CHAPTER XVI.

SETTLEMENT OF THE CENTRE.

1813—1819.

"Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness as pillars of smoke?"—*Song of Solomon.*

"It never troubles the wolf how many the sheep be."—VIRGIL.

IN 1808 a Committee of Parliament had inquired into the financial affairs of the East India Company, taking into consideration a petition from the Company for the repayment of a large sum owing by Government, and for a loan of like amount, on account of the pecuniary embarrassments caused by disturbances in India, and the falling off of commerce at home. The great development of our domestic cotton manufacture had so damaged the import trade of the Company that, in the main article of piece goods, the value of the importation in 1807 was only one-sixth of what it had been ten years before—less than half a million, instead of nearly three millions. In consequence of the Committee's report, one million and a half was paid over to the Company, being 300,000*l.* above what was owing from Government.

At the same date, an eminent Liverpool merchant, Mr. Wm. Rathbone, happened to be in London, where, struck by the spectacle of the Company's shipping, he inquired of a merchant at his elbow why London allowed a trade so great, and so capable of expansion, to be engrossed by a corporation. His friend gave him such illustrations of the power of the Company in London as showed that nothing could be done there to obtain a free trade. If any movement were made, it should be in the provinces; and Mr. Rathbone lost no time in stirring up Liverpool, Manchester, Glasgow, and Paisley to demand the opening of the trade. Five years of the existing charter remained, and the interval was so well improved that a considerable relaxation of the monopoly was obtained in 1813. After the 10th of April, 1814, British merchants might trade to the Company's territories, and to India generally; but the China trade was still reserved. The territorial accounts of the Company were to be henceforth kept separate from the commercial; and by this provision a test of the working of the monopoly was created, and a good preparation was made for the final extinction of the commercial function. The Directors had always acted on the assumption that the immutability of Hindoo habits would for ever confine trade within a fixed amount; and they now reasoned and pleaded accordingly. But human nature was against them; and a few years sufficed to prove

that Hindoos are so far like other people as that they will lay hold of good things when brought within their reach. Bishop Heber told us, by his journals, that he saw the natives in the interior buying English comforts and French adornments wherever they could obtain them. From the first hour of competition it was clear that the great Association which had introduced Great Britain and Hindostan to each other, and bridged over the gulf between the civilization of the one and the barbarism of the other, could not compete with the ready wit and alertness of private speculators in supplying the material wants and wishes of seventy millions of Asiatics. The Company had complained in 1808 of the decline in their imports of cotton goods. After the opening of the trade their exports of manufactured cottons dwindled to almost nothing, while private merchants were exporting those goods to the amount of a million and a half per annum, with an increase from year to year.

After the Committee of 1808, Parliament attended to the Company's affairs from session to session; and in 1810 there was a further petition for pecuniary assistance—partly on account of the great number of the Company's ships which had been taken by the enemy, or had perished at sea. A succession of loans kept the India House open till the time arrived for setting about the new charter. The Company unceasingly declared, as they doubtless

sincerely believed, that they could no more exist politically than commercially if their commerce were invaded, because their territorial revenue had never been equal to their expenses: and their sales at the India House, and remittances of goods from India and China, were their reliance for meeting their obligations in England. As they admitted that their commercial profits arose mainly from the sale of tea, that branch was preserved to them. But it was this plea of theirs which created the new arrangement about their accounts—the separation of the territorial from the commercial. Their supreme dread was of that colonization of India from Europe which had been anticipated and desired by the authors of both the systems of land revenue before described. The Company declared that such colonization would go on, surely, however slowly; and that the consequence would be an ultimate separation from Great Britain, for the same reasons which had wrought out the independence of our American colonies. This was too remote a contingency to affect the terms of a charter granted at a time when the security and development of India were a matter of urgent concern; and after 1813, any Briton might trade to India, or take up his abode there, without leave from any quarter. These particulars require notice here, not only because they are historically true, but because they are the early incidents of that transition period in the civilization of India, with which our present

misfortunes there have no doubt the most radical connection. From the moment when the trade monopoly was relaxed, however partially, the institution of railways and canals, steam-communication, the electric telegraph, and everything most confounding to Mussulman pride and Hindoo apathy, was only a question of time. It is true we were not then in possession of most of those things ourselves: but they were about to be revealed; and before, as well as after, they were known to us it was equally certain that the introduction of our arts and modes of life, belonging to a different stage of civilization, must create a revolution in an ancient polity indigenous in a remote continent; a revolution which would take form in some portentous manifestation which the Company apprehended more distinctly than they could explain. Their warning of the growth of a republican spirit in India, causing in time a coalition of all orders of inhabitants against Great Britain, under a new Declaration of Independence, looks now like a melancholy joke; and it seems strange that those who should have known India well could conceive of such a settlement of a populous Asiatic country by Englishmen as could be likened to that of our American plantations. But it should be remembered that a class who knew India even better than the Directors and Proprietors at home have shown quite as little foresight and power of interpretation of social phenomena. Hardly one in a thousand of the Company's

officers in India has at all anticipated the sort of revolution that would be induced by subjecting India to the conditions of European life in the nineteenth century. Hardly one in a hundred has seen what was going on before his eyes, or reasoned on what amused his observation or interested his understanding. The great Brahminical controversy which ran high before a mile of rail was laid—how far the merit of pilgrimages would be affected by railways, which the Brahmins knew the pilgrims would certainly avail themselves of, ought to have been as portentous to our political residents as to any Brahmin. Such suggestive phenomena have abounded for half a century past; and now that it is too late, we see very clearly what they might have taught us. It is not necessary to enlarge on this, but only to point out what the action of the opposing parties really was at a juncture which both knew to be critical. The Company resisted change, under a vague and mistaken apprehension of the consequences, and of the means of precluding them, but with a just conviction that some revolution must ensue. The free-traders failed to perceive what safeguards would be required throughout a transitional period, while rightly insisting that it was not optional with any party concerned whether there should be change or not. In new cases it is the event which discloses the political philosophy; and it is only now that we fully learn what it would have been wisest to do when the Company's monopoly was

first effectually assailed. At the time we speak of, the case of the opposing parties was that of the Spanish proverb, "Whichever way you take there is a league of bad road." The merchants saw only the good highway, and exulted; the Company fixed their gaze on the bad league, and began a new period under severe anxiety and depression.

The chief affliction was that the wars were not over in Hindostan. The Directors emphatically professed a peaceable policy still; they enjoined it upon their servants; they implored, they ordered, insisted, remonstrated; but still, every representative they sent out made war, and declared that he could not help it. At this time the Directors seem to have committed the matter into the hands of the new Viceroy, Lord Moira—for the offices of Governor-General and Commander-in-Chief were united in him. His appointment was caused by political changes in England; and, between the fruitlessness of their own efforts to preclude war, and the stringent action of the Board of Control, the Directors saw nothing for it but hoping the best from the rule of an old soldier who might be more likely than a civilian to estimate the evils of perpetual conflict. Lord Minto's resignation was on the way when his successor was nominated, by order of the Prince Regent and his ministers; and Lord Moira, afterward Marquis of Hastings, arrived in Calcutta in October 1813. He had scarcely

arrived when tidings came from various quarters which acted on the old soldier as the trumpet on the warhorse. His council were of a different metal, and they had an empty treasury before their eyes, and impending calls for payment on their files; and the consequence was a fierce controversy at the Board while Lord Moira was in Calcutta, and in the form of documentary recrimination afterwards. But the power passed over into the Governor-General's hands when he began to show that he could save money and generate revenue, as well as defend his territory and his neighbours. When his nine years' term of office closed, he was almost equally estimated by all parties. His military successes were brilliant, and his territorial policy was large and generous, while his social administration was prudent and gentle. It seems to be generally agreed that it was in his time that our Anglo-Indian reputation reached its highest point, and justified the best hopes.

First, there was war with Nepaul; and, as it was an affair of prime necessity, the Burmese who troubled our eastern frontier were kept quiet provisionally, till they could be properly attended to. The Goorkhas, who domineered over the chief part of Nepaul, and were delighted with a frontier which cut deep into our territory and that of states protected by us, had made irruptions which were not to be forgiven; and in Lord Minto's time a force

had been sent against them which met with signal discomfiture, on repeated occasions, before Lord Moira's arrival. Charles Metcalfe, looking on from Delhi, had strong convictions on two points at least, and ventured to lay them before the Governor-General within a month after his arrival. He was persuaded that no good could come of a war with mountaineers among the spurs of the Himalaya while Central India remained unsettled, and all alive with unscrupulous enemies and treacherous allies. And, again, he was confident that our very footing in India was imperilled by the rash practice of attempting to take fortresses without breaching—the cause of our disasters in the Nepaul war. The grand fault of the British in India, said this high-hearted young man, was, despising their enemies; and, unless they could be cured of this folly, the whole course of their Indian experience would be a group of calamities at intervals, always retrieved, as far as reputation went, by valour and endurance, but each time lessening the superstitious reverence of the natives, and finally causing our complete overthrow and expulsion. Lord Moira was struck, as he well might be, by such a despatch (worded with all due modesty) from a young civilian, and summoned Metcalfe to his presence, and followed his advice. After the loss of lives which could be ill spared, the fortress of Kalunga was at length bombarded and taken; and travellers at

this day can only know by local tradition where it stood.

By the wisest men the Goorkhas were pronounced the most formidable enemies we had yet encountered in India. They would require our best available strength to reduce them; and yet, as Metcalfe said, there was Runjeet Singh watching from the north-west how we got on, in order to decide whether he should adhere to our alliance or not: there was Meer Khan, the prince of bandits, and a vulgar and ferocious copy of Holkar, hovering about in the Rohilla country, and ready at any moment for a swoop on Delhi or Agra; there were Scindiah and the Rajah of Nagpore laying their heads together about the best time for attacking our long frontier, from Agra to Cuttack and the Bay of Bengal; and there were the Pindarrees, the vultures sure to come clustering wherever we left a heap of dead: all these must be not so much met on the frontier as kept on the other side of it by the *éclat* of our expeditions against the Goorkhas; and thus far we had sunk in their estimation. It was the most critical moment of our Indian empire. This is often said, in every empire; but it was so firmly believed in Hindostan at the beginning of 1815, that proposals were made to summon all the troops that could be spared from the two southern Presidencies, and from all our colonies, and from England—where, however, all our disposable force was soon to be otherwise occupied, between Napo-

leon's return from Elba and his humiliation at Waterloo. The Goorkhas were conquered, with much loss to us, and little glory, and by means of our artillery and money. They lost the territory between the Sutlej and the Gogra, which it had taken them thirty years to acquire; and the whole circle of watchers were asking, as we were of each other, how our empire was to be preserved, if the defence of one section of our frontier cost us so dear. The doubt was soon put to rest by the issue of the Pindarree war; and the truth was, we could hardly encounter such difficulty anywhere else as among the intricate defiles of Nepaul, held by an enemy as brave, skilful, systematic, and confident as ourselves, and far more prudent. Our superiority in guns and money gave us the advantage; but the impression left by the Nepaul war was that the Goorkhas had better be our allies than our enemies. It is well for us now that they still are so, and that Nepaul is a friendly territory. Some of our countrywomen and civilians have found refuge there this summer, and write warmly of the kindness of their reception. Our Goorkha soldiers appear to be our best reliance, till European reinforcements can arrive; and, but for a fatal infirmity of purpose at head-quarters, a force already on the march from Katmandu would have saved Cawnpore and relieved Lucknow, and more or less checked the whole mutiny. The territory acquired in 1815 gave us a

standpoint on the Himalaya, and strengthened our hold on the great plains below, while curbing the feuds of the hill tribes, and opening ways for commerce into the heart of the mountain region.

Then there were the Pindarrees to be dealt with. They were not a race, or a tribe, or a sect, but an agglomeration of lawless men of all faiths, and all ways of living and thinking that were compatible with horsemanship and marauding. Any man who could ride and levy plunder might be a Pindarree. For a century they were heard of only as freebooters; but fifty years ago they were strong enough to be treated with by the Mahratta chiefs, and to give the name of a war to our conflict with them. The Mahrattas would not eat with them, nor allow them to be seated in their presence; but they gave them tracts of land, or a license to seize them for themselves: and thus they rose in the world, though the plunder of portable goods was their chief resource. As they began to convert their adventurers and their lands into a sort of state, they occasionally fought against the Mahrattas, and were bid for as auxiliaries and when once their posts of command were recognised as hereditary, a confederation of chiefs became possible and convenient to themselves, and extremely annoying to every other power. Their confederacy sucked in all the loose elements of society: every villain who was tolerated nowhere else could always go to the Pindarrees; and wherever they went

they ruined men enough to increase their numbers by leaving no other alternative than to starve. Their numbers were never even to be guessed at, nor their visitations to be anticipated. Two or three hundred of them, well mounted, and carrying nothing but breadcakes for themselves and a feed or two for their horses, struck across country for their destination, riding faster than the news could be sent. They at length extended their line so as to enclose and sweep clear a certain area, burning whatever they could not carry away, and torturing their victims in indescribable ways and degrees, and then turned back the way they came, meeting a body of supporters who helped them to carry their booty, and to fight their way, if opposed. But they usually got off before the alarm had spread. Meeting and dispersing like the birds of the air, they presented no point of effectual attack; and the most successful conflict with them was a mere shooting of single specimens, whose place was sure to be immediately supplied. In Lord Minto's time they had become strong enough to collect annually, to the number of 15,000, for a raid; generally into the British, or some allied territory. While the English were engaged in the north before the stockades of the Goorkhas, in October, 1815, eight thousand Pindarrees crossed the Nerbudda, and, dividing into two parties, swept the entire territory of the Nizam, meeting on the banks of the Kistna. How much further they meant

to go there is no saying; but the river was still swollen, and they must turn elsewhere. They turned east and swept round by the coast, and along the Godavery, carrying an enormous booty, and having met with no check except in one night attack near the outset. This feat was planned by the ablest leader they had ever had—Cheetoo, whose name had been more or less formidable for ten years; and he sent out a second expedition of 14,000 horsemen as soon as the first had returned. No wisdom or valour availed against them, for they could never be caught, though the smoke of fifty-four burning villages went up in one day, and seventy in another. In May, 1816, they were at Cheetoo's head-quarters again, with a second vast booty, having signalized their twelve days' visit to the Company's territories by plundering 339 villages, killing 182 persons by deliberate cruelties, wounding 505, and putting to the torture no less than 3,603. Lord Moira was well aware that the Peishwa, Scindiah, and other Mahratta chiefs, were cognisant of all this, and that they were intending to invade our territories in concert with the Pindarrees while the British forces were engaged with the Goorkhas. Our peace with Nepaul baffled this calculation, and Lord Moira at once resolved to turn his army, before it was dispersed, against this infamous coalition. The moment he received the necessary sanction from home, the attack began; but all the successes that

were won by vigilance and valour seemed to do no good, and the Pindarrees made a wider sweep that year than ever. Sooner or later, they were sure to be weakened by divisions; and this happened in 1817, when they were also alarmed by a series of bad omens. Nothing discouraged them so much, however, as a thorough defeat of the Holkar Mahrattas, accomplished by Sir John Malcolm and Sir Thomas Hislop, on clear evidence of the treachery of the Mahrattas. This battle of Maheidpore (in Malwa) took place in December, 1817; and it yielded great booty of elephants and camels, in the first instance, and then a very advantageous peace. After various shufflings on the one side, and punishments inflicted on the other, the Mahratta territory was put under British protection—several strong places being ceded in perpetuity to the protectors. Scindiah saw his own interest, and was at last convinced that it would be wise to keep to his engagements.

The Pindarrees must now take care of themselves; and their weakness was soon evident. Pressed hard by British detachments, Cheetoo could not get to his home among the hills; nor could the different Pindarree bands achieve a junction with him. He appeared in various unexpected places, at great distances; but these flights cost him all his baggage, and most of his horses. In January, 1818, his lair was discovered, and the hill tribes of Malwa were

set upon his traces. They destroyed almost everything and everybody belonging to him: but they could not catch him. Two hundred followers shared his hardships and escapes; and they repeatedly advised him to surrender to the British: but he was persuaded he should be sent out of the country, and he preferred death in any form. During his snatches of sleep he was continually dreaming of that fate, murmuring "The Black sea! O! the black sea!" Even now, he got away again into the Deccan, and was at large for another year, losing some of his followers at every step, but being sheltered by some Mahratta officer or other. He passed the rainy season among the Mahadeo mountains, and then endeavoured to take refuge, in February, 1819, in Scindiah's fortress of Asseerghur, which had sheltered him before. He was refused admittance, and turned his horse's head towards the neighbouring jungle. Some days after, his well-known horse was seen grazing near the verge of the forest, saddled and bridled, and carrying a bag of cash, seal rings, and letters from a deposed rajah, promising great things to the wandering robber. After a little search, some clothes were found, and then some bones, and at last a human head, which was recognised as Cheetoo's. The human tiger had succumbed to his brute brother. The last of the Pindarrees met with a singularly appropriate death.

I have given a somewhat disproportionate space

to the Pindarree war, because it is desirable at the present time to mark the characteristics of warfare with different tribes or orders of men in India, in order to see in what direction we ought to look for friends or foes; and because the incidents of Mahratta and Pindarree warfare may lessen our amazement, though not our horror, at the worst incidents of the existing rebellion. They show us what the wild Asiatic nature is. The Pindarrees were regarded as a sort of scavengers to the Mahrattas; but they were simply a gross specimen of the same type: and there is so strong a likeness between both and the slaughterers of our countrymen and countrywomen in India, that we may take to ourselves the shame of having ever allowed them the opportunity they have abused. Nana Sahib himself is the representative Mahratta chief of our time; and he is Cheetoo, dressed in the accomplishments and manners of the Europeanized native prince. We shall call up no more Pindarrees from their graves in the jungle to keep our arsenals, hold our strong places, and guard our women and children. It was madness ever to do it.

CHAPTER XVII.

OPENING OF THE SOUTH-EAST.

1619—1854.

"He sees such a desperate rapaciousness prevail; such a disregard to equity, such contempt of order, such stupid blindness to future consequences, as must immediately have the most tragical conclusion, and must terminate in destruction to the greater number."—HUME.

"If a wise man contendeth with a foolish man, whether he rage or laugh, there is no rest."—*Proverbs* xxix. 9.

FOR every summons to attend to affairs at or beyond one frontier in India, we may confidently reckon on a challenge from the opposite boundary. We have been glancing up towards the north-west, where the Five Rivers converge in the mighty Indus, which can be reached by us only over a sandy desert. While our Indian statesmen were discussing the question, as a matter of political speculation, whether it would be best to have that sandy desert or those rivers for our final frontier, or even the mountain range beyond both, it became necessary to look in the opposite direction, and see what was to be done where the other great river, the

Burrampooter (the son of Brahma) divided our territories from the Burman empire on the east. This prodigious stream involved no interests of ours for the first two-thirds of its course. It rises due north of Allahabad—the length of Oude, the width of Nepaul, and the loftiest mass of the Himalayas lying between. It skirts the Himalayan range on the Thibetan side, flowing eastwards as if it meant to cut China in two, and escape into the Pacific; but at the end of the Himalayan range, it turns their base, flows south-west through Assam, and, having received the contents of sixty rivers in Assam alone, takes a southern course, along what was our Bengal frontier at the time we are contemplating. A troublesome frontier it was sure to be, considering its own character, and that of the people who lived beyond it. As a river it is good for neither one thing nor another. It is nowhere fordable, and it is not navigable. It is equally impracticable where it is one mile wide and where it is six—when it is lowest, when it is fullest, and at all intervening times. In the dry season most of the canals into which it is divided by islands in its broadest parts are mere mud, with channels of great depth between; and in spring, when swollen by melted snows, it is a truly fearful object —slab with mud, while rolling a dirty foam on shore, and tossing on its waves trees of the largest size, and corpses of men and beasts, swept down by the inundations above, in which nearly the whole of

Assam occasionally lies under water. Day by day it makes and destroys mud banks and sandy shoals, so that any navigable use of it would be impossible if vessels could encounter the snags, sawyers, and floating forest trees, with which those of the Mississippi are not comparable. Some Hindoos treat it as a sacred river, but only those who cannot get to the Ganges. The two rivers communicate by several small channels; and when they pour out their contents into the Bay of Bengal, their mouths are separated only by islands. A territory subject to two such streams can be nothing but an area of swampy islands, in which the higher specimens of the human race cannot live; and of all frontiers none are so productive of mischief as those which are the resort only of degraded or lawless men, who go there to snatch what they can get from the *débris* of Nature, and the leavings of the brutes which make their homes in such places. In those jungly swamps, and the reeking forests which grow above them, the alligators pursue men, and men hunt the tiger and circumvent the elephant. Their mutual needs caused some little commerce to pass between the people of the confronting provinces. The eastern people wanted salt from the bay; and the Bengal folk drew some of their supplies of cotton, silk, and rice from Assam. They were rivals in the matter of ivory and gold-dust, which last they fished from the rivers. All were

sunk in the depths of superstition—the Assam people professing Hindooism, though eating animal food with their rice; not beef, but snakes, rats, ants, and grasshoppers, with dogs for an occasional delicacy. As for the southern part of our frontier, there were endless troubles at the time we are now concerned with between the people of Chittagong and Arracan—subjects respectively of the Company and the Burman empire. They were for ever at feud—proud Mussulmans having succeeded to the Buddhists in Chittagong, and the people of Arracan being no more disposed to defer to the subjects of the Company than other Burmese. The passes from the one to the other were mere tracks cut in the forest, which were overgrown after every monsoon; and trespasses, depredations, and skirmishes were for ever going on. As no Europeans could live in such places as the jungles and forests were then, the natural process was to leave matters pretty much to themselves; and then followed the inevitable claims generated by such a method. Each party of skirmishers claimed as a frontier the furthest point reached, and usually a good deal more. The Burmese sovereigns, for instance, sent word from time to time that they must have the whole region as far as the Ganges, including Moorshedabad. Many disputes arose out of their demands that fugitives of intermediate races should be delivered up to them, while, on the other hand, the subjects of the Com-

pany had no peace on account of the incursions of their Burmese neighbours.

Those who denounce all the Burmese wars that we have been engaged in are probably unaware of the difficulties caused by such a frontier as the one just described, where barbaric races live on either side, and where the necessary military force cannot be stationed on account of a climate fatal to the soldiers while endurable by the enemy. When to all this is added the usual series of provocations which the British in India have had to undergo; the intrigues of our European rivals among our neighbours, and the efforts of those neighbours to draw the subjects and the allies of the Company into treason and disaffection, it may be less wonderful than it appears at first sight that we should have had wars with Burmah, ending at length in the annexation of Pegu. It might seem at first sight very strange that we should have submitted to any intercourse with the Kings of Ava which could involve humiliation, trouble, or cost, or have burdened ourselves at last with a territory which lies beyond our natural boundaries, and was not particularly tempting, in any view; but it alters the case not a little to find that the French were once paramount at the Burmese, as they were at the Persian court—endeavouring to induce the sovereign, in each case, to promote the invasion of India through his dominions; and when it is

understood that spies were again and again traversing the Company's dominions, on a pretended mission in search of religious books, but in reality to treat with the Mahrattas, the Mogul sovereign, and Runjeet Singh at Lahore, about the expulsion of the British, our transactions with the Burmese court and people are seen to involve more than treaties and quarrels with a barbaric neighbour. Common sense might suggest that Englishmen would be hardly likely to put up with all the trouble that we have had with the Burmese, and to go into a war with them, at least without some reason—and some other reason than conquest; for it is evident that if conquest had been the object, it might have been achieved at a very early date. What the story really was may be in a manner conveyed by a very brief sketch of our relations with Burmah.

There was a king in Ava, in 1619, who encouraged the English to trade in Pegu; but the Dutch slipped into our shoes; and it was near the close of the century when our first diplomatic intercourse took place with the Burmah court. Our envoy, Mr. Fleetwood, went through the customary humiliations and provocations, made the prostrations and received the insults which were a matter of course at the Asiatic courts, and obtained leave to build a factory at Syriam, but none of the more important objects of his mission. Now and then opportunities arose for our doing and obtaining good,

when the kings of that peninsula went to war; but no adequate attention was given to them at the time, and we remained unknown to the Burmese sovereign, as regards our national character, during a long course of years which might have been improved to the advantage of our commerce and our reputation. One king slapped his thigh in the ambassador's presence, and made his courtiers laugh at the idea of the East India Company being of any use to such a great man as he was; another would not write a letter, but only an order, to the Governor-General, because he issued nothing but commands to anybody on earth; and this one sent, in return for the Company's fine presents, twenty-four heads of Indian corn, eighteen oranges, and five cucumbers. The Company's flag was, on this occasion, planted at Bassein, to the firing of guns; but the treaty which authorized it was presently found to be a mere pretence for getting hold of bribes. Within two years—that is, in 1759—all the European gentlemen at the station were murdered by an incursion of armed Burmese, just as they had assembled at a dinner-party; and only a midshipman escaped to his ship. The king fancied that the English had been corresponding with one of his enemies, and connived at the act of which some French adventurers had the credit. Our mission to the successor of this king, Alompra, failed, and we gave up the Bassein settlement, having thenceforth a walled factory at Rangoon,

within which our flag was kept flying; and for five-and-thirty years the Company's traders carried on some commerce, under hard conditions of insult, delay, and heavy duties. While they were treated no worse, and perhaps rather better than other merchants, they could put up with the airs of a pagan king who knew no better. Next began the frontier difficulties. The native inhabitants of Arracan, driven desperate by the oppression of their Burmese conquerors, became a jungle banditti: and when they had committed any extraordinary act of daring or plunder, they hid themselves in Chittagong, which had been the Company's territory since 1760. The first the English heard of it was that five thousand Burmese troops had been marched into Chittagong to apprehend the fugitive Mughs, while 20,000 more were on the Arracan frontier. They were met by a force, under General Erskine, which impressed them with some respect; they withdrew from our soil, the commander visited the British general, and, on our side, the fugitives, being tried and found guilty, were surrendered. Thus far, the matter seemed to end well: but the incident fixed the attention of the French on that region; and M. Suffrein's maps and plans were attended to at Paris, and his opinion quoted that "Pegu was the country through which the English might be attacked in India with most advantage." One consequence of this new light was the establishment of a permanent Resident at

Rangoon in 1796 for the purpose of protecting British interests and watching French intrigue. From this date there were rival embassies at the Burmese court; and the Kings of Ava became more insolent, as they imagined themselves holding the balance between two European nations. These incidents occurred when Mr. Shore, afterwards Lord Teignmouth, was Governor-General; and he sent Captain Symes on a mission which was more intolerable than any former one, because the King concluded, from the surrender of the Mugh robbers, that the English were too weak to keep them. It is needless to describe these embassies—the gilt boats, golden umbrellas, arrogance, and grossness on the one side; and the evils suffered on the other—the waiting hours, days, and weeks for notice; the being quartered in the street, or on the place of execution; the being paraded through the low parts of the town, for the amusement of the rabble, or landed to spend the night on an island swarming with snakes and mosquitoes; the having the shoes pulled off at the outer gate of the palace, and the hat snatched from the head under a tropical sun. All this may be imagined as inflicted on a succession of envoys, and endured, of course, only for some very strong reasons. Lord Wellesley tried, in 1802, what a little splendour would do, and sent an escort of 100 Sepoys, and a handsome equipment, with his envoy; but this was a game at which the gilt gingerbread King of Ava

was sure to beat us; and he misinterpreted the whole affair from having just been informed that the new peace at Amiens was a boon granted by France to the English, on condition of the latter restoring all places in India which had ever been French. The disarming of the British escort was actually ordered, and prevented only by the interposition of the heir apparent, who, however, could not prevent the French envoys being quartered next door to the English Colonel Symes—these envoys being a French felon, just escaped from Calcutta gaol, an American supercargo, and two half-caste youths, born in Ava. Thus matters went on, the kings telling all the world that the Company had paid homage to the golden feet, and besought the protection of Burmah, and kindly assuring a Governor-General from time to time, that if he had only applied in the right quarter, the armies of Burmah would have gone overland, and given the whole continent of France to England; whereas, if any measures were taken without leave from Ava, the King would be obliged to go overland, and take England. One viceroy at Rangoon, who had been civil to our envoy, was to be crucified in seven fathoms water, and so floated to Calcutta, to show us the consequence of our making friends among the King's servants. In a fit of caprice, however, the culprit was not only spared but promoted. In 1811 there was a second invasion of Chittagong: and the

king's object for several months was to get possession of Captain Canning, our envoy, and his suite, as hostages for the delivery of more of the Mugh fugitives. Not succeeding in this, and hearing a vivid description of two of our vessels of war which were off Rangoon, the king lowered his commercial duties, and sent messengers to Calcutta, to ask for the surrender of his enemies. An unfortunate concession was made on this occasion by the Supreme Government, which proposed (in consideration of the unhealthy nature of the service) that the Burmese troops should be admitted into Chittagong, to search for the fugitive Mughs. A demand was instantly made, in the form of a stipulation, that the British should be at the cost of the troops while so employed; and it was announced that the King of Ava had lent troops to the English on their petition. When the Mughs finally succumbed, after the death of their last king, their chiefs surrendered to the Supreme Government as prisoners of war; and when Lord Moira conclusively declined to deliver them up, it was hoped that the troubles with the Burmese were over with the extinction of the Mughs; but the King of Ava only betook himself to other schemes. It was then, in 1816, that discoveries were made of his intrigues at Lahore, and tamperings with several of the states, for the purpose of occasioning a general revolt against the English rule. The Mahrattas were the great hope of the traitor-king; but they

were destroyed before he could mature his plans. Runjeet Singh was doubtless too sagacious to be deceived as to which was the stronger power. Before giving up for that time, the King of Ava made one more effort. By deputy he wrote to Lord Moira to demand the cession of Chittagong and Ramoo, Dacca and Moorshedabad, under penalty of annihilation from his wrath. Lord Moira replied through the Viceroy of Pegu, regretting that the King of Ava should be no better supplied with advisers, and hoping that the writer of so insolent a letter would be chastised. Then followed a war of succession in Assam, and conflicts which left no chance of tranquillity to our frontier, where villages were sacked and burned, while no further apology could be obtained than that it was by mistake. Again, our elephant hunters were seized, and a Burmese army of 18,000 men, under the king's best general, announced an intention of following the Assam refugees into our territory. This was in 1822. It was clearly high time to strengthen our frontier; and the more speedily because the Assam princes had lost their game, and their country became a province of the Burman empire.

There was no respite from the provocations of our neighbour. In 1823, leave was asked for the Burmese army, with all its prisoners, to go home through Chittagong. This was refused. Next, Chittagong was encroached upon, and our island of Shapouree

was claimed, and after various refusals seized in the night of September 24, 1823. A thousand men made the attack, giving out that an army of 15,000 men was in Arracan, and that sixty boats were about to convey it into Chittagong. Three Sepoys were killed, and three wounded; and it may be regarded as a proof of great forbearance that the Governor-General wrote to the King of Ava before proceeding to repel the invasion by force. No answer was sent, otherwise than by an order to the Governor of Arracan to keep down the English, and hold the island. The Burmese obeyed these orders, and set up forts on our territories, secured by strong palisades, from which a British officer was driven back with loss in February, 1824. There was no avoiding war after this.

Nobody but the King of Ava could doubt about the issue of such a war, as far as the quality of the combatants was concerned. But the real and formidable enemy of the British was the climate. Rangoon yielded at once; the authorities fled at the first shot, and the entire population, except one hundred persons, made off into the jungle. The jungle was the mischief. The natives threw up stockades wherever they rested; and fever and sunstroke decimated the invaders. The Burmese died fastest, by many to one; they left their ammunition behind them; they laid waste their fields, and were evidently going to perdition as fast as possible; but then, the English were suffering in their proportion, and while they sent home assurances that

the Burmese were perishing, there were no signs of peace being any nearer. At the end of 1824, there was no peace. In the autumn of 1825 there was still no peace, though Sir Archibald Campbell had a series of successes to report; but there was now a good deal of talk about it. Then the English defeated the great Burmese army, ten times as many as themselves, and peace was reported to have followed, as it ought. The treaty was actually signed; but one day it became known that it had never been forwarded to the King. He could certainly never pay for the expenses of the war; and his servants hoped to persuade the General to take rice instead of money, and to cut down and carry away any trees he pleased. After the next victory at Melloone, the treaty, which had been again signed, was found in the minister's house, still unseen by the King. In February, 1826, the thing was really done. The expenses of the war were paid by the Burmese, and the provinces of Tarvi and Tenasserim were ceded to the Company, as well as those of Assam and Arracan, by which it was hoped that the quiet of our frontier was secured.

The King of Ava was afterwards declared insane, and succeeded by his brother, who might as well have been insane, too, for any benefit which we could obtain from his abilities. One of the terms of the peace was that a commercial treaty should be formed; and as soon as the treaty was ratified, Mr. Crawford's well known mission to Ava took place. The nego-

tiation lasted from Sept., 1826, to Jan., 1827, and it was conducted very much as former conferences had been, ending in the yielding up of some of the most important points on the British side, and in our being unable to obtain any fulfilment of those which remained; while, to crown the discomfiture of the official representative, who had suffered under all manner of neglect and insults, the treaty was called by the Burmese a royal license granted to the English.

In December, 1829, the British in Moulmein were attacked from Martaban. After fair warning, which produced no effect, a detachment of our soldiers was sent to Martaban to seize the offenders, when some native followers fired the place. This act, wholly unintentional on the part of the English, produced a wonderful effect; and no more molestation was offered to the British in that region for a course of years.

In the north, however, there were troubles which rendered the cession of Cachar necessary to the integrity of our frontier; and when our Affghanistan war was impending, King Tharawaddy drew his rabble rout of an army forward, ready to enter Bengal when the British should have, as he supposed, turned their backs. Except on their own territory, with its swamps and forests, and hideous malaria, there was nothing for us to fear from them. But it became necessary once more to encounter them

there. Our merchants at Rangoon declared in 1851 that they must leave the country if they were not protected from the exactions, and the oppression, even amounting to torture, inflicted by the local authorities. The treaty had been clearly and grossly violated, and reparation was demanded at the court of Ava. It was the old story over again, except that some civil promises were made at first. Then there were insults; and Rangoon was declared in a state of blockade. Next, the British ship was fired upon, and the cannonade was returned. Our readers will remember the sequel; the capture of the town, from the coast up the river; the arrival at Prome; the visit of Lord Dalhousie to Rangoon, in the hope of expediting matters and getting our troops out of the swamps before disease had carried them all off; the driving out of the Burmese from Pegu, and the annexation of the whole province, "in compensation for the past, and for better security for the future." The Governor-General's proclamation disclaimed all intention of interfering further with Burmese territory, as long as the King of Ava should respect the quiet of his neighbours. For some months there was trouble with some predatory bands of Burmese; and the King refused to exchange any further instrument of agreement: but he verbally acknowledged the cession of territory, and engaged to protect Europeans from the attacks of his subjects, and to leave the river

Irrawaddy open for free commerce between the people of both countries.

This is a painful and tedious story; but it must be told, not only because it is the true history of the extension of our empire eastwards, but because it cannot but remind those who accuse the English of territorial rapacity that it is as well to understand the facts before lavishing imputations of that sort. Whether it was possible to obtain peace and a quiet frontier by another method may be a fair subject of controversy: but we cannot imagine that any unprejudiced person could, after learning the facts, declare that this case bears any resemblance to others in which the first move has been made by the ultimate conquerors. The method of more than one of the world's rulers is to introduce discontents among neighbours, to stir up strife, to interpose, to protect, and, finally, to annex. That it was not so with Burmah, our narrative shows. Whether the English could or should have been more patient, more forbearing, more prudent, or in any way more wise, men will judge for themselves: but that the annexation of the provinces beyond the Bay of Bengal was an act of rapacity. no fair-minded observer will ever say.

CHAPTER XVIII.

BEGINNING OF COMPREHENSIVE DOMESTIC AMELIORATION.

1823—1835.

"There forth issued from under the altar smoke
A dreadful fiend."—SPENSER.

"Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay."
TENNYSON.

AFTER long waiting, and many discouragements, the time at length arrived when wars ceased within the peninsula of India, and the energies of its rulers could be devoted to the improvement of the condition of the inhabitants, and the retrieval of the affairs of the Company. There was war in Burmah, as has been seen; but long before Lord Moira's (henceforth to be called Lord Hastings) term of office was over there was such a state of peace from the Himalaya to Ceylon as enabled him to give the crowning grace to his administration by instituting social reforms as important as his military successes were brilliant, and his political scheme definite and successful. The system which was conceived by Clive, professed by Warren Hastings, thoroughly wrought out and largely applied

by Lord Wellesley, so as to be fairly called his own, and reversed for a time by Lord Cornwallis and Sir George Barlow, under orders from Leadenhall-street, was accomplished and firmly established by the Marquis of Hastings. British authority was supreme in India: and not only had it no antagonist for a long course of years, but it availed to prevent warfare among the states of the great peninsula. Reforms, political, social and moral, at once ensued; and they were vigorously continued through three viceregal terms. They may be most clearly apprehended by being surveyed as the harvest of twenty years of peaceful administration, beginning with the close of Lord Hastings' wars, and ending with the resignation of Lord William Bentinck in 1835.

Lord Hastings left the Company's revenue increased by 6,000,000*l.* a year; and a considerable part of the increase was from the land, indicating the improved condition of the people who held it. He was succeeded by Lord Amherst, to whom the post was offered on account of the qualities for public service which he had manifested in his embassy to China. In the interval between the departure of the one and the arrival of the other Governor-General—that is, from January to August, 1823—the authority was wielded by Mr. Adam, the senior member of Council, whose short administration was made memorable by his action against the press in India, to which he believed that Lord

Hastings had given a liberty inconsistent with the preservation of social tranquillity, in a community so anomalous as that of India. He also broke the bondage of the Nizam to the great house of Palmer and Co., for the sake of English honour and the independence of our subsidiary ally. It was done by an advance of money, to enable the Nizam to redeem a tribute for which he had come under obligation to the firm, and by forbidding any further pecuniary transactions between the great firm and the Court of Hydrabad. The interest of the public debt was reduced from 6 to 5 per cent. by Mr. Adam; and he intended to apply the savings from the diminished expenditure to social objects, and especially to the promotion of native education, under the terms of the last charter; but in this he was thwarted by prohibitions from home. After having incurred as much blame and praise as could well be earned in seven months, Mr. Adam made way for—not Mr. Canning, as had been intended, but—Lord Amherst, and died on his way home in 1825.

Lord Amherst had the Burmese war to manage, in the first instance; and the Mahratta and Pindarree wars had left behind them the difficulty dreaded by every pacific Governor-General—an unsettled and unorganized population of soldiers, whom it was scarcely possible to deal with so as to satisfy at once themselves and their neighbours. The reforms already conceived, and even begun, had

not yet checked abuses, or remedied grievances; and there were real causes of disaffection, in the new provinces especially, which gave a most mischievous power to a marauding soldiery at the moment of finding its occupation gone. A vigorous rule was therefore necessary, and almost as much military demonstration as in warlike times. The improved revenue did not meet these calls, and much less the cost of the Burmese war; and a new loan and an increased taxation marked the close of Lord Amherst's term. He left the territory in a peaceable state, with not a single fort standing out, as Bhurtpore long did, against British authority, while the Company's territories were largely increased by the Burmese forfeitures. He won not a little European popularity by ascertaining the fate of the expedition of La Perouse, which had been as much a mystery as that of our Franklin expedition ever was; and he came home in 1828 full of confidence that the reforms inaugurated by his predecessor, and promoted by himself, would retrieve all financial difficulties, if they were but duly taken in hand by his successor. For such an object, the very best choice was made. If our *raj* were really over, as the deluded Sepoys now suppose, and the last Briton were to leave India for ever, tradition would preserve the memory of Lord William Bentinck, in the gratitude of the native population for centuries to come, though he overruled whatever was intolerably mischievous in their notions

and practices as fearlessly as he rebuked any self-seeking and pride on the part of all the Europeans in the country. He had given abundant proof of his ability to oppose native prejudice when Governor of the Madras Presidency, in 1805, when he supported the military commander in outraging the feelings of the Sepoys by changes in their dress—a mistake which he expiated by the immediate loss of his post. He was recalled after the Vellore mutiny; and his appointment to the highest office in India, in 1828, showed the confidence of the authorities at home that his fearlessness as a reformer would not again be spoiled by the inconsiderate rashness which they had rebuked in his earlier days. Every advantage was given to his plan of reforms by the appointment of new governors to all the presidencies at once—Sir John Malcolm going to Bombay, and the Hon. Mr. Lushington to Madras, when Lord William Bentinck assumed his post at Calcutta.

The first impression from Lord W. Bentinck's action was, that his sensibility to unpopularity had by no means increased since he was in India before. He had to carry out into practice various measures already devised and proposed, and to which he therefore pledged himself by accepting office. The most unpopular of these related to a method of retrenchment of military allowances, which excited a fierce outcry from the European officers, and remonstrances which were rebuked from home as approaching too

nearly to insubordination. The truth is the officers were poor, and could ill bear any reduction of allowances which they had learned to consider in the light of regular pay: while the Company was yet poorer, being deep in debt, and under the obligation to retrench in all directions. The Governor-General was in this case the medium through which the communications were sent. On the one hand, he would have been glad if the officers could have been spared the hardship, while on the other, he saw that no retrenchment would ever be accomplished if suggestions were accepted from the parties to be affected by it. Our elderly generation must well remember how large a space in our newspapers was occupied with the tiresome controversy about whole batta, half batta, and other technical matters, from which we gathered only that the Company chose to diminish certain privileges and allowances to their military officers, on the establishment of peace; whereas the officers said they could not live on their pay without those additions. The Duke of Wellington, then in the ministry, supported the Company's authority; and a saving of something less than 20,000*l.* a year was effected. The retrenchments were carried out in the civil departments also, committees of inquiry being employed for several years in seeing how expenditure could be checked. The outcry might have been less passionate if the salaries of civil functionaries of high rank had been reduced in any fair

proportion to those of the humbler military offices. Two millions a year were needed to meet the Company's existing obligations in England. Half a million was saved in the civil, and a million in the military department — not immediately, but prospectively. More income must be obtained by increased production, after economy had done its utmost. Several of the best men in India—among whom was Metcalfe—testified that the plainest and shortest way of obtaining a revenue was, to develop the resources of the country by the utmost freedom of trade and colonization; while others—among whom was Malcolm—preferred debt and difficulty to any experiment which should throw open the country to European residents, by whom (they took for granted) the natives would be oppressed and insulted, so that the English would be driven from the country. The events of the day spare the necessity of rebuke or reply. There is probably not an educated man in England who has not been recently revolving the difference between the present state of Bengal and what it would have been if a thorough commercial understanding had been established between the industrial classes of England and Hindostan; and, as for political philosophers, they had warning half a century ago from Sir James Mackintosh, who made no secret of his anticipations from what he saw on the spot. Three years after the Vellore mutiny, he declared his opinion that mutiny was not our greatest danger

in India, but the inevitable results of commercial monopoly. He relied on the diversity of the peoples and the soldiery to control mutiny, but saw that the country could never flourish, to the point of safety, till industry and its rewards were left free. The consolation of the case was, that no false theory could for ever keep down a country so favoured by nature, and that retrieval would always be possible, and certainly speedy at last.*

The Indian government had a strong lesson in the matter of their opium traffic. Various methods of restriction on the growth and sale of opium in Hindostan Proper, where the poppy flourishes most, had been tried; and all were intolerable to the land-owners and cultivators, and worse than useless to the Company, as they resulted merely in a vast system of smuggling. The opium was conveyed to Kurrachee, and thence to foreign settlements on the coast, whence it was sent to Europe under the Portuguese flag, and sold in the Company's markets. To put an end to spying the land and fighting on the roads—scenes as disgusting as were ever caused by our excise and customs tyranny in England—it was proposed to let the poppy fields and opium sales entirely alone, only requiring the seller to provide himself with a license which would cost less than the expenses and risks of smuggling. Lord W.

* Memoirs of Sir James Mackintosh (1st edition), Vol. I. pp. 385–386.

Bentinck adopted this suggestion, and carried it out. The first year, licenses were taken out for less than 1,000 chests; the next year for 7,156 chests; and the amount paid for licenses has increased beyond expectation. If the monopoly was to continue, this was probably the least injurious form it could take.

For ten years before Lord William Bentinck went out there had been discussions and experiments about the landed settlements. Throughout wide regions the zemindars were bankrupt, almost to a man: this was the complaint in one direction. Elsewhere, the cultivators were groaning under the exactions of a new set of landowners. The local agents declared that the quantity of land withdrawn from taxation by forged documents pretending old assignments was beyond belief; and Government had occasion to know, by the state of the revenue, that some trickery of the kind must be going forward. The home authorities ordered the fluctuating system to be adopted in territories pledged to the permanent system; the new North-West Provinces were to be brought under the one system or the other; the Collectors were or were not to have judicial and executive powers in regard to civil and criminal suits; all was in confusion even when Lord Moira went out. He assembled the Collectors in his first journey up the country, and determined on a new survey and assessment, seeing

at once that the ryotwar system could not answer over the wide area of Upper India, and concluding the old village system to be the best, if the derangements of recent years could be rectified, and the injured parties reinstated. Hence arose the Mofussil or Provincial Commission, appointed to work in the country, and the Sudder Commission, seated at Calcutta, to receive and adjudicate upon their reports. Great benefits accrued from these proceedings: and the rural inhabitants had begun to confide in the protection of Government before Lord W. Bentinck's entrance upon office. In the Ceded Districts, and in various parts of the Madras Presidency, there were struggles for the establishment of one or another system, or for modifications of either, too frequent and too complicated to be followed here. It must suffice that a very extensive inquiry had produced a mass of materials for new rules and methods of administration. In the Bombay Presidency especially there was scarcely a field anywhere in the territories acquired from the Mahrattas which was not measured and valued soon after its acquisition. Lord W. Bentinck soon found the necessity of establishing a settled revenue system in the North-West Provinces, to quiet the minds of the population, and encourage their industry; and in January, 1833, he met the chief officers at Allahabad, and presently after sanctioned a scheme by which the villages were surveyed and assessed

by European officers, and the minor divisions confided to native officers, whose decisions were subject to the native method of arbitration. The assessment thus procured was finally settled for a term of thirty years. Speedy judicial decisions and publicity of accounts were provided for; and the people immediately began to rejoice in their security, and the certainty of their circumstances for at least thirty years. It would be very interesting to look closer into the peasant and village life of Hindostan, as laid open by the materials thus collected; but our space is too small for even the barest record of the other acts of the new Governor-General.

In consequence of Lord Cornwallis's plan of committing the administration of justice, civil and criminal, almost entirely to European agents, the expense of the necessary staff had become unmanageable, while a host of complainants were excluded from justice. The business to be done far exceeded the Company's means of discharging it, if their agents had been, to a man, perfectly qualified in all respects. More and more of the work was committed to native functionaries when it was found that even decisions of an inferior quality were preferable to delays, infrequent gaol deliveries, and the cruel penalties attending a denial of justice; and in 1827 nineteen-twentieths of the civil suits instituted throughout the country were decided by native judges. The consequence was a further extension

of the experiment. The judges were raised in position and emolument, and more work was confided to them; and a Court of Appeal was settled at Allahabad, for the use of litigants who lived too far from Calcutta to be easily able to apply there. These improvements were among the many which were originated by his predecessors, and only adopted and carried out by Lord William Bentinck. One more item may be added in this connection. By law, all British subjects were competent to serve on juries in India; but custom first, and then law, had pronounced half-castes not to be British subjects. In 1826 a bill was passed which enabled all "good and sufficient residents" to serve on juries, with the limitation that only Christian jurors should sit on the trials of Christians.

One of the first acts of special policy of Lord W. Bentinck's was the abolition of the suttee, or burning of widows — a superstition which his predecessors had discountenanced, but had not felt themselves able to prohibit. The more supervision was instituted, the more frequent the practice became: and more mischief was clearly done by Government recognition than good by suppressing attendant enormities. The new Governor-General thought it safe to try vigorous measures with the spiritless population of Bengal, among whom more than nineteen-twentieths of these sacrifices took place. He would hardly have ventured if there had been reason to suppose the native soldiery deeply

interested in the matter; but most of the Sepoys came from districts where the rite was least insisted on; their wives were not wont to be with them in cantonments; and it was thought sufficient to avoid using their services in the suppression. The police were charged with the enforcement of the new law, which treated as felony all participation in the sacrifice of human life by the burning or burying alive of women; and they had but little to do. After a few attempts at stolen meetings, very like those of "the ring" in English counties, the Hindoos of Bengal gave the matter up; and the prohibition was extended to the other presidencies without any difficulty. Opposing appeals were made to the home authorities by Hindoos who approved and disapproved the measure; and the petition of the latter was regularly argued before the Privy Council in 1832, and dismissed. The abolition was by no means so general as was at first concluded. It related to only 37,000,000 out of the 77,000,000 of India of that day. It indirectly affected about 19,000,000 more, in the subsidiary States over which we had most influence; but 21,000,000 remained entirely unaffected by it. It is impossible to say how far the sullenness of the disappointed Brahmins may have aggravated ill feelings from other causes during the interval; but, on the other hand, several native princes have proscribed the custom because the General Government did so with success.

The difficult question of the introduction of

Christianity into India was warmly and widely discussed at this time. By the charter of 1813 missionaries were permitted to go to India—a measure about which there could have scarcely been two opinions if the country had been hitherto open to settlement by all who chose to go. As it was, the question was surrounded with difficulties, then as it is now. The points on which rational people were agreed were that extreme ignorance and presumption in the missionaries who went out at the beginning of the century had produced deadly effects, not only by aiding the disaffection at Vellore, but by discrediting the profession of Christianity by more enlightened and less egotistical persons. All agreed that the Company were pledged not to interfere with the religion of their subjects, whatever it might be; and all the Company's most trusted officers on the spot declared that missionary efforts among either Hindoos or Mohammedans would put a stop to the improvements, material and moral, in the condition of the people, which were becoming very marked. There seem to have been few, however, who perceived that the conversion of the Mussulman to Christianity is almost as impossible as that of the genuine Jew; and that the conversion of Hindoos had thus far been, and was likely to continue, a mere conformity from the sense of duty and fitness in their relation to their European superiors. But, over and above all this, there

were Christians in India to the number of many thousands; and they needed a clergy, and justified an episcopate. At first it was proposed to have four bishops, for the three presidencies and Ceylon; but the charter of 1813 provided for one, who should occupy the see of Calcutta, and act as archdeacon at the other presidencies. Bishop Middleton went out, as the first bishop, in 1814. He found he had only thirty-two clergy under him; and they were, in fact, military chaplains, over whom he held a divided authority. They were widely scattered, with no parishes, and many of them no churches; and the few who were settled at civil stations were as much under civil as their moveable brethren were under military control. He did the best he could under such unfavourable circumstances, causing new churches to be built, and congregations formed, and establishing some degree of order and communion among the European Christians in different parts of the country. Under his sanction the Missionary College of Calcutta was founded, for the instruction of natives and others for the offices of preaching, catechising, and school tuition, and for the aid and encouragement of missionary labours in general. Bishop Middleton died in 1822, and was succeeded by the beloved Reginald Heber. According to testimony from all quarters, great and increasing surprise was caused by the ill-success of all missionary efforts in India. Vast sums were

expended, and more and more missionaries were sent out; and still it was very rarely that the hope of the conversion of an individual could be entertained: and when it was, disappointment almost invariably ensued. It is easy to see now that the whole development and training of the mind of Asiatics of any religion were so entirely different from the European, and especially the British, that it was impossible for the two to obtain the same point of view. Through all that is said, and very truly, of the difficulty of dealing with such an institution as that of caste, and with other obstacles, the fundamental truth is that the unprepared mind, whether Hindoo or Mussulman, developed under Asiatic conditions, cannot be in sympathy, more or less, intellectually or morally, with the Christianised European mind. The only true method is now, for the most part, agreed on: the natives must pass through a great process of secular education—that of life under improved conditions—before it can embrace any new dogmatic system. Lord William Bentinck and his immediate predecessors were faithful representatives of the views of their employers in this respect, being devoted to the work of native education, as the only genuine preparation for religious conversion. Before Lord Hastings went home, the missionaries applied their services to the Christians at the presidencies, instead of the hopeless task of

converting Brahmins and Mohammedans; and when they did attack the hostile faiths, it was chiefly by means of schools, in which improved views and principles were to be conveyed in the form of literature. Many trials were made of English schools, as a higher stage to be reached through these in which the native languages were employed; but the attempt created mistrust, till the British at Calcutta offered to deliver over an English college there to the management of enlightened Hindoos. The thing was done; and thus arose the English College of Calcutta. Lord W. Bentinck carried on with zeal all such schemes; and he originated many more. New schools and classes were encouraged all over the country. The best superintendence and stimulus were given to the native institutions; but the Governor-General's earnest desire was that the English language and literature should be the medium through which the native mind and destiny should be elevated in all directions. He proved, clearly enough, the happy consequences which would ensue; but he overlooked the impracticable character of the enterprise on which he wasted a great deal of virtuous effort. Bishop Heber died too soon to effect much beyond establishing a strong interest between the English public and that of Hindostan. We shall even yet make more use than we have made of the disclosures of the life of India offered in his Journals.

Lord W. Bentinck completed the extirpation of Thuggery, or the strangling of travellers for booty, by a special sect of divergent Mohammedans. By taking no notice of the railings of the press he left it practically free, though the re-imposed restrictions remained unrepealed. The people say the press was free in his time; and it was so for all practical purposes. In his time some important public works went on, especially some embankments of the Cauvery, by which a sufficient area was made fertile to have served as a lesson to all existing and future authorities as to how to prevent famine, and secure the material welfare of the inhabitants. The new provinces across the bay, and especially Arracan, were becoming so productive, under the influences of peace, as to afford hopes of universal food and an extending commerce. If space allowed, we might trace the footsteps of advancing civilization over the whole peninsula prior to the great famine of 1837; but it must suffice to say that when the commercial function of the Company ceased, under the charter of 1833, there was every encouragement to believe that through such rulers as Lord W. Bentinck, they might make their rule as remarkable under the pacific *régime* of a later time as their commercial enterprise had been in the old days, when the factor was a brave adventurer first, and next an *impromptu* soldier, ready to turn statesman when necessity required.

It is under the head of social amelioration that it seems right to notice a region of our Indian empire which has hardly yet come into view. Ceylon was at this time the most effectually improved part of our eastern dominion; and some of the most effectual improvements took place while Lord William Bentinck was at Calcutta, though not exactly in consequence of his rule. For many years before, Ceylon had been virtually governed by the Ministry, and not by the India Company; and it remains so at this day: but in a historical survey, its improvements should be credited to the period in which they occurred.

After passing under the rule of the Portuguese, and then of the Dutch, and being fought for by all parties in all the European wars carried on in the eastern seas, Ceylon became ours at the peace of Amiens, remaining under the rule of its own kings, till 1815, when the chiefs of the island invited the British to annex it to their dominions, because the tyranny of the reigning king had become intolerable. Nothing but misrule could spoil such a country as Ceylon, with its natural gifts and graces, and its boundless power for the production of wealth. Besides the ordinary treasures of the sea, pearls and pearl-shells abounded within reach of its shores: and cinnamon and other spices, with all tropical agricultural products were obtainable to any amount. But the people, chiefly Buddhists, with some Hindoos

(worshippers of Siva, however) to the north, were priest-ridden; and their apathy and ignorance made them the mere victims of a sovereign who was more like a fiend than a man. The change within a few years after their welfare was fairly taken in hand by the British was remarkable. The benevolent Sir Alexander Johnston, Chief-Justice there in 1811, introduced trial by jury, in the face of much mockery and evil-boding; and it answered beyond all expectation. In rapid succession other ameliorations took place. Slavery was abolished; the monopolies by which a once prodigious commerce had been reduced to almost nothing, were repealed; and the people were relieved from labour-taxes and other oppressions which had deeply aggravated their constitutional apathy. A field so circumscribed, and so abounding in natural promise, drew missionaries from Europe and America; and those of the United States were distinguished above all others by conspicuous success. Sir Alexander Johnston always used to say that they succeeded by means of the sound sense with which they enlisted native self-interest first in works of industry, creating a civilization which opened the way for religion. Altogether, the prospect was most cheering in Lord William Bentinck's time. Ceylon was ruled by a Governor, assisted by two councils—legislative and executive. More and more natives were entering the lower offices of the government: justice was made easily accessible: a police, on the English

principle, pervaded the country, and the low proportion of crime was remarkable. The people adopted the practice of vaccination, with sufficient readiness, and they deposited largely in the Savings Bank. In a short time after the opening of the Savings Bank at Columbo, it paid off a Government loan of 2,000*l.*, leaving a surplus in its treasury. Agriculture and commerce flourished under the partial emancipation of labour and trade; new roads were opened, and British capital and skill began to flow in. The population was then somewhat under a million and a quarter, or rather more than 46 to the square mile. The total number of schools, government and private, civil and military, was above 1,000, of which 63 were Roman Catholic.

It is true that there was a sad revulsion in store, fifteen years later, when the imposition of impracticable taxes by an ill-judging Government was to induce the rebellion of an unarmed multitude, and to injure the British name and authority accordingly: but it would not the less be wrong to pass over the reviving impulse given, at the time I am treating of, to an agriculture which once sufficed to support a dense population over a wide surface since lapsed to jungle and swamp, and to a commerce which in ancient days rivalled that of the most flourishing ports in Asia. In 1835 there was every reason to believe that Ceylon might be retrieved from its long lapse, and elevated to a higher civilization than its proudest traditions had ever pretended.

CHAPTER XIX.

BEGINNING OF AN EXTERNAL POLICY.

1835—1842.

"Be not over-exquisite
To shape the fashion of uncertain evils."—MILTON.

"It is said that the Persian army went as far as that: but no one knows what became of it afterwards, unless it be the Ammonites, and those whom they told. The only certain thing is that it did not go as far as Ammon, and that it never returned to Egypt. Thus perished that army."—HERODOTUS.

"Le plus grand défaut de la pénétration n'est pas de n'aller point jusqu'au but; c'est de le passer."—LA ROCHEFOUCAULD.

THE commercial character of the Company, much restricted in 1813, was extinguished by the next Charter, in 1833. From April, 1834, this great association dropped entirely the venerable title by which it became known in the history of England—that of a Company of British Merchants trading to the East. Henceforth they were to be simply *the East India Company*. Even their tea trade was given up, and all the commercial property of the Company sold. Their real capital was estimated at 21,000,000*l.*; their dividends were guaranteed by the Act to the amount of 630,000*l.*, or 10½ per cent. on a nominal capital of 6,000,000*l.*; these dividends were made

chargeable on the revenues of India, and redeemable by Parliament in 1874. India was thrown open for settlement quite freely; natives and emigrants had henceforth professedly equal claim to office and employment, and there was to be no distinction on account of race, colour, or religion. Great hopes were founded on these provisions by all who were unaware of the bottomless chasm which yawns between the interior nature of the Asiatic and the European races; and even the most cautious trusted that the genuine and permanent civilization of India was at length provided for. As for the commercial effects of the Charter, they were clear enough. Within ten years the trade with China doubled, and the value of British exports to India and Ceylon increased from two millions and a half to six millions and nearly half. How it was that one portion of the new arrangements worked so well and others not at all, was a subject of earnest speculation when the Charter was renewed in 1853, and during the intervening twenty years. It was stated in Parliament that not one native had obtained an office after 1833 who could not as well have held it before; and the reply to this was not a contradiction, but a statement of the number of natives employed as judges, deputy-collectors, and deputy-registrars. The main fact in defence was that 96 per cent. of causes were adjudicated on by native functionaries; and this was met by allegations of the extreme badness of the decisions thus

awarded. Those who judged by the average amount of peasant income declared the people to be in a state of fearful destitution, while, on the other hand, the increase in the imports of articles of popular consumption was pointed out as the best proof of a rising condition. There had been a famine in Hindostan Proper in 1837 so fearful that the British residents at Agra and Cawnpore could not take their evening drive, on account of the smell of corpses too numerous for burial; and cholera and smallpox followed, sweeping away a multitude who had outlived the dearth. This was not necessarily a proof of general poverty; and those who called it an accident declared that it would not happen again; for that our new provinces, on the Burmah side, would henceforth be the granaries of rice-eating India; and that the prodigious effects of irrigation, wherever restored (as in some parts of the Deccan), showed that the fate of India, in regard to food, was wholly in the hands of its rulers. This was universally felt to be true; and the natural consequence was an influx of petitions from natives for the vigorous prosecution of public works. Still, amidst much material improvement and external agreement about the means of more, the European and Asiatic races drew no nearer to each other in mind and heart. Much was said, in a kindly spirit and in eloquent language, in the parliamentary debates on the charter of 1853, about the progress of education, the increase of churches,

and the means of moral and religious sympathy and advancement; but yet these were all only means; and no one could show that the end was attained. This is a matter which calls for no exposition now. An extinguisher is put upon all arguments, *pro* and *con.* We knew now that for one hundred years daily prayers have been uttered in Mussulman worship for the Mogul rulers and their restoration, and that a vast multitude of those whom we were striving to raise to a condition of fellow-citizenship with ourselves, have only been waiting for the expiration of our century to turn us—not only out of their country, but out of the world. Meantime, what the petitioners professed to want was a great purification in the administration of justice; a rectification in the land tenures; and a vigorous prosecution of public works. All these were discussed in the session of 1853, and the new Charter then voted accomplished some considerable changes.

It was seriously debated whether to preserve the Double Government—few pretending to say that it had worked well, but at best doubting whether any other arrangement would work better. "The Company" was declared to have become a mere fiction; and the Board of Directors to be a blind behind which the general Government really ruled India. Those who desired to have the Queen at once proclaimed in every town in India, and to have a new Secretary of State for Indian affairs, did not obtain

their desire: but the number of Directors was reduced from thirty to eighteen, of whom six were eventually to be nominated by the Crown, while half of the twelve elected by the Directors themselves must have served ten years in India. An English Commission was appointed to promote good law and a good administration of it in India; and several minor provisions were made, suitable to the more marked political character of the Company. We have since seen great changes made in regard to Indian patronage—civil offices being thrown open to competition, and admission to military training being made more easily attainable. The exclusive East India College at Haileybury is to be closed; and thus was one after another of the characteristics of the great Company passing away. Something had happened in the interval between the two last Charters which had indeed brought the Company into very close relations with the politics of the empire at large. A great European controversy had been contested in their name, on their territory, and at their expense. In the debate on the new Charter, in 1853, the Directors declared their finances to be in a better condition than appeared from the figures, because 15,000,000*l.* of recent expenditure had been incurred for a war which was not Indian but European. On the last occasion of a new Charter, the Company's debt was 38,000,000*l.*; it was now (twenty years later) 53,000,000*l.*; but the

existing balances were so much larger than on the former occasion, that the great wars of the interval —those of Burmah, Affghanistan, and Scinde—had in fact caused an increase of less than eight millions and a half, though the Affghan war had cost fifteen. The difference might be taken as a fair measure of the improvement in Indian finance. Thus it appeared that the time had arrived, predicted by Mackintosh, and by many before and after him, when the chief danger of our Indian empire would appear to be from a foreign foe: for this alone could be the meaning of a European war being carried on in India. It was even so, as all our readers well know. Few of them can have forgotten the Affghan war; but some may be unaware of its relations with our empire, east and west; and our review of British life in India would be unnecessarily defective if we omitted to sketch a group of events so remarkable in themselves, so suggestive of change, and so clearly exhibiting a new phase in Indian Government.

There is an old Eastern proverb, that no one can be King of Hindostan without being first Lord of Cabul. Yet, when Lord W. Bentinck came home in 1835, and Lord Auckland went out to succeed him, the English held Hindostan, as far as the desert frontier which extended from the Hill States of Ghurwal (which Simla and other summer stations render familiar to English imaginations) to the sea, without having ever been lords of Cabul. Alexander

had gone by way of Cabul to India, after taking Herat, near the borders of Persia; and Tamerlane conquered it on his route to the Ganges, and Baber in his descent upon Delhi, where he set up his throne. Sultan Mahmoud made Ghuznee, in the same region, his basis of operations in founding the Mohammedan empire in India. It was natural for the natives of India to speculate on our not being lords of Cabul, seeing that we were masters of Hindostan: but the English at home, who are not too well-informed in regard to Asiatic traditions, might easily wonder, any time within twenty years, what business we had at Cabul. How did we become involved in an Affghan war, which cost us a deluge of blood and tears, of which the loss of fifteen millions of treasure is only the bare material record? It is a problem not to be solved in this place how such a war could be instituted, against the will of the Company, just after the Company had been left with a territorial function alone. Its sole business after April, 1834, was to manage the political and administrative affairs of India: and yet a course of political action was entered on presently after which was disapproved by the Company from first to last. In their own words, it was a European conflict carried on on their territory, and at the expense mainly of their subjects. The only possible answer to the question why they allowed it is, that they could not help it. What was this strong compulsion? A few glances round the scene may help to account for it.

It will be remembered that there was an alarm in 1808 about invasion from the north-west while Napoleon and Alexander of Russia were friends, and Turkey their tool, and Persia waiting their commands. Metcalfe was sent to the Punjaub, and Elphinstone to Cabul, to prepare alliances in preparation for such an attack. Through all subsequent changes, when Napoleon and Alexander were in their graves, the alarm of an invasion in Asia by our European foes or rivals was occasionally revived; and it was particularly strong when Lord Auckland went out to India. In Persia, our envoy, Mr. Ellis, found in 1835 that the young monarch whom we had seated in peace on his throne was the humble servant of the Czar Nicholas, instead of the friend of England. He was going to besiege Herat, for which he might or might not have good reason; but he was going further than Herat, intending to claim Ghuznee and Candahar; and if he obtained them, he would be very near the Punjaub; and nothing else lay between him and us. The conclusion in England was that it was as the Czar's pioneer that the Shah was thus penetrating eastwards; and it was anticipated that, in a very short time, Russian consular agents would be settled in all the great towns up to the frontier of the Punjaub. At the same time, the Affghan rulers—a set of turbulent princes, always at feud among themselves—were afraid of Runjeet Singh, our Sikh ally, and promised aid to Persia, and also to Russia, in return for support against their

neighbours at Lahore. This combination really was alarming, and the British envoy reasonably desired to see peace made between the Herat sovereign and the Shah. Terms were offered on the side of Herat; but the Shah marched on to the siege instead of accepting them. It has been a matter of dispute to this day whether Russia encouraged or discouraged the Shah in this course. The Czar declared that he had always openly disapproved it; while there was a great amount of testimony that Russian agents were everywhere busy in obtaining aid for the Persian enterprise, and spreading reports of a great Russian reinforcement being on the march to join the Shah's army. Herat was besieged under the guidance of Russian officers; and it was defended by the help of an English officer—Lieut. Pottinger, who so enabled the place to hold out as to baffle the Shah, and compel him, at the end of ten months, to raise the siege, and turn homewards. The policy of Europe was in truth represented in little at that spot at the foot of the Affghan mountains; the real conflict was between the aggressive Russian officers managing the siege without, with their 40,000 Persians and 80 cannon, and the gallant and vigilant Pottinger within, who was managing the defence as if the fate of India hung on his making the crumbling walls, and the hungry people, and the tired garrison hold out till the Shah should give up the game. And if there were busy Russians stirring up the towns against the

kings of Hindostan, lest they should become lords of Cabul, there were also adventurous Englishmen, wandering in strange places, each charged with a mission relating to the same controversy. Lieut. Wyburd was winning his way to Khiva in 1835, to see what the Khan there knew of the reported army of Russians, and to obtain his good-will on the English side. Colonel Stoddart presented himself to Pottinger at Herat, and was so deep in the interest of the case as to be ready to try another formidable journey, as perilous as Wyburd's. He learned at Bokhara that Wyburd had been murdered very early in his mission. Captain Conolly followed Wyburd's track, and then joined Stoddart at Bokhara, where they were beheaded together in 1843, after enduring a long and loathsome imprisonment. These were the first fruits of the policy of going out into the wilderness to meet a rumoured foe, instead of awaiting his possible attack in a well guarded position at home. Thus were the scouts cut off at once, who would have done good service in watch and ward within the camp.

Pottinger's defence of Herat was a piece of individual gallantry; and the three envoys who were sent wandering into Central Asia had each a particular and speculative mission. There must be besides a new seat of diplomacy between the Persian territory and our own; and advantage was taken of overtures from Cabul to establish a mission there. Dost

Mohammed, the ruler of Cabul, applied to all parties at once, in his dread of Runjeet Singh—to Lord Auckland as well as the Czar and the Shah; and the Governor-General at once sent Captain Burnes, who arrived at Cabul while the Persians were on their march to Herat. Burnes's mission had avowedly a commercial object; but he found a Persian competitor so busy at Candahar in showing the Affghans how much better the Russian and Persian alliance was for them than the British, that he declared the British could not stand their ground but by entering into a political rivalship. On no better security than the opinion of Burnes and the sincerity of Dost Mohammed, the very serious step was taken of investing our envoy with political powers, and entering into a competition with Russia, involving the India Company in a policy which they wholly disapproved, and costing the English nation dearer than any conceivable consequences which could have arisen from leaving it to Russia to get to India if she could, across the snows and the sands, the frosts and the heats, the parched plains and the impracticable defiles which an army must struggle through before reaching our frontier, and meeting a fresh army face to face. As it was, we lost an entire army without having encountered a Russian.

Whilst Burnes was at Cabul, sending a series of "startling disclosures" to Calcutta, and while the Governor-General continued to be startled in due

response, two successive ambassadors at St. Petersburg, Lords Durham and Clanricarde, were satisfied that Russia was not at that time thinking of invading India, and the Russian ambassador in London convinced Lord Palmerston of the same thing. The Czar even changed his official agents in the East at our desire, and, as we have seen, Herat was not taken by the Persians; yet was an act ventured upon at Calcutta which must have appeared rash even if a hostile army had been in full march upon our frontier. In October, 1838, the Governor-General issued a proclamation to the Bengal division of the troops then at Simla, explaining our difficulty with Persia, complaining of the conduct of Dost Mohammed towards our ally, Runjeet Singh, and announcing the intention of the Company's government to depose the rulers of Cabul and Candahar, as belonging to a usurping race, and to seat a rival claimant, Shah Soojah, on the throne. Everybody in England, and most people in India, asked who was Shah Soojah, and what business we had to do more than fulfil the terms of our alliance with Runjeet Singh. The very feuds about the succession among the Affghan princes so weakened their states that we might advantageously have left them to their own disputes; whereas, at the moment when they were least likely to make war upon us we involved ourselves in their quarrels, for the sake of setting up a prince who

would be thereby bound to keep the peace towards us. After one of the princes had seen his fine province of Cashmere annexed to the Punjaub under Runjeet Singh, and Peshawur reduced to the rank of a vassal city, while another saw Balkh incorporated with Bokhara, and next, Scinde declared independent under its own Ameers, it was a most unnecessary act for us to interfere; but the fact was, a panic had possessed the Calcutta government and its agents in the north-west; and they saw the Russian hosts approaching through every medium of circumstance. If the Affghan princes were strong and united, they would overwhelm Runjeet Singh, and give a passage to the Russians: and, if they were weak, they would be no defence against the Russians: so Shah Soojah was set up as the English tool, at all risks. British troops were to accompany his soldiery to Cabul, to ensure his accession, and were to retire when he should be firmly seated. Thus it was that we had a British army in Affghanistan. It was an imposing force when Lord Auckland and Runjeet Singh met at Ferozepore in November, 1838, and the greeting of the allied potentates was a really splendid spectacle, so magnificent were their retinues and soldiery; but when it was known that the Shah was retreating from Herat, the Bengal force was at once considerably reduced. A strong body of Bombay troops marched through Scinde, according to treaty; but

they met with such treatment there that it was necessary to bring more to keep all safe in our rear, and to establish a permanent force in the country at the expense of the Ameers. Thus were our obligations and liabilities increasing with every step we took in an anticipatory policy with regard to Russia.

The rest of the dreary story may be very briefly told; for everybody knows it whose memory can carry him 15 years back. The Bombay force had to fight its way up through Scinde, and Shah Soojah's army marched down the Indus to meet it. The Belooches saw from their hill stations what was going on, and of course disapproved of their new neighbours, making use of their opportunity to damage and despoil the invaders. It was March: and in the jungly plains the soldiers were struck down by the heat, while in the mountains the snow blinded them by driving in their faces. The enemy dammed up the rivers, so as to let out a deluge where the invaders were coming; and the Belooches hovered in flank and rear, carrying off camels, stores, and stragglers. One of the princes was negotiating with the British Political Agent at the very moment when he was sending his bands into the Bolan pass, to make the passage through it a mere running the gauntlet. Our soldiers emerged from it without tents, camels, baggage, or food, so that the camp-followers fought for the carcases of the horses which fell dead on the

road. Our officers, in their despatches, said that this march had no parallel but the retreat from Moscow; and Shah Soojah's force was reduced from 6,000 to 1,500 men. He entered Candahar without opposition, and Sir John (afterwards Lord) Keane took Ghuznee for him with great skill and hardihood. When Dost Mohammed heard that it had fallen, and that his son was a prisoner in the hands of the English, he withdrew to Bokhara, and left Cabul open to his rival, who entered it on the 7th of August 1839.

The work was supposed to be now achieved, though many a warning reached the managers of this policy that they had better not feel secure. There were well-disposed men in Cabul itself who offered secret intelligence that plots were hatching against us: but Burnes (now Sir Alexander), through whom Lord Auckland received his intelligence, would listen to nothing which did not corroborate his sanguine hopes; and Sir William M'Naghten, the new Political Resident, was for a time equally delighted with our happy lodgment at Cabul. Sir J. Keane carried away too many soldiers, while a crowd of women and children congregated at the new station. Burnes encouraged everybody to come, and garden as he did, and cultivate the pleasant people he lived amongst. As soon as the Bengal and Bombay forces were in great part gone home, the popular hatred of the imposed sovereign began to appear, and in the dreaded form of threats to appeal to Russia. The

Affghans showed us that we had been virtually inviting the Russians by our precipitancy in forestalling them. The Czar did in fact declare war against Khiva towards the close of the year, on the ostensible ground of aggressions by the Khiva people. It was in that winter that the Russian army was lost in the snow, and by famine and pestilence, only a few stragglers returning to tell the Czar how difficult a matter it was to march in the direction of India—at once a lesson for him and a rebuke to us.

After a time, Dost Mohammed surrendered, by quietly walking into the British camp, and placing himself at the disposal of the authorities. We, in England, heard of him as the ornament of the parties at Government House, and as playing chess with the Governor-General's sister. Whatever he might be at chess, he was very able at a deeper game.

In April, 1841, General Elphinstone, aged and infirm, was put in command of the troops in Affghanistan. He saw nothing wrong, though the hill-tribe of the Ghilzees was at that time sworn to avenge on the British the death of a chief besieged and killed by misadventure. Five thousand of their warriors were watching their opportunity from day to day. Major Pottinger, arriving from Calcutta in May, saw at once that the British force was far too weak, though Lord Auckland had just ventured to offend the native chiefs by reducing their allowances, as if we stood in no need of their good-will. Already

the Punjaub had broken down behind us. Runjeet Singh died in 1839, and in a few months his two next heirs were dead; one by poison, if the general belief is well-founded, and the other by the fall of a beam as he was passing under a gateway on his camel. The consequent disputes about the succession made the Punjaub a new scene of anxiety, instead of the sure refuge which we had considered it. Again, no small sensation was excited at Cabul when the news came that the Peel and Aberdeen ministry had caused the recal of Lord Auckland, and the despatch of Lord Ellenborough to fill his place. Would the Auckland policy be sustained by Lord Ellenborough? His course was prepared by events.

After an anxious summer, during which the gathering of the storm was watched by the wise and made a jest of by the sanguine, the day of doom was drawing near. The best officers were the most depressed, because most aware of the necessity of good command under the approaching crisis, and of the utter imbecility of their commander. They did not know the whole truth—the native scheme that the British should be apparently allowed to return to India; but that only one should be left alive—to sit, deprived of his limbs, at the entrance of the pass, with a letter in his teeth, declaring him to be the one survivor of the British in Affghanistan. Our readers remember how nearly this came true; how the garrison of Jellalabad saw a single horseman

approach, reeling in his saddle, and how he told them that he alone had escaped to tell the fate of his countrymen and countrywomen. More were afterwards recovered; but it was a lost expedition; and it occupies its place in history as one of the great catastrophes of nations. The gay and confident Burnes had no misgivings till the Cabul rabble stormed his house on the 3rd of November, and shot him and his brother in their own balcony. The careworn M'Naghten said in December, that a thousand deaths would be better than the hell of anxiety he had been living in for six weeks; and on the 23rd he was murdered, and his head and green spectacles made a plaything of by the soldiers of Akbar Khan, Dost Mohammed's second son.

The British, half-starved and without ammunition, looking in vain for help from below and behind, and distant a mile and a half from the citadel, which should have been their grand bulwark, were "advised" by the enemy to go back to India; and on the 6th of January, 1842, they set out. Their doom was clear before five miles were over. Of the 4,500 soldiers, 12,000 camp followers, and a great body of women and children, only one individual accomplished the march. At the first halt, they saw the glare from their burning cantonments as they sat in the snow. The women were pillaged of everything but the scanty clothing they wore; the children were lost in the hubbub; and the snow was

soaked with the blood and strewn with the corpses of our soldiers till there was not one left. The camp followers, frost-bitten and benumbed, lay down in the road, or crawled among the rocks, to die of cold and hunger.

The generals did not appear, because they were obstructed below, and had enough to do to save our military reputation. That reputation *was* saved, the errors of the Affghanistan war being attributed to the weakness of civilians, who laid themselves open to irresponsible military importunities. Large reinforcements were sent, and able commanders found means to get them through the passes. General Pollock for the first time in history proved that the Khyber pass can be traversed in the face of an enemy, and relieved the gallant Sale after his heroic defence of Jellalabad. General Nott came up from Candahar, victorious, though the reinforcements sent could not reach him. A considerable number of women, children, and wounded or isolated officers were recovered; our flag was planted on the citadel at Cabul, and the bazaar—a work of Aurungzebe's—was burned. General Elphinstone died in captivity before things took this turn; and Shah Soojah was murdered near his own capital—to be succeeded presently by Dost Mohammed—relieved of his fears in all directions.

Lord Ellenborough by proclamation commanded the evacuation of Affghanistan, declaring, to the

astonishment of the Affghans, that it is contrary to British principles and policy to force a ruler on a reluctant people. It was for the Affghans and all India to argue whether the British were perfidious, or simply infirm; and we are now suffering the practical consequences of the speculation.

CHAPTER XX.

BULWARKS OF AN EXTERNAL POLICY.

1830—1856.

"For to think that a handful of people can, with the greatest courage and policy in the world, embrace too large extent of dominion, it may hold for a time, but will fail suddenly."—BACON.

"In the garden more grows than the gardener sows."—*Proverb.*

"Is this the promised end?"—LEAR.

IN the slight mention made of Scinde in our review of the Affghan war, it was plain that the most disastrous complications may arise, and are almost sure to arise, when once aggressive measures against a foreign state are undertaken for precautionary purposes. Our Bombay forces, we have seen, had to fight their way up the Indus, and then through the Beloochees, before meeting their ostensible enemy in Affghanistan. The conquest and annexation of Scinde and the Punjaub were inevitable consequences of the Affghan war, though Lord Auckland would no doubt have recoiled from the charge of so flagrantly violating the orders and the professions of both halves of the double government at home by so vast an extension of their Indian

Empire. Sir Charles Napier always called the conquest of Scinde "the tail of the Affghan war;" and there was presently nobody to deny that it was so.

Before that unhappy speculation, our authority and influence extended to the Sutlej. We had alliances beyond it; but it was our true boundary. A line of three states had intervened between us and the mountaineers beyond the Indus; Cashmere, lying among the sources of the Five Rivers; the Punjaub, through which they flowed and converged; and Scinde, through which they ran to the sea after uniting to form the Indus. Cashmere had belonged to Cabul, but was easily obtained by Runjeet Singh, and annexed to the Punjaub in 1819. With the other two states we had treaties of alliance. Our relations with Runjeet Singh have been described. Those with Scinde were less simple and stable.

Scinde was the scene of successive barbaric invasions and tyrannies from the time it was first known to the British till fifteen years ago. While it was under the rule of a tribe of military fanatics from Persia, who established themselves there in the beginning of the last century, the English first gained a footing in Scinde, planting a factory at Tatta, in the delta of the Indus, in 1775. Broils and troubles among the inhabitants rendered the establishment precarious. Sometimes it was suspended for years, and then restored, while changes of dynasty went on; but when our envoys at Lahore and Cabul obtained

pledges that the French should not be received at those courts, the same engagement was entered into by the Princes of Scinde, who in 1820 promised to exclude the Americans also. By this time our possession of Cutch had led us up to their frontier; and it was necessary to station a military force within view of it to secure good faith from allies who had no very clear idea what Americans and Frenchmen could have to do with their affairs. Commerce was still the main object, however: and the first step towards accomplishing it was to examine the Indus. This might be done, it was thought, in spite of the jealousy of the Ameers (Lords) of Scinde, by sending a present of five dapple-grey horses to Runjeet Singh by that route, as the princes could hardly refuse a passage in such a case. Our Political Resident in Cutch, Sir Henry Pottinger, advised this, adding the suggestion that a handsome coach should be also sent, as absolutely requiring a water conveyance. A good observer was despatched with it, who certainly made great use of his eyes and his opportunities. It was poor Burnes; and perhaps some of us may remember the sensation excited at home when he published his travels, and told us how he had navigated this mighty river up to Lahore, and what splendid commercial results might be expected when it was thrown open to commerce. Again and again the English were turned back with insult; but at length they were speeded up the country as fast as

royal favour could carry them. The Ameers sent them dinners of seventy-two dishes, all served in silver; but the poverty of the country was extreme nevertheless. For hundreds of miles there was not even a ferry-boat, and the natives crossed the stream each on his bundle of reeds. This was in 1831. A Beloochee soldier told Burnes that all was over, now that the English had seen their river; and he was not the only one who expressed the same fear. More treaties followed, and double ones as new cliques of princes divided the empire; and in 1832 we began to have specific rights in Scinde. We might use the Indus freely for commerce, but no vessel of war was to enter it. No merchant was to settle in Scinde, and travellers must have passports. A tariff was to be granted by the princes, whose officers were to abide by it; and the princes engaged to alter it if it proved objectionable, and to help to put down the border robbers of Cutch. The tariff and tolls were settled by another treaty in 1834, and Colonel Pottinger was appointed Political Agent for Scinde. The tolls were to be taken (not on goods, but on vessels) only at the mouth of the Indus; and the produce was to be divided among the powers whose territory bordered the river; viz., the British, the Ameers, Runjeet Singh, and a tributary prince whose lands lay between the Sutlej and the Indus. In a few months more a steamboat was navigating the Indus, the property of a Mogul merchant at Bombay.

Throughout the districts of our cotton manufacture, and among the abolitionists of the United States, there were great rejoicings over that steamboat; but the anticipations of a good supply of cotton down that channel have not as yet been fulfilled, though there is every reason for hope that they will be. It was Lord Auckland's policy that intercepted that benefit as so many others. There is "a law of storms" in politics as in natural philosophy; and in this case, among the wrecks on the verge of the tornado was Scinde. From the time when Lord Auckland conceived his anti-Russian policy, he desired to use as his tools the allies who lay between his dominions and Cabul; and the ruin of Scinde as an independent state was the consequence—a consequence, we must add, anything but disastrous to the inhabitants at large, whose condition could scarcely be worse than it was when the British entered the country.

Runjeet Singh quarrelled with the Ameers, and threatened invasion, requiring of the Calcutta Government a supply of arms to be sent up the Indus. This was rendered impossible by the treaty; but Lord Auckland used the opportunity to obtain such a footing in Scinde that it could be made the base of operations in the Cabul invasion, when it was determined to use the Bolân pass in preference to the Khyber. The Ameers employed their utmost endeavours to send Shah Soojah to Cabul by the Khyber pass; and, failing, the march of the Shah's