
Advances in Asia and Imperial Consolidation in India

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introduce his name because, as Sir Harry Johnston, he has proved himself a brilliant administrator in British Central Africa, and is at present engaged in organizing a system of government for that great province of Uganda, which Captain Lugard (now General Sir Frederick Lugard) won for the Empire under the auspices of the Imperial British East Africa Company.

This ends my sketch ; but I would add a few words on a question which the future historian will assuredly ask :—In what spirit has this vast expansion of the Empire been conducted ?

Now, looking only at British America, Australasia, and Africa, because British India is outside my province to-night, these fall roughly into two sections, one of which is mainly peopled by white races capable of self-government, while the other is peopled by coloured races, which (when unprotected) fall a prey to cruel tyranny and inhuman fetish practices, or are devastated by unceasing inter-tribal war, or are swept away by the incursions of slave-raiding hordes.

Throughout the Victorian age, Great Britain has dealt with the white races on the principle of constitutional liberty, when assured of loyalty to the Crown and flag ; and the chief aim in dealing with the coloured races has undoubtedly been beneficence, though this aim, like other human ideals, has too often been marred by imperfect knowledge or faulty judgment. But perhaps the dominant note throughout this period of expansion has been the devotion to duty of those concerned in it, whether soldiers, sailors, or civilians ; whether in the United Kingdom or in the Colonies ; whether explorers of unknown regions or their supporters living within the bounds of civilization.

And it was that triple watchword of Liberty, Beneficence, and Duty which made our late Sovereign the perfect symbol of the cohesive forces that bound this vast Empire together ; her respect for the constitutional liberty of her subjects was only equalled by her deep human sympathy with all kind of suffering, and by that extraordinary devotion to duty, which was carried to the very verge of the grave. So it was that Her Majesty stood as the type and example of all that is best and truly greatest in our race : and as long as English history shall endure and wherever the English language shall be spoken, the last Sovereign of the Hanoverian line will be revered by our descendants as Victoria the Beloved.

III. ADVANCES IN ASIA AND IMPERIAL CONSOLIDATION IN INDIA.

By Colonel Sir THOMAS H. HOLDICH, K.C.I.E., C.B., R.E.

When we turn from the magnificent record of geographical enterprise, closely associated, as it has been, with the advance of Imperial interests in Africa during the last sixty years, to the records of progress in

scientific research in Asia, we may at first be struck by a sense of disproportion in the extent of the results attained. Here are no vast bands of forest and mountain, no continental widths of plain and morass, to be traversed for the first time in the history of the world's research by the wearied feet of the geographical pioneer, but a very, very old world indeed, a world so old that its intermittent phases of past civilization have been utterly lost in the sleep of oblivion, and it is for us, the geographers of the present day, to dig out their skeletons and to reconstruct from the fleshless bones the full outline of its former development. There is, indeed, little analogy between Africa and Asia. Our most venturesome and intrepid explorers for the last half-century have but followed the footsteps of Old World travellers, and told a tale which must have been told centuries and centuries ago. We have but restored to the world what the world well knew once before, but we have restored it in a form which precludes the possibility of any further relapse into obscurity. We have given the geography of Asia a scientific basis and a constructive anatomy which must last as long as the world lasts; and thus the old, old continent takes new shape, shedding its mantle of mystery, whilst it is finished and fashioned and fitted with all the latest improvements by the modern map-maker.

In the year of grace 1837, when our late Queen ascended the throne of England, Russia was still behind the Caucasian barrier; Persia and China were for the most part regarded with Arabia as regions of speculative inquiry; High Asia was a nebulous sea of uncertainty, with the face of its past civilization battered beyond recognition by the destructive Mogul; Siberia was a boundless waste of snow-covered steppes where desolation reigned supreme, and men went as to final perdition, without hope in this world, and no promise of a comfortable exit into the next. Such, at least, were the popular views of the geographer of 1850, and I am old enough to remember something of their nature in the early days of my boyhood. Nothing has changed except men's knowledge; and this has grown with the growth of empire, of Russian Empire and of British Empire, till the wildernesses and deserts of our imagination have blossomed into fields and prairies, and the wealth which our ancestors passed by unheeded is enriching the world.

All this has been brought about by the slow and certain process of Imperial advance, carrying with it all the accessories of civilization, which sweep clean the rottenness that underlies the undergrowth of small and semi-barbarous nationalities choking their roots and stunting the growth of wide and wholesome development; and it is this which has distinguished Asia no less than Africa in the history of the world's advance during the last century. But, coincident with this advance, and due to it, very much has been done to make the byways of the Old World plainer to those who study them, so that they may read on

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the face of the map as they run, and not involve governments in grievous geographical blunders. There is hardly a corner of Asia which has not been visited and examined and mapped during the last fifty years. The researches of Doughty and Bent and Blunt, in Arabia on the west, have been balanced in the far East by such a host of determined far-searching explorers that it is impossible to enumerate them. The names of Gill, of Margary, of Baber, Colquhoun, Younghusband, Bell, Woodthorpe, and Glass, will occur to you all. They are sufficient to sustain the reputation of Englishmen as foremost in the geographical field of eastern Asia. An immense mass of information has been collected and collated by these members of our Society. They have unravelled the riddle of Eastern hydrography in its early beginnings, showing us where the Brahmaputra, the Irawadi, the Salwin, the Mekong, the Hoang Ho, and the Yang-tsi trace their sources; they have unfolded the magnificent resources of Central China, and proved the possibility of reaching them from India; they have set a definite line of partition between British and French interests in the Far East; and they have mapped out the world of mountains between Assam and Lower Burma. The far north of Asia has yielded up all secrets worth knowing to the patient, unwearying persistence of Russian explorers and Russian surveyors, and it has been for us Englishmen to keep pace in the south with the advance of Russian scientific expeditions in the north; to take up, as it were, the geographical glove which has been cast at us from beyond the Himalaya, and see to it that we were not outpaced in the search after knowledge. We have no reason to be ashamed of our share in the scientific contest. Into the central region of vast elevations and depressions, whilst we have watched with admiration the advance of such giants in geographical exploration as Prjevalski and Sven Hedin, we Englishmen have sent a very creditable contingent of inquirers. The names of Shaw and Hayward, the Stracheys, Trotter, Dalgleish, Ewer, Littledale, Younghusband, Wellby, Ney Elias, Curzon, Conway, Deasy, are all familiar enough to this Society and to the world. Through them, and others like them, we have learnt all that there is to know of the general physiography of High Asia, including that land of ancient mystery, Tibet. And to these names there are yet others to add which are not so well known, the names of those patient workers in the geographical cause who have been sent out from time to time from India across the great chains of Himalaya by the administrators of Indian Survey Department; natives of the country (sometimes natives of the very land they set out to explore); men who have faced all difficulties and braved all dangers, who have been to Lhasa and mapped it as if it were London, and who have carried through their work from end to end a well-connected chain of scientific observation, incorporating the whole into an accurate record of trans-Himalayan geography. Amongst them we may select the names of Nain Sing and Krishna as

typical workers. Now all this great advance in what we may rightly term scientific geography has occurred not only during the long reign of our late Queen, but well within the latter half of it, and it could never have assumed the high value which we may fairly claim as its due (a value which we measure by the standard of accuracy rather than of extent) had there not been a sound and assured basis of accurate geodetic deduction from which to start. For this we must turn to India.

What was our geographical position in India in those comparatively early days of the century just passed away, when our great Queen first assumed the responsibilities of monarchy?

Take any map of India that existed before 1840, and you will see it plainly marked. Draw a line from the head of the Gulf of Kutch, on the western coast, due northward till it reaches a point about level with Sukkur, on the Indus, where the great cantilever bridge now spans the river and carries the North-Western railway across it. From this point slant the line north-eastward till it hits the upper reaches of the Sutlej river below the Himalaya, and you will have a fair presentment of the north-west frontier of India in the days of Lord Auckland. Beyond it lay the unlimited flats and sands of the Punjab and Sind, so little known that we find written across the blank space intervening between the Sutlej and the Ravi, "Here dwell an erratic people called the Khattia." But with all the geographical uncertainty that overlay these regions beyond the frontier, there were here and there districts and positions which were not inaccurately laid down. The valley of the Kabul river, for instance, the historical high-road of the conquerors of India, is not vaguely expressed; and the position of the main passes across the frontier hills is relatively maintained throughout, although the names are misplaced. When the gallant Wood set out on his voyage of exploration up the Indus and terminated his quest at the Lake of the Pamirs to which he gave the name of his young Queen (a name which, through the courtesy of Russian geographers, is to be retained through future years by a lake which is now half Afghan and half Russian), he was received with suspicion. Coming events were even then casting long shadows before. In 1843 Sind was annexed. Within the next ten years the red line had passed round the Punjab, had included the Berars in Central India, and had encircled Lower Burma on the east. In 1856 Oudh was coloured red; and finally, after a long, long interval, Upper Burma joined us in 1885. Thus since 1840 six great provinces, covering 450,000 square miles of country and including fifty million of people, were added to India.

The great peninsula of India during this period has been gradually reduced from a condition of geographical vagueness to that of detailed map accuracy. There was in the year 1840 a vast space of the interior lying between the Godavari and the Bay of Bengal across which was written the word "unexplored"—and so indeed it remained absolutely

unexplored, along with many other minor tracts, a region of absolute darkness, until the seventies, about which period we may say that all geographical uncertainties were cleared up, and Indian exploration became a thing of the past. Meanwhile there had been growing up to perfection a system of minutely accurate geodetic survey, which has finally covered India with a network of triangulation second in scientific value to none in the world, which has furnished a basis for extension of accurate geography westward into Persia, Baluchistan, and Afghanistan, and northward to the Oxus and the Pamirs, and which has, in a secondary degree, supplied that data which was necessary for the scientific exploration of all High Asia. And with this grand development of practical geodesy, as much as with the scientific acumen which first saw the advantages to be gained from a system of exploration conducted by natives of the country based thereon, must ever be associated the name of my late chief, General Walker. To him, not as a great pioneer in the field of exploration, but as the guide and adviser of all pioneers, the constructor of a system on which such pioneering might be based with the result of assured accuracy, the friend and councillor of this institution, and the warm supporter of all geographical enterprise, I would award the first place in that great roll of English geographers who have maintained the honour of English science in Asiatic fields.

It seems fitting that on an occasion like this we should call to mind some, at least, of the names of those who have been so closely associated with this great Society, and whose voices we shall hear no more within those walls. Of the living I need not speak again. We have them with us, and we trust to meet them often; but to those who have crossed the last boundary into the great unknown lands we may well give a passing tribute of unforgetfulness. Along with Walker we have lost many whose names were well known on the list of Indian surveyors—Basevi, Montgomerie, Tanner, Harman, that gallant explorer Woodthorpe, McNair, and many another less-known hero have passed us by; Theodore Bent has left the fields of Arabia and Africa; Elias will no more tread the steppes of Central Asia, nor Wellby; Hayward has gone, and with him that later adventurer into the stern altitudes of the Himalaya—Mummery. These all rest from their labours, and their work is done.

And what are we to say of such lights of Asiatic geography as Rawlinson and Yule? Such names as theirs will never die. They will echo down the roll of ages for century upon century. Their works are their monuments, and that work which they lived to accomplish is a work which yet speaks and gives life to geographical enterprise.

I have been asked to say something of the consolidation of the British Empire in Asia. For its material consolidation we must look to those physical changes which the addition of territory and the

enlargement of its borders bring about. For that consolidation which means unity of purpose and bond of sympathy between the many nationalities of which India is composed, we must look to the condition of the people under new developments of civilization, and to their loyalty to the throne.

I have said that since 1840 six great provinces and a vast number of people have been brought under British dominion, until the total area of British India is measured by one million of square miles of territory, peopled by 200 million inhabitants. The Presidencies of India exist no more, British India is now represented by eight provinces, each under its own administrative staff answerable to one supreme head, the Viceroy of India. Within it, each under its own native administration, are a multitude of native states enjoying various degrees of independence, and these collectively represent about another half-million of square miles in area, and from 50 to 60 millions of people. Beyond this again there stretches a great area of trans-frontier country, Baluchistan and the independent districts of the Pathan border, reaching to the frontiers of Afghanistan, which must be regarded as being independent only in the sense in which the native states of the peninsula are independent. It would take more time than is at my command to define the exact degree of independence claimed and exercised by each, but it is well in these days to remember and to recognize the actual facts of that independence, and to bear in mind that for the last forty years no material shifting of the red line westward has taken place. Where the stern old Sikh drew his frontier line at the foot of the hills, there (in spite of the fact that we occupy advanced posts, and are in strength on certain strategical lines) is our frontier still. Only in Baluchistan have we definite official footing on the red patch which centres about Quetta, and which we call British Baluchistan. It is in the east, in Upper Burma, that the great material change of extension of territory is most boldly marked. But whilst the peninsula of India extending to Burma is the visible expression of British Empire in Asia, we must regard its consolidation as dependent on the measure of our capacity to govern and to defend it; and this means a sure and determined hold on the borderlands between ourselves and Russia, or between ourselves and France. So that the measures which have been recently taken to define the exact limits of Persian, Russian, Afghan, or French spheres of influence respectively by the demarcation of boundaries must be regarded as so many factors in effective consolidation, just as much as should the occupation of those military posts and strategic positions which leaves the command of frontier avenues of approach in our hands. No empire can be consolidated which leaves a ragged border of indefinite sovereignty on its edges subject to perpetual political wrangle and dispute. Here, then, surely we have nothing with which to reproach ourselves. If

the past century has brought with it great additional responsibilities and a widening Imperial sphere, it has also seen a definite limitation set to any unjustifiable thirst for extension of territory, and a rounding off of the area of Imperial responsibilities which can but make for peace and settled government.

But the consolidation of an empire is not merely a matter of physical definition. That unity of sentiment amongst many peoples, which can only be brought about by good government, by the exercise of the qualities of justice and mercy, by the gradual increase in the material welfare of the millions, by their final contentment and acknowledgment of the success of our efforts in their behalf, is yet more important. What have we done for India by the introduction of perhaps the most successful scheme of administration that the world has ever seen? Is India the better for us, and are the people united and happier?

It would be easy enough to turn to the pages of blue-books and produce evidence of the extraordinary march of Indian administration; to trace out the steps whereby the cumbersome processes of government under the company which gave India to us have gradually given way to the present system, a system which is only made possible by railways; and to prove that the policy of decentralization, which has been the keynote of Indian administration for the last twenty years, has been the only one which could deal successfully with the problem of binding twenty different nationalities with as many different tongues into one compact and enduring empire.

We could then speak of the developments of civilization; of thousands of miles of roads where roads never existed before; of hundreds of square miles of irrigated land where there was nothing but wild waste; of railways whose united length would encircle the globe; of the creeping, growing change that these things are effecting in the caste prejudices of the people; of the transition from the India of tradition, the India of jungles and thatched bungalows and slow movement, to the India of the self-complacent globe-trotter, of flats, and hurrying, dusty, week-end skirmishes to and fro.

If material advance is to be measured by revenue, then it is satisfactory to record that the gross revenues of India, which in 1837 amounted to 21 million in pounds sterling, can now be reckoned at 95 millions, reckoned in tens of the depreciated rupee. How far that depreciation has affected the growth of empire, we cannot at present inquire.

But it is the people, after all, the silent, sullen people, who make the empire, and it is to them we would rather turn for illustration of the moral and material advance that India had made. That they are much better off (in spite of famine and pestilence) than they were, is a self-evident fact to any one who has had opportunity to study them in any one locality for a decade or two. Better houses, better clothes,

brass pots instead of earthenware, silver bangles twinkling on the women's arms and ankles,—all these things are the outward and visible sign of increase of material wealth, and they are evidences which can hardly be misinterpreted. They are at least abundantly manifest in all those parts of India where European civilization reigns. Amongst the 180 millions of agriculturists who form the bulk of the population of India, there must be times when scanty crops and consequent famine reduce vast multitudes to great destitution. But for all that, the normal condition of the Indian peasant, as that of the landowner, is vastly improved under our rule. It is well to remember the words of Strachey: "There has never been a government of India that has taken from the people so small a share of the profits of the soil as ourselves, and this is true for every province in India." If, as some seem to think (but as I do not think), the people of India in the mass are not contented and the happier for our rule, surely, in the words of another great statesman, they "ought to be." If we turn to the educated classes, we have no reason to despair. There are at least thousands of natives, men of intellect and wide influence, wise with the wisdom of the West as well as of the East, who point to the universities and the schools now existing in every part of the country with pride and confidence, and who amply justify the hope that our methods of improvement, our efforts towards the diffusion of knowledge, will yet avail as a strong support in the construction of empire.

But the strongest expression of that unity of nationalities which means a consolidated empire is not to be found in mere contentment of a people with their surroundings, or in the evidence of material advancement and wealth. It is unity of sentiment, the bond of common sympathy evoked by the call of a common allegiance to their ruler, which is the best guarantee for continued Imperial soundness, and without which no empire can hope to stand. In a word, it is the loyalty of the people to which we must look.

Are the people of India loyal, and if they are, to what extent has the influence of the first great Empress of India, our late Queen, been directed in its development?

Consider what India is. Remember that there must be 40 to 50 millions of people in that but half-known land who have certainly never seen the gleam of a bayonet or the face of a British soldier, and many of whom can never even have seen a white man. Can such a sentiment as loyalty be evoked in the breast of these half-reclaimed savages of the jungles? I think it can. I do not speak as a political economist—merely as an ordinary observer, who has walked and talked with the people of India for thirty years in their hills and jungles and plains, and has learnt a little of their moods and methods. I say that loyalty is an instinctive and natural principle implanted in the breast of every native of India. But it is the loyalty of personal attachment

to his ideal. A native will be loyal to his chief, loyal to his mulla, loyal to his friend, or loyal (ah ! how loyal many of us can say) to his master or mistress ; but he must have a clear definition, if an ideal one, of the attributes of the object of his loyalty. His mind must be clear, though his conceptions may be utterly wrong. Thus the wretched jungle woman who propitiates the goddess Mata (the beneficent mother who comes with small-pox in her hand to carry away her child), and builds little swings by the roadside with scant offerings of rice or turmeric to persuade good Mata to deal gently with her, would offer her starved and battered heart in an ecstasy of adoration to the great Queen-mother, her Empress, with her womanly sympathies and her royal condescension, were there but the outward and visible presentment of sovereignty to fall down and worship. But she doesn't understand the Sirkar, the Government of India, which may indeed exist in high altitudes on the mountains of the north, but which shows little active interest in her poor struggle for life, if so be, indeed, that she has ever heard of the Sirkar at all.

A little higher in the scale of Indian humanity—amongst the swarming millions of agriculturists and the so-called educated classes, the zamindars and the mullahs, the priests, the babus and the Mohammedan pleaders, how much is there of real loyalty to the throne? I believe that the great mass of them are loyal by instinct and by tradition. They have known no government that was not a foreign one, and to them the freedom of republicanism is incomprehensible. Although education has advanced far enough to have induced a discontent which, amongst a certain section of the noisiest of them, takes the form of a simmering overflow of disloyal sentiment in their infant press, I believe this to be absolutely superficial. Their own literature, such as it is, teems with tales of regal splendour and magnificence, and captures their imagination by stories of royal condescension, of kings and kalifs descending to walk amongst their people and distributing a vicarious and ill-considered justice by royal command. It may be said that this is a sentiment only. If so, it is a sentiment which has pervaded all India, and which still wraps the throne in a mantle of idealism, still places loyalty to a living chief above all family affection and ties, and this sentiment I believe to have been warmed from a dead acquiescence in the rule of the Sirkar to a living, moving faith, since first a living Empress has been given to the people. What else was the meaning of the voices of prayer which went up from thousands of mosques and temples through the length and breadth of the land that our Queen might be safeguarded from death and restored from illness? The small voice of sedition was still then. There was never any real life in it.

For that great company of native chiefs and nobles who have shown their loyalty and devotion to their Empress on a hundred fields, I need answer no more than I need for the army of India. Strange indeed

would it be if the devoted loyalty of the British soldier (a loyalty which is a passion) had found no echo in the ranks of his fellow-soldiers who have fought shoulder to shoulder with him through the campaigns of an Empire. But, in truth, the quality of loyalty is not caught by contagion in India. It was always there, the hereditary possession of a race of soldiers who, so long as they can see and know whom it is that they serve, will serve with all the hereditary valour of their race. But with them, as with all the rest of us, the dead sentiment is quickened into life, and loyally springs from the head to the heart, when the visible object of it is wholly worthy, Imperial in dignity and power, yet claiming human sympathy even as that sympathy is given. I have ridden many a long day's ride with a simple Mohammedan soldier who, to his eternal satisfaction, had been selected as a representative of the Indian army at our late Queen's jubilee. I knew that he had ridden with the Prince of Wales through many a magnificent pageant, that he had seen all that London had to show of England's wealth and power. Yet of all these wonders (for wonders they were to his simple mind) he had not a word to say; but he had everything to say of the gracious lady, *his* Queen, who had spoken to him five kind words and touched the hilt of his sword, who ever had at her side a man of his own faith and kin in attendance, who could speak his language *as a lady should speak it*, and who had even learnt to write it. His gratitude and his admiration were unbounded. Loyalty with him had become a life's faith. It was his Empress who existed for him for ever as the guiding-star of his devotions in camp or field.

I have not forgotten the mutiny or the lesson of unfaithfulness that it taught us. But I remember two facts in connection with it. Firstly, the people of India were hardly touched by the disloyalty of the army; and, secondly, that the army which, mutinied was not composed of soldiers of the Queen. It may be said that faithfulness to a throne is the same thing as faithfulness to the executive government, which may happen to represent the throne. Loyalty to the one is loyalty to the other. It is so, but with a difference. I ask you, brother officers, who for many years have stood up to listen to that simple toast which is ever received with a silence that is eloquent, and which, alas! we shall hear no more with the old significance—"Gentlemen, the Queen;" should any mess president have deemed it wise to substitute the words, "Gentlemen, the Indian Government," would it have been the same thing to you or me? Hardly. And how should we expect it to be the same with the soldier of India? And it was the just appreciation of the true meaning of this difference, representing as it does a deep-rooted human principle, that prompted the wisest statesman of his time to give to the Empire of India a living Empress, to claim the hearts of the people as well as their heads, and thus to bind an Empire together with ties of a common sympathy and personal loyalty. I believe that

the keystone to the Imperial structure was set on that first of January, 1877, when our Queen was proclaimed Empress of India, and I believe that the bright clear light of her royal dignity, of her Queenly condescension, and of her womanly sympathy, has so bound together the sympathies of all the scattered nationalities of the East, that men shall say through all future time, "This was a consolidated Empire indeed, for it was built up on the hearts of the people."

IV. PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS ON THE ACCESSION OF KING EDWARD VII.

His present Majesty has received from us, as he will receive from all his subjects, the most sincere and most respectful congratulations on assuming the heavy burden of empire. All his subjects bear in mind the work of His Majesty as Prince of Wales, characterized as it was by untiring and unceasing devotion to duty, by unflagging industry, by great ability and perfect tact and judgment, and by warmth of heart. These high qualities accompany him as King; and we all loyally and earnestly wish that, following in the footsteps of his august mother, he may long be spared to the Empire as a great and wise constitutional Sovereign.

As Prince of Wales, His Majesty succeeded his revered father as Vice-Patron of this Society in the year 1862; and His Royal Highness made it no honorary post, but took a warm interest in our proceedings, was present at our meetings, and performed official functions on several occasions. In alluding to the Prince's gracious acceptance of the post of Vice-Patron, Sir Roderick Murchison truly said that no other heir apparent ever before made himself so good a geographer by extensive travels. The Prince of Wales was pleased to express great gratification at becoming our Vice-Patron, particularly as it was a post which had been occupied by his revered father.

The first great event after the Prince accepted office in our Society was the return of Captain Speke from the discovery of the Victoria Nyanza. Although His Royal Highness was unable to attend our very crowded meeting, he was so much interested in the discovery, that a special arrangement was made for Captain Speke to read his paper again at the Royal Institution, when the Prince could be present.

In 1869, in accepting an invitation from Sir Roderick Murchison to be present at our Anniversary Dinner, the Prince of Wales said, "Nothing will interest me more, or give me greater pleasure, than attending the dinner at which you preside. I have taken the greatest interest in the grand project for the exploration of Equatorial Africa."

During the tour of the Prince and Princess of Wales in Egypt, their Royal Highnesses were accompanied by Sir Samuel Baker, and the Prince interested himself most deeply in the question of suppressing