory had to be confided (with the exception of military affairs) to a native minister; and it was difficult, in the first place, to fill the office well, and, in the next, to reconcile its existence with any real care of the land and the people. Whether a Mussulman or a Hindoo was appointed to that post of wealth and dignity, mischief was sure to ensue; and it was not possible to answer for good government while it remained in the hands of either. Thus, through this one political fiction, whereby Clive hoped to effect the English ascendancy in peace and quiet, there were always three obstacles in the way of honest English government—the nominal Sovereign of Hindostan at Delhi; his nominal Viceroy at Moorshedabad (his master and our servant); and the Prime Minister of the Viceroy, appointed by us, but wholly unqualified for doing our work, while sure to make mischief from being a member of one of two opposing native races.

Within the establishment at Calcutta, matters went no better. The committee was apt to split into factions, as such bodies usually are, and the more virulently the further they are from London. The President had only a casting vote in council, in case of an equal division; and nothing of importance could be done without the authority of the committee. Under these difficulties, everything went wrong. The reve-

nuc fell off, though the arrangements at home between the Company and the Government supposed a large annual income; there were bitter conflicts among authorities and parties in London; and, in the midst of the confusion, a famine happened in India which exceeded in horror almost every famine recorded in history. There is no need to dwell on a spectacle which any one can conceive for himself. It is enough to say that more than a third of the inhabitants of Bengal perished in it. Some of the Company's agents were then found to have traded in rice, in defiance of Clive's reforms and the Directors' prohibitions; report magnified the offence, and made out a strong case of cupidity and cruelty—probably much stronger than the facts would warrant: the unpopularity of Anglo-Indians in London increased every day; the persuasion was strengthened in the popular mind that the whole concern would soon end in a crash; the eagerness of the proprietary for large dividends was sharpened accordingly; and in 1771 an augmentation of the dividend was insisted upon, though it was known that the treasury at Calcutta was nearly empty, and that the Company was in debt all over India. Such a state of adversity, and such evidences of misgovernment, threw the Company very much into the power of parliament. In order to obtain the means of going on at all, by loans and otherwise, it was necessary to submit to very hard conditions. From  $12\frac{1}{2}$  per cent.

per annum the dividends were to be reduced to about half; the territorial possessions of the Company were treated as liable to use in the way of pledge; and proposals were offered to change the entire constitution of the Company. The Proprietors and Directors were to permit a raising of their respective qualifications; and—what is more to our purpose, in reviewing the story of the English in India—a Governor-General was to be installed at Calcutta, to rule over all the three presidencies—that of Bengal being the first in rank: four councillors were to be the cabinet of the new potentate; and a Supreme Court of Judicature was to be established at Calcutta, constituted of a Chief Justice and three other judges. The first body of new rulers were to be nominated by parliament for a term of five years, after which the nominations would revert to the Directors, subject to the approbation of the Crown: and all the functionaries of the Government and the courts were interdicted from all implication in commercial transactions.

These new arrangements became law in the Regulating Act of 1773. Warren Hastings had the year before been appointed Governor at Calcutta, in consequence of the ability he had manifested, from the time of his return to India, in retrieving the commercial condition of Madras, after its decline from the conversion of the merchants of that presidency into soldiers and diplomatists. Warren Has-

tings was the first Governor-General of India. We shall see how the introduction of English methods of law, and the mingling of English pretensions with Asiatic facts of government answered under the superintendence of a man of eminent and appropriate ability.

## CHAPTER IX.

## ACCOMPLISHMENT OF THE REVOLUTIONARY PERIOD.

1774—1785.

“ A heart like mine,  
 A heart that glows with the pure Julian fire,—  
 If bright ambition from her craggy seat  
 Display the radiant prize, will mount undaunted,  
 Gain the rough heights, and grasp the dangerous honour.”

GRAY.

“ What is here?—Gold!”—SHAKSPERE.

THE first Governor-General of India must be “ the observed of all observers ;” and his period of rule must be a marked era in the history, not only of the dependency itself, but of the country to which it belonged. If it must necessarily be so from the excitement of the public mind at home, under the agitating and disgusting news from Bengal in 1773, there was something in the mind and manners of the first Governor-General which rendered the crisis more marked, and the national interest more intense. Not a few of us who are living to receive the recent portentous tidings from India may remember the countenance and bearing of Warren Hastings ; for he lived till 1818. It was a countenance not to be

forgotten by any one who had ever seen it, full of intellectual serenity, thoughtful, somewhat melancholy, but resolved and confident. His figure was small, but anything but insignificant, in connection with a demeanour of natural dignity, a complexion which revealed a life of toil, and a head which proved a capacity for it. When he sailed for India the second time, in 1769, he left the impression of this countenance on the minds of the first men of a day of great men, and with it a high respect for his literary and political cultivation. Johnson looked up to him for the philosophy he quoted from his Oriental learning, and our great scholars for that Oriental learning itself. Our statesmen could hardly have given him credit, then or at any time, for comprehensive political views; but his constant adequacy to the occasion, his evident familiarity with the native mind and modes of life, and his strong convictions of what ought to be done at a time when the responsible parties were only too thankful to be told what they ought to do, pointed out Warren Hastings as one for whom an office of high authority ought to be created at such a time, if it would not otherwise exist. He at once took in hand, as has been seen, the mischief which had arisen at Madras from the conversion of traders into military and political officials; and his being promoted to the highest post followed almost as a matter of course.



It should be borne in mind, in studying the history of this time, that the worst things we know of the miseries of the inhabitants are told in the form of lamentation and remonstrance expressed by the Directors to their servants in India. The letters are extant in which they complained that every attempt they had made to reform abuses had increased them, and that the industrial classes of natives were more oppressed for every effort to protect them. "Youths" were suffered to domineer over whole communities, even as sovereigns, and to enrich themselves by monopolies, at the expense of the natives on the one hand, and of the Company on the other. The native merchants no longer appeared in the markets; the products found their way to Europe through every channel but the British; and the Company must be ruined unless an able head and hand could inaugurate on the spot a new system, first legalised at home. Such are the complaints of the Directors in their correspondence of April, 1773.

Who were these terrible "youths" who excited so much indignation in high quarters? They were the Supervisors, afterwards Collectors, a body of officials whose advent marked the transition of British India from being a new field of commerce to being a possession, requiring political administration. The failure of Clive's plan of double government, under which all the old evils remained, while the authority to deal with them was abstracted,

compelled a resort to some new method of obtaining the dues of the British establishment. The native collectors declared that they could not obtain money, the Mogul governors declared that they could not get their commands obeyed, in the administration of criminal and civil justice; and the people meantime pleaded for protection from every kind of spoliation. In 1769 it was decided that servants of the Company should be dispersed throughout the country, each superintending a district from a central station whence he could observe and control the native officers in their work of collecting the revenue, and also of administering justice. As these overlookers were soon found to need overlooking themselves, two councils were appointed for the purpose, to sit at Moorshedabad and at Patna. No benefit being observable at the end of two years, and the Supervisors' reports disclosing a fearful state of corruption and misery, the Directors at home decided to take the whole affair into their own hands, dispensing with all native intervention. Unaware that they were thus destroying the whole political structure of India, and causing a graver revolution than any invaders of the country were ever answerable for, they announced their decision, and desired their agents in Bengal to carry it out. The council at Calcutta, of which Mr. Hastings was then the most active member, undertook the business, set aside old modes of letting lands and levying revenue, deter-

mined in three days what new one would answer best, and converted their Supervisors into Collectors, with power which enabled them to do what the Directors complained of so bitterly in the spring of 1773. Their offices were now as much political as commercial; and the institution of the new scheme may be regarded as the half-way station between the commercial objects with which the Company entered the country, and the time (in 1834) when their commercial function had dissolved under the action of free-trade principles, and they remained a body with purely territorial functions and attributes.

The Governor-General was not at once the potential personage he has since become. The necessity of ruling by a Dictator (a dictator on the spot, though responsible to superiors at home) had not yet become obvious: and the Governor-General had no superiority in council, except the casting vote in case of an equal division. Whether he could govern or not depended chiefly on whether he had a party of two in the council. Two out of the four, with his own casting vote, were enough; and without it, he was not really governor. This is not the place in which to follow the history of the first general council and its factions, apart from the consequences to British interests. It must suffice to say that at the outset, three out of four of the council (and those the new officials from England) were opposed to Hastings.

It has been related that the internal administration of Bengal under Clive's "double system" was managed by the Nabob's prime-minister. This functionary had a salary of 100,000*l.* a year, and enjoyed a high dignity and immense power. One man who aspired to hold the office in Clive's time was the great Hindoo, Nuncomar, already described as eminent in English eyes for his wealth and his abilities, and much more in native estimation for his sanctity as a Brahmin, and his almost unbounded social power. He seems to have been a sort of Wolsey, if we can imagine Wolsey waiting for office at the pleasure of a foreign authority. In one way he was more exalted than Wolsey; his life was regarded as absolutely sacred, as a Brahmin: whereas nobody's life was secure near Henry VIII. The Maharajah Nuncomar was a great scoundrel—there is no doubt of that; and his intrigues, supported by forgeries, were so flagrant as to prevent his appointment to the premiership under the Nabob. Such vices were less odious in Bengal than almost anywhere else; but they were inconvenient, as well as disgusting, to the British; and this was the reason why Clive set aside Nuncomar, and appointed his rival competitor, Mohammed Reza Khan, though he was highly reluctant to place the highest office in Bengal in the hands of a Mussulman. This Mussulman administered affairs for seven years before Hastings

became Governor-General; and he also had the charge of the infant Nabob, after Surajah Dowla died. We have seen how dissatisfied the Directors were with the proceeds of their Bengal dominions. Nuncomar planted his agents everywhere; and in London especially; and these agents persuaded the Directors that Mohammed Reza Khan was to blame for their difficulties and their scanty revenues. Confident in this information, they sent secret orders to Hastings to arrest the great Mussulman, and everybody who belonged to him, and to hear what Nuncomar had to say against him. A similar disgrace was to be inflicted on the minister who held the same office in Bahar, Shitab-Roy, a brave man, devoted to the British. He was arrested at Patna when the greater Bengal minister was seized at Moorshedabad. Hastings announced this act of obedience in a letter to the Directors, dated Sept. 1, 1772, and informed his employers that he had kept the matter so secret that the members of the Council knew nothing of it till the accused ministers were on the road to Calcutta. While they were still in confinement the old system was swept away, and their offices with it. The young Nabob was committed to the charge of one of his father's wives, and his income was diminished one half. When the new system was fairly established, the two ministers were released. Shitab-Roy received an apology, and

all possible consideration; but he was already broken-hearted, and he presently died. The great Mussulman did not come out altogether so well from the trial, as Nuncomar had no scruples as to what he alleged, and how he supported it; but the Mussulman minister was not punished, and Nuncomar hated Hastings accordingly. He bided his time, storing up materials of accusation with which to overwhelm the Governor at the first turn of his fortunes. That turn was when the majority of the Council were opposed to the Governor-General, and rendered him helpless in his office; and Nuncomar then presented himself, with offers of evidence to prove all manner of treasons and corruptions against Hastings. Hastings was haughty; the councils were tempestuous: Hastings prepared to resign, though he was aware that the opinion of the English in Bengal was with him; and Nuncomar was the greatest native in the country, visited by the Council, and resorted to by all his countrymen who ventured to approach him. Foiled in the Council, Hastings had recourse to the Supreme Court. He caused Nuncomar to be arrested on a charge brought ostensibly by a native of having forged a bond six years before. After a long trial for an offence which appeared very slight to Bengalee natives in those days, the culprit was found guilty by a jury of Englishmen, and condemned to death

by the judges. Monstrous as was the idea, in native minds, of hanging any man for so common an act as forgery—(much like lying with us)—it was more than monstrous—it was incredible that a Brahmin should be executed. Though he knew this, Hastings did not encourage the Chief Justice to use his power of respiting offenders pending a reference home. The Council declared that Nuncomar should be rescued at the last moment, if no other means remained. The British, many of whom had paid homage to Nuncomar in his greatness, were earnest to have him respited. The natives rejoiced or sorrowed, according as they were Mussulmans or Hindoos; but none of them appeared to have conceived that the great and sacred Brahmin would be really put to death. He was put to death, however, and by hanging. The people acted as if the final curse of Heaven had fallen upon them; and their frantic horror must have moved even the stern soul of Hastings. He was not a philosopher, nor a statesman “looking before and after,” and therefore he perhaps failed to be aware on that portentous day that he had caused a bottomless gulf to yawn between the Hindoos and the Anglo-Indians, and that he would himself have to meet, on this side the grave, a day of retribution for this deed. The execution took place on the 5th of August, 1776. Mohammed Reza Khan was restored to that part of his former

office which gave him the charge of the young Nabob and of the royal household at Moorshedabad.

Another of the guilty deeds by which Hastings compromised our national character while his ability was extending our power, was as audacious as the sacrifice of Nuncomar, and, at the same time, as sordid as any theft. The Mogul sovereign, Shah Alum, sunk in weakness and ignominy, lived at Allahabad, while his deputy, an able Rohilla chief, managed affairs at Delhi. The Rohillas were the warrior gentlemen of the Mussulman body in India, imported from beyond the north-western mountains, ranking high among the Affghan troops settled in India, and peaceably established as landholders in the plains extending from within seventy miles of the city of Delhi, to the spurs of the Himalay. While the Rohilla chief lived to administer affairs at Delhi, the nominal Emperor subsisted on the tribute (nearly 300,000*l.* a year) paid him by the English for the Bengal provinces. He was restless in his palace at Allahabad, and ever on the watch for the means of returning to Delhi, though perhaps with some apprehension as to what might become of the districts of Allahabad and Corah (made over to him by the Company) if he shifted his quarters. In 1770 the Rohilla deputy at Delhi died; and the Emperor then resolved to do what he had long meditated—he called in the Mahrattas to help him to his throne. They were abundantly ready to



gratify him: and, as soon as he was sufficiently involved to be unable to retract, and helpless in his camp in the midst of the rains, their chiefs offered him ruinous terms as the price of their assistance. On the 25th of December, 1772, he re-entered his capital, carrying himself as if he were really a great Mogul sovereign, while feeling himself the victim of the Mahrattas on the one hand and the English on the other; and exactly a twelvemonth later, he opened the gates of Delhi to the Mahrattas, in their character of besiegers, pressing him for the fulfilment of their hard terms. As for the English—Hastings made the discovery that it was absurd to keep faith with a nominal sovereign who was the tool of other people, as the Emperor now was of the Mahrattas; and he therefore gave notice that the annual tribute would not be paid again, and that the concession of the districts of Allahabad and Corah was revoked. These districts were so placed as to be more costly than profitable to the Company; whereas they lay conveniently to hand for the Viceroy of Oude—vassals of the Emperor. The Oude Nabob, Sujah-ood-Dowla, desired the lands: Hastings wanted money; and the parties struck a bargain. The Nabob purchased the districts for about half a million sterling. As for the Mahratta auxiliaries, they carried the Emperor and his forces northward with them, and seized first the lands of the late deputy, who had served his master so long and so faithfully.

The brave efforts of the Rohillas failed to save their high-lying, unfenced, and rich plains from being laid waste; but their ruin was accomplished by Hastings, in his eager desire for money. He had already sold to Oude lands stolen from the Emperor: he now sold to Oude, in a different form, the brave and unoffending Rohillas. Sujah Dowla dared not encounter them unless reinforced by the best troops obtainable. The English troops (including their native regiments) were the best; and they were found obtainable. Hastings negotiated a loan of the British army, and received in consideration of its services, 400,000*l.*, clear of all expenses. Hastings himself put this transaction on record in a report to his council. He met the Oude Nabob at Benares in September, 1773; he “encouraged” the Nabob’s desire to acquire the Rohilla country, bearing in mind the distresses of the Company, and the importunity of the Directors for money. By the arrangement then, and there entered into, the military expenses of the Company would be reduced nearly one-third; “the forty lakhs would afford an ample supply to our treasury: the Viceroy would be freed from a troublesome neighbourhood, and his dominions be much more defensible.” The considerations which were not referred to, were—why a peaceable and honourable people should be invaded, and what England would say to having her name mixed up in such a business, for mere money, and her troops

sold to a rich bidder, to do such thief's work as this. What England thought of it, Hastings had the opportunity of seeing when, thirteen years later, he heard his act arraigned by Burke in the Commons, as the ground of an impeachment; and, again, fifteen years after the Benares *tête-à-tête*, when the *élite* of the British nation, assembled at Westminster, listened to his impeachment for various crimes and misdemeanours, of which the foremost, as the most flagrant, was the Rohilla war. The Directors expressed the strongest displeasure at this, and at other deeds of Hastings; but he noticed their remonstrances in his own way—by a sneer; saying that they should not press him so urgently for remittances if they were so hard to please as to his methods of raising money.

When the majority in Council shifted to his side, by accidents of death and other change, he extended his views, stiffened his will against all obstacles, and resolved to set his heel on the neck of his adversaries, while making the English power paramount throughout India. He was still embarrassed with financial difficulties; and his success in raising money from Oude tempted him to look round for some other rich potentate who might relieve his wants. There was no richer city then than Benares, the holy city, crammed with the gifts of devotees, and made the depôt of the commerce of the Ganges. The Hindoo princes of Benares had been vassals of Delhi and

Oude, and now stood in the same relation to the Company. Hastings demanded, for three successive years, 50,000*l.* in addition to the customary tribute. Cheyte Sing, the Benares prince, offered him 20,000*l.* for himself if he would remit the demand. Hastings took the money, and long kept the secret of his having it, though he finally declared that he never meant to appropriate it. However that may be, he did not remit the demand, but raised it to 60,000*l.* as a fine for delay, and exacted it by marching troops to receive it. The money was paid, and then a body of cavalry was demanded. Hastings avowed his policy towards Cheyte Sing — to increase his demands till the prince turned restive, and then to make him pay high for pardon. Cheyte Sing offered 200,000*l.* to be received into favour; but was told that it was not enough, and that the Governor-General was coming to Benares. Hastings was meditating selling Benares by a third bargain with the Oude Nabob. At Benares he arrested the prince, and was in consequence barely saved from ending his career in the midst of one of its basest acts. His officers were killed by the enraged populace of the Brahminical city; and the whole country rose, for many miles round, at the first news of a check to the English. The prince had escaped to the opposite river bank, and was preparing to dictate terms to his oppressor, when the British troops came up, summoned by messages which Hastings,

had managed to send through the enemy. The British troops conquered; Benares was annexed to the English territory. The prince fled; one of his family was made Rajah of Benares, but without power, or other wealth than his pension from the Company. The Company received nothing from the far-famed treasury of Benares. It contained only a quarter of a million, and it went to the troops as prize-money. The territory, however, yielded a revenue of 200,000*l.* a year. His treatment of Cheyte Sing formed the second article of Hastings' impeachment.

An equally bad case was his pillage of the Princesses, or Begums, of Oude. A young Nabob now ruled there. He extorted money from his wealthy mother so outrageously that she appealed to the English for protection. Hastings believed that she and the other ladies of the family were worth 3,000,000*l.* in treasure, besides palaces and other wealth. He conspired with the profligate son to charge the ladies with having instigated disturbance at the time of the Benares conflict, and to take their wealth as a fine. They were imprisoned, insulted, and subjected to hardship, and their trusted officers were tortured. Hastings extorted 1,200,000*l.* from them, and justified himself for this, as for the other deeds just related, on the ground that the people of India could be managed only by force or fraud; that it was his business to do the best he could for the

interests of the Company, and that he must be the best judge of the means. The Directors and the English Government remonstrated against his acts, and repeatedly endeavoured to remove him; but he was so stoutly and obstinately supported by the proprietary, that he set his enemies at defiance, and completed the revolutionary period of our history in India by ruling till 1785.

We shall see hereafter how British courts of law worked in a country where the morality of Western Europe and its safeguards of law must at first have been unintelligible, and afterwards unacceptable. We can now only indicate that the establishment of a Supreme Court at Calcutta was a sign and pledge of a settled organization, as the territorial arrangements of Hastings were of a permanent policy. He committed crimes, and inflicted misery, as unnecessarily (according to modern opinion) as wickedly. But, these crimes apart, he was a great benefactor to both countries by amalgamating them to a greater extent than any other man had done, or than any other could have done. He was the first Governor of India who could and did converse with any natives in their own tongue. He was the first who opened the potent and mild resources of intellectual sympathy, by cultivating and honouring Oriental literature, and interesting the best minds of Europe in the history of our native subjects in Hindostan. He made the way easier for future Governors, and

finished with his own strong hand the revolutionary period which perhaps no other could have brought to a close. It is impossible to esteem him, and it is impossible not to admire him. Without any appearance of a conscience, and with nearly as little indication of a heart, he had a most effective understanding, and deserved whatever praise can be commanded by vigorous and patient resolution; and a life of strenuous purposes carried out in unflinching action. He could hardly have been a happy man at any time; but he was strong and collected enough to keep his foes at bay, and win a final victory over them in the form of an acquittal from charges for which he had in fact undergone a protracted punishment of disgrace and suspense. He won royal favour, and a good deal of popular admiration: was made a Privy Councillor and the idol of the street; and he died, Hastings of Daylesford. He would probably have confessed in some soft hour of sunset, under the old oaks, that he did not enjoy them so much after the heavy price he had paid for them as when, in his childhood, he dreamed of possessing them, without a thought of guilt to be risked in the acquisition of them.

## CHAPTER X.

CLOSE OF THE FIRST EXPERIMENT OF GENERAL  
GOVERNMENT,

1785.

“This is true, that ‘the wisdom of all these later times, in princes’ affairs, is rather fine deliveries, and shiftings of dangers and mischiefs, when they are near, than solid and grounded courses to keep them aloof. But, this is but to try masteries with fortune.”—BACON.

AT the close of so critical a period as that of the administration of the first Governor-General, and of such a ruler as Warren Hastings, it seems fitting to take stock, as it were, of our East India possessions, to ascertain the amount and condition of what we have acquired. For this purpose we must see what has been doing to the South. The Madras Presidency had, at the time, no mind to be overlooked on account of the vast and showy achievements of Clive and Hastings in Bengal; and the spread of our empire was in fact nearly as remarkable, in the way of influence, in the south of the peninsula as it was in extent in Hindostan Proper, while there was as little to be said for the moral quality of the conquest in the one case as in the other. The grand apparent



difference in the two cases is that in the north-eastern territory two men of eminent ability did everything by their own strong will and dexterous hands, so that the spectacle presented to the natives was that of a ready-witted, resolute, irresistible Power, doing what it pleased with their country; whereas at Madras there was no overbearing genius, acting and ruling in defiance of men and circumstances, but a set of men quarrelling among themselves, and, if by chance agreeing on any policy or method, pretty sure to reverse it on receiving orders from home. Their military quality was highly esteemed; and there was an incessant competition for their alliance; but, as long as the Directors and their agents were apt to be at variance about their most important proceedings, and the chief officials were seen to be changed almost as soon as any decided policy was instituted, the general impression throughout the Deccan inevitably was that the British in India were weak and fickle, like other people, though in a less degree than the native rulers.

It will be remembered that Clive's early achievements left us with a Nabob of Arcot on our hands. The only lands held by the Company were the district round Madras, and a maritime district, the Northern Circars, which the Delhi Sovereign granted to them in 1765, and about the revenues of which they had made arrangements with the Nizam, the great Viceroy of the Deccan. More than this was

necessary to sustain such a position as theirs—that of arbiters of the destinies and relations of the native rulers; and they therefore first arranged with their Nabob that they should undertake the military defence of the Carnatic—he paying the expenses. By this means they obtained possession of all the forts; and it was resolved that whenever the Nabob desired to get rid of the garrisons, he was now thankful to borrow, his wish should be resisted. The country was thickly studded with forts, perched on hill-tops, commanding difficult passes among the hills, or protecting fertile plains; and every soldier that could be spared was in one or another of them.

The vicinity of the British was dreaded by one order of the people and liked by another. The wealthier classes felt themselves reduced to the level of the multitude wherever the British administered or controlled either military or financial affairs; whereas, the lower classes were less wretched in proportion to the stability ensured by the presence of the English. As for the administration of justice, the time had not yet arrived for the introduction of English law even into the British territory on the coast, where it was hereafter to create as much disgust and bewilderment as in Bengal. Meantime, as the Hindoos predominated over the Mohammedans so as to allow few traces of Mussulman rule in the south, it was left chiefly to the Brahmins to deal with offences. Their power of excommunication was so

much more effective than any penal arrangements which could be made by Mussulman or Christian, that, whatever might be professed, the whole business of social morals and manners remained in the old hands, wherever the British appeared, as it had done wherever Aurungzebe had penetrated. Thus time passed, native rulers now combining and now making war on each other; now inviting the dreaded Mahrattas, and now seeking alliances against them; and everybody, all round, using the Mahratta name as a bugbear to frighten everybody else. The English, all the while, were under constant embarrassment as to whom they should support and whom put down; and the Directors sometimes left them without guidance, and even without answers, when they requested orders; and then confirmed or reversed their work, as might happen. The Rajah of Tanjore was deposed to please the Nabob of Arcot; and then the Directors insisted on his being reinstated. Again, the English Government sent out naval commanders to whom the Directors gave authority over their naval force in India; and this caused a perpetual struggle about precedence in dignity, and authority in political affairs. When Government sent an envoy on a mission, he required the Company's officers to appear in his train; and they found it impossible to do so before the eyes of tribes and nations who had always regarded them as supreme. An occasional rebellion of the Council,

or a part of it, against a President, the recall of a popular Governor home, or the imprisonment of an unpopular one on the spot, went further than anything else probably to show the essential evils and insurmountable difficulties of a method of rule which had grown up in India out of the natural circumstances of the case. Groups of foreign traders had inevitably become a territorial and political power, apparently supreme, but soon seen to be subjects, liable to be overruled from home in matters of Indian concern. Another complication was added when the two earlier Presidencies were placed under that of Bengal, and all the local governments subordinated to a Governor-General and the decisions of a Supreme Court. Here was the Madras Governor subjected to the Governor-General; and he to the Directors; and the Directors (under certain agreements at critical seasons) to the King's Government. It was not to be expected that the watchful nabobs, far and near, and the restless Mahrattas, and the jealous French who remained in India, should be much impressed by the consistency and dignity of a method of rule so complicated, and so troubled in its working. General notices like these must suffice in regard to the state of the Madras Presidency up to the year 1778.

The French were so often found to be on good terms with the Company's enemies, and helping them in wars and revolutions, that it was determined by the English to expel them from India

on the first convenient opportunity. If we got an ally to enforce our demand, that French troops should be dismissed from territory which we had leased to a small chief, our ally helped us with alacrity, but only to engage the French troops in his own service. French officers organized the soldiery of any doubtful power, and were found in the heart of hostile territories and councils. When news arrived, in July, 1778, of war between France and England, the English did not wait to hear confirmation of the rumour, but disembarrassed themselves of the French at once. The settlements on the Hooghly and the Bay of Bengal surrendered on summons, and Pondicherry fell in September. The garrison were gallant soldiers, and the British were a generous foe; and every circumstance of mitigation softened the bitter mortification of vacating the place in which the French had till now been, as it were, an opposite neighbour in India to the other great European power. The garrison marched out with the honours of war, and the Pondicherry regiment was allowed to carry its colours.

There remained one foot-hold of the French—a small place on the western coast, called Mahé, where they had a factory. The spirit of Hastings showed itself in the project of marching native troops, under their European officers, across the peninsula, to take this small place, at once driving out the French altogether, testing the dispositions of

the intermediate rulers, and proving the quality of his favourite Sepoys. Hastings met with opposition from the majority of his Council; but he had not only resolved to attempt the feat, but had strong pleas to urge in its favour. The Bombay Presidency needed cheering and strengthening. Hyder Ali (whose story we must presently tell) derived so much assistance from the French that it was desirable to prevent their having a residence and storehouses in the country. The scheme becoming known, it was the best policy to execute it rapidly. So the thing was done. Hastings was proud of the march to his dying day; and the Bengal Sepoys, however changed in mood towards us, are proud of it to this hour. We have seen that mutinies have been occasioned by attempts to send Sepoys to sea. Hastings was aware that, to escape such an order, his Bengal force would willingly meet every other sort of danger. A body of nearly 7,000 Sepoys, commanded by 103 European officers, and encumbered by a body of 31,000 followers (rendered necessary by the unknown character of the country they were to traverse) was ordered to rendezvous near Cawnpore, whence it commenced its march on June 12, 1778. Hastings superseded the commander in September, appointing Lieutenant-Colonel Goddard in his stead, under whom the march was completed. On they marched, no one knowing in the morning

what scenes and people he should become acquainted with before night. Sometimes on wide hot plains, sprinkled over with mosques and saints' tombs, with their environment of dwellings: sometimes in perilous passes, with Hindoo temples half-way up the shelving rocks: sometimes overtaken to get out of the jungle before night; and then embarrassed how to cross deep gullies or broad rivers, while a multitude of inhabitants looked on uneasily, or fled, to give the alarm of invasion: now feeling as if they were leaving home for ever, because they must pass the Vindhya range; and at last, finding "the black water" on the other side their world—they must have felt what our resources of knowledge and travel hardly allow us to conceive; but they did what they undertook: European troops met them, having come round by sea; Colonel Braithwaite led them to the attack; and they took Mahé on the 19th March, 1779. It was strongly placed; but it was not stocked for a siege. The French might be very mischievous still, by assisting the plans and the warfare of our enemies; but they were dislodged from their last foot-hold. As to the Bengal Sepoys, the Governor-General said of them that they had proved "that there are no difficulties which the true spirit of military enterprise is not capable of surmounting."

At the moment when this feat was accomplished

there was severe embarrassment in the Council-chamber at Madras. Hyder Ali, the great ruler of Mysore, had just applied for assistance against the Mahrattas; and the question was what answer to give him. He appealed to a treaty of nine years' standing, by which the Madras Government was bound to alliance with him in defensive wars; but he had made the same appeal in the first year after the treaty, and had obtained nothing better than neutrality. The British were afraid to involve themselves with the Mahrattas, by openly assisting Hyder, but they would do nothing against him. The same answer was given now, and bitterly did the English rue it. How came they to pledge themselves to such an alliance in mutual defence if they could not keep to it for a single year? Their excuse was that they could not help themselves, being at Hyder's mercy at the moment of negotiation. Hyder was a soldier of fortune, of the lowest birth—his great-grandfather having been a wandering dervish from the Punjaub, who begged through the country, in order to raise the means of founding a mosque in the dominions of the Nizam of the Deccan—a method by which he got money as well as reputation. His descendant Hyder grew up totally uneducated; but he was a born soldier and commander, and he lived to endanger the British empire in India more than any man, or even any hostile nation, from the hour when



they set foot in it till now. He was rendered irredeemably hard-hearted and vindictive by having been put to the torture in childhood with his brother, to extort payment for a pretended debt of their deceased father; and early humiliation aggravated his ambitious tendencies to passion. By serving his prince, the Rajah of Mysore, at a pinch, by his soldierly qualities, he obtained a military command; and having used his position for marauding purposes, he was able to make such an appearance in the field as secured further promotion. He raised a troop, and armed them from the proceeds of his plunder, and engaged French officers to drill and organise them. He engaged, also, an astute and servile Brahmin, who supplied the defects of his ignorance, and did the dirty work of his intrigues. Hyder became Commander-in-Chief of Mysore, and with the aid of his Brahmin, pillaged friend and foe by a diligent use of his authority, his force, and his opportunities. He swept off the cattle of every district he crossed, and sold them at advanced prices to their owners. The number of his wounded always appeared unaccountably large on the periodical occasions when the allowance for the wounded was to be drawn; the fact being, that he added hundreds of sound men to the body of claimants by bandaging their limbs and bodies in cloths dyed blood-colour. While he was in the field, his Brahmin was at court wheedling the weak Rajah with praises of the

Commander-in-Chief, and obtaining whatever Hyder chose to ask. When he felt himself strong enough, Hyder assumed the office of prime minister, and soon after pensioned off the Rajah, and seated himself on his throne. This took place in 1761, when Clive had just returned to England after the acquisition of Bengal, and young Warren Hastings was made a member of Council. It is hardly probable that either foresaw, when hearing of the accession of a new and warlike ruler of Mysore, that the bandit Hyder, who cut off noses and ears by hundreds in a day, and plundered every wealthy man he could hear of, would be, within ten years, not only the most embarrassing ally the English in India had ever had, but the enemy who would be very near driving them out of the country altogether.

As sovereign of Mysore, he first encroached on all his neighbours, so as to unite them all in an alliance against him; and next he took advantage of their fears to divide them, and make them fight his battles. In 1767, the Nizam, the great Prince of the Deccan, was warring against the British, instead of with them against Hyder. The English, afflicted by the weaknesses already described, had enough to do to meet the Nizam, when suddenly Hyder swept down the pass, and scoured the plains of the Carnatic, almost without drawing bridle for the last 120 miles, and appeared before Fort George, and among the residences of the English officials. The Madras Govern-

ment declared that there was no option about making a peace on the enemy's terms; and it was then and therefore that they agreed with Hyder to restore all conquests on both sides, and to aid one another against all attack from any quarter. The British treated their engagement as men too often treat "vows made in pain;" and they failed their ally in his next struggle with the Mahrattas. It suited his purposes to let them alone for the time, when he had beaten off his invaders; and he applied himself, between 1774 and 1778, in strengthening his empire. In 1778, the Mahrattas threatened him again; and again he applied to the British to fulfil their agreement.

Again they shrank from giving active help; and ~~sorely~~ they suffered for it. The French were smarting under the humiliation of their total dislodgment, and they stimulated the passions of Hyder, and offered their services in organising his forces. They set about their work diligently; and so did Hyder in another direction. He won over not only the Nizam, but his own enemy, the Mahrattas, to an alliance against the British. The British seem to have been misled by the impunity allowed them on the former occasion of receding from their engagements; for it does not appear that they were at all prepared for the consequences of their present faithlessness, and of his wrath at their taking Mahé, after a warning from him that he considered that place in some sort

a dependency of his own, and that if it was meddled with he would invade the Carnatic. At one time the council wrote to Calcutta that affairs looked threatening; and then they informed the Directors that their prospects were pacific. They did so in January, 1780, and again in February; while, so late as the following June, no measures of defence were taken. Then, they bethought themselves of moving a detachment of soldiers across the Kistna, to be within call. It was on the 19th of June that news arrived of the assemblage of a large army under French officers at Bangalore, and of the march of Hyder from Seringapatam. Before the end of the month it was known at all the Presidencies that Hyder's army had been supplied with stores in abundance from the French islands, and that the force fell little short of 100,000 men. Then ensued that invasion of the Carnatic which is as celebrated an event as any in the history of India. The mighty host poured down from the breezy table-land of Mysore upon the hot plains of the Carnatic through the passes, and especially through that one which Sir James Mackintosh found so safe for the solitary traveller seven-and-thirty years later—as wild with rock and jungle in the one case as the other, but witnessing within one generation the modes of life which are usually seen five centuries apart. Mysore was rising under Hyder to the stage of improvement which a vigorous Mohammedan ruler can induce

upon an exhausted Hindoo state; but, under British superintendence, the best policy of Hyder had been left far behind for many years when the Recorder of Bombay made his philosophical observations on the security of life, property, and industry, on the very road by which Hyder descended to lay waste the Carnatic.

The Carnatic was indeed laid waste. Our garrisons yielded, for the most part; and the war, and its consequences of famine and disease, so depopulated the country, that, after peace was made, not one human being, nor one head of cattle, was met in a journey of hundreds of miles. The villages were burned, far on each side of the invaders' path; and Madras was so closely pressed that there was no other prospect than of yielding ultimately from famine. The British force was divided and overthrown in detail; and there appeared to be no means of meeting the great French force expected on the coast. The peasantry told Hyder everything, and the British commanders nothing; and it was the utmost that the English could do to hold their ground in a few fortified posts, without venturing upon offensive operations. Then it was that Hastings made his second memorable venture with his Bengal Sepoys. He sent down five regiments 1,100 miles along the coast to Madras, venturing to oppose them to French troops, and having cause to be proud of his venture. They returned at the end of four years

to Bengal, just before Hastings laid down his authority. He reviewed them, rewarding them with language which fired the hearts of a generation of future soldiers. As he rode along, in his civilian blue coat, and with uncovered head, every countenance of that array of black Rajpoots (for they were chiefly of that race) blazed with pride and delight; and the way in which those Sepoys were assured that they had mainly saved the southern Presidency is a tradition all over India to this day. Sir Eyre Cote, the idol of the native troops, was sent to conduct the war; and, by their attachment, rendering available his failing powers, and by the vigour of the Governor-General's absolutism over the feebleness of the Madras authorities, our empire was saved. At Porto Novo, near the old Fort St. David, which Clive knew so well, the British force was in a desperate position on the 1st of July, 1781—with the deafening surf parting them from their ships on the right hand, and Hyder's host in possession of all the sand-hills round, and of both roads in front. The occasion kindled a valour like that of Crécy; and the handful of hungry British put to flight the well-found host of the enemy, as a family of wolves scatter a herd of sheep. If the English had had cavalry, they would have destroyed Hyder's force; as it was, they dispersed it, and obtained a rich booty, with a loss of only 400 men. Still, hunger pressed throughout the province, and most where it was necessary to concentrate the force.

It was no use to propose negotiation. Hyder's reply to all such overtures was that there was no negotiating with authorities who went home every two years or so, being succeeded by men who disclaimed the pledges of their predecessors. The whole affair seemed to be drawing towards the dreaded close of a surrender through famine when Hyder died before Madras. His son Tippoo was as well disposed a successor as he could have desired, though not as vigorous; but, between the shock to his army of their old leader's death, the necessity of going home to establish his authority there, and the danger of invasion on the west by a force from Bombay, Tippoo found it necessary to withdraw from the Carnatic. Hyder died in Nov., 1782; Tippoo withdrew homewards in 1783; and made peace in the spring of 1784. The basis of the treaty, after so much mischief had been done, was, as before, a mutual restitution of conquests. The next year closed the reign of the first Governor-General; and our possessions in India then stood thus. A reference to the map will show the proportion our acquisitions in 1785 bore to our dominion now. When Clive and Hastings were said, in their own time, to have given us an Indian empire, the extent of our territory was a matter of wonder and conscientious misgiving; but the great fact of the case was the establishment of a policy under which the territory, and its advantages of every kind, must grow and increase. The possessions which

Hastings left to his successor were; the whole of Bengal, with its appendages of Orissa and Bahar; and the territory of Benares, the Northern Circars, lying along the Bay of Bengal, the Guntoor Circar, separately acquired in 1778; the estate of the Company near Madras, consisting of five miles along the coast; and Nagore, acquired from the Tanjore Rajah. On the western coast, the island of Salsette had been ceded to us by the Mahrattas. The Carnatic was, in fact, our own, being held under our control by a Nabob who was a mere creature of the Company. At the close of a period so remarkable as the administration of Warren Hastings, and in prospect of further conflicts in the Deccan, a new provision of government was made, of the highest importance in the history of our empire in India. That empire was thenceforward to be ruled under the combined authority of the British Government and the East India Company.



## CHAPTER XI.

### BEGINNING OF THE DOUBLE GOVERNMENT.

1784—1799.

“’Tis not easy for the distant parts of a large State to combine in any plan of free government; but they easily conspire in the esteem and reverence for a single person.”—HUME.

“How shall the enemy of the bride speak well of the wedding?”  
*Proverb.*

WITHOUT departing from the plan of these chapters—that of describing the British in India, and not the fluctuations of Indian questions in Britain—it is necessary to glance homewards occasionally at those marked periods when the legislature provided for great changes to be wrought in the management of our new dependency. The last of those great changes was the institution of a Supreme Government and Judicature in 1774. The plan did not work very well, and it failed to supply some needs; so that before the first Governor-General resigned his office it was clear that further considerable changes must be made—and especially at the source of authority—in the very constitution of the governing power of India. The outcry against Hastings, which was soon to cause his impeachment, was already very loud, and the Ministry and the

India-house together could not prevail against the determination to support him on the part of the proprietors. Other causes of discontent, financial, political and moral, have been referred to before, and we can only glance at the most serious of all—the ill-success of the introduction of English law, and the establishment of the Supreme Court in Bengal. No sufficient care had been used to define the powers and duties of the executive government, on the one hand, and the judiciary on the other; and incessant strifes between the two caused a rivalry in the oppression of the natives which must be put an end to, one way or another. English law proceedings are not very delightful to us at home, among whom, and to suit whom, the whole body of British law has grown up. It could not possibly suit any other country but one inhabited by our own race; and there is no Asiatic people to whom it could be rendered intelligible, applicable, or endurable, without a training of such duration as need not be contemplated here. Every custom, feeling and prejudice of the natives was outraged by our system of oaths, examinations, scale of offences, trials, and punishments. Never, perhaps, was a man more extensively or bitterly hated than the first Chief Justice—Sir Elijah Impey, whose merits and demerits are still a matter of controversy, but who would have fared little better in such a post if he had been a just man made perfect. The confusion

and popular wretchedness in Bengal under the new system were so terrible, and the Company at home were so disappointed, and so unable to keep on good terms with the Government, that something must evidently be done; and the British people were roused to a stronger interest than the present generation has ever been seen to take in Indian politics.

In 1783, Lord North and Mr. Fox were administering affairs at home, and Hastings was intriguing in Bengal with the Nabob of Oude, with whom his famous interview was to take place in a few months. Mr. Fox proposed his scheme for the better government of India, not at all anticipating the hubbub it would occasion, nor dreaming that it would throw out the Coalition Ministry. Never before had the nation been so excited about Indian affairs, though the main objection made to the bill was founded on purely British considerations. The King was angry and alarmed to excess; and the Commons, with their considerable majority, were obliged to give way before the hostility of the Lords to the measure. These circumstances are referred to here because the impression they produced on young minds largely affected the subsequent fortunes of our Indian empire. Among the eager listeners to the debates, which were repeatedly carried on till four or five in the morning, was the young Irish peer Lord Wellesley, who had won reputation as a scholar and a poet, and who had lately taken his seat, and his place among Grattan's

party in the Irish House of Lords. He was soon to become intimate with Pitt, and in a few years more to establish a theory and practice of government in India, for which the discussions of 1783 and 1784 went some way to prepare him. We hardly need add that he had a young brother, Arthur, who was likewise to have something to do with India. He was now a boy of fifteen, fond of play, and showing a countenance so undeveloped that then, and for long after, it was said by casual observers that whatever his accomplished brother, Richard might do, nothing would ever come out of Arthur. He, too, heard at school something of the uproar about Fox's India Bill, though without any suspicion how nearly the matter might concern him. Young John Malcolm, born in the same month, had already chosen India for his destination, and had just landed at Madras, and gone to the seat of war in front of Tippoo's force. Munro was in the field there, an ensign of four-and-twenty, interested in learning how the presidency was to be legislated for, of which he was to be an eminent governor. There was a French prisoner in camp about that time who probably cared little enough about how our legislature dealt with India, but who was afterwards so far interested as every European monarch must be in the management of such a dependency of any empire. A young serjeant, whose name was Bernadotte, was taken in a night attack on the British camp, and detained till the

peace in 1784. These were of the generation which connects us with that charged with the first establishment of a polity in India.

Fox's bills were thrown out, and Pitt's rival measures became law in 1784; and there was another "double government" to be discussed as the leading feature of our Indian rule. Clive's "double government" consisted of the face and its mask; Pitt's "double government" consisted of a dual brain with its pertaining pair of hands. Under Clive, the British ruled absolutely, while fulfilling the forms of vassalage to the Mogul court. Under the system of 1784, the Company and the administration prepared by consultation and a regulated co-operation or method of concession at home, for carrying on an absolute government in India. Clive's method was merely provisional, and expired when Hastings transferred the administration of Bengal from Moorshedabad to Calcutta, on the imprisonment of the native ministers. The Double Government provided in 1784 by the legislature is in operation at this day. The two methods have nothing in common but the name; but their having the same name renders this short explanation desirable.

The Company's home government consisted before of the two courts—first of Directors, and second of Proprietors. To these was now added a third body, whose office was described in part by its title

the Board of Control—a body consisting at first of Privy Councillors, nominated by the King, to the number of six, and of the Secretaries of State and Chancellor of the Exchequer, in virtue of their office. The limitation to the Privy Council for a choice of members was removed nine years later. The President transacts the business on ordinary occasions; and his business is to superintend the political and territorial transactions of the Company (who were then less a political than a commercial body), to overlook all the correspondence on those subjects, and, if necessary, to overrule the proceedings of the Directors. As a compensation for this, the Court of Proprietors could not interfere when the Government and the Directors were agreed. The salaries and other expenses of the Board of Control were to be paid by the Company.

Such is the famous Double Government of India which all the civilized world criticises, and which stands as an anomaly in political history. Without defending it in a theoretical view, Englishmen may fairly ask men of other nations (whether republicans or subjects of a despotism) what better arrangement could have been made, under circumstances wholly unprecedented? A set of merchants found themselves involved accidentally (as may be said) in war and politics, and compelled to exercise military and political sway, while they were themselves

subjects of a remote monarchy which had no connection with India except through them. It was not the case of a colony and its mother-country; for India has never yet been colonized. It was the case of an aggregate of States, poor and misgoverned, and in such a condition of anarchy that the commercial Company was not so much tempted as compelled to overrule by its power of civilization the terrorism and corruption of native rivals and tyrants. The struggle was deepened and dignified by the intrusion of our European rivals, the French, upon the scene; and a decisive character was given to the whole by the accident of two men of eminent ability starting up in the most critical times, each in his place. Clive and Hastings bequeathed to the Company functions and liabilities which had never been contemplated or desired, and to which its members must, except by miracle, be inadequate. They must be aided by Government; bickerings must arise out of the mutual jealousies of bodies so connected; and when the political and territorial business of the Company began to outgrow the mercantile, so that the honour and the foreign relations of England became implicated with the procedure of the Company, it was necessary to impose more or less of Government control as a set-off against support and assistance afforded to a body which must otherwise have been overwhelmed by its responsibilities.

So much for the origin of the “double government” —a creation not only natural, but inevitable. Its probable working was and is quite another question. It was said from the beginning that the rule of officials who were subjects at home while sovereigns abroad could never succeed; that while the natives supposed them sovereigns, the interference of the Board of Control could only paralyse their actions; whereas, if the natives discovered them to be subjects, controlled even in India by a higher power, their authority would perish at once; and that, if there was any escape from this liability, it could only be by the subservience of the one board to the other. If the Directors were subjugated to the Board of Control, it would be better for all parties that the Company should be dissolved, and India be made a colony. If the Company could resist and nullify the dictation of the Government (which everybody knew to be impossible under the adversity of that time) the new institution would be simply an expensive sham. If neither could subjugate the other, they would be always quarrelling; and, as one consequence, India would be misgoverned. Such were the forebodings in 1784, when Pitt’s India Bill became law; and it cannot be denied that both countries have had a taste of all the prophesied evils in turn, while yet the government of India remains one of the finest specimens—all the difficulties considered—of human government that the world has seen.