
Art. V.—Memoir of the Honourable Mountstuart Elphinstone

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ART. V.—*Memoir of the Honourable Mountstuart Elphinstone.* By Sir EDWARD COLEBROOKE, Bart., M.P.

CHAPTER I.

EARLY LIFE—INDIA—ASSAYE.

1778—1803.

THE subject of this Memoir was born in the year 1779. He was the fourth son of the eleventh Lord Elphinstone, by Anna, daughter of Lord Ruthven. The Elphinstone family is one of great antiquity in Scotland, and many of its members took a considerable part in the political events of their times. It may be sufficient, as connected with the present sketch, to mention that Mr. Elphinstone's father was a General Officer in the British army, was for some time Governor of Edinburgh Castle, and sat for several Parliaments as one of the representative peers of Scotland; also, that several of his relations were connected about the middle of the last century with the trade and settlements in the East. Mr. Elphinstone's uncle, Mr. Fullerton Elphinstone, was, for many years, a Director of the East India Company; and to this circumstance we may attribute the destination of Mr. Elphinstone, and one of his brothers, to the Civil Service of India.

The few particulars I have collected of his early life and education are chiefly interesting as confirming the impression of those who knew him when his character was formed, that he was in every sense a self-trained man, and that his love for literature was self-sown. Until his twelfth year his studies were pursued at his father's house, under a tutor. He attended the High School at Edinburgh in the years 1791-92, where he studied under Dr. Stark, afterwards a Minister of the Church of Scotland. His education was completed at a school in Kensington, under Dr. Thompson, a teacher of some repute, with whom he remained for about two years, until his departure for India. To none of these schools, or preceptors, can we trace more than the

germs of that scholarship and patient persevering study that distinguished him through life. The description which has been given to me by those who knew him when young, is of a clever, idle boy, full of spirits and energy, fond of desultory reading, but averse to systematic study. Lieutenant-General Monteith, one of his earliest and latest friends, who knew him at his father's house at Cumbernauld, adds that he used to assume a lead among his young companions, and was the head of all the little boys of the neighbourhood in their adventurous expeditions. Mr. Elphinstone himself, speaking to me on one occasion of the aspirations of his early public life, described his thoughts previous to his arrival in India, as scarcely having risen beyond a wish to live the life of a young subaltern.

I am unwilling to believe that he could have received any part of his education at Edinburgh, without deriving some of the force and independence of his character from his intercourse with his fellow students at this period. He was the contemporary and friend of Francis Horner and the late Lord Murray, from the latter of whom I once received some slight reminiscences of their boyhood. They were fellow scholars and friends; and the intimacy thus begun, was renewed upon Mr. Elphinstone's return from India, and cherished by them both to the end of their lives. We know that Edinburgh sent forth, at this period, a band of energetic spirits, who rose to distinction at the Bar, in literature, and in public life. It is pleasing to find the name of Elphinstone added to the list of self-trained men who threw such lustre on the place of their common education.

I may mention, too, in this place, that to Edinburgh Mr. Elphinstone turned, in after life, to supply a professorship founded in his honour at Bombay. Professor Pillans, who was his schoolfellow, and communicated to me this incident, met him after his return from India at a dinner of the Friday Club (a re-union of the literary men of Edinburgh). It was remarked, that, with one or two exceptions, all present had been pupils of Dr. Adams, the Rector of the High School. Subsequent to this recognition, Mr. Elphinstone applied to Professor Pillans to aid his views of Indian education.

A little trait of early character is worth noticing, and adds to the contrast between his youth and mature age. Throughout life he was a Whig; but, when very young, his political principles were so ardent, that he would often refer to his extravagant admiration of Charles Fox as one of the errors of his youth. One of Lord Murray's early recollections of him was that of a little boy in grey, who wore his hair long in imitation of the French republicans, and was fond of

singing "*ça ira.*"[1] Another of his early friends, Sir R. Houston, describes this fondness for the songs of the Revolution, and adds that his strong opinions led to some of his friends presenting him, shortly after his arrival in India, with a cap of liberty and tricolour cockade.

I have before me two brief and interesting reminiscences of young Elphinstone. The first is from the pen of his cousin, Mrs. Thompson, sister of Mr. John Adam, of the Bengal Service; the other from his relative, Mr. John Loch, formerly Director of the East India Company. The former writes:—

"Mountstuart seemed to be full of observation and of mischief, but not much inclined to study. I can just recollect him at our house the few days before they left England, and I perfectly remember the contrast between the quiet gentle manner of my brother, and Mountstuart's energy and spirits. I think he used to quote Shakespeare much, and also doggrel rhyme. I remember hearing my father say, he was clever enough for anything, but an *idle dog*. Who could suppose that could have been said of Mountstuart?"

Mr. Loch's reminiscence refers to the same date:—

"My impression of him, when we met in our respective holidays at the house of our uncle Adam, was, that he was very quick and

[1] Since this was written, I have received some amusing details on this subject from Mr. Elphinstone's early friend, Mr. John Russell, of Edinburgh:—

"Mr. Elphinstone's father, Lord Elphinstone, then an officer in the army, was, at the time I first knew his son, the Governor of Edinburgh Castle, where he resided with his family in the Governor's house. This must have been about, or some time after, the breaking out of the French Revolution; at least it must have been some time after our first engagements with the French at sea, for there were then confined in the castle a great number of French prisoners, some of whom made a little support to themselves by manufacturing snuff boxes and little toys of wood. From being intimate with Mountstuart, I was frequently with him in the castle, and our great amusement was to traffic with the prisoners for their wares, and perhaps practise our small French which we were then learning at school, and talking to them. This led to their singing French songs to us, which we learnt from them; and, as they were zealous republicans, their songs were all to that tune. Nothing amused Mountstuart so much as going about the castle singing these songs, which consisted *inter alia* of the 'Marseillaise,' 'ça ira,' 'Les Aristocrates à la lanterne,' and the other democratic songs then in vogue in France. The old officers looked askance at this outrage on their loyal feelings, and Mountstuart, if he had not been the Governor's son, would probably have been checked in a way he would not have liked; but I do not recollect of anything more than possibly a private reprimand having been inflicted. He was at all times a very lively sprightly boy, with a light figure, and curly golden locks, and very good-looking. He left Edinburgh very early after that, and I did not of course see him again till his return from India, when we renewed our former acquaintance."

clever, and could make himself master of any subject; but at that time he was not a student, though very fond of general reading. He was very fond of fun, and inclined to be riotous in his play. I mention these small facts as he was so different in after life."

But I must pass from these reminiscences of his youth, which, imperfect as they are, have their interest, as illustrating his character and disposition before they were developed by the accidents of his profession. What was great and elevated in his character, was the natural result of his being early placed in a profession, and in situations, calculated to form the mind and lead it to cherish the noblest aspirations.

He sailed for India in July, 1795, as a writer on the Civil Establishment of Bengal, accompanied by, and sharing the same cabin with two young friends—his cousin John Adam, who rose to high eminence in the Bengal service, and a friend of his early youth, now living, General Sir R. Houston. After a tedious voyage, they arrived in Calcutta in February of the following year, and Mr. Elphinstone was almost immediately appointed Assistant to the Magistrate at Benares.

No literary tests awaited the young civil servant at this period. He was placed at once in harness; and if he showed an aptitude for business, his future career was certain. This process of training was not inaptly compared, by a late Governor-General, to the practising of anatomy on living subjects; and of its evils and dangers there could be no question. To let loose in India a succession of young men, freed from restraint at an early age, and protected by the nature of the service from the risk of dismissal, was, at a still earlier period of our history, attended with frightful disorders; and at all times the mischief was conspicuous. There were, however, advantages in the system which counter-balanced its defects. Those who are placed early in situations of responsibility, and rise superior to the temptations by which they are beset, acquire a force of character which no scheme of training can supply. The circumstances in which Mr. Elphinstone was placed, were eminently favourable to this early development; and to it we should attribute some of that precocity which he was so soon to show.

I am unable to supply any particulars connected with this early period of Mr. Elphinstone's service beyond an eventful incident.

In January, 1799, Vizier Ali, the deposed Nawab of Oude, who was held in surveillance at Benares, visited the Resident, Mr. Cherry, and, whether under a preconcerted plan, or under the impulse of ungovernable passion, aimed a blow at him with his sword, which

was the signal to his followers for the murder of all the British officers present at the interview, and the attempted massacre of every European resident in the place. We know how the work of death was checked by the gallant resistance of the Magistrate of Benares, Mr. Davis, who, with spear in hand, defended the narrow stair which led to the roof of the house, on which his family was placed, until the arrival of troops put an end to the disturbance. The escape of Mr. Elphinstone was a very narrow one. He was sitting with his friend Sir R. Houston, then on a visit to Benares, unconscious of the murders around them, until nearly all the English were destroyed, or had fled. The two had barely time to mount their horses when they were followed by some of the enemy's horsemen, and only eluded the pursuit by riding through a high sugar-cane plantation, which hid them from view.

Two years after this event, Mr. Elphinstone was transferred to the diplomatic service, which was to number him among its most brilliant members. It was the policy of Lord Wellesley to select and appropriate to this branch of the service the most promising of the young civilians. A knot of them, including in their number Elphinstone's cousin, John Adam, served under the eye of its chief, and rose to rapid distinction in the great events which followed. The names of some of the most eminent of our Indian statesmen are connected with this judicious selection. Mr. Elphinstone never belonged to the Governor General's office (as it was called), but his destination was in every respect a fortunate one. He was placed under one of the ablest members of the diplomatic service, Colonel (afterwards Sir Barry) Close, and in a Court which was about to be the scene of important events.

We have now arrived at a point in our narrative when it will be convenient to take a short review of the position of this Marrhatta Court, and of the remarkable events which preceded and followed Mr. Elphinstone's arrival at Poona. So much of his personal history is connected with that of the Marrhattas, both in his early rise to distinction, and in one of the most interesting chapters of his after career, that a few pages of explanation will assist us in following our narrative to its close.

In the year 1801, when Mr. Elphinstone was appointed to Poona, the relations of the British Government with that Court were of amity only, and unaffected by any entangling engagements; but the weakness of the Government of the Peshwa, and the feeble character of its chief, gave a weight and authority to the representative of the military power of the British Government, scarcely inferior to what it after-

wards possessed. The Peshwa, or chief, inherited an authority which formerly controlled the whole Marrhatta confederacy, but was now merely a shadow of what he once possessed. The power of the Marrhattas had indeed risen to sudden and surprising eminence upon the decline of the Mogul empire; but at the end of the eighteenth century it had fallen into the same state of anarchy as its predecessor. The forms, however, of imperial sway in the east, even more than in the west, will long survive substantial power. When the Delhi monarchy declined, its vassals, or soldiers of fortune, used its name and authority to cover usurpations, made treaties, and exercised claims of sovereignty in the name of a prince whom they despised. So it was at Poona. The nominal head of the State—the descendant of the great founder of the Marrhatta power—was a pageant prince, in whose name the government was carried on, and from whose hands even the Peshwa, or mayor of the palace, received his investiture. He was treated with the outward respect due to his illustrious descent; but he was subjected to more or less of restraint, according as he showed talents that might aspire to rule. At the end of the last century, the power of the Peshwa had almost reached the same stage of decadence as that of the nominal chief, and the country for many years exhibited the singular aspect of a double pageant; two separate Courts representing these illustrious families, while both were held in subjection by one of the ablest administrators the south of India has produced, the well-known Nana Furnavese. The skill of that remarkable man consisted in using the authority of two great names to support his own, while he held together the tottering fabric of Marrhatta power; and had he possessed military talents equal to his civil capacity, he would probably have founded a new dynasty, and revived the sinking state as the Peshwa of the Peshwa of the Sattara Raja; but wanting the skill which could direct armies, his government was oppressed by the great feudatories of the empire, and at last gave way before the feeble arts of Bajee Rao.

This Marrhatta prince, whose later career is so connected with that of the subject of this memoir, was, at the time that Mr. Elphinstone joined the Poona residency, in the exercise of a temporary independence, having long been the sport of the factions he attempted to cajole. Inheriting the fortunes of a great family, and with showy accomplishments and address, that had their influence with the multitude, he succeeded in displacing Nana Furnavese, and grasping at the headship of the State. But the country continued to be ravaged by the armies of the different Marrhatta chiefs, and the authority of the Peshwa was at its lowest ebb. Suddenly, however

the army of Scindea, which had long been encamped in the neighbourhood of the capital, was withdrawn to meet the difficulties which beset the northern dominions of that chief; and the Peshwa signalised his freedom from restraint, by acts of violence and vengeance directed against every chief whom he knew, or suspected of having been, the enemy of himself or his father. Among others, Wittojee Holkar, brother of the Marrhatta chief who was at that time engaged in a struggle with the power of Scindea, fell into the Peshwa's hands. He was instantly tied to the foot of an elephant, and put to death in the Peshwa's presence, under circumstances of great barbarity, while the Peshwa himself, seated at a window, listened unmoved to the supplications of his victim, and enjoyed the brutal spectacle of the execution. This dastardly act—for no charge was laid against him but the venial one in the eyes of all Marrhattas, of joining in the plundering which was going on around—sealed the fate of the Peshwa's independence. By common consent, the two chiefs who were engaged in a fierce struggle in Central India, seemed resolved to fight out their quarrel at the very gates of Poona, and in the presence of the pageant court which lay as the prize of the conqueror.

The execution of Wittojee took place in the spring of 1801. In October of the following year the battle was fought at Poona which decided the contest. Jesurent Rao had wrongs which he had vowed to avenge; but his object was not vengeance only, but to get possession of the Peshwa's person, and use his authority to establish his own power. His military success was complete. The armies of the Peshwa and Scindea were chased from the capital in an engagement fought almost at the gate of the Residency, which bore the British flag, and was treated with respect by the combatants. His victory, however, was short-lived. After some vain attempts to set up a brother of Bajee Rao as Peshwa—on which occasion it is curious to observe this pageant of an hour receiving his investiture from the hands of the Sattara Raja—the carcase for which these beasts of prey were struggling, was wrested from him by another power, which seized on the opportunity to establish its own authority.

No one will contend in the present day that the Treaty of Bassein, into which Lord Wellesley entered with the Peshwa at this crisis, was not the cause of the Marrhatta war which followed. A subsidiary alliance with the head of the Marrhatta confederacy, was a challenge to all the feudatories that belonged to it. We assumed a military, and with it a political, authority over the Government that was, even in its weakness, the centre of all the intrigues and struggles of the Marrhatta chiefs. Our interference in the quarre

must therefore be admitted to have been openly aggressive and meddling. It would be unfair, however, to judge the policy of Lord Wellesley by the sentiments of more settled times. We were engaged in a formidable struggle at home, and the dread of French principles and French arms influenced the conduct of our Governors in every part of the globe. To replace by English troops the armies in India that were officered by Frenchmen, was a policy worthy of any Governor-General; and this had been successfully accomplished in the dominions of the Nizam in the previous year. The dangers we apprehended from the state of the Peshwa's Government arose from its weakness. Its territory was the prey of powerful chieftains, part of whose forces were disciplined by European officers on the European model, and controlled at the same time the Courts of Delhi and Poona. A military alliance with the latter recommended itself to Lord Wellesley, as the means of checking these growing powers so adverse to our own; but we need not suppose that Lord Wellesley himself ever imagined that he could carry out such an object without a struggle. He keenly watched the internal troubles in the Marrhatta State, to urge a treaty of military alliance on the Peshwa. He had pressed it strongly on Colonel Close, who checked his chief's impatience, and advised him to wait for the progress of events, which must inevitably bring the prize within his reach. There was no indisposition on the part of Bajee Rao to cultivate an alliance with the British Government, and avail himself of their power to re-establish his own; but the terms hitherto offered had been such, that no prince who had authority, or capacity for rule, would have deigned to accept them. When, however, he was at last chased from his capital by a foe whose vengeance he had good reasons of fear, he at once placed in the hands of the British envoy instruments which recorded his submission to the British Government.

I have dwelt at some length on this memorable transaction, from its bearing on Mr. Elphinstone's later career, and also because it should be understood that when Mr. Elphinstone joined Sir A. Wellesley in the following year, and accompanied him through the whole of that brilliant campaign, he had been necessarily familiar with some of the important events which led to the war. He had resided with Colonel Close at the Marrhatta Court, witnessed the struggles which overthrew it; accompanied Colonel Close to Bassein, when the treaty was negotiated; and again returned to Poona with Sir A. Wellesley, when the Peshwa was reinstated in power. It is said that Mr. Elphinstone joined Sir A. Wellesley at the express desire of the latter, who had appreciated the talent of the young

diplomatist; and I understand that the statement rests on the authority of one who knew Mr. Elphinstone well—the late Sir Lionel Smith.

He joined Sir A. Wellesley, as his Secretary, at Ahmednugger, early in August, 1803, to supply the place of Malcolm, who was compelled to leave the camp from ill health at the very opening of the campaign. The five months which followed were perhaps the most eventful in Mr. Elphinstone's life. They gave him an insight into Marrhatta warfare which enabled him to advise with authority and effect at the crisis of his latter transactions at the Poona Court. Of the importance of serving under, and on terms of confidence with, such a chief, it were needless to speak. Among the proofs which are scattered through the Wellington Despatches of the respect which the General felt for his young assistant, I will only quote the emphatic lines in which he recommends him to the important post of representative of British interests at the Court of Berar, at the conclusion of the treaty of peace :—

"Upon the occasion of mentioning Mr. Elphinstone, it is but justice to that gentleman to inform your Excellency that I have received the greatest assistance from him since he has been with me. He is well versed in the language, has experience and a knowledge of the Marrhatta Powers, and their relations with each other and with the British Government and its allies. He has been present in all the actions which have been fought in this quarter during the war, and at all the sieges. He is acquainted with every transaction that has taken place, and with my sentiments upon all subjects. I therefore take the liberty of recommending him to your Excellency."

Mr. Elphinstone entered upon the campaign with the ardour of a young soldier who has to win his spurs. At Assaye, though suffering from sickness, he quitted his palanquin to follow his general through that desperate struggle, and, as he has described in a letter written after the action, was "well dusted" on the occasion. At Argaum, he was at his general's side when our troops came suddenly upon the enemy, and some confusion was caused at the head of the column by the enemy's guns which opened unexpectedly upon it. The general rode direct towards the enemy with a look of blank dismay, followed by his secretary; at last he pulled up. "There will be time to take those guns before night." A promise which he fulfilled so literally, that but twenty minutes of daylight remained when he had completed his victory. At Gawilghur, an important siege that closed the campaign, he received the emphatic approval of one so chary of praise, when he told him that he had mistaken his profession, and ought to have been a soldier.

Mr. Elphinstone was fond of reverting to these great events. His respect for the character of his great chief had a tinge of the enthusiasm of youth, which made him impatient of any slighting observations. He has described him to me at this period as at times almost boyish in his manners; then, as afterwards, attaching the first importance to the supplies of the army, and never more excited than when, on one occasion, he received intelligence of the interception of a convoy. He added, what was less to have been expected, that he was most keenly sensitive of what was said of him at head quarters. Of his anxiety to anticipate criticism we have a well-known instance in the letter written to Sir Thomas Munro, vindicating his attack on the enemy at Assaye, which appeared originally in Munro's Life, and was afterwards published in the Duke's Despatches. I may remind my reader that battle was the fruit of a rapid resolve. The British force, misled by false intelligence, found itself suddenly in presence of the whole combined force of the Marrhattas, while the separate force, led by Colonel Stevenson, was advancing by another route. Mr. Elphinstone told me that his general took the greatest pains to vindicate himself from the charge of rashness, to his own staff, after the engagement. "Had I not attacked them," he said, "I must have been surrounded by the superior cavalry of the enemy, my troops must have been starved, and I should have had nothing left but to hang myself to these tent poles."

As an example of his chief's perfect sereneness, and even good-nature on the field of battle, Mr. Elphinstone told me that when going into action at Assaye, when our troops were moving down to the river, with their flank exposed to a hot fire of the enemy's artillery, he allowed his secretary to put to him questions excited by mere curiosity. "Do you call this a hot fire?" "Well, they are making a great noise," was the reply, "but I do not see anybody hit." The incident, trifling as it is, shows the footing on which the secretary stood to his chief.

There is a very interesting record of this engagement in a letter from Mr. Elphinstone, which I have had the advantage of reading, and which will probably be given to the world should any collection of his letters be published. It details, in clear and picturesque language, the different phases of the fight, from its first commencement, when the small British army almost walked round the enormous force of the Marrhattas, down to the close, when the "genius and fortune of the Republic" brought the British dragoons into action, at the crisis of that desperate affair.

Upon the conclusion of the treaty of peace with the Berar Raja,

Mr. Elphinstone was placed by Sir Arthur Wellesley in temporary charge of our relations with that chief. It is to be observed that at the time Mr. Elphinstone received this mark of the confidence of the great Captain, he had not completed his 25th year, and the appointment itself was intended for a public servant of some distinction, Mr. Webbe, on whose death, which occurred shortly afterwards, Mr. Elphinstone was thought worthy of occupying this onerous and responsible post.

Our relations with this Court were not at that time of the intimate nature they afterwards assumed, when the Raja subsidized a British force,—a step in the progress of our increasing authority over a native State, which may be regarded as the practical surrender of all independence. The Berar Raja exercised all the authority of an independent sovereign, and he had been shorn of some important provinces by the progress of our arms in the late struggle,—two circumstances which called for increasing vigilance on the part of the Resident, after the surrender of territory had been completed. Allusions to these matters are scattered through the Wellington Papers, and are chiefly interesting as showing the confidence of Sir Arthur Wellesley in the young diplomatist. Even on one occasion when Mr. Elphinstone expressed his suspicions as to the intentions of the Raja to renew the war, Sir Arthur, while stating to the Government his reasons for differing from Mr. Elphinstone's conclusions, does so in terms which mark the respect he felt for his judgment.

CHAPTER II.

EMBASSY TO CABUL.

1808—1810.

The pacific times that succeeded the stirring events of Lord Wellesley's administration, afforded no opportunity of brilliant display. The only transaction of public importance which occurred during Mr. Elphinstone's residence, consisted in the restoration to the Raja of some of the provinces which had been wrested from him in the late war. The territory was not of great political value to the British Government, and the successors of Lord Wellesley thought it necessary, by their concessions, here and in other parts of India, to remove the uneasiness which our late conquests had occasioned. Mr. Elphinstone's conduct in this transaction must have confirmed the confidence

of the Government in his abilities, for we find him transferred in March, 1808, to the temporary charge of our relations with the Court of Scindea, and from this he was transferred in the following August to the charge of an embassy to Cabul.

The disastrous events which signalised our subsequent relations with this Court, make us trace with interest every step in these early transactions, independent of that which belonged to Mr. Elphinstone's well known work.

The motives which impelled the Indian Government to this unusual step have been often described, but nowhere more succinctly than in the opening page of Mr. Elphinstone's narrative :—

"In the year 1808, when, from the embassy of General Gardanne to Persia, and other circumstances, it appeared as if the French intended to carry the war into Asia, it was thought expedient by the British Government in India to send a Mission to Cabul, and I was ordered on that duty."

These few lines contain the epitome of the whole policy of the Government. In 1807, Napoleon was engaged with his northern adversary, and the instructions for General Gardanne's mission were penned in the midst of the campaign of Friedland and Eylau. A Persian embassy had penetrated in the same year to Warsaw, and it was against the Russian power that the Imperial project was launched; but the treaty to which it gave rise was equally directed against the British power in the East. While it bound the French to recover to Persia the possession of the province recently conquered by Russia, the treaty was to pave the way to the Eastern progress of the French by the cession of the Island of Karrack; and agreements were entered into to co-operate with a French army directed against India.

General Gardanne was accompanied by a large staff of Engineer and Artillery officers, who were engaged in military surveys while their chief was negotiating at Tehran. These wild projects were sufficiently indicated by the preparations to which they had given rise, and roused both the British and Indian Governments to corresponding exertions. The continental European war had already progressed eastward, and had given rise to futile expeditions on the part of the British Government directed against Egypt, and a still more futile attempt against Turkey in forcing the passage of the Dardanelles. The Indian Government, now in the enjoyment of internal peace, had recourse to a series of missions to every country that could possibly be involved in the threatened struggle, and the mission to the Court of Cabul formed part of the general plan.

However extravagant the designs of the French Emperor may now

appear, there seems no just grounds for the criticisms directed against our Government for the steps taken by them to meet the threatened danger. It was true there was a lamentable want of concert in their arrangements. Simultaneous missions from both England and India were directed to Persia, and led to undignified collisions between the rival ambassadors; while the treaties into which we entered, led, in more than one case, to opposite and conflicting engagements. The lack of information as to the political condition of Cabul was conspicuous; but in truth the intercourse between these regions and the British frontier was at this time very slight, and the power of the Affghans was measured rather by the reputation of a former generation, when Ahmed Shah advanced almost to the gates of Delhi, and defeated the army of the Marrhattas, then at the height of their power. By the natives of India, and especially by the Mahomedans, the power of a state which had given rise to successive conquerors and dynasties, was regarded with hopes and aspirations, against which it was the obvious duty of the Government to guard. Zemaun Shah, the brother and predecessor of Shah Shujah, encouraged by overtures from the disaffected, had passed his short reign in planning schemes of Indian invasion, from which he was as regularly diverted by internal troubles; but which had their influence in India, and called for watchfulness and preparation on the part of its Government. After a series of revolutions, in the course of which Zemaun Shah was dethroned and deprived of sight, Shah Shujah restored the fortunes of his family; and to this sovereign, who had been in possession of the throne for six years, and was supposed to be strongly established, the British embassy was directed.

The announcement that he was to proceed on this mission, was received by Mr. Elphinstone with an eager hope that he was about to take a part in the important events which were convulsing the world. In adverting to this period of his career, he would describe the sanguine views he entertained that he would meet with a field of European distinction, and he entered on his preparations with a sedulousness that embraced the minutest point of ceremonial at the Affghan Court.

These hopes were rapidly dispelled, as much by the progress of events in Europe, as by those at the Court to which he was accredited. Mr. Elphinstone had scarcely arrived at Peshawur when he was followed by dispatches from Calcutta, cautioning him against cultivating any alliance that should not be purely defensive in its nature. His first instructions, written under the alarm caused by the news from Persia, provided for offensive operations against that power, if its

hostility was confirmed: but the aspect of European politics was now changed. In October, 1808, when Mr. Elphinstone left Delhi on his mission, Napoleon was in full conflict with the Spanish insurgents, supported by the material aid of a British army, and was further threatened by a renewal of the war with Austria. The Indian government, relieved from the pressure which gave rise to the embassy, restricted the power of its ambassador, and repented them[1] of the burden to their finance which it occasioned. When the tottering state of Shah Shujah's throne was made known to the Governor-General, and Mr. Elphinstone was obliged, from the state of the country, to withdraw from the capital, the embassy was very properly recalled, and soon after dissolved.

The slender political advantage that could accrue from the alliance became apparent to Mr. Elphinstone immediately upon his arrival at the Court. The sovereign was beset with difficulties, which increased with every month. The hopes of deriving pecuniary assistance from our Government, caused the embassy to be treated with marked respect during its stay; but, as the envoy's instructions forbade any such assistance, the embassy became simply aimless; and though it continued to be treated with respect, it was virtually at an end. The political history of the mission is so completely told in two brief extracts from the work on Cabul, that I cannot forbear giving them in Mr. Elphinstone's own clear language:—

"Though I do not intend to touch on my negotiations, it will elucidate my intercourse with the people at Peshawur, to state the manner in which the mission was regarded at Court. The news of

[1] Mr. Kaye, in his History of Affghanistan, says, that Lord Minto censured, in a Minute recorded in Council, the lavish scale of expenditure in this embassy, as also in that of Malcolm to Persia. As Mr. Elphinstone, in the opening paragraph to his narrative, takes credit for the scale of magnificence of that preparation, it is in the highest degree improbable that he exceeded the direct or implied sanction of the Government. The following are the expressions used by him:—"As the Court of Cabul was known to be haughty, and supposed to entertain a mean opinion of the European nations, it was determined that the mission should be in a style of great magnificence, and suitable preparations were made at Delhi for the equipment." I am informed by Sir R. Houston, in illustration of Mr. Elphinstone's carelessness about money, that he "had difficulty in persuading him to claim a large sum due to him by the Government, which was withheld owing to the neglect of others; but I brought home all the papers connected with the subject, and with his uncle's assistance, recovered a part of it. This refers to his mission to Cabul, by which he was a considerable loser, from his own delicacy, preferring to expend his private funds to fighting with public officers." Mr. Elphinstone's pride of character must have been wounded by the charges of extravagance brought against him, and this may partly account for the delicacy here alluded to.

its arrival reached the king while on his way from Candahar, and its object was at first regarded with strong prejudice and distrust. The King of Cabul had always been the resource of all the disaffected in India. To him Tippoo Sultan, Vizier Ally, and all other Mahomedans who had a quarrel either with us or the Marrhattas, had long been in the habit of addressing their complaints; and, in later times, Holkar himself, a Marrhatta, had sent an embassy to solicit assistance against us. Runjeet Sing, the Raja, or, as he calls himself, the King of the Punjab, took a great alarm at the opening of a communication between two powers whom he looked on as his natural enemies, and did all he could to convince the Court of Cabul of the dangerous nature of our designs. The Hakims of Leia, of Moultan, and of Sind (each imagining that the embassy could have no particular object but to procure the cession of his particular province), did what they could to thwart its success; and, at the same time, the Dooraunee hordes were averse to an alliance that might strengthen the king to the detriment of the aristocracy; and the king himself thought it very natural that we should profit by the internal dissensions of a neighbouring kingdom, and endeavour to annex it to our empire. The exaggerated reports he received of the splendour of the embassy, and of the sumptuous presents by which it was accompanied, seemed more than anything to have determined the King to admit the mission, and to give it an honourable reception. When the nature of the embassy became known, the King, without laying aside his distrust, appears to have entertained a hope that he might derive greater advantage from it than he at first adverted to, and it then became an object with each of the Ministers to obtain the conduct of the negotiations.

"There were two parties in the Court: one headed by Akram Khan, a great Dooraunee lord, the actual Prime Minister; and the other composed of the Persian Ministers, who, being about the King's person and entirely dependent on his favour, possessed a secret influence which they often employed in opposition to Akram Khan; the chief of these was Meer Abool Husseen Khan. This last party obtained the earliest information about the embassy, and managed to secure the Mehmandaree; but it was still undetermined who would be entrusted with the negotiations. The Persians took pains to convince me that the King was jealous of Akram Khan and the great Dooraunees, and wished to treat with us through his personal and confidential agents; and Akram sent me a message by an adherent of his own, to say that he wished me well, and desired to be employed in my negotiations, but that if I left him out I must not complain if

he did all in his power to cross me. From that time his conduct was uniformly and zealously friendly, nor did he expect that any reserve should be maintained with the opposite party, a circumstance in his character that prevented much embarrassment. He had, however, marched for Cashmere when I arrived, and to this I attribute many altercations to which I was at first exposed.

"I cannot give a better idea of the Dooraunee Sirdars, or contrast them more with the Persians, than by relating part of my own transactions with both. At a time when Shah Mahmood was advancing from the West, Shah Shujah's army, which had been collected at a great expense, was defeated and dispersed by the rebels in Cashmere. and he was entirely destitute of the means of raising another for the defence of his throne. In these circumstances it was of the utmost importance to him to obtain pecuniary assistance from us; but our policy prevented our taking part in the civil wars of the country, and our public declarations to that effect did not leave us at liberty to do so consistently with good faith, even if we had been so inclined. The ministers who were employed to persuade me to depart from this line of conduct were two Persians and a Moollah; but other persons of the same description were employed to influence me, in the shape of ordinary visitors and disinterested friends. I frequently found some of them in my hall when I rose, and although the necessity of retiring to Chausht procured me a respite of some hours during the day, the ministers were often with me till two hours after midnight. There was no argument or solicitation which they did not employ; they even endeavoured to persuade me that our Indian possessions would be in danger if we refused so reasonable a request; but even *they*, never insinuated that I should be exposed to any personal risk. The utmost of their threats (and those certainly were embarrassing), consisted in assurances that the queen would send her veil to me, and that when Akram Khan returned from Cashmere, he would certainly come with Nannuwautee to my house. But these fears were dispelled on Akram Khan's arrival. At my interviews with him the same subject was renewed; but all importunity, and even all solicitation, was at an end. Akram proposed, in direct terms, schemes of mutual benefit; which, while they provided for the King of Cabul's wants, undoubtedly appeared to him to offer great and immediate advantage to the British, and which showed entire confidence in our sincerity and good faith. When it was obvious that these plans were not acceptable, they were instantly dropt.

"The King's difficulties, however, continued to increase. Cabul fell into the hands of the enemy, and his approach was daily expected

at Peshawur. The King tried all means of raising money. His jewels were offered for sale at less than half their value; but nobody dared to venture on a purchase, of which the opposite party would have denied the validity. In all his distresses the King never resorted to violence. He was at one time advised to seize a large sum of money which some merchants were carrying from Cabul to Cashmere, on a commercial speculation He was nearly persuaded to take their money, and to give them jewels in pawn for their repayment. The royal cauzy had given his fetwa, declaring the legality of the action; but, on reflection, the King determined to maintain his reputation, and rejected the expedient. In this season of necessity, recourse was again had to me; and as the Persians had exhausted all their arts, I was invited to the Council of the Dooraunee Sirdars. The Persians did not fail to take advantage of this circumstance; they lamented the rudeness and barbarism of the Affghans, pointed out to me what a difference I should find in treating with military savages, and with polished people like themselves, but told me to be of good courage, for that a little compliance would set all right. They even insinuated that it would be dignified to make a voluntary offer through them, rather than be intimidated by the violence of the Dooraunees. After all this, I went to the palace to the Council, accompanied by Mr. Strachey, and two other gentlemen. We were led, by a private way, into a very comfortable room, close to the presence chamber. On our way we passed through an antechamber, where some of the principal secretaries and ministers were transacting their business. When we had taken our seats, some of our acquaintances came in for a few minutes, and we were then left to ourselves, to admire the rich and beautiful landscape on which the windows of our room opened. The curtain which covered the principal door was soon gently raised, and several persons in dark dresses entered in profound silence, but without any bustle. They did not at first attract much notice, but on looking at them, I perceived Muddud Khan; and as I rose to receive him, I recognized Akram Khan, Ahmed Khan Noorzye, and the four great Dooraunee Sirdars. They were all in their court dresses, with the red boots on, which are required when they appear before the king, but all quite plain in their attire. They took their seats opposite to us, with Ahmed Khan, the eldest of their number, at their head. They immediately entered upon general conversation, interspersed with many civil and friendly speeches; but they shewed an extraordinary reluctance to open the business of the meeting, and often pressed each other in Pushtoo to begin, before any one could be found to undertake it. At length they began at a great distance, talked of their confi-

dence in us, and their wish to consult with us, and at last delicately hinted at their own wants; in reply to which, I spoke with respect and interest of their nation, and assured them of our sincere wishes for its prosperity; but pointed out in plain terms the objections which existed to our taking part in their domestic quarrels, and remarked the advantages which an ambitious and designing state might derive from an opposite line of conduct. Ahmed Khan (whose arrangements with the enemy must now have been completed) could not let slip this opportunity of shewing his zeal and his Affghan bluntness, and he began a pressing, and even a sarcastic speech; but he was immediately silenced by the rest, who changed the subject at once, lamented the disorders of the kingdom, which prevented our having been received with all the honours that were due, and our enjoying the pleasures which their country afforded; and this conversation lasted till we broke up. After this, I was no longer importuned by anybody, but I perceived no diminution in the attention or hospitality of the Court."

The mission, thus fruitless in political consequences, gave rise, as is well-known, to the only standard work we possess on these countries, and on which Mr. Elphinstone's literary reputation was at first founded.

Much of its value as a standard work may be said to rest on what will appear a defect to the general reader. Though it abounds in graphic, and even lively descriptions, it wants the charm of a work of travels and adventures. The introduction, which gives a narrative of the journey, is written with great spirit. The Embassy penetrated, with a slender escort, the desert which separates the Delhi frontier from Moultan, and thence proceeded to Peshawur. The account of these countries, then for the first time fully explored, has all the interest and romance of a voyage of discovery; but this portion of the work formed but a small part of the whole. The account of the Affghan country is treated methodically; and this arrangement adds to its value as a standard and historical work, though it does not render it so attractive to the general reader. The materials of which it is composed were originally collected with a view to an official report, and were the product of different pens. The master hand of Mr. Elphinstone connected together the different chapters dealing severally with the geography, natural history, &c., of the country, and laid them before the Government in a Report, which would probably have been fated to encumber the shelves or be buried in the vaults of Leadenhall Street.

From this fate they were saved by a happy accident. The Embassy, on its return from Cabul, proceeded to Calcutta, where a twelvemonth was occupied in preparing their Reports for the Govern-

ment. Their work being completed, Mr. Elphinstone received the appointment of Resident at the Court of the Peshwa; and while passing through Bombay, on his way to Poona, met with Sir James Mackintosh, who urged him to give the results of his labours to the world, as is modestly told by Mr. Elphinstone in the preface to the work.[1] Fortified by this encouragement, Mr. Elphinstone applied himself to the work of compilation, and pursued it during the intervals which his official duties permitted in the following year. The volume was not published until 1815, and instantly attracted public attention and the encouraging notice of the two leading reviews. That in the "Edinburgh" bears the stamp of the hand of Sir J. Mackintosh, and, with pardonable anachronism, speaks of Mr. Elphinstone of 1808, as owing his appointment to the reputation which more properly belongs to the Elphinstone of 1815, and as "the head of the Indian Civil Service."

That part of the work which has the most enduring value, consists in the description of the manners and political condition of the remarkable tribes which constitute the Affghan nation. Mr. Elphinstone's attention was here strongly arrested by the view of a state of society so different from that which we are accustomed to connect with Eastern government; and his account is of historical importance. This part of the work, which indeed comprises the greater portion, bears internal and distinct evidence of Mr. Elphinstone's observations, even to the speculations which run through it, of the possibility of engrafting on society so formed, institutions kindred to the freer spirit of both ancient and modern Europe. The speculations are only introduced to be dismissed, for Mr. Elphinstone's calm sense could not fail to perceive principles of repulsion and disunion utterly inconsistent with any organized or constitutional government; and I only allude to them as illustrating that peculiarity in Mr. Elphinstone's turn of mind which made him at once the most speculative and the most sober of enquirers.

The contribution to our geographical knowledge was considerable, though the Embassy penetrated only a corner of the countries which the work describes. Greater accuracy was secured to the map of the

[1] There is a slight but interesting reference to this meeting in Sir James Mackintosh's published Memoirs. He describes "the fine understanding and modest manners" of the young ambassador; chronicles their meetings, and gives the subject of one at least of their conversations, in which these distinguished men discussed, in common with Sir John Malcolm, the importance to the British empire of its Indian possessions; but as Sir James is careful only to report his own opinions, there is little in the notice that bears upon the present memoir.

country traversed by the Embassy; but as regards the vast tract beyond the Indus, Mr. Elphinstone had to follow in the footsteps of Rennel, who has applied to the geography of Central Asia every particular which the literature of the East, or the itineraries of caravans or conquering armies could supply. Those who followed him could only be gleaners in the same field of research. By pursuing the same method of inquiry, and by great industry in collecting additional materials, a considerable addition was made to our knowledge of the geography of those regions. In this task he received valuable assistance from one of the officers attached to the Embassy—Lieutenant Macartney, whose memoir was published in the appendix, and by whose death, shortly afterwards, the public service lost a young man of great talent.

I cannot pass from this chapter in Mr. Elphinstone's personal history, without a slight reference to the views which the ample and intimate knowledge thus acquired, led him to entertain of our political and disastrous connection with these countries at a later date. We are anticipating the views of maturer age, but the reference may more appropriately be made here.

When the Indian Government, misled by the analogies of Indian alliances, attempted to apply the principles of military control which had been so successful in India, to the wild mountain tribes of Affghanistan, Mr. Elphinstone's good sense and experience enabled him to foresee that the step would prove as false politically, as strategically. I can well remember the force with which he expressed this to me, and though these opinions did not carry the weight they ought during the first success of that expedition, they were vividly recalled, when the course of events showed the prophetic spirit with which they had been formed. Whatever strength Shah Shujah might derive from kindred tribes, or from the disunion of others, would be lost, he thought, by the introduction of a foreign army; and our hold of the country must be miserably insecure. To defend Affghanistan from a Persian invasion, it was essential, he said, that we must appear as defenders, and not as conquerors. We have gained experience since these words were uttered, and we are not likely to repeat the error of 1839; but the same wisdom which guided them, might have suggested itself to the authors of the policy of 1839, had they consulted this striking work, where every peculiarity of manner and government, as well as of geography, are as vividly portrayed as they were in the description of those who took part in those campaigns.

But to revert to our narrative. All political interest in the embassy to Cabul ceased when Mr. Elphinstone left Peshawur on his

return to Delhi, and Shah Shujah proceeded westward to combat the insurrection which overwhelmed him. I have already explained that Mr. Elphinstone's official duties were not immediately closed; for, on his arrival at Delhi, he received a summons to Calcutta, to report to the Governor General in person on the results of his mission, and the form and name of an Embassy were kept up, while Mr. Elphinstone and his assistants were engaged in completing their reports on the countries they had left.

After a twelvemonth occupied in this task, he received that appointment with which his reputation is so eminently connected. In October, 1810, he was appointed Resident at the Court of Poona, and joined it in the following March. The memorable events which ended in the fall of the Peshwa's government, and the annexation of the principal part of the territory to the British dominions, are of almost romantic interest, and I shall make no apology for following, in some detail, a very remarkable chapter in Indian history.

CHAPTER III.

POONA.

1810—1817.

In preparing this sketch, I have referred to Mr. Elphinstone's own reports which were published in 1818; but the outline of these transactions is so admirably traced in two contemporary histories that my task has been a very easy one. Mr. Prinsep's narrative was prepared with the advantage of access to all official papers of the British Government; while Grant Duff, after witnessing many of the events he describes, had access to the records of Poona after the fall of the Peshwa's government. It will be scarcely necessary to explain that the duties of a British Resident at a native Court, are rarely confined to the ordinary functions of a diplomatic representative. The lines of separation which divide internal from external politics are finely drawn, and scarcely admit of complete definition under any government; still less in Eastern States, which rest on the power of the sword and the authority of the chief. The relative claims and rights of the British Government and the Court of Poona were defined by

the Treaty of Bassein. A British force was subsidized and bound to aid the Marrhatta State, not merely to defend it against external foes, and to chase away the greater plunderers who were ravaging the country, but further, "for the overcoming and chastisement of rebels." This latter questionable engagement, though qualified by the proviso that our force was not to be employed on trifling occasions, necessarily called us in from the beginning of the alliance to establish the Peshwa's authority over his own powerful feudatories, who were scattered through the mountainous district that had been the cradle of Marrhatta independence, and who only owned an imperfect allegiance to the Court of Poona.

The work of settlement was but little advanced when Mr. Elphinstone arrived. The country was indeed much improved. Seven years of comparative peace had worked a change which Mr. Elphinstone describes in a letter of a later date. In that letter he refers to the state of this territory in proof of his position, that these alliances, by which we apparently added to the power of a despotic prince, were frequently productive of immediate benefit to the inhabitants. But every advance that Bajee Rao made in strengthening his government by reducing the overgrown power of his vassals, led to exaggerated expectations of the increased strength he was to derive from the alliance, mixed with some obscure dreams of recovering the old authority of the Peshwa. But the character of this prince, the state of the country, and the very obligations we had come under to the different chiefs whose power we had reduced, gave the Resident, from the first, a constant field for the exercise of authority and judgment, as arbitrator between the Peshwa and his revolted subjects. We are told by Grant Duff, that Mr. Elphinstone from the first acted upon the principle of allowing access to everybody, judging for himself, and placing implicit confidence in no native servant; and that he had many difficulties to contend with, owing to the intrigues of native servants, who were supposed to have had influence with his predecessor. By Bajee Rao Mr. Elphinstone was regarded with suspicion, as the friend and follower of Sir Arthur Wellesley. The recollection of the freedom of the latter's remonstrances, and his resolute resistance to every attempt to use the British force for purposes of vengeance, still rankled in the mind of the Marrhatta Prince. But the straightforward course pursued by the Resident, and the just principles on which he acted in his mediation between the Court and its vassals, seem for a time to have made an impression on the Peshwa. But with so unstable a character no impression could be lasting. It is the fate of many princes, both in India and elsewhere, to be placed in situa-

tions as dependent and galling as that of Bajee Rao; and when the lot falls to those who have never possessed power, or the capacity for exercising it, there is no difficulty in persuading them to a life of pomp and ignoble ease. Bajee Rao was certainly in neither of these categories. He was not devoid of talent, but it was exhibited chiefly in a turn for intrigue, that amounted to a passion, and was the source of his ruin.[1] His character has been often described, and it is easy to catch its salient traits. He had the externals of royalty, certain showy accomplishments, that in his youth pleased and gained the multitude, and assisted in placing him on the throne, with a dignity of manner that Mr. Elphinstone described to be as beyond anything he knew in any other court. But these externals covered a heart unstable and false, and incapable of any firm resolve, or indeed of any steady plan of action. Moral contrast could not have been greater than between this weak prince and the noble simple-minded man that represented British power. They may indeed be said to have been types of the defects in the Indian, and the higher qualities in the British character, that were in constant collision in Anglo-Indian history. The struggle in the present case could scarcely have had another end. One so experienced and discerning as the British Resident, could not fail to see through the petty schemes of the Peshwa; and here his judgment never failed. But weak as was the character of this Marrhatta, he derived importance from his position at the head of a once powerful nation; and the wars in which we were soon to be engaged, rendered him a formidable foe.

It is quite consistent with such a character that he should place confidence in a favourite, and that the influence of that favourite should be unbounded. The Minister who at this time had the ear of the Peshwa, Trimbukjee Danglia, was a person of considerable activity and energy, who raised himself from the lowest origin by pandering to the vices of his chief, and when he was elevated to the

[1] Lieutenant-General Briggs, in a memorandum from which I shall have occasion to quote more than once, refers to the period of Mr. Elphinstone's arrival at Poona, as Resident, in the following remarks: "The Resident was aware that the Peshwa, instead of aiding the Duke of Wellington, as he was bound by treaty to do, during the campaign of 1803, 1804, and 1805, had systematically played into the hands of the enemy, and had even assumed charge of the estates of some of the Jagheerdars who were in attendance on the Duke: the latter, in one of his letters addressed to Sir B. Close, commenced it by saying, "Bajee Rao will never do; he has broken the Treaty of Bassein (if I recollect right) on seven different occasions:" and he then proceeds to give the instances. This letter which I have seen in the Duke's own hand was dated after the battle of Assaye."

position of Minister and confidant, he distinguished himself by an excessive devotion to his interests, while he worked on his passions and foibles as he pleased. "Should my master order me, I would kill a cow," he said on one occasion to Mr. Elphinstone—an expression of servility and profanity which could not be exceeded.

The state of India at this time (1815) afforded an ample field for his mischievous activity. Although the British Government had been compelled, in the cause of order, to take a part in the internal affairs of the Poona State, its external relations had not been controlled to the full extent that we were entitled to demand by the Treaty of Bassein. Ministers from all the principal States of India continued to reside at the Court, and a considerable amount of correspondence was carried on that did not pass under the eye of the British Resident. This laxity would appear to have arisen from the number of pecuniary questions that remained outstanding between the Peshwa and the neighbouring governments of Hyderabad and Baroda, which made it difficult to close at once all external and political correspondence. Nor did it seem to be of any political importance to insist on a settlement, through British arbitration, so long as there was a disposition on the part of the native states to settle these matters themselves. The negotiations connected with the claims on Baroda afforded a harmless occupation to the Peshwa, gave room for correspondence, interchange of missions, and postponed the time when these sources of intrigues were to be finally closed. When, however, our reverses in Nepal and the unsettled state of India gave courage and confidence to the enemies of British rule, the opportunity was seized upon by Trimbukjee to enlarge his master's correspondence and intrigues, and put forward claims inconsistent with the position of subordinate alliance to the British Government. Matters were rapidly arriving at a crisis that must have compelled the British Government to assume a tone of decision, and Mr. Elphinstone was preparing for this, when the crisis was brought on, in a most unlooked-for manner, by the horrible transaction I am now about to relate.

There is no part of Indian history on which so full a light has been thrown, as the murder of the unfortunate Shastree and the important events which followed. Our subsequent conquest of the country gave us sources of information which were improved by the local inquiries of Grant Duff, and we can trace the undercurrent of intrigue by the light of subsequent knowledge, and with aids that Mr. Elphinstone did not possess till afterwards. The Shastree came to Poona, as the envoy of the Baroda government, to endeavour to bring to a settlement the pecuniary questions to which I have already

alluded. The illusive character of the Peshwa's negotiations were well known to the Baroda government. The Peshwa, though pressing always for a settlement, showed no disposition to arrive at one; and when at length an envoy was sent at the pressing instance of the Peshwa, matters seemed less advanced than they were several years before. The unhappy victim who was sent on this disastrous mission, had personal grounds of fears, and declined to place himself within the power of one so violent and unprincipled as Trimbukjee, without a direct guarantee of safety from the British Government. These apprehensions were lulled for a time by the caresses of the Prince, whose object was to gain an influence over the Baroda Court by binding the Shastree to his side. A matrimonial alliance was projected between the Peshwa's sister-in-law and the Shastree's son, and preparations were being made for the ceremony. The Shastree who was governed by fits of blind confidence and not unreasonable fears, now took alarm, lest in gaining the favour of the Peshwa, he should forfeit that of his own Sovereign, and imprudently broke off the engagement so far advanced, and gave other and more deadly cause of offence in forbidding the ladies of his family communicating with a Court so dissolute as that of Poona. Revenge being the dominant passion in the Peshwa's mind, an agent was at hand ready to second the impulse, and the Shastree was put to death by hired assassins in the open street at a place of pilgrimage, to which he had accompanied the Peshwa, and almost within hearing of the minister who had ordered the slaughter.

There were none of the difficulties in this case which usually obstruct justice in British India; for the public voice, shocked at the murder of a Brahmin in a place of sanctity, supported Mr. Elphinstone in those inquiries which he was called upon to make to vindicate the broken guarantee of his Government. He was absent at Ellora when the murder took place, but on his return to Poona, he received accumulated proofs of the guilt of the minister, and was enabled to address to the guilty Court a memorial calling for punishment of the authors of the crime, which is a masterpiece of energetic remonstrance. The memorial from which I quote is given in Mr. Prinsep's history. It recapitulates the proofs and presumptions of the participation of the minister in the murder, and thus proceeds :—

"On all these grounds, I declare my conviction of Trimbukjee's Danglia's guilt, and I call upon your Highness to apprehend him, as well as Govind Rao Bundojee and Bhugwunt Rao Gykwar, and to deposit them in such custody as may be considered safe and trustworthy. Even if your Highness is not fully convinced of the guilt

of these persons, it must be admitted that there is sufficient ground for confining them; and I only ask of you to do so, until his Excellency the Governor-General and your Highness shall have an opportunity of consulting on the subject. I have only to add my desire, that this apprehension may be immediate."

"A foreign ambassador has been murdered in the midst of your Highness's Court. A Brahmin has been massacred almost in the temple, during one of the greatest solemnities of your religion; and I must not conceal from your Highness, the impunity of the perpetrators of this enormity has led to imputations, not to be thought of, against your Highness's Government. Nobody is more convinced of the falsehood of such insinuations than I am; but I think it my duty to state them, that your Highness may see the necessity of refuting calumnies so injurious to your reputation. I beg you also to observe, that while Trimbukjee remains at large, his situation enables him to commit further acts of rashness, which he may undertake on purpose to embroil your Highness with the British Government. He is at the head of the administration at Poona, and has troops at his command; he is likewise in charge of your Highness's districts, which are contiguous to the possessions of the British Government, and of the Nizam and the Gykwar; and, even though he should raise no public disturbance there, I cannot but consider with uneasiness and apprehension, in what manner your Highness's affairs will be conducted. For these reasons, it is absolutely necessary that immediate steps should be taken; as your Highness will be held responsible by the Governor-General for any acts of violence which Trimbukjee may commit after this intimation. I therefore again call on your Highness to adopt the course which I have pointed out to you, as the only one which can restore confidence to the public ministers deputed to your Court. They cannot otherwise enjoy the security necessary to transact business with your Highness, nor can they with safety even reside in the city; and everybody will be obliged to take such steps as he may deem necessary for his own protection. One consequence of this will be, an interruption of your communication with the British Government, until the measure I have recommended shall be adopted. I beg that your Highness's reply may be communicated through some person unconnected with Trimbukjee Danglia."

Nothing was more easy than to trace the murder to the minister of the sovereign. The invitation repeated to the unwilling victim to join him in the temple, the preparations for the journey, the known causes of enmity, all impelled the popular voice, prior to any full enquiry, to decide who was the immediate author of the deed. The

only difficulty which beset the British Government, consisted in the number of the presumptions which bore against the chief of the state, and made it difficult to distinguish between the instrument and the prime mover in the deed. It must be admitted that the Peshwa did his best to encourage this belief; for the bold demand of Mr. Elphinstone for enquiry, when he first heard of the murder, struck dismay into the heart of the prince, and he shrunk back to Poona by stealth, and surrounded himself with troops, as if his safety were compromised by the demand; and when full proofs were laid before him of the guilt of his minister, he had recourse to delays and evasions, which showed how completely he identified himself with his minister. He gave way at last to the demand for the latter's imprisonment, under the reiterated demands of the Resident, backed as they were, after a certain interval, by the authority of the Governor-General.

In his first demand Mr. Elphinstone was necessarily obliged to assume authority and call in the support of troops; as it seemed for a long time uncertain whether the weak prince would not hazard all rather than surrender his favourite. But after levying troops, and all but commencing war, the show of resolution gave way before the demands of the British representative, and Trimbukjee was at length given up to British custody.

The events which followed constitute one of the most singular chapters in Anglo-Indian history. The reparation we had demanded was moderate and judicious. Less, certainly, could not have been asked for; and it would have been difficult to have demanded more without directly implicating the chief of the state, against whom the presumptive evidence was very strong, without being of that kind which would have warranted extreme measures against him, even were the British Government prepared for such a step. The demand to surrender his favourite was in itself most humiliating to the Peshwa, while our moderation encouraged him in the belief which interested flatterers were constantly suggesting to him, that his alliance was of such importance to our Government, that we should hazard much rather than take measures against him, and that he might therefore proceed with confidence in his intrigues with the other Marrhatta states, to which he henceforth devoted himself. His manner, too, from this time underwent a marked change. Instead of the consternation which he showed when he thought his personal safety was aimed at, his manner in his intercourse with Mr. Elphinstone, which the subsequent events gave rise to, showed a composure, and even firmness, quite unusual with him.

The imprisonment of Trimbukjee did not last long. The mixture

of carelessness and precaution in his custody makes it doubtful whether the Government attached any serious importance to his confinement; they seemed content with the humiliation to which they had subjected the higher criminal. Instead of sending Trimbukjee out of the country, he was left in a place open to adherents and emissaries of his master, while, from excessive precaution, no native soldiers were allowed to mount guard over him. The plan for his escape proceeded almost undisturbed. Natives sung their intelligence to the captive under the windows of the fort, and of course in the very ears of the English guard, and the escape was easily effected. Once at large he betook himself to the wild hills, and for a few months passed unheeded and unheard of. The plot now began to thicken; intelligence reached Mr. Elphinstone of gatherings of armed men; old Marrhatta plunderers appeared at large, and the country was assuming an unsettled state, without the interference of the Government to check it. Trimbukjee himself was traced from point to point, and on one occasion exact information reached Mr. Elphinstone of an interview between the Peshwa and his old minister, without any appearance of secrecy or concealment. Remonstrances were from the first addressed to the Peshwa against the permission to the culprit to move about with armed troops, and it was met by the astounding denial of the existence of any such assemblage; when pressed further, a body of the Peshwa's forces were sent, at Mr. Elphinstone's instance, and returned with the bold assertion that not an insurgent was to be found.

There is something so ludicrous in this shallow attempt to deceive one so practised in foiling Marrhatta designs, that it is difficult to suppose that the Peshwa could have looked for more than to gain an advantage of time, until the critical state of Central India, now menaced by the preparations that were in progress to put down the Pindarrees, should give him an occasion to throw off the mask and commence open war. The Marrhattas had always cherished the belief, that by reverting to the ancient plundering habits of the nation, and by irregular warfare, supported only by the strongholds with which the Peshwa's country abounded, they might recover the ascendancy which had been shaken by the wars of Lord Wellesley. Views of this kind are said by Mr. Elphinstone to have influenced Bajee Rao so far as so unsteady a prince could be supposed to have a fixed plan of action. Whatever were his plans, they were defeated by the promptitude of the British Resident. Time pressed; for the rainy season was at hand, during which military operations must have been suspended in the hill country; while, on the other hand, an insurrection in Cuttack had

interrupted the communication with Calcutta, and obliged Mr. Elphinstone to take counsel only in his own sense of what the public service required. Warnings to the Peshwa that the course on which he was embarked would bring ruin on himself, were accompanied with preparations for action. Troops were put in motion against the insurgents, who were spreading over the country and capturing forts; and the singular spectacle was exhibited of war carried on by a British functionary against an insurrection in the heart of a sovereign's dominions, fomented by the material aid of the sovereign himself.

Still the game of evasion and delay was carried on. The transactions which I have thus briefly described extended over several months. From January to April successive remonstrances and warnings were addressed to the Court, of the danger of the course in which it was embarked; but they were met by frivolous replies or denials from the ministers of state, whose language sometimes assumed a peremptory and menacing tone, more in unison with the active military preparations that were in progress. Instead of wasting our efforts against the insurgents, it had become evident by this time that nothing would be gained without the most stringent measures directed against the chief of the state; and troops were drawn to the neighbourhood of the capital, to support the peremptory tone Mr. Elphinstone was now obliged to assume. Mr. Elphinstone even hesitated for a while whether the time had not arrived when he should commence hostilities, and order an attack on the Prince in his palace; but motives of humanity, and regard for the unoffending inhabitants of a great city threatened with assault, supported the public consideration which made the Resident avoid the commencement of actual war without the direct authority of his Government, although the general impression in both camps was, that war was resolved upon by the Peshwa, and delay would only enable him to carry it on with more perfect preparation.

An interesting memorandum has been placed in my hands by Lieutenant-General Briggs, of his reminiscences of this crisis, and the copious extract which follows, vividly describes the nature of the contest in which we were engaged :—

"It appeared clear that Bajee Rao had made up his mind to embark in an extensive Marrhatta confederacy against the English. His proceedings were conducted with the greatest secrecy, but they did not escape the vigilance of the Resident. In order to obtain intelligence of what the latter absolutely knew, and what he proposed doing, the Peshwa was lavish in promises and bribes to all whom he

could seduce about the residency. The doctor, who was in the habit of passing an hour every day with Mr. Elphinstone reading Greek and Italian, was supposed to be in his confidence, though he was only treated as a common friend. The Peshwa begged that the doctor might be sent to attend some members of his family; and the kindness that he there received, and the manner in which the Peshwa spoke of his fidelity and attachment to the English, deceived the doctor till the day when war was declared. In the same manner he gained over the services of the English Commandant of the contingent, who, to the last hour, professed to believe that the Peshwa would never make war with us. This last gentleman received two lacs of rupees from Bajee Rao to obtain information of Trimbukjee and his proceedings; but it is only just to him to say, that he rendered an account of the manner in which he had employed part of it, when afterwards called on by Mr. Elphinstone to do so, and he then paid the balance into the Treasury. I joined Mr. Elphinstone as his third assistant early in 1816, and left him to take the field as Sir John Malcolm's Assistant in July, 1817; the other two Assistants at Poona were Francis Whitworth Russell, the third son of Sir Henry Russell, Chief Justice in Bengal, and Henry Pottinger, afterwards well-known as Sir Henry. My acquaintance with the languages induced Mr. Elphinstone at an early period to employ me in making translations of the numerous akhbars he was at that time in the habit of receiving from the native Courts of India, where he had established intelligencers, and his own previous acquaintance with the Ministers of India while Resident at Nagpore, made him familiar with their characters and connexions. At the time I speak of we had had regular postal communications with the several capitals of these chiefs; and as the whole of that department was under our own postmaster at Poona, it was not difficult in a great degree to depend on their reports, which were occasionally checked by sending a confidential agent along each line, under the plea of paying these intelligencers, and to report circumstantially the actual state of affairs. Bajee Rao's foreign communications were made either by means of camel hircarrahs, or by special foot messengers, whose progress was detected by the small javelins the latter carried, every Court having them painted differently, to enable them to command any necessary aid they might require on their route. This answered as a sort of livery, but was recognised only by the officials of the several princes. Similar javelins were used by the messengers of the bankers of the different cities in the native states, but they were for the most part painted in one colour. In this way we, at Poona,

obtained instant information of the entry of any of the messengers of foreign Courts that might pass our postal stations, and were enabled to be on the look out for their arrival, as well as to trace the direction of any despatched by the Peshwa. As it was subsequently ascertained from the public records of his Government that out of the million and a half sterling of revenue which Bajee Rao received, he laid by half a million annually, he must have had at his disposal in 1816–17 upwards of eight millions of treasure in jewels and in specie, and he was by no means parsimonious in dispensing it to effect any of his purposes. He laid himself out to gain over by bribery every servant of the Residency; but such was Mr. Elphinstone's vigilance that he was aware of those in the Peshwa's pay, and took care to make use of them for his own purpose. So complete was our information, that one of the charges made by Bajee Rao to Sir J. Malcolm, at Maholy, against Mr. Elphinstone, was, that he was so completely watched that the latter knew 'the very dishes that were served at his meals.'"

"One night, after a day that had been passed in considerable anxiety, owing to reports of troops brought into the town, I received certain information that the cattle for the guns had been sent for, and had arrived an hour before; that the artillery were drawn up in front of the park; that the streets were full of mounted men; and that the Peshwa was in full durbar discussing with his chiefs the subject of immediate war. I hastened to inform Mr. Elphinstone, whom I found sitting in a large tent, engaged in playing a round game of cards with a party, among whom were several ladies. He saw me enter, and observed my anxiety to speak to him; but he continued his game as usual for half-an-hour, when, after handing the last lady of the party into her palankeen, he came up to me rubbing his hands, and said,—"Well, what is it?" I told him the news, which he received with great sang froid, and we walked together to the Residency office. There we encountered the European Commandant of the contingent, above alluded to; on which Mr. Elphinstone asked him the latest news from the city. He appeared not to be aware of what was in progress, but observed that the minister, whom he had just left, had told him that the Peshwa had discharged some of the troops lately enlisted, and that all was quiet. Mr. Elphinstone then called on me to state what I had heard, and distinctly told the Commandant that he did not believe a word that he said. The latter said that his information was from the *minister himself*, and that as to the troops in the streets, he did not observe any beyond the usual patrols, and knew nothing about the arrival of gun bullocks. The moment was critical; the Residency

was incapable of being properly defended, especially by the ordinary escort, and the idea of attacking the Peshwa at once from the cantonment, though hastily expressed, was subsequently abandoned. Mr. Elphinstone resolved to defer doing anything until the morning, and then to take such precautionary measures as he might deem proper. I believe that neither I nor he had much sleep during that anxious night. The night fortunately passed quietly; owing, as was said, to the opposition to war evinced by some of the ministers. Bajee Rao was physically an arrant coward; he had always displayed this weakness, and was not ashamed to avow it. No steps were therefore taken by either party during the night, but in the morning a requisition for a reinforcement was made, and two guns accompanied it to the Residency."

At this stage occurred one of the most singular and dramatic scenes in this semi-tragedy. The Peshwa, who had latterly refused all overtures for an interview with the Resident, apparently alarmed at the decisive tone of his language, suddenly invited the intercourse which he had long refused, and endeavoured to overwhelm him with a torrent of protestations and remonstrances. The details of the conversation are given in the published papers; but they feebly report the spirit of the remarkable scene as it has been described to me by General Briggs, who accompanied Mr. Elphinstone on that occasion. So eagerly did Bajee Rao pursue his argument that he, of all persons, was most unlikely to engage in hostility against a power to which he owed so much, that he even referred to his own personal timidity to support his assurances. "How could one," he said, "so constitutionally timid as to be alarmed at the sound of cannon, who requires that no salute should be fired till he has passed to a distance, ever think of setting himself up as a warrior, and placing himself at the head of an army?" To such protestations and arguments Mr. Elphinstone had but calmly and clearly to detail the overwhelming proofs he possessed, that these assurances were utterly inconsistent with the military preparations that were going on, and evidently directed against us, and the inaction as regards the insurgents. Nothing was easier than to convict the weak prince of folly and insincerity, and this was effected in a quiet masterly way that never overstepped the bounds of decorum; but it was quite unavailing to change the resolve of the Marrhatta prince. Motives of pride, a consciousness how much the guilt of the minister was involved in his own, and, perhaps, some feeling of regard for him, strengthened him in his haughty resolve to refuse the concession demanded; and the interview ended, like the end of a letter, with profuse tenders of personal regard.

Negotiations proving fruitless, Mr. Elphinstone prepared for action. He sent a written demand for the surrender of Trimbukjee within a specified time, and the immediate cession of three forts as pledges for the act. On the other hand every preparation was made for resistance in the city, and it was hourly expected that the prince would quit the court and take the field; when suddenly this bold front of opposition was abandoned, all the show of firmness gave way before the necessity of committing himself to hostility, and after the usual amount of shuffling and prayer for delay, the important message was sent announcing the acceptance of the terms demanded, and the cautionary forts were placed in British hands.

These events took place on the 6th and 7th of May. On the 10th of the same month the instructions from Calcutta reached Poona, the absence of which had much encouraged the Peshwa in withstanding the demands of the British representative. The rights of war are proverbially severe. The Peshwa's conduct gave us an unquestionable right to exact penalties for acts of such scarcely disguised hostility, as well as to demand securities for the future. Whether it was wise to impose such severe conditions may be doubtful. We are not accustomed to judge native governments by the more rigid standard of European morality. Something is to be allowed for the influence of education, and still more to the perverted public opinion which influences all governments. Some regard was also due in the present case to the very circumstance under which we acquired our influence in the Peshwa's Government, and this opinion was expressed by Mr. Elphinstone in one of his own dispatches. The instructions of the Governor-General were, to require the Peshwa to close at once all foreign correspondence, dismiss all vakeels, acknowledge his complete dependence upon British power, coupled with the surrender of all claim to the titular headship of the Marrhatta State. It further insisted on the surrender of territory for the support of the military contingent to which he was bound, and called on him to acknowledge on the face of the treaty his belief in the guilt of Trimbukjee. These were certainly hard terms, though none of them could be impugned as not justifiable by particular acts. It may be added, that these humiliating conditions seem inconsistent with the desire to maintain him as the head of the State, and were sure to bring forth bitter fruit, unless stringent precautions were taken against his renewed hostility.

Mr. Elphinstone was instructed to make these demands in the event of no sincere efforts having been made to arrest Trimbukjee. The propriety of announcing them to the prince at the moment he had promised concession seems to have struck Mr. Elphinstone as more

than questionable, and he hesitated for some days to give effect to them. But the continued vacillation of Bajee Rao left him no alternative but to act on his instructions; and after renewed scenes of threatened collision, which were but a repetition of what has been already described, the treaty of so-called security was extorted from the sullen prince. Vigorous measures were in the meanwhile taken, under the direct authority of the Peshwa's government, to expel the insurgents from the territory.

The restraint put on the Peshwa by this treaty was certainly of little value in the events which followed, and was not relied upon by Mr. Elphinstone himself, whose opinion was strongly expressed, that when we insisted on these humiliating conditions we must be prepared for, and take precautions against, the enmity and open hostilities of the Prince should circumstances favour him. That would also appear to have been the opinion of Lord Hastings.

Military preparations were in progress for a campaign directed against the Pindarry hordes of Central India. These plunderers owed their origin and strength to the semi-anarchy which the Marrhatta Governments produced, and now received encouragement from these States, who believed that the confusion caused was more dangerous to the British Government than their own. The military preparations were therefore on a scale to meet every anticipated danger from the direct hostilities of the greater Powers, and these anticipations were amply fulfilled in the events which followed. The subsidiary force, stationed a few miles to the north of Poona, would have sufficed to meet any danger in this quarter, had this force been available; but at this critical moment appeared a new actor on the scene whose council deprived Mr. Elphinstone of this aid, and precipitated the crisis which followed.

There could scarcely be a stronger contrast than the character of of the wily Marrhatta whose closing scene we are following, and the joyous generous nature of one of India's best soldiers and diplomatists, Sir John Malcolm; but they had this in common, they were both of them great believers in the power of diplomacy. It was Malcolm's weakness to rely on that address to which he had owed some o his success in life and the confidence of successive Governors-General; but on this occasion he was no match for the Marrhatta Prince. He had proceeded from Calcutta on a tour of visits to the principal native Courts, under instructions from the Government to sound and report on their disposition and designs. In the month of August he arrived at Poona, and proceeded instantly to join the Peshwa, who was absent on a pilgrimage to Punderpoor, a place of sanctity, about

seventy miles distant. From a letter of Malcolm's, published in his Life, it would appear that he started on this expedition predisposed to regard the late conduct of the Peshwa as a temporary aberration, the result of evil councillors, from which he was already recalled by the penalties that he had suffered. In this good motive he would be encouraged (as Sir John thought) by the language of an old friend, by the hope of regaining the favour of the British Government, and something of the power he had lately lost. When, therefore, in the interview which followed, the same profusion of protestation and argument which had proved ineffective in convincing Mr. Elphinstone was again employed, they were received by one too ready to believe and to trust; and to such excess did he carry this feeling of confidence, that he urged on Mr. Elphinstone, when he returned to Poona, not to allow his suspicions of the conduct of Bajee Rao to interfere with the military plans of the Government, by retaining so large a force to guard against Bajee Rao's designs. Thus appealed to, the chivalrous spirit of Mr. Elphinstone gave an unwilling assent, and the greater part of the troops that held a military occupation of the Peshwa's country were allowed to advance to the north, and take a part in the general campaign, while the protection of this important post was left to three weak battalions of sepoys. By this rash proceeding Bajee Rao gained more than he could have hoped for; and he instantly commenced to take advantage of the opportunity, by levying troops and calling in his feudatories. They began to collect in overwhelming numbers at Poona, while to all remonstrances addressed to him from the British Resident, he had the ready reply that he was only complying with Malcolm's advice to show his devotion to the British Government by aiding in the extinction of the Pindarries.

The first signs of approaching hostility are rarely indicated by the language of a Court or a diplomatic agent. In the present case the professions of the Prince and his ministers were belied by the conduct of the armed multitudes who knew well the object for which they were assembled, and closed round the British cantonment, evincing their hostile intent by a thousand acts of insult and defiance. These demonstrations reached their height during the festival of the Dussera, on the 19th October. A great military display took place, which was attended by the Resident and the British troops. The marked slight with which the former was treated by the Peshwa encouraged the Marrhattas to make an open display of hostility. A large body of their cavalry charged directly down upon the British position, wheeling off as they approached, as if to show how completely the

latter were at the mercy of the large force by which they were surrounded.

The position of the British troops was one of unquestioned peril. The cantonment had been placed in the immediate vicinity of the city, by Sir A. Wellesley, for the purposes of defence, and for this it was well adapted; but it was surrounded by enclosures in which discipline loses half its advantage over irregular forces, and from the close proximity of the Peshwa's army an attack might have been made without a moment's warning. The position, too, favoured the attempts to corrupt the fidelity of the sepoys. These were now almost openly employed, and daily brought to the knowledge of their officers by the statements of the sepoys themselves. The circumstance that the families of many of the sepoys were at the mercy of the Marrhatta Government, gave to these attempts an importance which alarmed even those who had the highest confidence in their fidelity.

To withdraw the troops from their dangerous position was to provoke the hostility for which the Court was preparing; but every precaution was taken short of the commencement of the struggle that was inevitable, and in which Mr. Elphinstone's eager spirit was now anxious to anticipate the attack of the enemy. Intelligence was sent to hasten the arrival of a European regiment from Bombay; and Sir Lionel Smith, who commanded the subsidiary force, was asked to send back a light battalion to the old cantonment, thirty miles north of Poona, and was further warned to regard any interruption of communication as evidence of the outbreak of war, and in that case to march back to Poona.

A crisis was now at hand, where judgment and knowledge of character are of as much value as the highest energy and resolve. The picture which is drawn by Grant Duff of the doubts of one eventful night, when he stood alone with Mr. Elphinstone, and listened to the din of preparation that came from the city, will be read with great interest.

"For several nights the Peshwa and his advisers had deliberated on the advantage of surprising the troops before the arrival of the European regiment; and for this purpose, on the 28th October, their guns were yoked, their horses saddled, and their infantry in readiness. This intelligence was brought to Mr. Elphinstone a little before midnight of the 28th, and for a moment it became a question whether self-defence, under all circumstances, did not require that the attack should be anticipated. It was an hour of anxiety; the British cantonment and the Residency were perfectly still, and the inhabitants slept in the complete repose inspired by confidence in that profound

peace to which they had been long accustomed; but in the Peshwa's camp, south of the town, all was noise and uproar. Mr. Elphinstone had as yet betrayed no suspicion of the Peshwa's treachery, and, as he now stood listening on the terrace, he probably thought that in thus exposing the troops to be cut off without even the satisfaction of dying with their arms in their hands, he had followed the system of confidence so strongly recommended to a culpable extremity; but other motives influenced his conduct at this important moment. He was aware how little faith the other Marrhatta princes placed in Bajee Rao, and that Scindia, who knew him well, would hesitate to engage in hostilities until the Peshwa had fairly committed himself. Apprized of the Governor-General's secret plans and his intended movements on Gwalior, which many circumstances might have concurred to postpone, Mr. Elphinstone had studiously avoided every appearance which might affect the negotiations in Hindostan, or by any preparation and apparent alarm on his part give Scindia's secret emissaries at Poona reason to believe that war was inevitable. To have sent to the cantonment at that hour would have occasioned considerable stir; and in the meantime, by the report of the spies, the Peshwa was evidently deliberating, the din in the city was dying away, the night was passing, and the motive which had hitherto prevented preparation determined Mr. Elphinstone to defer it some hours longer. Major J. A. Wilson, the officer in command of the European regiment on its march from Bombay, had already been made acquainted with the critical state of affairs, and was hastening forward."

By his hesitation on this occasion, Bajee Rao unquestionably lost the last opportunity of striking an effective blow against British power. The character of this weak prince was probably better known to Mr. Elphinstone than to himself. His confession of his physical incapacity to be a warrior fell short of the reality. The motives which led him to postpone the attack became afterwards known, when his government was subverted. He relied to the last on the success of the efforts to corrupt the sepoys, and promised himself an easy victory without the trial of a conflict; but the weakness which prompted this policy of procrastination was well known to Mr. Elphinstone, and formed one of the elements in his calculations when he consented to two more days of uncertainty.

The day which followed this council was passed in the usual messages and remonstrances. On the afternoon of the 30th October, the British battalion marched into the cantonment, and Mr. Elphinstone hesitated no longer to order the withdrawal of the whole force

to a well chosen position, four miles from the city; an act which both parties understood as a preparation for war. This seasonable reinforcement, and the additional security we obtained by the position of the troops, put an end to the motives which made Mr. Elphinstone eager to commence hostilities, and he now calmly awaited the attack, knowing the moral importance which belongs to the fact of not appearing to be the aggressor in such a conflict. In pursuance of this policy he still retained his dangerous position at the Residency, and in close proximity to the city, supported only by a slender guard of sepoys. Rumours were rife of intended assassination, and would appear to have been well founded; but a high-minded man was not to be swayed by such fears, and the generosity of his nature prompted him to disbelieve them.[1]

Orders were meanwhile sent to hasten the arrival of the battalion at Seroor, thirty miles distant, and the Peshwa, on the other hand, added to his forces by the daily arrival of new troops. At length, on the morning of the 5th, an insolent message reached the Resident demanding the meaning of our preparations, and calling upon him to send away the European regiment that had lately arrived. This was well understood as a declaration of war, and the party at the Residency had barely time to mount their horses and retire, when the advance of the Peshwa's army, now pouring from the city and its neighbourhood in every direction, showed that the long expected conflict was at hand.

To seize and destroy the Residency was the first act of the enemy. As no preparations could under the circumstances be made for a sudden evacuation, all Mr. Elphinstone's papers and a valuable library shared in the general destruction. So complete was it, that Mr. Elphinstone reporting these events to Sir Evan Nepean, playfully remarks "I beg you will excuse this scrawl; but all my writing implements with everything I have, except the clothes on my back, form part of the blaze of the Residency, which is now smoking in sight."

Mr. Elphinstone's experience in Marrhatta warfare gave an authority to his advice, independent of that which it derived from his position as Resident, which enabled him to direct the movements of the troops. Colonel Burr, who commanded the troops, a gallant old soldier, but half crippled by a paralytic affection, wished to take up a defensive position, but Mr. Elphinstone, who urged on all the importance of being forward to meet a Marrhatta foe, ordered an instant attack, and this bold counsel was decisive of the day.

[1] I am assured by Major-General Briggs that he disbelieved them to the last.

I must here again borrow the picturesque description of the scene which presented itself to the party retiring from the Residency, from the narrative of Grant Duff, whose History, tedious while carrying us through all the windings of Marrhatta intrigues, rises into animation while describing the scenes in which he took a part.

"Wittojee Guckwar had scarcely quitted the Residence, when intelligence was brought that the army was moving out on the west side of the city. There was a momentary consultation about defending the Residency, but it was instantly abandoned as impracticable, and it was determined to retire to Khirkee, for which purpose the nature of the ground afforded great facility. The river Moola, betwixt the Sungum and the village of Khirkee, forms two curves like the letter S inverted. The Residency and the village were both on the same side of the river, but at the former there was a ford, and near the latter a bridge, so that the party by crossing at the ford had the river between them and the Peshwa's troops greater part of the way. From the Residency no part of the Marrhatta army was visible, excepting bodies of infantry, which were assembling along the tops of the adjoining heights, with the intention of cutting off the Residency from the Camp, and having this object in view, they did not molest individuals. On ascending one of the eminences on which they were forming, the plain beneath presented at that moment a most imposing spectacle. This plain, then covered with grain, terminates on the west by a range of small hills; while on the east it is bounded by the city of Poona, and the small hills already partially occupied by the infantry. A mass of cavalry covered nearly the whole extent of it, and towards the city endless streams of horsemen were pouring from every avenue. Those only who have witnessed the Bore in the Gulf of Cambay, and have seen in perfection the approach of that roaring tide, can form the exact idea presented to the author at the sight of the Peshwa's army. It was towards the afternoon of a very sultry day, there was a dead calm, and no sound was heard except the rushing, the trampling and neighing of horses, and the rumbling of the gun wheels. The effect was heightened by seeing the peaceful peasantry flying from their work in the field, the bullocks breaking from their yoke, the wild antelopes, startled from sleep, bounding off, and then turning for a moment to gaze on this tremendous inundation which swept all before it, levelled the hedges and standing corn, and completely overwhelmed every ordinary barrier as it moved."

Then ensued one of those scenes we are so familiar with in Indian history. The sepoy battalions who had resisted the attempts

to corrupt them,[1] now supported by the presence of British troops and led by British officers, advanced with alacrity to meet the coming host, and added to the list of triumphs of discipline over irregular forces however apparently overwhelming. The affair which followed scarcely amounted to a general engagement. The Marrhatta horse overlapped the British troops, and a bold attempt was made by a large mass of them to destroy a sepoy regiment that had advanced too eagerly beyond its supports. It is said that at this critical moment the Peshwa, true to his character, sent an order to recall his instructions to begin the engagement; but Gokla, who commanded the army, a sanguine and impetuous chief, suspecting the nature of the message that was approaching, instantly ordered a battery to open fire, and precipitated the collision which was now inevitable. The sepoys stood firm, and had almost repelled the cavalry attack before any of the British troops could be brought into action. Whereupon the vast array of the Marrhattas, foiled in this attempt and daunted at the steady advance of the British line, fell back to their old position, and the little army which had gained a victory, the importance of which was not to be measured by the losses sustained on either side, remained master of the field, and again took up their post at Khirkee.

I think it unnecessary to enter upon the question which has been raised elsewhere as to the share taken by Mr. Elphinstone in the disposition of the troops during the action. His position as Resident gave him the control over the troops, and his experience gave an authority to his advice, when he directed the commencement of hostilities; his counsel therefore to assume the offensive amounted almost to a command;[2] but it is not necessary for Mr. Elphinstone's reputation to suppose that he interfered with the movement of the troops on the field of battle. There was no rivalry at the time, nor need there be now. Colonel Burr, in his report on the action, acknowledges the obligation he is under for the advice of the Resident on that occasion, and many years afterwards I received from Mr. Elphinstone himself a description of some of the principal incidents in the engagement. From his account of the gallantry and energy of the crippled old soldier who commanded, one would have supposed that Colonel Burr, and not Mr. Elphinstone, was the hero of that day.

[1] The Marrhattas in Captain Ford's battalion deserted, but this force belonged to the Peshwa's own contingent. It is mentioned by Grant Duff, with pride, that not a single sepoy of the regular service left his colours.

[2] Colonel Burr, in his Report, says that the Resident sent a requisition to him to move out and attack the Marrhattas.

I must rapidly pass over to events which followed.

When General Smith joined the force at Khirkee, he found every preparation for resistance on the part of the Marrhattas. They occupied a position of considerable strength; but after their repulse on the 5th, it will not be a matter of surprise that they shrunk from a conflict with the strong British force now preparing for an attack, and after a slender show of resistance on the passage of the river in the front of the British army, the Peshwa abandoned his capital for ever. The campaign which followed, though it lasted for several months, consisted, from its commencement to its close, in the pursuit of a foe whose skill was shown in the doubling and winding by which he evaded the chase of the large force that was employed against him.

Early in the retreat, the Marrhatta host came suddenly upon a single sepoy battalion supported only by two field pieces; and the stubbornness with which this handful of men resisted, and repelled the whole array of the Marrhattas, contributed in no small degree to the political success of the policy of the Government.

Two other important events must be mentioned before I close this portion of my narrative. The dominions of the Peshwa embraced the mountain range which divides the slender strip of territory on the west coast from the rest of the Indian peninsula, and the territory thus naturally strong was formidable from the fortresses with which it abounded. The same motives which led Mr. Elphinstone to endeavour to hasten a crisis when he had to deal only with the marauding expedition of Trimbukjee, led him to urge the employment of a portion of our troops in attacking some of the forts, instead of wasting our energies in a never-ending still-beginning pursuit. In accordance with this advice, the fort of Sattara, the ancient stronghold of the founder of the Marrhatta power, was attacked, and fell after a mere show of resistance; and the moment was considered propitious to issue a proclamation which, under instructions from the Government, Mr. Elphinstone had lately prepared, pronouncing the downfall of the empire of the Peshwa, the assumption of the greater part of his territory by the British Government, and the elevation of the Sattara family, the descendants of Sevajee, to the government of a reserved portion of the dominions of his ancestor. The battle of Ashtee closed the campaign. General Smith surprised the Peshwa's camp; in a short struggle of cavalry, Gokla, the sole remaining prop of an almost desperate cause was killed; and the Sattara family were released from their dependence on the Peshwa, to be placed on the dependent throne prepared for them. The now fallen Prince, whose

cause was regarded as hopeless in his own camp, and abandoned by the Marrhattas generally, retired from his dominions, surrendered finally to Sir John Malcolm, and passed the rest of his days in obscurity in the neighbourhood of Cawnpore.

This chapter in Indian history may be said to have been continued in our own day, when the adopted son of the Peshwa, the infamous Nana Sahib, took a part in the horrid acts of massacre at Cawnpore.

I cannot more appropriately close this portion of my narrative than in quoting the graceful terms in which Mr. Canning, in moving the vote of thanks to the Governor-General and the army for their services in the Pindarry war, comments on the important part which Mr. Elphinstone played on this occasion :—

"While the campaign was proceeding thus successfully against those whom Lord Hastings had taken into account as probable enemies, their number was unexpectedly increased by the addition of the Peshwa, the executive head of the Marrhatta empire, who suddenly broke the ties which bound him (as has been seen) in the strictest amity to the British Government. Even Sir John Malcolm, better qualified perhaps than any other person to fathom the designs and estimate the sincerity of the native powers, had been so far imposed upon, in an interview with that Prince at Poona, as to express to Lord Hastings his perfect conviction that the friendly professions of the Peshwa deserved entire confidence. In the midst of this unsuspecting traquillity, at a moment now known to have been concerted with other Marrhatta chieftains, the Peshwa manifested his real intentions by an unprovoked attack upon the Residency (the house of the British Resident) at Poona. Mr. Elphinstone (a name distinguished in the literature as well as the politics of the East) exhibited, on that trying occasion, military courage and skill which, though valuable accessories to diplomatic talents, we are not entitled to require as necessary qualifications for civil employment. On that, and not on that occasion only, but on many others in the course of this singular campaign, Mr. Elphinstone displayed talents and resources, which would have rendered him no mean general in a country where generals are of no mean excellence and reputation."

CHAPTER IV.

COMMISSIONER OF THE CONQUERED PROVINCE.

1817—1819.

With the conquest of the Peshwa's territory we commence a new chapter in our narrative. We have now to follow Mr. Elphinstone's career as an administrator and governor; and the change requires some departure from the plan on which his public services have been hitherto detailed. It would have been easy to compile a narrative by copious extracts from his public despatches; but clear and able as they are, they would have scarcely repaid the reader for the labour of following the intrigues of a Marrhatta court. The papers relating to Mr. Elphinstone's administrative labours are of another kind, and abound in broad and general views of policy, which can only be properly studied in the writer's own words, and I shall make no apology for the introduction of some full extracts from these documents, and especially from his report to the Government on the principles of his settlement of the territory that fell into British hands.

No sooner was the rupture with Bajee Rao known at head-quarters, than Lord Hastings, with a promptitude which would seem to have anticipated the event, decided on the extinction of the Peshwa's authority, and the perpetual exclusion of Bajee Rao and his family from any influence or dominion. Mr. Elphinstone had carefully avoided every step which might commit the Government to any particular course, and had even suggested the possibility of reinstating the Peshwa in a portion of his dominions, if it were considered politically expedient; recommending, however, that in that case he should be subjected to such restraint on all his actions as would have left him only a nominal sovereignty. The policy of substituting other members of the family for Bajee Rao was likewise brought under consideration, without the expression of a preference for either of the plans; but Lord Hastings, who was strongly impressed with the danger of reviving in any form an authority so influential with the Marrhattas as that of the Peshwa, and whose views pointed to conquest, sent instructions to Mr. Elphinstone on the 15th of December, 1817, announcing the annexation of the territory, and the exclusion of Bajee Rao from sovereign authority; but leaving a large latitude

with Mr. Elphinstone as to the terms to be conceded to the different Jageerdars, and especially to the Sattara family. As sole Commissioner for the settlement and administration of this territory, he was invested with full authority over all the civil and military officers employed in it.

This settlement has been the subject of deserved eulogy; his success in conciliating the Marrhattas to the new order of things has been repeatedly dwelt upon. It would, however, convey an imperfect view of the grounds of this success, if we attributed it solely to so ordinary an expedient as a policy of conciliation and concession to powerful and influential classes. Mr. Elphinstone felt that the difficulties of his task would commence when the conquest was achieved, and would probably increase in proportion as the military subjugation was complete.

To settle the country—*i.e.*, to bring it under British dominion—was a comparatively easy task. The remarkable progress of Munro in the southern Marrhatta territory, who, with a handful of troops,—amounting at its commencement to only three companies of sepoys and a few field-pieces—invaded a country abounding in forts, conquered a province, collected the revenue, and established a civil government, showed how complete was the overthrow of the Peshwa's authority, and the reputation of the British arms.

The only immediate difficulties to be apprehended in the settlement, arose from the influence of the religious and military classes. The Peshwa was a Brahmin, and, from policy and superstition, had encouraged his order with lavish doles and grants of land; while by placing them in every public office, he had left his territory crowded with an intriguing and fanatic class, necessarily antagonistic to British rule. To conciliate them to the new Government by the recognition of the grants and pensions they received from the former Government, was an act not merely of policy, but of necessity. In his anxiety to make known the views of his Government, he followed up the announcement of its intentions conveyed in his proclamation, by a personal visit to a celebrated place of pilgrimage, the resort of the most influential of the sacred class. He then took occasion to address an assembly of this religious order, and renewed the assurance of the security of their grants and endowments. These assurances were again repeated at Poona, when presents were distributed, as a sort of temporary compensation for the lavishness of the Peshwa's grants. If they were encouraged to believe that these acts proceeded from timidity or superstition, they were soon undeceived. A conspiracy was detected, headed by Brahmins and the most desperate of the military class,

having for its object the murder of the Europeans at Poona and Sattara, and the revival of Marrhatta power. It was met with promptitude, and Mr. Elphinstone, who never hesitated to assume any responsibility when he thought the public service required it, ordered the ringleaders to be punished in Marrhatta fashion, by being blown from the cannon's mouth, remarking at the time that the punishment contained the best elements of capital punishment, painless to the criminal, and terrible to the beholder. The act, however, was then an innovation in British India; and Sir Evan Nepean, the Governor of Bombay, wrote to Mr. Elphinstone, advising him strongly to ask for an act of indemnity. This counsel was indignantly rejected. "If I have done wrong," said Mr. Elphinstone to his friends, "I ought to be punished; if I have done right, I don't want any act of indemnity."[1] We are significantly told by the historian, that this terrible example had the effect of preventing any similar attempts on the part of this intriguing order.

Far greater interest attached to the settlement with the military chiefs. Few of them held Jageers of an extent to cause uneasiness to the Government, but they were numerous and strong in the possession of hill forts, and in the difficulty of their country. Mr. Elphinstone suggested some concessions to a class whom it was unwise to drive to desperation; the views of the Government were carried out by him with a liberality that produced lasting effects. The expressive terms in which Grant Duff concludes his history merit a place in this narrative:—

"Thus was completed, under the directions of the Honourable Mountstuart Elphinstone, this important change in the government of the Marrhatta country. The liberality of the settlement authorized by the Marquis of Hastings far exceeded the expectations of the people, and more was in consequence done for the tranquillity of the Deccan in eighteen months than had ever followed a revolution in that disturbed country after a period of many years. The name of Elphinstone was deservedly associated with the acts of the British Government, and the memory of benefits conferred by him on the inhabitants of Maharashtra will probably survive future revolutions, and will do much in the meantime to preserve the existence of British India."

These were not idle expressions, for the name of Elphinstone was a powerful aid to his kinsman and successor in the government of Bombay during the fiery ordeal of 1857. Lord Elphinstone dwelt much on this to me in an interview I had with him shortly before his decease, and he pointed to a pile of letters he had received from the

[1] This anecdote was communicated to me by Mr. John Warden.

Marrhatta chiefs of the Deccan when the death of their benefactor became known.

But what was the key to this success? It will be interesting to trace, because it is not merely illustrative of the character and political views of Mr. Elphinstone, but it even has its bearing on the present day. It may be studied in the interesting state paper to which I shall now refer.

His report, which forms a volume, and was printed and circulated as such, gives a detailed account of the provinces comprised in the Peshwa's government, with the different subject-races and their characteristics; it then gives an outline of Marrhatta history, an account of the Peshwa's family and the constitution of the government, and proceeds to pass in review the whole system of administration, revenue and judicial, pursued by the Marrhattas, as a necessary preliminary to Mr. Elphinstone's own propositions. The pervading spirit of this able state paper is one of moderation and caution in its suggestions—a caution springing not merely from his impression of the political difficulties attending this conquest, but from those which are inherent in the attempt to introduce European principles of administration in Eastern nations.

Doubts have occurred to some of the ablest of our administrators how far British rule has been ultimately beneficial to the people subject to it. It has given to India the inestimable blessing of peace, restored order, and checked the rapine that wasted its provinces; but the attempt to administer justice between man and man, to protect life and property, and even to establish fixed principles of revenue administration, have in many cases been attended with such lamentable failures, as to constitute a scandal to our Government. Mr. Elphinstone had constantly before his mind the remarkable exposure of our system in the oldest and most settled of our provinces in the famous Fifth Report of 1812; and nowhere can we find such an admirable comparison between the evils which prevail in our own and in the government of native sovereigns, as in the review from which I am about to quote. It traces vividly and clearly the compensation which the inhabitants enjoyed under their own government before it proceeds to decide on the principles on which our future administration was to be founded.

Starting from the same assumption as Sir Thomas Munro, that there was something in the native system that would bear a comparison with our own, and which was suited to the manners and habits of the people, he proposes to act on the simple principle, that any change introduced should be as slight and gradual as possible.

In pursuance of these views, he proposed to maintain the feudal chiefs in much of their former authority, and even when they are brought more directly under our administration, he suggests that they should retain considerable power and influence. The head of the Sattara family had a certain territory assigned to him, over which he was to exercise a sovereign authority. This arrangement was proposed, not merely for the purpose of giving employment to influential classes, who would not find a place under our administration, but for the conciliation of the Marrhattas generally to the new order of things, by maintaining an old family and court. In the provinces that were brought under our direct administration, a simple form of government was established, and as much of the native system as was compatible with our own.

It is time that I should give some extracts from the report. The following refers to the position which the Jageerdars, whose land was not included in the Sattara territory, were to hold under our administration. This class is thus described :—

"The great Sirdars are a more important class; they are not, like the chiefs of a Mahomedan Government, foreigners to the people, nor are they raised by the prince to fall when his support is withdrawn. They are of the same nation and religion with the people, and the descendants of those who have been their leaders since they rose to independence. Their landed possessions also give an extent and a permanence to their influence not usual in the countries we have before subdued."

In another passage he recommends the following arrangements :—

"The greater Jageerdars, to whom their personal lands are now to be restored, ought, I think, during life to be left in charge of the police, in those villages at least which are near their residence; but they ought to be apprised that they are not to inflict punishment on serious offences, but to send the offender to the Collector. All communications with them should be made by the Collector himself, even when complaints are brought against them, and no judgment should be pronounced on their offences but by the Commissioner. The lower order ought perhaps to be put in charge of the police of their villages for the sake of efficiency, though it is not otherwise necessary. In all these cases, except the southern Jageerdars, the regular police ought to be allowed a concurrent jurisdiction in the lands of all Jageerdars. The offences of the lower order of Jageerdars may be tried by the Collector, but not without previous reference to the Commissioner. The same rule ought, I conceive, to apply to all serious complaints against people of rank; mere trifling complaints and civil suits ought

to be carried on by Punchayets, or by the proper European officers; but in all these cases the forms of civility usual among men of rank ought to be substituted for the summons and orders of Court usual in settled countries. Everything in this country is provisional, and may be altered when found inconvenient; but I would, if possible, maintain most of these proposed indulgences during the life of the present generation. Afterwards, all that produce real inequality may be removed, but inequality of forms must be maintained as long as we wish to preserve inequality of ranks, unless the natives should become sufficiently enlightened to view these matters as we do in England. At present a violent change would be felt as oppressive by the upper classes, and disapproved as unusual even by the lower."

The proposal to maintain a privileged class is so opposed to received principles of judicial administration that I may briefly refer to its subsequent history. To have separate Courts for the adjudication of questions where men of rank are concerned is revolting to English notions, but nothing can be more true than the position of Mr. Elphinstone, that equality of all classes before the law has shocked natives as much perhaps as any part of our system of government. Of this, if necessary, abundant evidence could be adduced. How strongly he felt on this subject will appear from the extract which follows. The letter from which I quote was addressed to Metcalfe, then one of the Secretaries to the Supreme Government, and reports specially on the Putwurdun family. The language is prophetic :—

"I am induced to enter so fully into these subjects by my sense of the importance of preserving the privileges of chiefs whose friendship we have acknowledged, as well as to show how much is gained by attachment to our Government, and for the general advantage of having some portion of the old nobility flourishing and contented. I likewise believe that in addition to the real difficulties of avoiding disputes with chiefs of this description, there arises, when their former situation and the nature of their claims come to be a little known, a disposition to regard them as useless encumbrances on the revenue, and obstructions to the course of the regulations, and to consider it as desirable that their lands should be resumed. From such a disposition, and even from the lapse of time, the letter of the present engagements may be remembered when the manner in which it was proposed to enforce them is forgotten; to guard against which, I would venture to suggest that any explanations which the most noble the Governor-General may think necessary for preserving the spirit of the agreements should be communicated, as permanent rules, for the guidance of the Government under which the chiefs are severally to be placed, and that this prin-

ciple should be extended to the whole of the Jagheerdars who are left in possession of their lands."

Mr. Elphinstone's subsequent position as Governor of Bombay enabled him to give effect to his views. So long as the territory was administered by officers with large discretionary authority, it was easy to maintain the exceptional position of these feudatories; but alarm was early taken on their part, lest they should be subjected to the jurisdiction of the much dreaded Adawluts, and in 1822, Mr. Elphinstone, on a visit to the Deccan, was besieged by their remonstrances against the establishment of some judicial officers in that country, a step which they thought betokened the final establishment of English courts of law. They contended that to make them subject to such a judicature would be in violation of the pledges conveyed in his proclamation on the fall of the Peshwa's government, by which all the privileges enjoyed under the Marrhatta government were guaranteed. To make them over to the Adawluts would, they contended, involve them in hopeless ruin. These remonstrances had their weight, and a special officer was appointed as agent for the sirdars, with an appeal only to the Governor in Council, and one of the last acts of Mr. Elphinstone's Government was to provide for this peculiar system in the regulation which brought the Peshwa's territory more directly under the system of administration that prevailed in the other provinces. These chiefs are then classed according to their rank and the estimation in which they were held under the former Government, and exempted from the immediate jurisdiction of the civil courts; an appeal being allowed from the agent who adjudicated on such questions, to the Governor in Council, in regard to those of the highest rank, and to the Sudder Dewanee as regards inferior chiefs. The system thus established had the advantage of the support of Mr. Elphinstone's successor and fellow-labourer, Sir J. Malcolm, who shared in those views, and it acquired a stability that it could not have otherwise attained.

Malcolm's testimony to the popularity of this system with all classes is very striking. It is contained in a minute of the 30th of November, 1830, in which he enters largely into the policy of maintaining these privileged classes. He contends "that there is nothing in the new code that creates inconvenience or embarrassment from the existence or extension of the privileged classes of the Deccan. I can confidently state that during my whole experience in India, I have known no institution so prized by those who enjoy its exemptions, or more gratifying to the whole people among whom it

was established. It is recognised by the lowest orders as a concession in forms to those whom they deem their superiors, and as such is received as a boon by the community, who, from their condition, neither understand nor appreciate those unyielding forms that deny alike advantages of birth and the claims of rank and service." He proceeds to contend that those inequalities belong to all governments, and are not unknown to that of Great Britain, quoting in support of his position the privileges of peers, members of parliament, judges, and clergy.

To those who may be surprised at the establishment of such an anomaly as a different system of jurisdiction for different classes of society, I would only remark that it is not more anomalous than the separate judicature provided for another privileged class, viz., the British residents in India. The existence of such anomalies is, after all, chiefly to be vindicated on the ground of the low reputation of the courts of local judicature established through British territory. An amusing instance was once given me by Mr. Elphinstone, illustrative of the dread with which the Adawluts were regarded by natives at the beginning of the century. During the progress of our conquests in the North-West, the inhabitants were observed flying in considerable numbers from the territory we had acquired. "Is Lord Lake coming?" was the eager enquiry. "No!" was the reply, "The Adawlut is coming, which is ten times worse."

To return to our extracts from the Report. The following passage is long, but it will not bear abridgment. It gives his comparison between the Marrhatta administration and our own, and adds some general remarks on the principles of our Government. The recommendation at the close to encourage the use of arms has a peculiar significance at the present time :—

"Judging from the impunity with which crimes might be committed under a system of criminal justice and police such as has been described, we should be led to fancy the Marrhatta country a complete scene of anarchy and violence. No picture, however, could be further from the truth. The Reports of the Collectors do not represent crimes as particularly numerous: Mr. Chaplin, who has the best opportunity of drawing a comparison with our old provinces, thinks them rarer here than there. Murder for revenge, generally arising either from jealousy or disputes about landed property, and as frequently about village rank, is mentioned as the commonest crime amongst the Marrhattas. Arson and cattle stealing, as a means of revenging wrongs or extorting justice, are common in the Carnatic.

Gang robberies and highway robbery are common, but are almost always committed by Bheels and other predatory tribes, who scarcely form a part of society; and they have never, since I have been in the country, reached to such a pitch as to bear a moment's comparison with the state of Bengal described in the papers laid before Parliament.

"It is of vast importance to ascertain the causes that counteracted the corruption and relaxation of the police, and which kept this country in a state superior to our oldest possessions, amidst all the abuses and oppressions of a Native Government. The principal causes to which the disorders in Bengal have been attributed are the over-population, and the consequent degradation and pusillanimity of the people; the general revolutions of property, in consequence of our revenue arrangements, which drove the upper classes to disaffection and the lower to desperation; the want of employment to the numerous classes, whether military or otherwise, who were maintained by the Native Government; the abolition of the ancient system of police, in which, besides the usual bad effects of a general change, were included the removal of responsibility from the zemindars; the loss of their natural influence, as an instrument of police; the loss of the services of the village watchmen, the loss of a hold over that class which is naturally disposed to plunder, and in some cases the necessity to which individuals of it were driven to turn robbers, from the resumption of their allowances; the separation of the revenue, magisterial, judicial, and military powers, by which all were weakened; the further weakness of each from the checks imposed on it; the delays of trials, the difficulties of conviction, the inadequacy of punishment, the trouble and expense of prosecuting and giving evidence; the restraints imposed by our maxims on the assumption of power by individuals, which, combined with the dread of the Adawlut, discouraged all from exertion in support of the police; the want of an upper class among the natives, which could take the lead on such occasions; and, to conclude, the small number of European magistrates who supply the place of the class last mentioned, their want of connection and communication with the natives, and of knowledge of their language and character.

"The Marrhatta country presents in many respects a complete contrast to the above picture. The people are few compared to the quantity of arable land; they are hardy, warlike, and always armed till of late years. The situation of the lower orders was very comfortable, and that of the upper prosperous. There was abundance of

employment in the domestic establishments and foreign conquests of the nation. The ancient system of police was maintained, all the powers of the State were united in the same hands, and their vigour was not checked by any suspicions on the part of the Government or any scruples of their own. In cases that threatened the peace of society, apprehension was sudden and arbitrary, trial summary, and punishment prompt and severe. The innocent might sometimes suffer, but the guilty could scarcely ever escape. As the magistrates were natives they readily understood the real state of a case submitted to them, and were little retarded by scruples of conscience, so that prosecutors and witnesses had not long to wait. In their lax system, men knew that if they were right in substance they would not be questioned about the form; and perhaps they likewise knew, that if they did not protect themselves, they could not always expect protection from the magistrate, whose business was rather to keep down great disorders than to afford assistance in cases that might be settled without his aid. The mamlutdars were themselves considerable persons, and there were men of property and consideration in every neighbourhood—enamdars, jagheerdars, or old zemindars. These men associated with the ranks above and below, and kept up the chain of society to the prince; by this means the higher orders were kept informed of the situation of the lower, and as there was scarcely any man without a patron, men might be exposed to oppression, but could scarcely suffer from neglect.

"Many of the evils from which this country has hitherto been exempt, are inseparable from the introduction of a foreign government; but perhaps the greater may be avoided by proper precautions. Many of the upper classes must sink into comparative poverty, and many of those who were employed in the court and army must absolutely lose their bread. Both of these misfortunes happened, to a certain extent, in the commencement of Bajee Rao's reign; but as the frame of government was entire, the bad effects of these partial evils were surmounted. Whether we can equally maintain the frame of government is a question that is yet to be examined. The present system of police, as far as relates to the villages, may be easily kept up; but I doubt whether it is enough that the village establishment be maintained, and the whole put under a mamlutdar. The potail's respectability and influence in his village must be kept up by allowing him some latitude, both in the expenditure of the village expenses, and in restraining petty disorders within his village. So far from wishing that it were possible for the European officers to hear all

complaints on such subjects, I think it fortunate that they have no time to investigate them; and think it desirable that the mamlutdars also should leave them to the potails, and thus preserve a power, on the aid of which we must in all branches of the government greatly depend. The zealous co-operation of the potails is as essential to the collection of the revenue, and to the administration of civil justice, as to the police; and it ought, therefore, by all means to be secured. Too much care cannot be taken to prevent their duty becoming irksome, and their influence impaired, by bringing their conduct too often under the correction of their superiors. I would lend a ready ear to all complaints against them for oppression, but I would not disturb them for inattention to forms; and I would leave them at liberty to settle petty complaints in their own way, provided no serious punishment were inflicted on either party. We may weaken the potails afterwards if we find it necessary, and retrench their emoluments; but our steps should be cautious, for if we once destroy our influence over the potails, or theirs over the people, we can never recover either. Care ought also to be taken of the condition of the village watchman, whose allowance, if not sufficient to support him and to keep him out of temptation to thieve, ought to be increased; but it ought not to be so high as to make him independent of the community; and it ought always to be in part derived from contributions, which may compel him to go his rounds among the villagers, as at present.

"If the village police be preserved, the next step is to preserve the efficiency of the mamlutdar. At present all powers are vested in that officer, and as long as the auxiliary horse and sebundies are kept up, he has ample means of preserving order. The only thing requisite at present is, that the mamlutdar should have higher pay, to render him more respectable, and more above temptation, and to induce the better sort of natives to accept the office. When the sebundies are reduced in numbers and the horse discharged, our means of preserving the peace will be greatly weakened, at the same time that the number of enemies to the public tranquillity will be increased: the number of sebundies now in our pay, by giving employment to the idle and needy, contributes, I have no doubt, more than anything else to the remarkable good order which this part of our new conquests has hitherto enjoyed. The mamlutdar will also feel the want of many of the jageerdars and others of the upper class, who used to aid his predecessors with their influence, and even with their troops. The want of that class will be still more felt, as a channel through

which Government could receive the accounts of the districts, and of the conduct of the mamlutdars themselves. The cessation of all prospect of a rise will of itself, in a great measure, destroy the connexion between them and the rulers; and the natural distance which, I am afraid, must always remain between natives and English gentlemen, will tend to complete the separation. Something may be done by keeping up the simplicity and equality of Marrhatta manners, and by imitating the facility of access which was conspicuous among their chiefs. On this also the continuance of the spirit of the people and of our popularity will probably in a great measure depend. Sir Henry Strachey, in his report laid before Parliament, attributes many of the defects in our administration in Bengal to the unmeasurable distance between us and the natives; and afterwards adds, that there is scarcely a native in his district who would think of sitting down in the presence of an English gentleman. Here, every man above the rank of a hircarrah sits down before us, and did before the Peshwa; even a common ryot, if he had to stay any time, would sit down on the ground. This contributes, as far as the mechanical parts of the society can, to keep up the intercourse that ought to subsist between the governors and the governed; there is, however, a great chance that it will be allowed to die away. The great means of keeping it up is, for gentlemen to receive the natives often, when not on business. It must be owned there is a great difficulty in this. The society of the natives can never be in itself agreeable; no man can long converse with the generality of them without being provoked with their constant selfishness and design, wearied with their importunities, and disgusted with their flattery. Their own prejudices also exclude them from our society in the hours given up to recreation, and at other times want of leisure is enough to prevent gentlemen receiving them; but it ought to be remembered, that this intercourse with the natives is as much a point of duty, and contributes as much towards good government, as the details in which we are generally occupied.

"Much might likewise be done by raising our mamlutdars to a rank which might render it creditable for native gentlemen to associate with them. It must be owned our Government labours under natural disadvantages in this respect, both as to the means of rendering our instruments conspicuous, and of attaching them to our cause. All places of trust and honour must be filled by Europeans. We have no irregular army to afford honourable employment to persons incapable of being admitted to a share of the government, and no court to make

up by honours and empty favour for the absence of the other more solid objects of ambition. As there are no great men in our service, we cannot bestow the higher honours on the lower, on which also the natives set a high value, as the privilege of using a particular kind of umbrella, or of riding in a palanquin, cease to be honours under us, from their being thrown open to all the world. What honours we do confer are lost from our own want of respect for them, and from our want of sufficient discrimination to enable us to suit them, exactly to the person and the occasion, on which circumstances the value of these fanciful distinctions entirely depends.

"To supply the place of these advantages we have nothing left but good pay, personal attentions, and occasional commendations and rewards. The first object may be attained without much additional expense, by enlarging the districts, diminishing the number of officers, and increasing their pay. The pay might also be augmented for length of service, or in reward of particular activity. It might be from 200 to 250 rupees at first, and increase one-sixth for every five years' service; khilauts might also be given as occasional rewards for services; and, above all, lands for life—or even, on rare occasions, for two or three lives, or in perpetuity—ought to be given to old or to meritorious servants. Besides the immediate effect of improving the conduct of the mamlutdars by these liberalities, their political advantages would be considerable, by spreading over the country a number of respectable persons attached to the Government, and capable of explaining its proceedings. If these grants could often be made hereditary, we should also have a source from which hereafter to draw well educated and respectable men to fill our public offices, and should found an order of families exactly of the rank in life which would render them useful to a Government circumstanced like ours. The jagheer lands as they fall in, might be applied to this purpose; and I think it would be good policy to make the rules regarding the resumption, at the death of the present incumbents, much stricter, if they were to be applied to this purpose; since we should gain more of useful popularity by grants of this kind than we should lose by dispossessing the heirs of many of the present jagheerdars. It would be a further stimulus to the mamlutdars, at the same time that it contributed to the efficiency of the system, to put the office of dufterdar with the collector on such a footing as to render it a sufficient object of emulation. For this purpose I would allow it 1,000 rupees a month; which, considered as the very highest salary to which a native could attain, is surely not too much. I have fixed these allowances below what I at first thought it expedient; and in judging of their

amount, the great difference in expense between this territory and the old provinces, must be borne in mind. The pay of the common servants here is more than double what it is in Bengal; but if the proposed allowances should still seem more than the finances can bear, it ought to be recollected that economy, no less than policy, requires liberal pay when there is considerable trust,—a maxim long since confirmed in its application to the natives, by the experience and sagacity of General Munro.

"Having thus formed a chain from the potail to the Collector, and having provided them with such rewards as circumstances will admit, it is of at least equal importance to take care that they should be punished for neglect. The proposed improvement in the situation of a mamlutdar provides some means for punishing him, by affording him allowances which it would be a serious misfortune to lose, and which would admit of his paying fines, by giving him a character that should make reproof a punishment, and prospects which he would be unwilling to forfeit. Imprisonment, or other punishment, may be added, if his offence were more than neglect. A still stronger responsibility must be imposed on the potail, village watchman, and in villages where the koolkurnee manages, on him also. The practice of levying the value of the property lost on the village, ought not, I think, to be entirely abandoned. I am aware that it has been objected to by the highest authorities, and that it is in reality harsh, and often unjust; but I think it better to regulate than to abandon it. It is a coarse but effectual remedy against the indifference of the neighbourhood to the sufferings of individuals; and if the great secret of police be to engage many people in the prevention and punishment of crimes, it will not, perhaps, be easy to find a measure more advisable. It was adopted by our own early lawgivers, and is not less suited to the state of society in India than it was in England under Alfred. When it is plain that a village could not prevent a robbery, the exaction of the money could, of course, be remitted; but where there is either negligence or connivance, it ought to be levied either whole or in part. A fine would, at all events, be expedient in such a case, and this is a popular and established method of levying it; it keeps a heavy punishment hanging over every village where a robbery is committed, and throws the burthen of proving its innocence upon it; whereas a fine would require proof of actual connivance, and would, after all, be complained of as a hardship; while a levy of the same sum, in lieu of the property lost, would, if less than the value of the property, be felt as an indulgence.

"It appears an objection to this plan, that it affords the mamlutdar

an opportunity of collecting more than he brings to account; but in such a case the villagers will, of course, complain, as they always did when the money was taken from them unreasonably; and this abuse, like many others, must depend for a remedy on the vigilance of the Collector.

"On this, indeed, it will have been long since observed, the whole system must depend; its object being to provide sufficient powers, and leave it to the principal officer to guard against the abuse of them. That he will always succeed is more than I would promise; but perfection is not to be looked for, and we have only the choice of taking away from our agents the power to do good, or leaving them, in some degree, the power to do harm. Against this even a system of check and limitation will not always guard; for a man may be careful not openly to commit irregularities, while he is secretly guilty of every sort of oppression. As long as the chief power in the district is in able hands, the good done by the inferiors in this system will preponderate over the evil; and if the Collector be deficient, I am afraid that no distribution of powers would make up for his want of capacity, or do more than palliate or conceal the evils to which such a want would give rise.

"The highest rank in the chain under Government should be a Court or an individual vested with a general control of all departments, who should be frequently in motion, and whose business should rather be to superintend the whole system than to administer any part of it, and to see that essentials were attended to rather than that rules were not violated. I would vest the fullest powers over the officers under them in the Collector, and in like manner it would be proper for Government to pay the utmost attention to the principal officer's recommendations, originating in the good or ill conduct of the Collectors. So general a charge, of course, requires great industry and abilities. It is to be hoped such may be obtained; and if they are not, I despair of supplying their place by any machinery that can possibly be invented.

"I have introduced those remarks under the police, where they first occurred to me; but it is evident they apply equally to any other branch of the Government. I now return to the police.

"The spirit of the people has been mentioned as of the first importance, and although that may be expected to flag under a foreign rule, and still more under a strong government which protects all its subjects, and leaves no call for the exertion of their courage and energy in their own defence; yet there are instances in some

parts of our old territories of our subjects retaining their military spirit after they have lost their habits of turbulence, and we may hope to accomplish the same object here. The first step towards its attainment is to remove all obstructions to the use of arms. On our first conquest some restriction was necessary on persons travelling with arms, but that has since been relaxed and ought to be done away. Besides the advantage of arming the people for purposes of police, it would be useful even in cases of war and insurrection, as the bulk of the people, even if disaffected, would be led, for the sake of their property, to employ their arms against our predatory enemies rather than against us. On the same principles, villages should be encouraged to keep up their walls, and perhaps allowed some remission to enable them to repair them."

At a later part of the Report he returns to the same general comparison :—

"But with all these defects the Marrhatta country flourished, and the people seem to have been exempt from some of the evils which exist under our own more perfect Government; there must, therefore, have been some advantages in the system to counterbalance its obvious defects, and most of them appear to me to have originated in one fact, that the Government, although it did little to obtain justice for the people, left them the means of procuring it for themselves. The advantage of this was particularly felt among the lower orders, who were most out of reach of their rulers, and most apt to be neglected under all Governments. By means of the punchayet they were enabled to effect a tolerable dispensation of justice among themselves, and it happens that most of the objections stated to that institution do not apply in this case.

A potail was restrained from exercising oppression both by the fear of the mamlutdar and by the inconvenience of offending the society in which he lived; and when both parties were disposed to a punchayet, he had no interest in refusing his assistance to assemble one. A punchayet can scarcely be perplexed in the simple causes that arise under its own eyes, nor can it easily give a corrupt decision when all the neighbourhood know the merits of the case. Defendants, witnesses, and members are all within the narrow compass of a village, and where all are kept from earning their daily bread during the discussion, there is not likely to be much needless complaint or affected delay.

"This branch of the native system, therefore, is excellent for the settlement of the disputes of the ryots among themselves, but it is of

no use in protecting them from the oppression of their superiors, and it is evident that the plan of leaving the people to themselves could never have been sufficient for that purpose. But here another principle came into operation; the whole of the Government revenue being derived from the ryot, it was the obvious interest of Government and its agents to protect him, and to prevent his being exposed to any exactions but their own. The exactions of Government were limited in good times by the conviction that the best way to enrich itself was to spare the ryots, and those of its agents, by the common interest of Government and the ryot, in restraining their depredations. By these principles, while the native Government was good, its ryots were tolerably protected both from the injustice of their neighbours and tyranny of their superiors, and that class is the most numerous, most important, and most deserving portion of the community.

"It was in the class above this the defects of the judicial system were most felt, and even there they had some advantages. As the great fault of Government was its inertness, people were at least secure from its over activity. A Government officer might be induced by a bribe to harass an individual under colour of justice, but he could not be compelled by the mere filing a petition to involve those under his jurisdiction in all the vexations of a law suit. Even when bribed he could not do much more than harass the individual, for the right to demand a punchayet was a bar to arbitrary decrees, and although he might reject or evade the demand, yet the frequent occurrence of a course so contrary to public opinion could not escape his superiors, if at all inclined to do justice.

"The inertness of Government was counteracted by various expedients which, though objectionable in themselves, supplied the place of better principles. These were private redress, patronage, and presents. The first occupies the same place in civil justice that private revenge does in criminal among still ruder nations. It is this which is called tukaza by the Marrhattas, and which has already been mentioned as so important in bringing on a trial. If a man have a demand from his inferior or his equal, he places him under restraint, prevents his leaving his house or eating, and even compels him to sit in the sun until he comes to some accommodation. If the debtor were a superior, the creditors had first recourse to supplications and appeals to the honour and sense of shame of the other party; he laid himself on his threshold, threw himself in his road, clamoured before his door, or he employed others to do all this for him; he would even sit down and fast before the debtor's door, during which time the other was com-

pelled to fast also; or he would appeal to the gods and invoke their curses upon the person by whom he was injured. It was a point of honour with the natives not to disturb the authors of these importunities as long as they were just, and some satisfaction was generally procured by means of them. If they were unjust, the party thus harassed naturally concurred with the plaintiff in the wish of a punchayet, and thus an object was obtained which might not have been gained from the indolence of the magistrate. Similar means were employed to extort justice from the ruling power; standing before the residence of the great man, assailing him with clamour, holding up a torch before him by day-light, pouring water without ceasing on the statues of the gods. These extreme measures when resorted to, seldom failed to obtain a hearing, even under Bajee Rao; and there was the still more powerful expedient both for recovering a debt or for obtaining justice, to get the whole caste, village, or trade, to join in performing the above ceremonies, until the demand of one of its members were satisfied.

"The next means of obtaining justice was by patronage. If a poor man had a master or landlord, a great neighbour, or any great connexion; or if he had a relation who had a similar claim on a great man, he could interest him in his favour, and procure his friendly intercession with the debtor; his application to the friends of the latter; or, finally, his interest with the public authority to obtain justice for his client. This principle was not so oppressive as it seems at first sight, or as it must have been if it had been partial, for it was so extended, that scarcely any man was without some guardian of his interests. Both sides in a cause were thus brought nearly equal, and the effect of the interference of their patrons was to stimulate the system, which might otherwise have stood still.

"If this recourse failed, a present, or a promise of a present, to the public authority, or those who had weight with him, would be efficacious:—the fee of one-fourth of all property gained in law suits was in fact a standing bribe to invite the assistance of the magistrate.

"The number of persons who could grant punchayets also expedited business. Besides the nyaeedaish and the numerous mamlutdars and jagheerdars, many people of consequence also hold punchayets, under the express or implied authority of the Peshwa, and every chief settled the disputes of his own retainers, whether among themselves or with others of the lower and middle classes. A great number of disputes were also settled by private arbitration; and their proceedings in the event of an appeal were treated by the

Government with the same considerations as those of punchayets held under its own authority.

"Thus some sort of justice was obtained, and it was less impure than might be expected from the sources by which it was supplied, because public opinion and the authority of the magistrates set bounds to tukaza, and the institution of punchayets was a restraint on patronage and bribery.

"The punchayet itself, although in all but village causes it had the defects before ascribed to it, possessed many advantages. Though each might be slow, the number that could sit at a time, even under the superintendence of one person, must have enabled them to decide many causes. The intimate acquaintance of the members with the subject in dispute, and in many cases with the characters of the parties, must have made their decisions frequently correct, and it was an advantage of incalculable value in that mode of trial that the judges being drawn from the body of the people, could act on no principles that were not generally understood; a circumstance which, by preventing uncertainty and obscurity in the law, struck at the very root of litigation. The liability of punchayets to corruption was checked by the circumstance that it did not so frequently happen to one man to be a member as to make venality very profitable, while the parties and the members being of his own class, he was much exposed to detection and loss of character; accordingly the punchayets appear, even after the corrupt reign of Bajee Rao, to have retained in a great degree the confidence of the people, and they do not appear to have been unworthy of their good opinion. All the answers to my queries (except those of the Collector of Ahmednugger) give them a very favourable character; and Mr. Chaplin, in particular, is of opinion, that in most instances their statement of the evidence is succinct and clear, their reasoning on it solid and perspicuous, and their decision in a plurality of cases just and impartial.

"Their grand defect was procrastination, and to counteract it the suitors had recourse to the same remedies as with people in power, importunity, intercession of patrons, and sometimes, no doubt, to promises, fees, and bribes.

"Such are the advantages and disadvantages of the native administration of justice which are to be weighed against those of the plan adopted in our provinces. If we were obliged to take them as they stood under the Native Government, the scale could probably soon be turned; but as it is impossible to invigorate the system and to remove its worst abuses, the question is not so easily decided.

The most striking advantages in our plan appear to be, that the laws are fixed, and that as means are taken to promulgate them they may be known to every one; that the decisions of the Adawlut, being always on fixed principles, may always be foreseen; that there is a regular and certain mode of obtaining redress; that the decision on each separate case is more speedy than in any native Court, and that it is more certain of being enforced; that justice may be obtained by means of the Adawlut, even from officers of Government or from Government itself; that the judges are pure, and that their purity and correctness are guarded by appeals; and that the whole system is steady and uniform, and is not liable to be biassed in its motions by fear or affection, policy or respect.

"On the other hand, it appears that although the Regulations are promulgated, yet as they are entirely new to the people of India, a long time must pass before they can be generally known, and as both they and the decisions of the Court are founded on European notions, a still longer period must elapse before their principles can be at all understood; and this obscurity of itself throws all questions relating to property into doubt and produces litigation, which is further promoted by the existence of a class of men rendered necessary by the numerous technical difficulties of our law, whose subsistence depends on the abundance of law suits; that by these means an accumulation of suits takes place, which renders the speedy decision of the Adawlut of no avail; that the facility given to appeals takes away from the advantage of its rigour in enforcing decrees, and renders it on the whole, in many cases, more feeble and dilatory than even the punchayet, while in others it acts with a sternness and indifference to rank and circumstances very grating to the feelings of the natives; that its control over the public officers lessens their power without removing the principle of despotism in the Government or the habits engendered by that principle in the people, and that by weakening one part of the machine without altering the rest, it produces derangement and confusion throughout the whole; that the remoteness of the Adawlut prevents the access of the common people; and that if moonsifs with fees, vakeels, &c, be adopted to remedy this evil, they are not exempt from the corruption of the native system, while they occasion in a remarkable degree the litigious spirit peculiar to ours.

"This view of the Adawlut is taken from the reports drawn up in Bengal, and it is possible that many of the defects described may originate in the revenue system, in the voluminousness of the regula-

tions, or in other extrinsic circumstances—a supposition which appears to be supported by the state of the courts under Bombay, where most of the evils alluded to are said to be still unfelt, but enough will remain to satisfy us, that the chance of attaining or approaching to perfection is as small under our own plan as under that of the natives; that on either plan we must submit to many inconveniences and many abuses, and that no very sudden improvement is to be looked for in the actual state of things If this be the case, it becomes of the first consequence to cherish whatever there is good in the existing system, and to attempt no innovation that can injure the principle now in force, since it is so uncertain whether we can introduce better in its room.

"I propose, therefore, that the native system should still be preserved, and means taken to remove its abuses and revive its energy—such a course will be more welcome to the natives than any entire change; and if it should fail entirely, it is never too late to introduce the Adawlut."

The plan of administration proposed was one of the simplest kind; the potail in the country districts, and the heads of trades in the towns, were invested with authority to summon and refer to punchayets matters which, under the ordinary course of civil administration, would come before the Adawlut. Native judges, with liberal salaries, were appointed in places where this primitive mode of administration would not apply, and appeals were allowed in many cases to the mamlutdar, or native officer, subject in all cases to the general supervision of the Collector of revenue, with whom all powers of criminal and civil administration remained. The details of the proposed plan are given at some length. I subjoin the general remarks with which he concludes this, by far the most interesting, portion of his Report:—

"The plan I have proposed has many obvious and palpable defects, and many more will no doubt appear when its operations are fully observed. It has this advantage, that it leaves unimpaired the institutions, the opinions, and the feelings that have hitherto kept the community together; and that as its fault is meddling too little, it may be gradually remedied by interfering when urgently required. An opposite plan, if it fail, fails entirely; it has destroyed everything that could supply its place, and when it sinks the whole frame of the society sinks with it. This plan has another advantage likewise, that if it does not provide complete instruments for the decision of suits, it keeps clear of the causes that produce litigation. It makes no great changes, either real or apparent, in the laws, and it leads to

no revolution in the state of property. The established practice also, though it be worse than another proposed in its room, will be less grievous to the people, who have accommodated themselves to the present defects, and are scarcely aware of their existence; while every fault in a new system, and, perhaps, many things that are not faults, would be severely felt for want of this adaptation. I do not, however, mean to say, that our interference with the native plan is odious at present. On the contrary, several of the collectors are of opinion that a summary decision by an European judge is more agreeable to the natives than any other mode of trial. This may be the case at first; but if the decisions of Europeans should ever be so popular as to occasion the disuse of the native modes of settlement, there would soon be a run on the courts, and justice, however pure, when obtained, would never be got without years of delay.

"There must, however, in the system now proposed be a considerable sacrifice of form, and even some sacrifice of essential justice; and it is to be expected that the abuses which will be observed under it will give particular disgust to most of our officers, because they are repugnant to our ways of thinking, and we are apt to forget that there are equal blemishes in every other system, and that those which are the least offensive in our eyes are often most disgusting to the natives. This unsuitableness of the native system to European ideas is, however, a very serious objection to its adoption, and renders it doubtful if we shall be able to maintain it after the officers to whom it is to be entrusted shall have ceased to be selected merely for their fitness.

"If our own system be unintelligible to the natives, it is at least intelligible to us, and as its characteristic is strict rules and checks to departure from them, it is not easy to go wrong. Moreover, as it possesses no very nice adaptation to the native way of thinking, a little derangement is of no great consequence. But the native plan can seldom be thoroughly understood by any of us; we may act against its plainest rules from mere ignorance, and we must all be liable to strike at its vital principles when we think we are only removing its defects. Nor is it necessary that the legislature should fall into this error to produce the most fatal effects. The error of an inferior executive officer is sufficient to overthrow the system. The Commissioner perceives the numerous irregularities, abuses, and corruptions in village punchayets, which may be avoided by a few simple rules, and the complete insight and effectual superintendence that would be gained by a mere report of the potail's proceedings; he makes his regulations, directs a register to be drawn up, punishes the neglect of his orders regarding it, and from that moment

there is an end of village punchayets, until potails shall be found who will undertake those troublesome and unknown forms from mere public spirit, with the chance of punishment and censure for unintentional failure. Not less effectual would be the decision of an inexperienced assistant, acting with that confidence which experience alone confers; he fines some punchayets for exceeding their powers, and imprisons some potails for confounding their judicial with their fiscal functions, and the effect of his decision is as complete within his district, as if a law had been enacted prohibiting all interference in settling disputes, except by the officers of Government.

"To avert these dangers, the best plan is to keep this territory for a considerable time under a separate commissioner, on whose vigilance we must depend for correcting mistakes such as have been described"

I wish I could add to these copious extracts the concluding remarks on the general disposition of different classes of society to our Government, and the probable dangers to which it is exposed. They are too long to quote, and refer chiefly to sources of disaffection which belonged to that period, and have been mitigated or removed by the lapse of time, and the stability which our Government has acquired. After pointing out how slightly we could count on the favourable disposition of the great body of the people, and how much we have to apprehend from the jealousy and enmity of the officials and feudatories of the late Government, he passes in review the motives which he thought would deter the latter from hazarding their possessions by engaging in any attempt to revive a Marrhatta government; and then describes forcibly the materials for mischief which exist in a country of great natural strength, from the hordes of disbanded soldiers and plundering chiefs, who were checked "*by the greatness of our real power, and the greater force of our reputation.*" Such dangers he thought could only become formidable in the event of a foreign war, which would cause the withdrawal of troops from the Deccan, or by a prolonged struggle such as that which had lately been brought to a close; but a "timely consciousness of the danger" would, he thought, be sufficient to provide against it. Against another danger of far more tremendous import he adds a few words of emphatic warning, and they must be given in his own forcible language:—

"I have left out of the account the dangers to which we should be exposed by any attempt to interfere with the religious prejudices of the natives. These are so obvious that we may hope they will never be braved. The numbers and physical force of the natives are

evidently incalculably greater than ours. Our strength consists in the want of energy and the disunion of our enemies. There is but one talisman, that while it animated and united them all would leave us without a single adherent: this talisman is the name of religion, a power so odious that it is astonishing our enemies have not more frequently and systematically employed it against us. I do not point out the danger now from any apprehension that Government will ever attempt to convert the natives, but to impress upon it the consequences that would result from any suspicion that it was disposed to encourage such a project. While we enjoy the confidence of the natives our boldest innovations are safe, but that once lost, our most cautious measures would involve us in danger. It would not then be necessary that we should go so far even as we do now; the most indifferent action would suffice to excite that fanatical spirit, the springs of which are as obscure as its effects are tremendous."

The settlement of the Marrhatta territory may be said to have introduced a new era in the administration of conquered provinces. Henceforward the aim of the Government has been to avoid the errors of the more complicated system prevailing in the older settled provinces. A more simple form of administration with less disturbance of native institutions, a more liberal employment of natives, larger powers given British officers, combined with a more careful selection of them, have been the principles on which we have generally acted in our subsequent accessions of territory. When we have departed from the principles which guided Mr. Elphinstone, and this we have repeatedly done, in our dealings with the large landholders and jageerdars, it has only been to render the more signal and striking the return to the rules of conduct which rendered this settlement so successful.

Many of the proposals were avowedly provisional, and the measures adopted fell after a time more or less into disuse. Those parts of the native institutions which derived their strength from the weakness of the former Government, as the punchayets for instance, were ultimately superseded by the authority of British officers or native judges acting under them. Intricate cases, however, involving the laws of caste and inheritance, continued still to be referred to punchayets. As a transition measure the success was complete. The comment of the most intelligent and most observing of Indian travellers, Bishop Heber, on its success after six years of trial is very interesting, and with this extract I shall close this chapter in my narrative.

"This simplicity of administration seems well suited to the

circumstances of the country and the people; and two other very great, though incidental, good effects arise from it, inasmuch as, first, there is a greater number of subordinate, but respectable and profitable, situations open to the natives than can be the case under the system followed in Bengal; and, secondly, the abuses which seem insuperable from the regular Adawlut courts of justice have not been introduced here, but offences are tried and questions of property decided in the first instance by native punchayets or juries assembled in the villages and under the authority of the potail or hereditary village chief, or in grave and more difficult cases, by native pundits, stationed, with handsome salaries, at Poona and other great towns, whose decisions may be confirmed or revised by the Chief Commissioner. The advantages of this institution seem great; it is true indeed that many complaints are made of the listlessness, negligence, and delays of the native jurors or arbitrators (for the punchayet system resembles the latter of these characters rather than the former), but still the delay is apparently less than occurs under the Adawlut in our old provinces, while the reputation of the Court, so far as its integrity goes, is far better than that of the others. Eventually, too, these institutions, thus preserved and strengthened, may be of the greatest possible advantage to the country, by increasing public spirit, creating public opinion, and paving the way to the obtainment and profitable use of further political privileges."

CHAPTER V.

BOMBAY.

1819—1827.

In the preceding review of the settlement of the newly conquered province I have in some measure anticipated events in Mr. Elphinstone's career. The report on the settlement was in fact not laid before the Government until shortly before his appointment to the government of Bombay, and a very important part of his duties in this new position was to carry out the plans here unfolded and modify them from time to time. The circumstances connected with his selection are given in Gleig's "Life of Munro." Mr. Canning, then President of the Board of Control, recommended the appointment of one of those public servants who had distinguished themselves during

the late events as a departure from usage. "The more general practice of the Court," he said "is to look for their Governors rather among persons of eminence in this country, than among the servants of the Company." It will scarcely admit of dispute that the practice here referred to arose from the influence of the Ministers of the Crown rather than from the leanings of the East India Directors to men of eminence, and a full share of the credit of departing from it in this case belongs to Mr. Canning himself. He proceeds to remark, very justly, "The extraordinary zeal and ability which have been displayed by so many of the Company's servants, both civil and military, in the late brilliant and complicated war, and the peculiar situation in which the results of that war have placed the affairs of your Presidency at Bombay, appear to me to constitute a case in which a deviation from the general practice in favour of your own service might be at once becoming and expedient." In pursuance of these views he recommended the names of Malcolm, Munro, and Elphinstone to the Directors, and the latter, though by many years junior to the rest, was unanimously selected to this distinguished post.

The choice was a fortunate one on the special grounds applicable to Bombay given by Canning, and we need not attach any weight to the reason assigned at the time for the preference shown to Mr. Elphinstone, that he was a civilian. Munro was better known as a civilian than as a soldier. Indeed each of these distinguished men were types of the great characteristic of both the military and civil services of India, their versatility, and the aptitude of their members for both peace and war.

The period during which Mr. Elphinstone held the government was one of profound peace in Western India, unaffected by the siege of Bhurtpoor in the North and the Burmese war in the East. They were therefore years of progress and prosperity, though not of course affording the same opportunities as in time of war of displaying the rare qualities with which he was endowed It is remarkable, however, that the reputation which Mr. Elphinstone left behind him at Bombay, though not inferior in the estimation of those who knew him best, as that of the ablest of our Indian administrators, should have been acquired at Bombay in the more humble labours of every-day civil administration.

In preparing this memoir I have conversed with many who served under him at this time, and the theme of all is the same, viz., his character. There was earnestness of mind, amounting to enthusiasm, which excited a corresponding enthusiasm in those who knew him,

and which laboured with the same energy in the less obtrusive duties of his new position as in the most trying crisis of his early career. Many have dwelt on his labours in reducing to a system the laws and regulations of his Presidency, or in furthering the cause of native education. I think it would detract from, rather than add to, his reputation, if I were to endeavour to detail all the labours in which he was engaged. Perhaps the most striking tribute to his fame is that he left no brilliant legacy behind. His influence was felt in the tone which he gave to the public service; and the natives of Western India, who saw and appreciated the labours of one whose whole time was devoted to their service, erected the most striking memorial to his worth when he left their shores.

Without attempting, therefore, to detail his administrative labours, I shall point out those only which were of prominent importance, and shall at the same time endeavour to give, as far as the means of so doing are open to me, the general views he entertained on some important points of Indian administration. Some were called forth, like those already quoted from his report on the newly-conquered territory, during his official service. Others were given at different times after his return to England, and express more carefully than dispatches written under the pressure of political exigencies, the opinions he held on some vital questions of Indian policy. This arrangement will I think be more for the convenience of the reader than if I had given each of those papers or letters at its respective date.

Before entering upon matters of administration, let us here insert some personal sketches referring to this period of Mr. Elphinstone's career which have been communicated to me. The first is by Lieutenant-General Briggs, who served under him during the crisis of Marrhatta affairs, and was subsequently employed in the settlement of the new territory.

"His manners were always affable and apparently free from restraint, but he possessed the greatest prudence in matters of business; although fond of relating anecdotes, and occasionally witty in his conversation, he never made use of a light expression; he was extremely cautious of repeating anything detracting from another's character; slow to suspect, though penetrating in discovering the good and bad qualities of those he came in contact with. He made a point of never speaking on business with any one whom it did not concern, while, to those with whom he transacted it, he gave his whole confidence where he thought it deserving. He was equally active in body

as in mind. He was up as early as it was light in India, and on horseback—a habit from which I never knew him to depart; he was a reckless horseman, sat loosely, and giving his horse his head, he generally galloped from eight to ten miles every morning; a horse seldom lasted him more than a year or two. At one time he drove out as regularly in the evening as he rode in the morning; but during the few months I was with him at Poona, his time was so constantly occupied, and the calls on it so frequent and sudden, that he substituted walking exercise for driving in the evening. Without being what is usually called neat and tidy in his furniture and in his office, he preserved the utmost order and method in all about him—his papers, though apparently lying in confusion, were accurately arranged so that he could lay his hands on any he wanted at any moment. His habits were regular and even methodical in the midst of constant occupations of different sorts; and by distributing his time carefully, he found leisure for everything, and nothing was ever in arrears. During my residence with him, he devoted the same hour every day to reading the classics, or some of the continental languages of Europe. He never gave into the habit of sleeping on a sofa during the day; when he was overpowered with the fatigue of business, he laid his head on his folded arms while sitting at his table, and closed his eyes for a few minutes: he used to tell me this afforded him more refreshment than if he laid down. He was too regardless of money, of which he seemed to keep no account. During the time I was with him in 1816 and 1817, the Court of Directors thought it expedient to reduce the ordinary table allowance of Residents at foreign Courts from 5000rs. to 3000rs. a-month: of this sum he never took charge himself, but left it to be managed by an old school-fellow whom he procured to command his escort; he alone managed the household department, which included all the personal expenses of the Resident's establishment. On the occasion in question he required the Captain to call in all outstanding bills for European supplies, of the sum total of which, however, he had no notion. To his great surprise it amounted to about half-a-year's allowance on the reduced scale. Mr. Elphinstone immediately went into the reform himself—discharged several servants, got rid of his carriage and horses, and allotted a certain sum for the monthly expenditure of each department, viz, servants, table expenses, stables, Europe supplies, and contingencies, leaving a balance for the gradual liquidation of the debt; and in order to ease the Captain of his trouble, he directed that the amount for each department should be deposited on the 1st

of every month in a *separate bag*, and an account kept of each department, to be balanced monthly. Inventories were taken of all the furniture, china ware, plate, &c.; deficiencies were made good, and what was unnecessary disposed of—the whole of which was conducted under the immediate orders of the Captain Commandant, the Major Domo, without occupying more than half-an-hour daily of Mr. Elphinstone's valuable time for about a week, and all done so quietly, that none of the inmates but the parties concerned knew anything about it.

"As an instance of his great kindness to others, and attention to the most minute points in times of trouble and turmoil, I cannot help relating, that immediately after the battle of Khirkee, he sought out my family, which had found refuge in a cow-shed; he procured a table and writing materials, and then and there wrote his dispatches. A hasty meal of tea and bread and butter sufficed him after all his labours of the day, and by daylight he started with the troops in pursuit of the enemy. The first moment of leisure he caused a list of articles of supplies to be made out, which, together with a tent for my family, he purchased and sent to them. It was thus in the midst of business Mr. Elphinstone forgot nothing; and without attempting to do more than he was equal to himself, he always contrived to find the right person to do in the best possible manner whatever was necessary to be performed. He was an active sportsman, and it was not his fault, but that of his horse, if he did not succeed in getting the first spear at a hog. He had an innate pride of not being excelled by any one in manly habits.[1] It happened while he was Governor at Bombay, and on a visit to Poona on business, an old friend arrived from a long journey, in which owing to his palankeen-bearers failing, he was compelled to adopt the unusual habit (to Europeans) of travelling several hundred miles on a camel. Mr. Elphinstone questioned him closely as to the mode of management of this uncouth animal, its paces, and the sensation. He was assured that nothing was easier than its management, that its pace was by no means unpleasant, and that he came at the rate of forty miles a day and upwards without as much

[1] This desire to excel in everything that was manly which we have referred to, was carried at this period of his life to a degree that bordered on eccentricity. In his horror of luxury, he made exertions to dispense with what he thought superfluous articles of clothing, and this practice must have contributed to injure his otherwise strong constitution. For several months he attempted to dispense with the luxury of a bed. The relation to whom he mentioned this asked him, with simplicity, the reason for such conduct. "Because I was a fool!" was the immediate reply.

fatigue as if he had been on horseback. Mr. Elphinstone was not then aware that in Rajpootana the European officers used camels in preference to horses in making long marches, and they were used in cantonments to pay morning visits. Some days after this, it was discovered that Mr. Elphinstone had, during the very night after the above conversation with his friend, ordered a riding camel to be brought to his tent, and, accompanied by another camel hurcarah, mounted and rode several miles during moonlight to satisfy himself of the sensation of riding on a camel. During a journey into the Southern Marrhatta country sometime afterwards, he went to visit the celebrated Falls of the Gutpusla, at Gokank. The river was full, and the fall of sixty feet formed an arch of several feet from the almost perpendicular rock over which the cataract rushes. He was standing with his Staff, about half-way down the precipice, opposite a narrow ledge, which projected from one side to the other. While admiring the scene, one of the party observed that a certain officer (mentioning his name) had walked across this narrow, slippery, and dangerous ledge. Mr. Elphinstone immediately turned round to the speaker, and said, 'Are you sure?' and on the fact being confirmed, Mr. Elphinstone said, 'Well, then, let you and I try if we cannot do so also;' and he instantly led the way, all the Staff being necessarily obliged to follow his example.

"Mr. Elphinstone's character closely resembles that of the late Duke of Wellington. He was a fearless soldier and a profound and prudent statesman, not less remarkable for his moral as well as his physical courage. He was disinterested in every action of his life, a sincere friend, an enemy to no one (for he was the most forgiving of men), and in the performance of his duty he forgot all personal injuries and dealt out impartial justice. Having left England at the early age of seventeen, he had no opportunity of finishing his education as a classical scholar. He had, however, imbibed sufficient of the rudiments of both Greek and Latin, which enabled him to find leisure for prosecuting his studies in India, so that he was able before he left it to read both with facility, and he also acquired a thorough acquaintance with the French and Italian languages before he left the country. He had a just appreciation of the character of the natives of India, making every allowance for their national habits, religion, and want of knowledge acquired by European education. On my observing in the corner of his tent one day a pile of printed Marrhatta books, I asked him what they were meant for. 'To educate the natives,' said he, 'but it is our high road back to

Europe.' 'Then,' I replied, 'I wonder you, as Governor of Bombay, have set it on foot.' He answered coolly, 'We are bound under all circumstances to do our duty to them.' Mr. Elphinstone's modesty was such that he not only never spoke of an event in which he had acted a conspicuous part, but if such a circumstance was mentioned before him, he turned the conversation, or, if he could, he walked away. He was perfectly indifferent to public applause. He was always so overpowered when his health was proposed at public entertainments, that he, who was in private conversation so eloquent, amusing, and instructive, became embarrassed, and had great difficulty in replying.

"On speaking with him one day in England on the subject of his entering public life, he said, 'Had I health, I might still perhaps be useful in India, but if I cannot stand the heat of Italy, I am quite unfit for Calcutta.' I then mentioned the Board of Control. He said, 'I feel I am quite unfit for debate in Parliament, to reply on the spur of the moment to any attack which an opposition member might choose to make upon measures for which I was responsible.'

"It may truly be said of him that he was a man without a weak point; though this very repugnance to public life, and his neglect of his private fortune when in office in India, have been imputed to him as such. He was too modest to court public fame, and too proud, too, to risk his reputation by failure. He was too honourable to incur debts which he could not pay, and too proud to live at the expense of others. Still he was hospitable and generous to the extent of his means, and died lamented and admired by all who knew him. And I never heard of his having made an enemy through life."

I give at this place, because it refers to the same period, the conclusion of Sir Robert Houston's "Reminiscences," from which I have already quoted :—

"He was always a most zealous servant in every position he filled, but too glad when he could to put aside his dignity. During my visit to him at Bombay, he frequently sallied out at night *incog.* with me to roam about for amusement; yet no man filled his high office more becomingly, or could be more looked up to by all under him. I always considered him self-educated, for he left school at sixteen, or rather before, and you know he was a good classicist and must have read much, for his fund of information was boundless. He possessed great personal activity, and underwent much fatigue while Commissioner in the Deccan. He had but one pace on horseback, that was a hard gallop. On one occasion he had a bad fall, and broke his collar bone; he had left all his escort behind him but one man, who gave him his turban

which he used as a bandage, and rode many miles after as if nothing had happened. "But I must stop, or you will think there is no end to an old man's gossip."

The following reminiscence was communicated to me by Mr. John Warden :—

"During the eight years Mr. Elphinstone was Governor of Bombay he visited each part of the Presidency twice. I was with him as Under-Secretary during his last tour through the Peshwa's country. His habits, whether in the Presidency or in the Mofussil, were the same. He rose at day-break, and, mounting one of a large stud he always had, rode for an hour and a-half, principally at a hand gallop. He had a public breakfast every morning, and never left the room as long as one man desirous of speaking to him remained, but after that he was invisible to all but his suite. I have been associated in the same relation with Sir John Malcolm, Lord Clare, Sir Robert Grant, and many good men of business, but Mr. Elphinstone was the best. His industry was such that he took as much pains about a matter of 5 rupees as with the draft of a treaty. He had the pen of a ready writer ; his minutes being written off quickly and without erasure. After luncheon he took a short *siesta*, and in the afternoon read Greek or Latin, and I have been called to him sometimes as late as six o'clock in the evening, and remained till there was only time left to stroll for half-an-hour before an eight o'clock dinner ; at ten he rose from the table, and, reading for half-an-hour in his own room, went to bed. Although surrounded by young men, he never suffered the slightest indecorum, and if anyone after dinner indulged in a *double entendre*, he would not say anything, but pushing back his chair, broke up the party. We always had in the camp a *Shikaree*, whose business it was to enquire for hog, and whenever he brought in intelligence of game, Mr. Elphinstone would proclaim a holyday, and go hunting for one or perhaps two days, and he was fond of a chase at any time. In the midst of many striking excellencies, that which placed him far above all the great men I have heard of, was his forgetfulness of self and thoughtfulness for others."

Mr. Warden gives somes instances of this. On one occasion he made over his official residence at Poona to the Commander-in-Chief, whose wife was delicate, and another house which was at his command, to the Archdeacon, for a similar reason, while he refused a similar offer of assistance from Mr. Warden himself ; and though suffering constantly from lumbago, he slept for weeks in a tent. Mr. Warden adds "compare this with the engrossing selfishness of most great men on service." He then proceeds ; "another instance was of a different

character, and told me last year at Paris, by Colonel Morse Cooper. As a young dragoon he was one of Mr. Elphinstone's guests in one of his tours, and was much chagrined that he could not 'take a spear' at hog hunting. Mr. Elphinstone mounted him on one of his best horses, which laid the young soldier alongside the hog, and he delivered his spear. Mr. Elphinstone rode up to him, and said you have won your spurs nobly, and you must allow me to present you with the horse on which you have performed the feat."

The admirable description of Mr. Elphinstone by Bishop Heber will be familiar to most readers, but any memoir would be incomplete without it :—

"We could not leave Bombay without regret. There were some persons whom we were sincerely pained to part with there. I had found old acquaintances in Sir Edward West and Sir Charles Chambers, and an old and valuable friend (as well as a sincerely attached and cordial one) in Archdeacon Barnes. Above all, however, I had enjoyed in the unremitting kindness, the splendid hospitality, and agreeable conversation of Mr. Elphinstone, the greatest pleasure of the kind which I have ever enjoyed, either in India or Europe.

"Mr. Elphinstone is, in every respect, an extraordinary man, possessing great activity of body and mind, remarkable talent for, and application to, public business, a love of literature, and a degree of almost universal information, such as I have met with in no other person similarly situated, and manners and conversation of the most amiable and interesting character. While he has seen more of India and the adjoining countries than any man now living, and has been engaged in active political, and sometimes military duties since the age of eighteen, he has found time not only to cultivate the languages of Hindostan and Persia, but to preserve and extend his acquaintance with the Greek and Latin classics, with the French and Italian, with all the elder and more distinguished English writers, and with the current and popular history of the day, both in poetry, history, politics, and political economy. With these remarkable accomplishments, and notwithstanding a temperance amounting to rigid abstinence, he is fond of society, and it is a common subject of surprise with his friends, in what hours of the day or night he finds time for the acquisition of knowledge.

"His policy, so far as India is concerned, appeared to me peculiarly wise and liberal, and he is evidently attached to, and thinks well of, the country and its inhabitants. His public measures, in their general tendency, evince a steady wish to improve their present condition,

No government in India pays so much attention to schools and public institutions for education. In none are the taxes lighter, and in the administration of justice to the natives in their own languages, in the establishment of punchayets, in the degree in which he employs the natives in official situations, and the countenance and familiarity which he extends to all the natives of rank who approach him, he seems to have reduced to practice, almost all the reforms which had struck me as most required in the system of government pursued in those provinces of our Eastern Empire which I had previously visited. His popularity (though to such a feeling there may be individual exceptions) appears little less remarkable than his talents and acquirements, and I was struck by the remark I once heard, that 'all other public men had their enemies and their friends, their admirers and their aspersors, but that of Mr. Elphinstone everybody spoke highly.' Of his munificence, for his liberality amounts to this, I had heard much, and knew some instances myself.

"With regard to the free press, I was curious to know the motives or apprehensions which induced Mr. Elphinstone to be so decidedly opposed to it in this country. In discussing the topic he was always open and candid, acknowledged that the dangers ascribed to a free press in India had been exaggerated, but spoke of the exceeding inconvenience, and even danger which arose from the disunion and dissension which political discussion produced among the European officers at the different stations, the embarrassment occasioned to Government by the exposure and canvas of all their measures by the Lentuli and Gracchi of a newspaper, and his preference of decided and vigorous to half measures, where any restrictive measures at all were necessary. I confess that his opinion and experience are the strongest presumptions which I have yet met with in favour of the censorship.

"A charge has been brought against Mr. Elphinstone by the indiscreet zeal of an amiable, but not well-judging man—the 'field officer of cavalry,' who published his Indian travels, that 'he is devoid of religion, and blinded to all spiritual truth.' I can only say that I saw no reason to think so. On the contrary, after this character which I had read of him, I was most agreeably surprised to find that his conduct and conversation, so far as I could learn, had always been moral and decorous, that he was regular in his attendance on public worship, and not only well informed on religious topics, but well pleased and forward to discuss them; that his views appeared to me, on all essential subjects, doctrinally correct, and his feelings serious and reverential; and that he was not only inclined to do, but actually did more for the encouragement of Christianity and the suppression

or diminution of suttees, than any other Indian governor has ventured on. That he may have differed in some respects from the peculiar views of the author in question, I can easily believe, though he could hardly know himself in what this difference consisted, since I am assured that he had taken his opinion at second hand, and not from anything which Mr. Elphinstone had either said or done. But I have been unable to refrain from giving this slight and imperfect account of the character of Mr. Elphinstone as it appeared to me, since I should be sorry to have it thought that one of the ablest and most amiable men I ever met with, were either a profligate or an unbeliever."

In a letter to Mr. Wilmot Horton, he describes Mr. Elphinstone as "one of the ablest and most gentlemanly men I have ever known, and possessing a degree of popularity and personal influence, as well as an intimate knowledge of every person and thing within the Government, which I never saw before, except, perhaps, in the Duke of Richelieu, at Odessa."

In a letter dated June 7th, 1825, the Bishop describes the natives of India as "most eager after knowledge and improvement, with a remarkable talent for the sciences of geometry, astronomy, &c., as well as for the arts of painting and sculpture. In all these points they have had great difficulties to struggle with, from the want of models, instruments, and elementary instruction, the indisposition or rather the horror entertained till lately by many among their European masters for giving them instruction of any kind, and now from the real difficulty which exists of translating works of science into languages which have no corresponding terms. More has been done, and more successfully, to obviate these evils in the Presidency of Bombay than in any part of India which I have yet visited, through the wise and liberal policy of Mr. Elphinstone; to whom this side of the Peninsula is also indebted for some very important and efficient improvements in the administration of justice, and who, both in amiable temper and manners, extensive and various information, acute good sense, energy, and application to business, is one of the most extraordinary men, as he is quite the most popular Governor, that I have fallen in with."

The decided opinion expressed to Bishop Heber favourable to restrictions on the Indian press only imperfectly represents the danger Mr. Elphinstone apprehended from its complete freedom. In a letter written to the Secretary of the India Board after his return to England, from which I shall have again occasion to quote, he expresses himself in the following strong terms:—

"The effect of a free press on the Europeans, and through the

officers on the native army, has often been set forth, particularly in Sir T. Munro's minute of April 12th, 1822. Its relation to the army has since been illustrated by the share taken by the newspapers in the late discussions relating to military allowances; but the rapid advance made by the natives has now brought forward a new consideration as important as any yet contemplated. This is the effect of the European press on the native press. Many natives already read English, and, as the number increases, the English newspapers will write for native readers. This will lead them to comment on native newspapers, and to assert the right of that branch of the press to freedom, if attempts shall have been made to keep it under restrictions. This will create discontent, and lead to disputes with native editors, and will end in the abandonment of the control over them also. So that it may be taken for granted, that if the European press be free, the native one cannot long be otherwise. If all be free, we shall be in a predicament such as no state has yet experienced. In other countries the use of the press has gradually extended along with the improvements of the government and the intelligence of the people; but we shall have to contend at once with the most refined theories of Europe and with the prejudices and fanaticism of Asia, both rendered doubly formidable by the imperfect education of those to whom every appeal will be addressed. Is it possible that a foreign government, avowedly maintained by the sword, can long keep its ground in such circumstances?"

It may be added that when the restrictions on the Indian press were removed, Mr. Elphinstone was strongly opposed to any attempt to retrace our steps, and while even retaining his fears of the danger to be apprehended, he was as averse to any half measure of restraint as he was in 1825. During the crisis of 1857, he wrote to me as follows:—

"I am afraid it is too late to put any effectual restraint on the press in India. *The press* is a great system of circulation, of which the types and printing machines form only a part. When the art is once understood, a very small quantity of printing, even in a language not more generally understood than English in India, is enough to furnish materials for a great quantity of manuscript, as well as of declamation, conversation, and dissemination of rumours and alarms. This of itself would be more than a match for the Indian Government, and it would have an irresistible auxiliary in the press and public opinion of this country."

The short extract which I have given from the letter of Bishop Heber, referring to Mr. Elphinstone's exertions in promoting the

instruction of the natives, form a fitting introduction to a brief notice of his labours in this cause. They are the struggles of a pioneer who has to contend with and clear away prejudices which are no longer felt, and some of his appeals to first principles would be considered superfluous in the present day.

A society for the promotion of education existed at Bombay previous to Mr. Elphinstone's accession to the government; but attention to that of the natives formed only a branch and an inferior branch of its objects. The first establishment of a society which should have the education of the natives only in view, dates from a meeting held in August 1820, over which Mr. Elphinstone presided. It is interesting to observe that the primary aim of this infant institution was instruction in the vernacular language. Their resolutions provided for the supply of suitable books of instruction in both English and native languages, support to existing native schools, and the establishment of new ones; and it was resolved, lastly, "that the schools be primarily for the conveyance of knowledge in the language of the country." Though many influential natives joined with the leading public servants of the Presidency and the archdeacon and clergy of Bombay in this attempt, the society languished for want of active support until it received a new impulse from the exertions of Mr. Elphinstone, who procured the assent of the Government to a grant of money for the printing department, leaving the society's funds disposable for the instruction of native teachers.

Encouraged by the disposition shown by the Governor, the society thought the time had arrived to make an especial appeal for increased aid, and laid their views fully before the Government in September, 1823. Mr. Elphinstone's general views were publicly recorded at this period in the minute from which I have given some full extracts, but his power to give effect to them was limited by the small amount of funds at the disposal of the local government at this period, and the society continued its humble efforts until Mr. Elphinstone retired from the government in 1827, when the natives of that Presidency, who had watched with admiration the unceasing efforts of their benefactor in this as in other objects of improvement, joined in that touching tribute to his public and private character out of which the Elphinstone College took its rise.

I give some full extracts from the minute referred to in the foregoing summary. The paper deals with the subject in much detail, and I only give those passages which illustrate his general views.

"I have attended, as far as was in my power, since I have been in Bombay, to the means of promoting education among the natives

and from all that I have observed, and learned by correspondence, I am perfectly convinced that without great assistance from Government no progress can be made in that important undertaking. A great deal appears to have been performed by the Education Society in Bengal, and it may be expected that the same effects should be produced by the same means at this Presidency; but the number of Europeans here is so small, and our connection with the natives so recent, that much greater exertions are requisite on this side of India than on the other.

"The circumstance of our having lately succeeded to a Brahmin government likewise, by making it dangerous to encourage the labours of the missionaries, deprives the cause of education of the services of a body of men who have more zeal and more time to devote to the object than any other class of Europeans can be expected to possess.

"If it be admitted that the assistance of Government is necessary, the next question is how it can best be effected; and there are two ways which present themselves for consideration. The Government may take the education of the natives entirely on themselves, or it may increase the means and stimulate the exertions of the society already formed for that purpose. The best result will probably be produced by a combination of these two modes of proceeding. Many of the measures necessary for the diffusion of education must depend on the spontaneous zeal of individuals, and could not be effected by any resolutions of the Government. The promotion of those measures, therefore, should be committed to the Society; but there are others which require an organized system, and a greater degree of regularity and permanence than can be expected from any plan the success of which is to depend upon personal character. This last branch therefore must be undertaken by the Government.

"The following are the principal measures required for the diffusion of knowledge among the natives. First. To improve the mode of teaching at the native schools, and to increase their number. Second. To supply them with school books. Third. To hold out some encouragement to the lower orders of natives to avail themselves of the means of instruction thus afforded them. Fourth. To establish schools for teaching the European sciences and improvements in the higher branches of education. Fifth. To provide for the preparation and publication of books of moral and physical science in native languages. Sixth. To establish schools for the purpose of teaching English to those disposed to pursue it as a classical language, and as a means of acquiring a knowledge of the European discoveries.

Seventh. To hold forth encouragement to the natives in the pursuit of those last branches of knowledge.

"The means by which the direct exertions of Government can be best applied to promote schools is by endeavouring to increase their number, and on this I am of opinion that no pains should be spared. The country is at present exactly in the state in which an attempt of the sort is likely to be most effectual. The great body of the people are quite illiterate, yet there is a certain class in which men capable of reading, writing, and instructing, exist in much greater numbers than are required, or can find employment. This is a state of things which cannot long continue. The present abundance of people of education is owing to the demand there was for such persons under the Marrhatta Government. That cause has now ceased, the effect will soon follow; and unless some exertion is made by the Government, the country will certainly be in a worse state under our rule than it was under the Peshwa's. I do not confine this observation to what is called learning, which in its present form must unavoidably fall off under us, but to the humble acts of reading and writing, which if left to themselves will decline among the Brahmins, without increasing among the other castes.

"I can conceive no objection that can be urged to these proposals except the greatness of the expense, to which I would oppose the magnitude of the object. It is difficult to imagine an undertaking in which our duty, our interest, and our honour are more immediately concerned.

"In the meantime the dangers to which we are exposed from the sensitive character of the religion of the natives, and the slippery foundation of our Government, owing to the total separation between us and our subjects, require the adoption of some measures to counteract them; and the only one is to remove their prejudices, and to communicate our own principles and opinions by the diffusion of a rational education.

"It has been urged against our Indian Government that we have subverted the States of the East, and shut up all the sources from which the magnificence of the country was derived, and that we have not ourselves constructed a single work, even, of utility or splendour. It may be alleged with more justice that we have dried up the fountain of native talent, and that, from the nature of our conquest, not only all encouragement to the advancement of knowledge is withdrawn, but even the actual learning of the nation is likely to be lost, and the productions of former genius to be forgotten. Something should surely be done to remove this reproach.

"It is probably some considerations like these that have induced the legislature to render it imperative on the Indian Government to spend a portion of its revenue in the promotion of education; but whatever were the motives that led to it, the enactment itself forms a fresh argument for our attention to the subject. It may be urged that this expense, however well applied, ought not to fall on the Government; that those who are to benefit by education ought to pay for it themselves; and that an attempt to introduce it on any other terms will fail from the indifference of the teachers and from the want of preparation among those for whose benefit it is intended. This would be true of the higher branches of education among a people with whom sound learning was already in request; but in India our first and greatest difficulty is to create that demand for knowledge, on the supposed existence of which the objection I have mentioned is founded.

"With regard to the education of the poor, that must in all stages of society be in a great measure the charge of the Government. Even Adam Smith (the political writer of all others who has put the strictest limits to the interference of the executive Government, especially in education) admits the instruction of the poor to be among the necessary expenses of the sovereign, though he scarcely allows any other expense except for the defence of the nation and the administration of justice.

"I trust, therefore, that the expense would be cheerfully incurred, even if it were considerable and permanent. But that of the schools is to be borne by the villages; the prizes and professors by funds already alienated; the press, as the demand for books increases, may be left to pay itself; and when the plans I have proposed shall once have been fully organized, I hope that the whole of the arrangement, so beneficial to the public, will be accomplished without any material expense to the Company.

"It is observed that the missionaries find the lowest castes the best pupils; but we must be careful how we offer any special encouragement to men of that description; they are not only the most despised, but among the least numerous of the great divisions of society. It is to be feared that if our system of education first took root among them, it would never spread farther, and in that case we might find ourselves at the head of a new class superior to the rest in useful knowledge, but hated and despised by the castes to whom these new attainments would always induce us to prefer them. Such a state of things would be desirable if we were contented to rest our favour on our army, or on the attachment of a part of the population,

but inconsistent with every attempt to found it on a more extended basis.

"To the mixture of religion, even in the slightest degree, with our plans of education I must strongly object. I cannot agree to clog with any additional difficulty a plan which has already so many obstructions to surmount. I am convinced that the conversion of the natives must infallibly result from the diffusion of knowledge among them. Evidently they are not aware of the connection, or all attacks on their ignorance would be as vigorously resisted as if they were on their religion. The only effect of introducing Christianity into our schools would be to sound the alarm, and to warn the Brahmins of the approaching danger. Even that warning might perhaps be neglected as long as no converts were made; but it is a sufficient argument against a plan, that it can only be safe as long as it is ineffectual; and in this instance the danger involves not only failure of our plans of education, but the dissolution of our empire."

The extract which I now subjoin will be read with interest as connected with the preceding subject It forms part of a letter written in 1832 to Mr. Hyde Villiers, Secretary to the Board of Control. Certain queries were circulated preliminary to the inquiries of the Parliamentary Committee that were preparing the way for the Legislature of 1833. Mr. Villiers's circular pointed out the topics on which the Committee desired information, and Mr. Elphinstone's reply, which is a document of considerable length, deals with a variety of subjects some of which were of temporary interest. I have already quoted a passage from it, bearing on the freedom of the press. The paragraphs here subjoined have reference to the broad question of the improvement and elevation of the natives of India.

"The disadvantages under which the natives labour, from long subjection to local government, from ignorance and superstition, and from the degradation of character resulting from those causes, are obvious.

"The great peculiarity in their situation arises from the introduction of a foreign government. This at first operated beneficially, by establishing tranquillity, and introducing improvements in administration. Its next effects were less beneficial. Under a native government, independent of the mutual adaptation of the institutions and the people, there is a connected chain throughout society, and a free communication between the different parts. Notwithstanding the institution of castes, there is no country where men rise with more ease from the lowest rank to the highest The first Nuwaub (now King) of Oude was a petty merchant; the first Peshwa a village

accountant; the ancestors of Holcar were goatherds; and those of Scindia, slaves. All these, and many other instances, took place within the last century. Promotions from among the common people to all the ranks of civil and military employment, short of sovereignty, are of daily occurrence under native states, and this keeps up the spirit of the people, and in that respect partially supplies the place of popular institutions. The free intercourse of the different ranks, also, keeps up a sort of circulation and diffusion of such knowledge and such sentiments as exist in the society. Under us, on the contrary, the community is divided into two perfectly distinct and dissimilar bodies, of which the one is torpid and inactive, while all the sense and power seem concentrated in the other.

"The first object, therefore, is to break down the separation between those classes, and raise the natives by education and public trust to a level with their present rulers; but even in this a foreign government has difficulties to overcome, as its improvements may fail from the want of preparation in the people to receive them; they may occasion violent resistance, from their objects being misunderstood; and in particular instances they may produce great danger, even from their success, if they are ill suited to the general state of society, or clash with particular parts of the ancient system which have not yet been removed.

"This consideration should impress on us that, although our efforts for the improvement of the natives should be strong and constant, they should also be patient and deliberate. An opinion seems rather to have gained ground of late years, that the scrupulous caution which we have hitherto shown in all our proceedings towards India was too nearly allied to timidity, and that it only requires a little enterprise to effect every change that we think desirable.

"This seems to me a very dangerous error. If acted on in great questions by the Government either at home or in India, the consequence scarcely requires to be pointed out; but even a disposition to encourage such an impression would be very mischievous. There is always on the part of individuals an inclination to enforce their own opinions in opposition to those of the natives, which it requires all the weight of the government to check; if this restraint were withdrawn, native prejudices would be daily outraged by the carelessness of some and the ill-judging zeal of others, and the result is not difficult to foretel. Even if it were possible to keep down the people by force, our power stands by our native army, and our native army partakes in all the prejudices of the nation; caution, therefore, is the surest way of attaining the objects which all have at heart

The improvement of the natives is certain if our rule continues; but so great is the danger from inconsiderate attempts at improvements, and also from premature and partial changes in the opinion of the natives, as to make it at least an even chance that we are separated from them before they have had time to derive much permanent benefit from the connection.

"I will here only remark, that I consider that it is more important to impart a high degree of education to the upper classes, than to diffuse a much lower sort of it among the common people. This latter object also is highly important; but it is not the point in which there is most deficiency at present. It will, besides, be much easier to make the lower orders desirous of learning to read, after a spirit of inquiry and improvement shall have been introduced among their superiors. The most important branch of education, in my opinion, is that designed to prepare natives for public employment. It is important, not only from its contributing so directly to the general improvement, but also from the stimulus it affords to education among the better class of natives, by connecting it with their interest.

"I conceive that the study of English ought to be encouraged by all means, and that few things will be so effectual in enlightening the natives, and bringing them nearer to us; but I have no hope that ever it will be more than a learned language, or at best a language spoken among people of education, as Persian is now in some parts of India. I believe there has been no instance of one language being supplanted by another, unless among people in a very low stage of civilization; or even among them, unless they were previously reduced either to actual servitude, or to a state very little less dependent.

"With respect to the employment of natives, they are already very largely admitted into the judicial department. It seems desirable gradually to introduce them into offices of higher rank and emolument, and afterwards of higher trust. I should see no objection to a native member of a Board, and I should even wish to see one district committed experimentally to a native judge, and another to a native collector. At the same time I think very strict supervision requisite, and many Europeans necessary for that purpose. If this be not attended to, the natives will introduce their old corrupt practices into the system at the first outset, and we shall never be able to eradicate them.

"In opening the higher appointments to the natives, care should be taken to do it in such a manner as to prevent unreasonable

expectations and consequent discontent. No situation of political or military power should for a very long time be entrusted to a native.

"The result of educating natives both in English and in their own language must be favourable to the progress of Christianity; indeed education seems to me the only means by which there is any chance of favouring its progress; direct attempts at conversion, while the native superstitions are still unimpaired, would, I conceive, excite a spirit of controversy and opposition, if it did not lead to more serious results. Except in the case of the conversions by the Portuguese, which seemed more nominal than real, I have not witnessed any visible progress in the conversion of the natives in India; I have heard that many have been converted in Travancore, but I know nothing of the particulars."

After Mr. Elphinstone's labours in the cause of education, those connected with the improvement of the laws and regulations of the Presidency stand next in rank and importance. Their history, however, need not detain us long; for valuable as was the legacy he left behind, in the code of regulations which bears his name, the work was in itself little more than a code of procedure, and formed only a small portion of his original design.

Upon his accession to the government, he would appear to have entertained a hope of reducing to a code the whole civil law of the Presidency. Enquiries were conducted in various parts of the territory, embracing questions of custom and usage, which were embodied in valuable reports; but it will not surprise those who have followed the history of such attempts in other countries, or even in India itself, that so great a work was not accomplished in the brief period allotted to an Indian governor. That, however, which he effected was most valuable, and with the assistance of a commission appointed by himself, and composed of two members of the Indian service, assisted by Mr. Erskine, son-in-law of Sir James Mackintosh, he framed a code that, in all essential particulars, still maintains its place as the basis of the regulations of the Presidency. Much of his time was given to the superintendence and revision of this work, which finally became law in the year of his retirement from the government.

As it bears the stamp of Mr. Elphinstone's approbation, and in some measure was his own, it may deserve mention that, instead of the pedantry which prevailed in the Bengal provinces, and which maintained the Persian language as that of business and record in judicial proceedings, the code of Bombay provided for the use of the English language in the inferior courts; while in the local tribunals it enjoined the use of the language of the country in which the court

sits; that it required the evidence of witnesses to be taken in the vernacular, and that the procedure enjoined was more simple and natural than that which prevailed in northern India, and with which Mr. Elphinstone was familiar in the commencement of his career. The written pleadings were less numerous, and the rules were framed with a view to bring matters to an issue.

I have mentioned at the commencement of this chapter that the term of Mr. Elphinstone's government passed without any striking event. Our relations with the native states connected with the Bombay Presidency were not altogether without importance, and the transaction with the Marhatta court of the Guickwar, by which the brother of the deceased chief was elevated to the throne, was carried out by Mr. Elphinstone himself on a visit to Baroda in 1820. The details of the negotiation are of slight historical interest. This Marhatta state, from the imbecility of its former chief, and the large pecuniary advances the British Government had made to it to clear it from embarrassments, had become completely dependent upon our power, and our interference had extended to details of administration from which we have, in our general relations to these governments, endeavoured to keep ourselves clear. When Syajee, the new chief, was elevated to the throne, Mr. Elphinstone made the experiment of a relaxation of the shackles by which the Government was bound, in the hopes of giving some vigour to the administration. The details of the transaction illustrate the difficulties which arise in such alliances, when attempts are made to fix the line to which our interference should extend; but the transaction itself scarcely requires any further notice in a sketch like the present.

In pursuance of my plan of throwing together in a connected series Mr. Elphinstone's opinions on matters of Indian administration, I add some additional letters and extracts which were written after he had left the country, but are so directly connected with his labours in India, as to merit a place here. The first of these was written to Mr. Hyde Villiers, in answer to another series of questions on the political relations of the Government of India to the native states. The enquiries of Mr. Villiers branched into a variety of elementary matters, for the instruction of the different committees. I only give those portions of Mr. Elphinstone's replies which illustrate his general views, or are of permanent interest.

"No native prince has put himself under our protection, until his government was in such a state of decay as to be incapable of subsisting by any other means. The immediate effect of the measure, therefore, has generally been a temporary recovery of vigour and

prosperity. The ill effects which afterwards result from subsidiary alliances have often been pointed out. It has been shewn that, by rendering the prince's safety independent on his own exertions or good conduct, they destroy his energy, and at the same time increase the arbitrary character of his government. It is also said that our treaties obstruct the natural course of events, by which, when a native government reaches a certain pitch of corruption, it is overturned, and a new and better one raised on its ruins.

"There is great truth in these observations, especially the two first; but the effects deduced from them seem to me to have been carried much too far.

"The energies of protected princes in war and politics are certainly impaired by our alliance; and as it is in those departments that we require their assistance, their deficiencies are soon discovered and loudly complained of. Even in this respect, however, I think we are wrong to attribute the whole of their decline to the alliance. Scarcely any State that has sprung up in India since the fall of the Mogul empire, has retained its vigour after the death of its founder, and not one has failed to sink into complete decay by the third generation. The ephemeral character of Asiatic governments may be observed in countries where our influence certainly never reached. At the time of our first treaty with the Nizam, the King of Persia had subdued all his rivals, and was threatening most of his neighbours. The King of Cabul, at a later period, occasioned us great uneasiness for the safety of our Indian empire; yet those two monarchies are now, for their extent, perhaps the feeblest in the world. Some light is likewise thrown by the history of Persia on the supposed renovation of decayed governments in Asia. That kingdom enjoyed a high degree of prosperity for three generations under the first Suffevees. It then languished for near a century under their successors. An equal period has since elapsed, during which there have been one or two very able usurpers; but the country is still in a condition probably inferior to what it was at the commencement of the Afghan invasion. In India, certainly, there have been one or two striking cases where the powers of the government were revived by a new dynasty; but the greater part of the States which have undergone revolutions have been broken up, or partitioned, or have fallen into perfect anarchy. I conceive, therefore, that the States with which we formed alliances would have lost even their political energy, as they have done, if the English had never landed in India.

"With regard to the falling off of their internal government, I

must say that it is quite inconsistent with my own observation. I was a year in the Peshwa's country before our treaty with him, and I saw it again nine years after the alliance; during that period it had suffered from a general famine, but the improvement in its condition was, nevertheless, most striking.

"The best proof of the fact is afforded by comparing the descriptions given by General Palmer and Sir Barry Close before the treaty, with those of the Residents after it. In some of the former it is stated, that the provinces were overrun by banditti; and that no one would rent the lands round the capital, because, being near the seat of government, they were liable to disturbances which the Peshwa was unable to restrain. The despatches after the treaty represent the Peshwa's territories as not suffering by a comparison with those of any other native prince. The neighbouring territory of the Nizam certainly fell off after our alliance; but I doubt if this was not owing to the inherent vices of a Mahomedan government. With all its disadvantages, it seemed to me in a better condition than Sindia's and Holcar's countries; and generally speaking, I think the dominions of the protected princes which I have seen, were in a better state than those of the independent ones. The most flourishing territory of a native prince I ever saw was the Guikwar's.

"The principal cause of this superiority of the protected princes is probably to be found in their immunity from foreign invasion; but the stability of the government also, though it may render the prince more arbitrary in some cases, renders him more moderate in others, and shuts out many great disorders.

"The ultimate result of our relation to protected princes may be too easily conjectured. So close a connexion between two powers so unequal and so dissimilar in all respects, can scarcely end otherwise than in the subjection of the weaker to the stronger. Differences must unavoidably arise; and however moderate the superior power may be, the result of each must advance the inferior a step towards entire subjugation. Even without such disagreement, it is the nature of an Asiatic government to decline; and when they are worn out, their States fall into our hands. How far their subjects are benefited or otherwise by the change will be discussed in another place; I need only observe here, that the subsidiary treaties have prevented formidable combinations and dangerous wars, which, unless they had succeeded in expelling us from India, would have led to the extinction of the native States as certainly as those alliances. It appears to be our interest, as well as our duty, to use every means to preserve the allied governments; it is also our interest to keep up the number

of independent powers; their territories afford a refuge to all those whose habits of war, intrigue, or depredation make them incapable of remaining quiet in ours; and the contrast of their government has a favourable effect on our subjects, who, while they feel the evils they are actually exposed to, are apt to forget the greater ones from which they have been delivered. If the existence of independent powers gives occasional employment to our armies, it is far from being a disadvantage."

In another letter to Mr. H. Villiers, of the same date, he enters largely on one of the most important questions of Indian administration that recent events have forced upon public attention, viz., the transfer of the local army to the Crown.

"Any advantages expected in placing the Indian army directly under the King, must, I presume, be confined to the officers; to the men it would be a matter of perfect indifference, provided it could be prevented from leading to interference with their interest or prejudices.

"A complete incorporation with the King's army, and the free admission into sepoy regiments of officers unacquainted with the language or ways of thinking of the natives, must, I conclude, be considered as quite impracticable. We must, therefore, suppose an army in all respects as it is now, but subject to the commander-in-chief in England, or to a department of the ministry. In that case, if the pride of the officers was for a moment flattered by a more immediate connection with the King, that feeling would probably be altered when they discovered that from a separate service, which had a reputation and pretensions of its own, and was the sole object of attention to the military department of its government, they had sunk into an inferior branch of another army, and were scarcely known to their commander-in-chief. Their solid interests would gain as little by the transfer as their consequence. If there were still to be regiments belonging to the King's European army employed in India, there would, then as now, be a difference of interest between the two branches of the service; but the leaning which is now considered to be in favour of the Indian army (in appointments to staff and commands) would probably be transferred to the other branch, the members of which would have the advantage of acquaintance in England, and of claims from service against European enemies. When to this is added the natural disposition of the officers at head-quarters to introduce more discipline, subordination, and economy into the Indian army, and to assimilate it to the other branch of the service, I think it is much to be feared that the transfer would introduce greater and more lasting discontent than has ever yet been experienced. Respect for the King's

name might check improprieties of language and conduct on ordinary occasions, but in case of extremities (if such a case be possible) it would not make the slightest difference; since even now it is perfectly understood that mutiny against the Company is rebellion against the King. There would, therefore, be more chance of discontent than there is now, and no more means of restraining it.

"An intermediate arrangement, making the distinction between the armies less complete, and yet imposing some restraint on the indiscriminate admission of officers into sepoy regiments, would still be imperfect. The facilities of transfer would be oftenest employed to the advantage of the superior branches of the service, while the restrictions would be insufficient to secure a mutual understanding between the native troops and their officers.

"If the Indian army were under a civil minister, more attention would probably be paid to its peculiarities. It would meet with more consideration in questions about batta, rise by seniority, and other points which affect it, and not the King's army; but it would neither be so exclusively protected as by the Court of Directors, nor so effectually kept in order as by a purely military authority.

"It would, no doubt, effectually protect the Indian officers if all the troops, European and native, in India were permanently formed into one army, and no officers from Europe allowed to be employed in it; but this would increase the provincial spirit already complained of, and lessen the ties which now connect that army with their country. It is not to their holding their commissions from the Company that the peculiarities of character ascribed to the Indian army have arisen, but from their being placed in a situation to which it is not easy, in the present state of the world, to find a parallel.

"The army in England is completely mixed up with the nation, of which each individual is hourly reminded that he forms a part. In India the European officers are a distinct community, entirely unconnected with the people among whom they live, and scarcely ever brought into intercourse with any one beyond their own body. In this state of separation they know they are in a country held by the sword, and that the sword is in their hands. It is not surprising that in such circumstances some of them should assume a tone of independence unusual in other armies, and it is, perhaps, rather to be wondered at that their conduct, on the whole, has been so little insubordinate.

"I have hitherto assumed that the government is to be under the King as well as the army. The separation of the civil government from the military would probably not answer in any country, but,

least of all, in India. The great problem there has always been to maintain the subordination of the military power to the civil, and to prevent clashing between the governors and commanders-in-chief. In this we have not always been successful, even when both drew their authority from the same source. The separation of the two branches of government, even if it led to no struggles between the civil and military chiefs, would soon make the former almost insignificant with Europeans, and entirely so with the natives, who can fancy no power unconnected with military command. If the payment of the troops were to be separated from the patronage and the control, every retrenchment would have the character of an offensive interference; and if this were obviated by the Company's paying a fixed sum to the King, still the protection of its subjects from military license, and other points of duty which could never be entirely disjointed from the government of the state, would involve the civil authority in constant disputes with the military.

"The only remedy would be always to unite the offices of governor and commander-in-chief; but it would be no small objection to the plan, that it restricted the selection for so important a station to the small number of general officers who have sufficient rank for the military command.

"I am not competent to judge of the comparative frugality of the two administrations in most of the instances specified; but I think there would always be a strong tendency in the King's government to judge of the reasonableness of allowances and pensions to Company's officers by those of his Majesty's service. This I consider among the dangers attending the transfer; for even if it were safe to reduce Indian allowances, it seems to me very far from advisable.

"The pay of the European officers is not now more than sufficient to enable them to maintain their rank among the natives, and scarcely sufficient to keep up their connection with their own country, by the prospect of revisiting it in their old age.

"Almost all the above observations relate to the manner in which the proposed changes will affect the officers. Their effects on the sepoys are, however, of still greater importance; many of these may be foreseen, and some of them may be guarded against; but as the sepoys are of many different classes, and as they are all liable to be affected by circumstances which have no influence on us, it is more difficult to form anticipations about them than about our countrymen and equals—the officers. The risk of unforeseen results applies more strongly to the transfer of the native army to the King, than to the mere consolidation into one body; and considering that our safety

depends entirely on that army, and that we have a precarious hold on it even now, it would appear that we should hazard no changes at all, except to remedy obvious evils, and none of a general nature without clear and urgent necessity."

It will be interesting to compare with these opinions some letters addressed to the writer of this memoir in 1858. They deal with a portion only of the same great and difficult question. Opinions were frequently broached both in public and private favourable to an exclusive reliance on a large local European force, and of course excluding the line troops from India. Mr. Elphinstone addressed me on the subject in the following strong terms:—

"HOOKWOOD, *March* 15, 1858.

"My dear Colebrooke,

"I hope the remodelling of the army will be very seriously considered. It is so complicated and so important a matter, that I scarcely think it can be settled without commissions both here and in India. If they were composed of few persons, and dispatch insisted on, their report might be received before the end of the session. The abuse of patronage, and even the discontents of the Indian officers, fall into the shade amidst the vast speculations that are forced on our attention. For one example, only consider the effects, both near and remote, of having an army of 50,000 Europeans unconnected with that of Great Britain, without a constant circulation of British blood, without the society, the example, and even the control of the strictly national force; especially if colonization succeed, and farms in the Himalaya become more attractive than pensions in England. The immediate danger would be a partial stratocracy like that attributed to the Bengal sepoys, and the remote ones would include the example of the Greeks in Bactria, or the Janissaries in Algiers. A soldier in the present royal army knows when he enlists that he is only one man in 10,000, and that all the rest are jealous of the least attempt on his part to encroach on their rights; he lives in constant awe of the magistrate, the police, and even the mob, and no more thinks of opposing the civil government than of altering the course of nature. With this training he may be safely trusted for a long period in India, being subject to recal at any time, and seeing regiments round him continually changing in the ordinary course of reliefs. But a recruit for an exclusively Indian army would be transferred at an early age to a country where he would be raised by his colour, as well as by some moral qualities to undisputed superiority over the millions round him, while he himself would have no superior except a body of insolent and meddling civilians, whose power

depended entirely on his support, and whom the slightest movement on his part would be sufficient to intimidate or remove. Where should we have been if such had been the state of feeling at the time of the Afghan war, or the Sikh invasion, not to mention the mutiny of the Bengal sepoys? Yours most sincerely,

(Signed) "M. ELPHINSTONE."

This striking letter was followed up the next day by another, enclosing an extract from a letter from a distinguished public servant and old friend of Mr. Elphinstone, then in the south of France. By a singular coincidence, Mr. Elphinstone's correspondent employed similar arguments expressive in even stronger terms of the danger of exclusive reliance on a local European force. Wishing to press the Government to refer this question to a commission, I asked Mr. Elphinstone to permit me to quote his opinion in the House of Commons.[1] In his reply he returned to the general subject:—

"HOOKWOOD, *March* 25, 1858.

"My dear Colebrooke,

* * * * * *

"To those who think a mutiny of Europeans chimerical, you may quote that of a handful of men who seized His Majesty's Castle and Island of Bombay in 1683, then our only possession, and kept it against the Company for two years, though still professing allegiance to the King; the mutiny of the French troops, under D'Auteuil, in 1749, which changed Dupleix's triumph into terror and consternation, and nearly nipped in the bud the grand design of bringing all India under the rule of France; the mutiny of the European part of the Bengal army in the face of an enemy under Clive, in 1766; that of the Madras Army in 1776 (in which the Commander-in-Chief took part), which deposed and imprisoned Lord Pigott; the all but mutiny of the Bengal officers in 1795–6; and that of a large portion of those of Madras against Sir G. Barlow in 1809. These were only partial mutinies and in circumstances particularly unfavourable to malcontents, yet in all of them either a little less firmness or a little less moderation and concession on the part of the Government would have led to a contest that might have proved fatal to our Indian empire. I only suggest these cases for inquiry, putting them down from memory.

"I entirely agree with you as to the necessity of leaving the Governor-General the entire control of the Queen's troops in India as

[1] I had no occasion to make any appeal, as the Government appointed a Commission soon after these letters were written.

he has now, the discipline and internal arrangements remaining as now with the Horse Guards, but I do not think it would be so difficult to settle the partition of the patronage as you seem to consider it. A similar distribution between the Governors and Commanders-in-Chief at the several Presidencies seems at first sight equally intricate, yet it has been settled by fixed rules so clearly that a difference on the subject hardly ever takes place. The great difficulty on this and on all other subjects arises from the supposed necessity of settling everything at once and without a moment's delay. On this I can be no judge, but I own I do not see the necessity for so much haste, and am more struck with the advantage of allowing some time to pass over, if our own minds were already made up as to what ought to be done.

"No resolution adopted at this time, on the proportion of European troops and sepoys, and the consequent organization of the Indian army, could be permanent, and yet you justly view that question as one of the utmost importance. We must of course have a large sepoy army, but we cannot at present judge what proportion it should be allowed to bear to the Europeans. At present that latter portion must be very considerable, and even when quiet is completely restored I do not think it can ever be made nearly as low as it was before the mutiny. It was then, I think, under 50,000, and in estimates for this year I believe it is taken at 92,000 men. Who can guess how many we shall require three years hence (even if tranquillity be undisturbed)? Whether we wish it or not, our government will assume a more decidedly European character than it has yet borne, and we cannot be quite certain what the effect may be either on the whole or particular classes of the natives.

"Yours most sincerely,

"M. ELPHINSTONE."

The two letters to which I shall next invite attention were, like those last quoted, written many years after Mr. Elphinstone's return to England. The subject to which this refers forms the concluding chapter of some of the transactions of his Indian administration, and the principles involved are of the highest moment at the present day.

It will be remembered that one of the most important parts of the settlement of the territory conquered from the Peshwa, consisted in the elevation of the descendant of the old Marrhatta dynasty to the sovereignty of a territory of limited exent. Its success as part of a policy of conciliation has never been impugned, and the British Government derived all the advantage they anticipated from a policy

whose objects were mainly of a temporary nature. The success, too, of the experiment of elevating a young man, whose life had been one of seclusion, to a position of such responsibility, was in another respect most complete. The Raja evinced a turn for business and a capacity for administration unusual even in those trained to it from early years. Mr. Elphinstone told me that he used to find him surrounded with papers and accounts, and as eager to discuss details of administration as a civil servant fresh from his cutcherry. I need not repeat to an Indian reader the long process carried on in India, and the still longer one in this country, which led to and followed his dethronement. He was accused of engaging in the wildest intrigues, having for their object the overthrow of British power in Western India. The inquiry was prosecuted with an eagerness by the Bombay authorities that embarrassed both the Government in Calcutta and the home authorities. A mass of evidence was collected by a public Commission of Inquiry, followed up by inquiries of a most voluminous character, and the Government, being at length compelled to act, took the singularly infelicitous step of inviting the accused sovereign to renew in more stringent terms the treaty which was assumed to be broken, and, as it were, compromise the case by a confession of the justice of their suspicions. The terms were indignantly refused, and the deposed prince went into exile.

The British Government did not suffer in reputation from this proceeding, for grave grounds of suspicion were laid before the world, and there was an evident desire to escape from the final step. Mr. Elphinstone certainly thought that the manner in which the enquiry was conducted, by a Commission summoning a prince whose government we had acknowledged, was a most undignified proceeding; but I am not aware that he ever expressed an opinion on the substantive merits of the case, nor even that he had waded through the mass of evidence and correspondence with which it was overlaid.

It was very different with regard to the second Sattara case. The brother of the dethroned prince was elevated to the throne, and a few years afterwards, when struck by a mortal disease, he sought to continue the sovereignty by the Hindoo custom of adoption. In all successions to property as well as sovereignty, this right is interwoven with the religion and the most ancient practice of hereditary descent. Its importance may be judged by the mere fact, that it involves the whole question of collateral descent. When the direct line fails, the right of collaterals is regulated by the customary law of adoption; and, as in sovereign families in India, the line of direct descent more frequently fails than in private life, any assertion on the

part of the British Government to interfere with, or regulate it according to their own arbitrary views, affects the rights of every principality, and if unjustly exercised, must ultimately bring every native government under the direct dominion of the British Crown. Its importance as affecting their rights and our own reputation could not be exaggerated, and it was as immediately appreciated by the Government that had to decide the question.

The dying Raja held his territory in sovereignty and perpetuity, ceded by the British Government to himself, his heirs, and successors; but the same treaty bound him in all important transactions to consult the British Government, and he instantly turned to the British representative to give his sanction to the step. The officer in attendance had no instructions to provide for such a case, and he declined to act; and the Raja, asserting the right which he considered guaranteed by the treaty, completed the religious ceremony which, as he thought, transmitted the throne to his relations. The most extraordinary part of the proceedings of the British Government, when called upon to decide, consisted in their misinterpretation of this very simple proceeding. The admission of our right to decide as arbiters (a right which is constantly exercised in regard to all native states in the interest of public order and of the states themselves) was assumed to be an admission of our right to decide in favour of ourselves. The right of the sovereign was pronounced to be an imperfect one, and the state was declared to have lapsed to the British Government as that of a feudatory whose direct heirs have failed.

I do not remember ever to have seen Mr. Elphinstone so shocked as he was at this proceeding The treatment of the Sattara sovereignty as a jagheer, over which we had claims of feudal superiority, he regarded as a monstrous one; but any opinion of the injustice done to this family was subordinate to the alarm which he felt at the dangerous principles which were advanced, affecting every sovereign state in India, and which were put forward both in India and at home. The loose manner in which the claim to regulate such questions as lords paramount, and the assertion of feudal claims of escheat as applicable to every state in India, were frequently commented upon, and he particularly dwelt upon the fallacy which was at the bottom of all the reasoning of the advocates of resumption, that precedents of interference with successions as arbiters supported our claim to decide the question in our own favour. The questions raised by the latter precedent have such an important bearing on the future of India that I offer no apology for giving the opinion of Mr. Elphinstone, expressed at the time in some letters to myself. I give them out of a

very numerous file in my possession. The first tells its own story; the second was written at my request, with a view to be shown to the Government. Mr. Elphinstone had previously refused to give his opinion publicly on the substantial merits of the place when applied to by Mr. Hume, and I begged him at least to let it be known by the Government how strongly he was opposed to the application of this precedent to states whose sovereignty we acknowledged.

"HOOKWOOD, *May* 13, 1849.

"My dear Colebrooke,

"Many thanks for your letter. I suppose the argument will be what you say, that the Raja was placed under so many restrictions that he could not be regarded as a sovereign, but must come under the rules applicable to dependants. But although such an argument might be used by foreign princes who chose to deny the Raja's sovereignty, it could not be urged by us who have solemnly acknowledged his *sovereignty* in the same treaty that enumerates the restrictions which are put upon the *exercise* of it. Even granting that he is dependant, it does not necessarily follow, that his territory, on defect of heirs, is to escheat to the power on which he depends; or that that power has a right to regulate the succession to his possessions: to complete the argument it is necessary to prove that such has been the invariable practice of India, and must have been understood by the parties to the treaty. To make out this proof, Mr. Willoughby and those who adopt his reasoning proceed to argue that *some* dependant chiefs are subject to this rule, and *therefore* the Raja is subject to it. They instance many enamdars, jageerdars, &c., but can they show any prince who had been acknowledged as a sovereign to whom the rule had been applied at the time of the treaty?[1] Can they deny that there are now many sovereign princes under limitations similar to those on the Raja, over whom such a right has never been used or pretended to? Nobody will say in Parliament that an adoption by Scindia, the Nizam, the King of Oude, &c., would not be *legal* without our confirmation, or that a son so adopted could not be an heir in the usual sense of the term; nor will any body allege that on the extinction of the families of those princes, their dominions will devolve on us as an

[1] In a subsequent letter he expressed a doubt whether he had not asserted himself too broadly that we had *never* applied the rule about adoption to sovereign states. "My doubt," he afterwards explained, "was whether in our innumerable engagements to dependant chiefs the word *sovereign* might not possibly have been applied to some of them, so as to make it unsafe to assert that we had never interfered as superior in succession to princes to whom we had given that title."

escheat. The claims founded on the general usage therefore fall to the ground.

"But we have claims founded on the treaty itself which deserve a separate consideration. By one article of the treaty the Raja is bound to be guided by our advice in all important measures; no measure can be more important than the adoption of a successor; and if the Raja adopted one in defiance of our remonstrances, or eluded our objections by a clandestine adoption, he would have broken the treaty, and we should be entitled to inflict such punishment as his offence justified, up to annulling the treaty and taking back our cession. Nobody has asserted that such an infraction of the treaty has taken place in this instance.

"Again, we have a claim to the reversion of the Raja's territory; not as an escheat, but on grounds arising from the nature of the treaty. We ceded the country to the Raja, his heirs, and successors: when these are extinct the treaty is at an end, and things return to the state in which they were before it was concluded. The country therefore is once more at our disposal. I do not dispute Holt Mackenzie's opinion, that the interests and wishes of the inhabitants ought to be consulted in such a case; but their claims are founded on the general principles of justice, and not upon this treaty. Our claim to the reversion, however, can only come into operation when the heirs and successors are really extinct; and this must be decided by the law and usage of the country, not by our arbitrary will.

"I am afraid I have tired you with my long discussion, but you may be consoled by the reflection that it is the last you will hear of it. I think it very doubtful whether Hume will get a House to listen to him; and if he does, there will probably be so much nonsense talked on both sides, that the real question will escape notice. I have just received the Report of the Proceedings of the Court of Proprietors on this question, and have only skimmed over parts of it. The case seems to be strongly put in Sullivan's opening speech. The Court of Directors might give an easy answer to the calls for reference to me and Grant Duff. It is not the intention of the agents of one of the parties that ought to influence the decision, but the words of the treaty, which were read and approved of by the principals on both sides. The evidence of the ministerial agents could only be of use if they could disclose any new facts showing that both parties had agreed to some tacit reservation, or had employed particular terms in a sense different from that usually put upon them.

"Yours most sincerely,

"M. ELPHINSTONE."

"WATERLOO HOTEL, *Feb.* 13, 1850.

"My dear Colebrooke,

"In answering your question as to the general opinion in India, while I was there, with respect to the relation between the British Government and the principal native States, especially our right to regulate their successions, I can only speak with certainty of my own impressions; but I believe they were those entertained by most of the other persons employed in transactions between our Government and the native States.

"Our relations with the principal States (the Nizam, the Peshwa, Sindia, Holkar, and Raja of Berar, &c.) were those of independent equal Powers, and we possessed no right to interfere in their successions, except such as were derived from our treaties with them, or our situation as a neighbouring State.

"In many of the new alliances contracted in Lord Hastings's time, an alteration was made in the footing on which the contracting parties stood, by the native State engaging to acknowledge the supremacy of the British Government, and these terms were introduced into treaties with some even of the principal States (those of the Rajpoot princes); but they do not appear to make any difference in the control of the British Government over successions. Their object was to secure the political supremacy of the British Government, not to assist its feudal sovereignty, and to obtain the *subordinate co-operation* of the native prince as an ally, not his subjection as a vassal. The British Government was to be supreme in all transactions with foreign States; but all internal affairs were to be regulated as before by the law and usage of the territory, free from any interference of the British Government. The succession, I conceive, was an internal affair, in which the British Government could not interfere, unless in a case which might affect the foreign relations of the State, or the general tranquillity of the country.

"This, I conceive, was the general impression in India when I was in that country. There was no native State to which the recognition of its succession by the British Government was not of the highest importance; but none of them, I conceive, ever imagined that that Government had a right to regulate the succession as feudal lord, or had any pretensions to the territory as an escheat on the failure of heirs to the reigning family.

"The above is my own conviction on a general view of the case, and I believe it was the opinion entertained in India in my time; but on this point it can be of no value, if it does not agree with the views

of my remaining contemporaries, or with those recorded by others at the time.

"Believe me, yours most sincerely,

"M. ELPHINSTONE.'

I must now bring this chapter in my narrative to a conclusion. In November, 1827, Mr. Elphinstone resigned the government of Bombay, followed by testimonies of respect and regret that have rarely been bestowed on any public functionary. An address from the native inhabitants of the Presidency, headed by the names of the native princes and chiefs connected with it, expressed their feelings in terms that would appear fulsome and adulatory were they not supported by other testimony. I give the opening paragraph :—

"We, the native princes, chiefs, gentlemen, and inhabitants of Bombay, its dependencies, and allied territories, cannot contemplate your approaching departure from the country without endeavouring to express, however faintly, the most profound and lasting regret which has been occasioned in our minds by your resignation of the government of this Presidency. For until you became Commissioner in the Deccan and Governor of Bombay, never had we been enabled to appreciate correctly the invaluable benefit which the British dominion is calculated to diffuse throughout the whole of India. But having beheld with admiration, for so long a period, the affable and encouraging manners, the freedom from prejudice, the consideration at all times evinced for the interest and welfare of the people of this country, the regard shown to their ancient customs and laws, the constant endeavours to extend amongst them the inestimable advantages of intellectual and moral improvement, the commanding abilities applied to ensure permanent ameliorations in the condition of all classes, and to promote their prosperity on the soundest principles, by which your private and public conduct has been so pre-eminently distinguished, has led us to consider the influence of the British Government as the most important and desirable blessing which the Supreme Being could have bestowed on our native lands."

The address enters at some length into an enumeration of the benefits derived from his administration, and concludes with the assurance that "the name of Elphinstone shall be the first our children shall learn to lisp, and that it will be our proudest duty to preserve indelibly unto the latest posterity the name of so pre-eminent a benefactor to our country."

In compliance with the request contained in this address, a portrait of Mr. Elphinstone, by Sir Thomas Lawrence, was placed in

the rooms of the Native Education Society; his statue, by Chantrey, was raised in the town hall; and the foundation was laid of the Elphinstone College, to which I have already referred. I am told that when the proposal to raise the last-named tribute to his fame was announced to him, "*Hoc potius mille signis*" was his eager reply. I suppose no man felt more strongly when young the desire for fame. "In youth we are all for glory" was his expression to me on one occasion when I uttered some sentiment that seemed opposed to his own early aspirations. Certainly no man in his maturer age was more indifferent to mere honorary distinctions, or more sober and more practical in his aims. The pleasure he felt that his name would be connected with a great educational institution was to be fully realised. A sum was subscribed, exceeding two lacs of rupees and ultimately reached 2,72,000, destined for the "foundation of professorships for the purpose of teaching the natives the English language, and the arts, sciences, and literature of Europe; to be held in the first instance by learned men to be invited from Great Britain until natives of the country should be found perfectly competent to undertake the office."

The institution was not established until 1834, owing to delays on the part of the Home Government. They are scarcely worth referring to, except as illustrative of the difficulties with which these pioneers of civilization had to contend. The promoters of this plan naturally looked to some aid from the Government, but though their application received the advocacy of Mr. Elphinstone's successor, Sir J. Malcolm, the replies of the Home Government for a time may be almost said to have been evasive. They at length decided to countenance the attempt so far as to allow a liberal rate of interest on the investment, and the Elphinstone Institution once fairly launched became the nucleus of subsequent exertions until the contribution of the Government became greater in furtherance of the object to which it became at length alive.

CHAPTER IV.

1827—1859.

No one who reads the few specimens I have here given of Mr. Elphinstone's papers and letters can fail to perceive that they proceed from a mind of a high order of talent, and matchless in the

thoughtful earnest spirit they evince. It has been the unceasing regret of those friends who knew and appreciated his excellence, that the public career of one so truly statesmanlike should have terminated in his forty-eighth year. It is a satisfaction to know that his capacity for greater things was appreciated by successive administrations. The Governor-Generalship of India was offered to him by Lord Ellenborough, on the part of Sir Robert Peel's Administration, in 1836, and the offer was renewed by the Government which succeeded. The weakness of his health, which was shaken when he left Bombay, and never recovered its tone, compelled him to decline both these offers, and the remainder of his long life was devoted to the literary pursuits which had always occupied a considerable portion of his leisure hours. Valuable as are the works he has left behind, I cannot but here add my own strong opinion, gathered from the intercourse of more than twenty years, that the character of his mind pre-eminently fitted him for the public life of an Indian statesman. Lord Ellenborough gave utterance to a very common remark, when he said at the public meeting which was lately held, that had Mr. Elphinstone accepted the Governor-Generalship we should have had no Afghan war, an event that tinged the whole subsequent history of India. It is perhaps idle to speculate what might have been the course of events had it not been for the removal of one man from the scene. There are few countries where the influence of a single mind may be so strongly felt, as it certainly would have been felt had Mr. Elphinstone been placed in the high position for which he was so well fitted.

Upon quitting India Mr. Elphinstone devoted eighteen months to travel. He passed through Egypt, Syria, and Palestine, Asia Minor, Greece, and Italy, and did not arrive in England until May, 1829. Poetic, as much as historical, associations guided his steps, and I think that at this time, even more than in after life, classical sympathies had the strongest influence. I well remember how he urged me at a time that I was going to the Levant to give a liberal allowance of my time to the Coast of Asia Minor, so famous in song and famous in story (I quote his own expression). I am not aware whether he commenced at this period a practice which he pursued with intermission through after life—of keeping a journal. It was carried out with diligence during this journey and again on subsequent occasions when he left England, and contained not merely the observations of a passing traveller, but occasional essays on localities of historical interest, such as the field of Cannæ and Hannibal's passage of the Alps. I am referring of course to his own

description of his practice. Of the journal itself I have no means of judging, except from reference made by himself when the subject of conversation led him to take down a volume to refresh his memory. Passages which he has read to me were very characteristic, and denoted an active and observant mind. I may mention that during the late French campaign in Northern Italy, I happened to put some question regarding the ground bordering on one of the rivers that was the scene of struggle. He instantly turned to the journal, and quoted a clear description of the place, drawn with the eye of a soldier, that assisted me to understand the strategical position of the two armies.

It may be unnecessary to mention that the injunctions of his will that these journals were not intended for publication render them unavailable to a biographer.

Upon his arrival in England, to which his reputation had preceded him, he received a cordial welcome from many of the most eminent in letters as well as in public life, and no man was more qualified to take a position in society on not unequal terms. The testimony of one so accomplished as Bishop Heber is decisive on this point; but such was the native modesty of his character, and such the high standard by which he was accustomed to measure his efforts, that his intercourse with men of the stamp of Hallam and Rogers impressed him almost painfully with the scantiness of his literary stores. "When I met them," he told me, "I used to find myself constantly out of my depth." He instantly decided with his characteristic energy to remedy this, and recommence some part of his education almost from the beginning. In pursuance with this resolution he retired for many months to a roadside inn (I think it was at Sutton), and then applied to Greek like a young scholar, working at the grammar and writing exercises. This was his own description to me of his proceedings, and it was alluded to casually while urging me to more systematic study, for no one spoke less of himself.

This practice of retirement for the sake of study was pursued at irregular intervals during the first few years of his return to England. He resided principally in London, and occasionally visited Italy. He was at all times a great reader, and to travel was to study, and the number of books he used to carry about was very great. He would devote himself to some special study for months in every year, when he passed some time at a watering-place, avoiding general society. One who knew him intimately in later life, and first became acquainted with him in Italy in 1831, says that it was surprising to him, then fresh from college, to see the variety of his classical attainments. A year or two later when he met Mr. Elphinstone at

Tunbridge Wells, he found his table strewed with the Greek tragedians and the apparatus that a college student would bring to the study of them.

In truth, whatever interested him interested him keenly and was pursued with ardour. But I am not aware that it was followed up at this time with any other object than the love of knowledge and the delight which the pursuit always gives. Next to classical literature and history, European history and historical antiquities had the greatest share of his attention. With physical science he was not familiar, and he used to express his regret almost sadly, that his want of mathematical knowledge had closed the door to such a field of research.

An active mind and rarely satisfied with the mere accumulation of literary stores. In 1834, he laid the plan of that historical work with which his literary reputation is associated From some jottings of dates in his handwriting, it appears that he began to think of an Indian history in January, 1834, and commenced it in earnest in July of the same year. January, 1835, found him "fairly engaged in Menu," and he concluded a portion of the Hindu period in 1835, when he instantly forwarded his manuscript to his old friend, Mr. William Erskine, for his opinion. Upon receiving his reply, which we are led to infer was encouraging, he set to work again in September, 1837, at the landed tenures, worked part of the time with a moonshee, and finished the Hindu and Mahomedan part in May, 1839.

He "began the European part" in July, 1839; and the memorandum concludes, "May, 1840. Lord Jeffrey recommends publishing. June, 1840. Settled with Mr. Murray. March 3, 1841. Received first copies of my history."

The work was pursued at irregular intervals, for in July, 1835, he became a member of a public commission over which the late Lord Minto presided. It was appointed to inquire into the means of religious instruction afforded to the people of Scotland, and took up a considerable part of his time during the winter of 1835–36, when he resided in Edinburgh. He passed a few months in Scotland, in the summer of 1837, for the same object. The greater part of the autumn and winter of 1836–37 was given to a tour in Italy, Germany, and Hungary. When, however, he applied himself to the work it was in earnest. The writer of this memoir first became acquainted with him at this period, and enjoyed much of his society during the winter of 1838, which he passed at Brighton. It was only during the afternoon that he would see his friends, when he would delight to join in long rambling walks over the downs. The mornings and evenings were devoted to work.

In commencing a great literary work late in life he laboured under great disadvantages, and I think they are to be traced in the composition and style of this well-known work. It has always struck me that the style of his published works is very inferior in force to that of his letters, and still more so to that of his conversation, and does not do justice to the vigour and originality of his mind. He used to speak of his history modestly as a contribution to the great subject he had taken in hand, that might aid the work of some future man of genius, and this diffidence of his own powers affects the tone of the work. The public, however, at once appreciated its value. It is a most valuable manual of all that is interesting in the early history of India, and the good sense and sagacity of the remarks will secure it a place of standard authority. If it fail to be a popular work this springs mainly from the nature of the subject with which it deals. The history of a race so deficient in historical records as the Hindus, resolves itself into a series of historical disquisitions that cannot interest the many; while that of the Mahomedan period, important as it is in its bearing on modern history, becomes insipid from the sameness of the revolutions that it records. Mr. Elphinstone's narrative introduces as much of philosophical reflection as the subject admits of, and his remarks have a direct bearing on the important events with which the European reader is interested, and to which the early narrative is only regarded as an introduction. Nothing, too, can be more graphic and masterly than the account of the manners and character of the different races of India, to which some interesting chapters are devoted.

It will be observed from the memorandum which I have quoted, that the published volume formed a part of a greater undertaking, embracing the rise of the British power in India; but failing health compelled him to abandon it. He continued his labour for about two or three years, and with such assiduity that his absence from London used to be prolonged, for, as he said, the trifling interruptions of friends, and even notes, interfered with that steady application to which he desired to devote himself. I am not aware that he has left behind any considerable materials, but he had formed very decided opinions on the events which led to the rise of the British empire in the East, and on the character and conduct of its founders; and his friends who enjoyed his intimacy largely profited by them. His love of truth never allowed him to be blinded to the defects of some of our heroes. I remember well the delight with which he spoke of Macaulay's sketch of Clive when it appeared. "The life of a great man should be written in this manly style; he should be painted

with all his faults. A history of British India written in such a spirit was a great loss; but when he abandoned the undertaking, he told me that he reconciled himself the more readily to it, as every step he had made in his study of the rise of our empire led him to doubt whether he could throw any additional light on it.

It was, I think, in 1842 that he finally gave up his labours. Doubts had occurred to him before whether he could expect to complete it, and it was owing to the advice of Lord Jeffrey, who strongly recommended the publication of the completed volumes, even though the subsequent portion should not appear, that they were given to the world. In the summer of 1842, he returned from Italy with his health shattered by a severe illness, and the still severer treatment he had undergone. He now, in obedience to his physician's advice, adopted a regimen that more and more withdrew him from general society and eventually from London. His health was at this time so precarious that it was only by a watchful attention that he guarded himself against renewed suffering; but with this attention, and with a regularity of habit, it recovered its tone sufficiently to enable him to follow steadily those literary pursuits that were still left to him, and which made him bear with cheerfulness a life of privation from society under which many minds would have sunk. In 1844 he rented a place in the neighbourhood of Leith Hill, and from thence he removed to another place, in the same neighbourhood, in the following year. He finally settled at Hookwood, in Kent, where he passed the remainder of his life. All these residences were more or less secluded, and wanting in easy access to those friends who sought his society. They were in some degree recommended to him on this account. His love of reading had now grown on him to such a degree as to amount to a passion, and he seemed to grudge the hours he did not devote to study. With all this there was a warm and affectionate welcome to old friends, and he would delight to throw aside his books and give himself up entirely to discuss the thousand topics of interest with which his mind was stored.

I give the following short note, written soon after his retirement to the country, because it illustrates that cheerfulness of spirit which I have alluded to, and it is one of the very few letters in my possession which contains the slightest allusion to himself, or his manner of life. To compose a biographical sketch from his letters would be next to impossible.

"Ockley, *Sept.* 23, 1845.

"Your letter gave me the more pleasure as I had begun to despair, not of seeing you altogether, but of your being here before this country gets as bleak and bare as the one you last visited. Any day

will suit me, and the earlier the better; especially as the sooner you come, the longer you will be able to stay. You must, however, be prepared for the accommodation and luxuries of a real cottage, and for the solitude and dulness of a real hermitage. Even out of door amusements will be under a disadvantage, as my walks are very short; and though I can go any distance in a close carriage, yet that will require you to risk your character in a yellow hack chaise, with two or more panes in each window. If you wish for freer excursions you must bring a horse, or trust to a neighbour, who candidly puts on his sign, licensed to let a horse, which horse, when not separately employed, draws a tax cart.

"There is a coach for Bognor which passes my door. There are also coaches for Brighton and other places, through Dorking. All these roads lead to Dorking, and I would advise you to take a chaise there, and instead of coming the straight road come by Westcott and Wootton. It is a much prettier road, besides passing close to Wootton, still inhabited by Evelyn, and surrounded by *Silvæ* of old Evelyn's planting."

Hookwood, to which Mr. Elphinstone moved at the close of 1847, was recommended to him, like his former residences, on account of the beauty of the country in which it lies; and the house was better suited to receive the visits of friends. From this time, though his life was a retired one, it could not be described as secluded; and many of his relations used to pay him long visits. At this time, however, he had to encounter a privation the most trying to a student. He was attacked by a weakness of his eyesight, attributed to the general state of his health; it never amounted to blindness, nor deprived him of the power of writing letters, but any attempt to read was followed by such pain that he was henceforward excluded from books, and had to rely on the assistance of others to pursue his studies. As he engaged a reader he was able to do this systematically and effectually, and continued to pursue subjects of enquiry with the same method as before. The regular division of his time, which this mode of life required, contributed in some measure to improve the tone of his health, and though an invalid he was never a sufferer, and continued to derive the highest enjoyment from literature and the society of friends.

Those whose best days have been passed in responsible situations in India, always follow with the deepest interest the course of eastern events, and Mr. Elphinstone was no exception to the general rule, but I have sometimes doubted whether his political leanings in matters of home politics were not superior to his Indian sympathies. I have selected a few letters illustrative of the interest he took in questions of Indian government, and it is curious to observe how his Whig partialities sometimes peep out in the midst of the absorbing subjects with

which he is dealing. I have only given some of his letters relating to India and the East, for though his remarks were statesmanlike and sagacious on all questions of European interest, his reputation is almost entirely Indian, and it was upon Indian questions that he was consulted during his life by those who had the privilege of his friendship. It is within my knowledge that two Governors-General sought his society before proceeding to their government, as of the highest living authority for the affairs of the East.

The letters I give require no explanation. They refer chiefly to the two periods when the constitution of the Indian Government came under public discussion.

"HOOKWOOD, *March 5th*, 1853.

"My dear Colebrooke,

"Your account of Indian affairs rather relieves me, as I was afraid of haste and blundering in any changes, but I hope there will be *some* changes. Something, for instance, to make a more respectable Court of Proprietors, who might not only be better electors but might form a Court at which it might not be discreditable to speak, move for papers, comment on public measures; for it is impossible to speculate about the machinery of the Home Government, because the springs which move the whole are concealed behind the veil of P. C., into which the evidence only gives a peep; but anything which would give more publicity to such proceedings, as even now are partially public, would be a check both on the Directors and the Board, and would strengthen the former. The Quadruple System,[1] or something *at least* as effectual, should be adopted to provide good servants. There should, if possible, be some honourable way of shelving worn-out servants, and of pensioning stupid and lazy ones without disgrace; but these subjects, together with the Law Commission, the Native Consultative Council, the increase of remuneration to the upper class of the natives already employed, and the employment of natives to a greater extent, with many other matters that suggest themselves, could only be partially handled by Parliament, if at all. The best thing that could happen would be an early appearance of the proposed plan, to be followed by a great deal of opposition and discussion, orders for printing innumerable papers (for the use of the public hereafter, for the movers themselves could not read them now), and in short as much stir and as long continued, as could be done without creating agitation in India, which might not cease with the present discussion.

[1] It was proposed in the Act of 1833, that four nominations of writers should be made for every appointment to the Indian Civil Service. The Act was never carried out.

"One thing Parliament might do, fix a liberal sum for the expenditure of each Presidency, not to be exceeded except in extreme cases, and then with sanction from home; and that done, leave the inferior Presidencies independent in all matters that do not affect the general politics or imperial legislature of India."

"HOOKWOOD, *March 20th*, 1853.

"My dear Colebrooke,

"I waited for the arrival of the reviews before I answered your letters. They reached me two or three days ago, and I have read a very good article on the Life of Mohammed, and rejected two (in the 1851 number) on the present India discussion, on account of their tone of contempt and defiance towards all assailants of the present system. I really think these extravagant panegyrists have been the worst enemies the Company have met with. The moment the public found an unsound point in the faultless edifice presented to them, they seized on the idea that the whole was a mere screen, and gave ready credence to the most absurd accounts of the abominations which it was said to conceal.

"I do not know if the general excitement about India had began when you last wrote to me, and perhaps it is over by this time, but it seemed by what I heard to be something like that on the Papal Aggression. If I have not formed an exaggerated idea of it, it will make a great change in the policy proper to be adopted.

"The Company is now so much discredited, that it will be impossible to go on quietly under the shadow of its name; and all hope of avoiding agitation in India is also at an end, for the effect produced here by the India petitions will raise hopes of advantage to the natives generally, and of distinction to individuals, that will not easily be kept within bounds. If this be the real state of things, I doubt whether the wisest plan is not to look the difficulty in the face, and enter on a full and free inquiry into the present state of India and the changes (if any) that ought to be made in our principles of Government.[1]

"You will readily forgive all this blotting, when I tell you that I was getting into a dissertation that had nearly filled another sheet, and might have filled a third or more if it had not been put a stop to. The substance would have been to show the alterations made by the education of the natives, the extinction of rival powers, and a variety of other causes which render a new *survey* of India necessary; and the advantage of knowing the feelings of the

[1] Several lines afterwards erased followed the above.

people all over the country by allowing time for discussion in the Mofussil, so as to ascertain what are the points in our yoke that really gall them, what grievances can be redressed, and what can be done to guard against the increase of groundless discontent arising from false views on delusive expectations. All this could be done with more ease and safety now than it would be if the discontent were allowed twenty more years to go on increasing and strengthening. All this, however, is mere speculation on a first view, which further consideration might refute; and the only thing I am quite fixed in, is the hope that the ministry will not risk their retention of power on the Indian question (important as it is), unless it suits their general tactics to take things in that order. I have been reading Holt Mackenzie's Evidence in the volume of 1832, and am struck with the correctness as well as the extent of his views in the first days of his examination (for the others seem to relate to financial details). Many of his suggestions have been adopted with success, and *all* or almost all the topics now under discussion are anticipated and decided in the manner now most in favour with good judges."

"HOOKWOOD, *January* 3, 1854.

"My dear Colebrooke,

"Along with this letter, or soon after, you will receive the 'Insurrection in China,' which I am ashamed of having kept so long. It is very interesting, as shewing the character of the insurrection and the views of its leader. The hatred of the Tartar Government seems to have been far more general than could have been supposed. The misfortune it experienced in its war with us increased its exactions at the same time that it disclosed its weakness, and resistance was sure to have arisen even if there had been no concert among the malcontents. What was wanting was a man of energy, who could devise a scheme by which the general excitement might be turned into one channel and brought under the influence of a single will. The philosophy of Confucius seems to afford the only moral principle that had any hold on the minds of the people, but it could not supply enthusiasm and impulse for want of a religious sanction. To remedy this the leader (or leaders) engrafted on it a faith which was already making progress, and which, besides its intrinsic merit, was in harmony with the moral doctrines of Confucius, and well suited to the moderate and pacific character of the Chinese. It was a bold stroke to assume the direction of the power thus formed in the character of a divinity rather than an apostle, but we must suppose that the projector knew best what would suit his countrymen; indeed the whole merit of the plan depends on the degree to which it is adapted to the state of

popular opinion; and, in this instance at least, success or failure will be the real test of the genius of its contriver. The whole affair suggests some serious thoughts about India. It shows how the most systematic endeavour to amalgamate two races has failed after a trial of near two centuries. How little internal tranquillity and material prosperity have sufficed to reconcile the conquered nation to its foreign rulers, and how little reliance can be placed on apparent attachment to a government, even when it assumes the shape of filial affection combined with a sort of religious devotion. It also shows how little foreigners can judge of the real character of a nation. If there was one thing that we thought characteristic of the Chinese, it was their obstinate adherence to old habits; one would have thought that a Chinese would have changed his government or his religion rather than have given up his pigtail, and now it proves that this very pigtail is among the worst of the grievances that have driven the nation into rebellion. All this leads to the reflection that there is nothing in India to prevent a new Nanik from uniting all the seemingly discordant elements in India, if any circumstance should reduce our military power even for a few years, and how difficult we should find it ever to recover our ascendancy. The moral is that we must not dream of perpetual possession, but must apply ourselves to bring the natives into a state that will admit of their governing themselves in a manner that may be beneficial to our interest as well as their own, and that of the rest of the world; and to take the glory of the achievement and the sense of having done our duty for the chief reward of our exertions.

"I must make up for this unprovoked dissertation by abstaining from all other topics."

"Hookwood, *September* 9, 1857.

"My dear Colebrooke,

"I yesterday received your letter of the 5th, and the papers on the day before. I hope the account of Lord Canning's indecision is overrated, though the story about Jung Behauder, *if accurate*, does not tell in his favour. The addresses of the European residents will no doubt help to increase the clamour against the Company, which will be sure to arise from the natural tendency of the public to impute every disaster to the misconduct of the people in power. But notwithstanding the liability of the House of Commons to be carried away by the madness of the moment during a popular delusion, I don't think either they or their constituents are so thoughtless as to sanction a revolution in the Government of India at a moment like the present. Leaving out all other objections, only imagine the probable effect of

announcing to people who have been driven into rebellion by the very thought of being made *Feringees*, that thenceforward their rights were to be secured by placing them under the immediate protection of the Queen, thus incorporating them with the British nation, and admitting them to a share in all the blessings by which it is distinguished from the nations of the East. Yet this is the language which many writers of the day recommend as a specific for soothing all minds, and removing all doubts and suspicions. There is a good article in yesterday's *Times* on the other side of the question, from which I suppose that they (the editors), believe the mind of the ministry is made up to keep things as they are for the present. The last accounts from India are, doubtless, very gloomy; the risk of fresh interests and new feelings arising during the interval of inaction is certainly very great, and to one who has just read Munro's admirable Minute,[1] it appears that the full accomplishment of his prophecy is at hand. But there is some comfort in the recollection how often foreign Governments have kept their ground in worse circumstances than ours. I will only mention the case of Rome, which was a much more oppressive Government than ours, and had tougher materials to work on in Spain and Gaul, and higher notions of freedom and national independence to contend with in Greece and her offsets, than we are ever likely to see among our Asiatic subjects. I have often wished to get some knowledge of the sort of administration by which the Romans contrived to fix their power on so firm a basis, but although it is easy to find out the framework of a Government in a province, I do not find any clue to the means by which it was administered. I suppose that what we do know is equivalent to a knowledge of the constitutions of the Presidencies in India, together with the law as administered by the Supreme Court, and a revenue system founded on farming to English capitalists; while all the details of legislation as well as administration were left to the natives, and managed by native princes or by local municipalities. Can you tell me where information on this subject is to be found? I suppose it must be well ascertained after all the researches by German and other scholars in late times. If you never read the account in Polybius of the mutiny of the mercenaries, which nearly overthrew the Government of Carthage, it will interest you in the present time. It differed in its origin and many details from ours, but still you will be struck with the analogy in many particulars. I read it in Hampton's translation, where it is near the beginning of the first volume. It is not long."

[1] The Minute on the effect of the Education of the Natives on the Army, which had been lately republished.

"Hookwood, *December 20th*, 1857.

"My dear Colebrooke,

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I am not so much afraid of the constant interference of the House of Commons, as of its indifference in general, and its acting on impulse on particular occasions without any general acquaintance with the subject. I think both the House and the public generally come to just conclusions when they have time to consider them, such as is afforded by our *triple* Government in this country, but I am afraid to trust them with the prompt, simple, and direct exercise of power which is now thought so particularly desirable in India, a country in which, of all others, caution and gradual progress are most required. I hope that feeling will lose some of its force during the discussions that must take place in the approaching Session. I think the ardour for the consolidation of territory, concentration of authority, and uniformity of administration which was lately so powerful, must have been a good deal damped by recent events. Where should we have been now, if Scindia, the Nizam, the Sikh chiefs, &c., had been *annexed*, the subordinate Presidencies abolished, the whole army thrown into one, and the revenue system brought into one mould, whether that of Lord Cornwallis, Sir T. Munro, or even Mr. Thomason?

"I should be more anxious about the coming session if I were quite at ease about Lucknow, but I have a horror of street fighting, where discipline loses so much of its superiority over numbers, and I cannot help thinking what would be the consequence of the defeat of the Commander-in-Chief in person, even at the present stage of the war."

"Hookwood, *February 23rd*, 1858.

"My dear Colebrooke,

"I am heartily sorry for the news. I would have swallowed Lord Palmerston's India Bill or a worse, much rather than have the risk of a state of things like the present. There is no chance of my being able to answer your letter otherwise than by an arbitrary list of desiderata, to which I shall proceed—

"1st. A Minister of the Queen.

"2nd. A Board, independent of the ministry and of all party influence, numerous enough to give weight to the body and courage to the individual members. To have an establishment of its own, and to carry on all its debates and other business apart from the Minister of the Crown.

"3rd. As a general rule the Board to have the initiation of all measures, and the elaboration of all details.

"4th. The Minister to decide on all measures, to take the initiative in special cases, and on cases of urgency and secrecy, to act at once on his own responsibility.

"5th. All discussions and all important correspondence to be recorded as at present, and means to be taken to give them publicity.

"6th. The home patronage to be disposed of as in Lord Palmerston's plan. That in India to be left to the local governors, but to be strictly limited to particular classes, either formed by nomination like the present services, or open to *all*, subject to examinations, probations, conditions as to residence in India, &c., sufficient to prevent lucrative employments from being employed for corrupt purposes, by means of collusion between the governors and the ministry at home.

"I have said nothing on the mode of appointing the members of the Board, which in fact is the essential question.

"The best plan would be by a body of electors taken from different classes, and so chosen as to have some authority in the eyes of the public. I should have preferred something representing the present East India Company, but with a large defecation of the present body of proprietors, and a corresponding addition from suitable sources. This would have given the advantage of present possession and old associations to a body possessed of many of the other qualities required for the purpose in view.

"Such a body, or a better, might be made up by selection from particular classes, whose station might give them weight (as ex-judges, ex-governors of colonies, ex-ambassadors, &c.), or who might be supposed capable of taking an interest in India (as members of "Aborigines Protection," and other philanthropic societies, even societies likely to take general views, as the Geographical, Asiatic, &c.). Many other plans might be suggested, if the public was in a humour to take them in good part, but every plan for governing India must be more or less a sham as long as India herself has not a part assigned in it, and at present all eyes will be turned to discover its weak points, and all hopes of the sanction of public opinion, which is essential to its success, must be given up.

"Perhaps after all Lord Palmerston's plan, with some modifications, is the best practicable, viz., to have a *sufficient number* of directors appointed for long periods (say ten years), with a small proportion to go out annually, so as to enable each party to have its turn in the nominations. If an elective body is to be formed, great care must be taken to avoid too large a proportion of Anglo-Indians, whether in or out of the service, especially if they still retain their connexion with India as public servants, or become members of the India House.

They certainly will have more knowledge and will take more interest in the prosperity of the people than strangers, but they will also have interests and feelings, separate and even opposite to those of the natives; and, moreover, dissensions among themselves, which will bring local factions into play, more perilous than those we are so much afraid of at home ; black and white, covenanted and uncovenanted, civil and military, settlers and temporary residents, &c., would be much more dangerous to India than whig or tory.

"I have confined myself to the new plan for the Home Government. There are questions of at least equal importance relating to the local Government that call for decision, but on them I shall not enter."

"Hookwood, *March 1st*, 1858.

"My dear Colebrooke,

"Many thanks for your interesting letter. I do not see anything that can be done at present for the purpose of controlling the Governor-General, excepting strenuously resisting all attempts to give him the power of naming the Members of Council, and keeping up the present plan of having all proceedings and *discussions* recorded and sent to this country.

"The fact is, I am more afraid of the Governor General's being too much reduced under the new system than by his being made too strong. He is the link between the despotism of India and the *Commonwealth* of England, and should possess power enough to command the highest respect, not only from foreign states, allies, and native subjects, but above all from our servants, civil and military, in India, and even to a certain extent from the Home Government. It is the last feeling that has made him the main bulwark of the patronage of India, against the encroachments both of the ministry and the directors.

"The avowed tendency of Lord Palmerston's Bill is to increase and protect his authority, and I have no doubt it would do so for a time, while all concerned are on their good behaviour; but I am afraid things will be far otherwise after public attention has been withdrawn from India, and Ministers begin to look on that country as a means of strengthening their party at home.

"The immediate effect of such restraints as are likely to be imposed by the new system will be beneficial.

"The great grievance at present is the disregard of the Governors-General to the repeated injunctions of the Court of Directors against plans of conquest, and other modes of extending our territory. Such

disregard is not likely to be tolerated on the new plan. The Minister for India will be the sole ostensible head of the whole administration of that empire, and it is not probable that he will be content to submit to the obscurity which the President of the Board of Control used to court. His object used to be to avoid all disputes that might bring the separate action of the ministry in Indian affairs before the House of Commons, and to do this he was obliged to deal with the Court of Directors in a way that weakened the authority of both, and left the Governor-General pretty nearly his own master. I imagine that the practice at that time was for the Court of Directors to check the Governor-General when they thought it right, and for the Board of Control to support him; that the Board generally carried its point, and that even when it gave way and allowed the official instructions to be drawn according to the wish of the directors, there was always a private correspondence between the President and the Governor-General, that emboldened the latter to pursue his own views without much fear of the consequences.

"All this will now cease, and my fears are not for the present, but for the future, when attention will be withdrawn from India, and when a weak and unscrupulous ministry may send out devoted adherents of its own to the Supreme Government, through whom it may employ the patronage of India for party purposes, supporting the measures of its creature through thick and thin in return.

"Against such a design, no restrictions afforded by an exclusive service, examinations, competition, conditions of previous residence in India, &c., will be of the least avail. The public is always averse to monopolies, and will support all infractions of those protective regulations which moreover will be introduced gradually and almost unperceived.

"*March 2nd.*—The above was written yesterday, but my eyes got so tired and my scrawl so illegible, that I thought it would be a relief to you, as well as to myself, to leave off, and have a fair copy made for your use. I am afraid you will find it very unsatisfactory after all. The only effectual check that I can see either on the Governor-General or the ministry at home is a Board of Council, formed by election, if possible, but at all events conducting its business entirely separate from the Minister for India. Even if we had such a Board there would remain the difficulty of getting members who would take a lively interest in *India*, viewed separately from Great Britain, and who would attend to the peculiar views and wishes of the natives, as well as to their pecuniary interests and strictly legal rights. The Company did so to a considerable extent, because it had long regarded

India as its own, and was strongly opposed to the maxim now in favour, of 'India for the English.' Sooner or later, we must introduce natives into the Council itself, or at least into the electing body, but to do so now would only produce contention and embarrass future operations."

"Hookwood, *April* 2, 1858.

"My dear Colebrooke,

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"I do not know that I have any more remarks to make on the two Bills, unless I omitted to notice the indirect way in which Mr. Disraeli contrives to leave it discretionary with the Secretary to carry on the whole business without consulting the Council at all. Lord Palmerston's Bill has not this fault; but with a Council such as he proposes, its meeting or not meeting would make very little difference.

"I scarcely venture to hope that you may not be too sanguine in your expectation,—that the whole discussion may end in the restoration of a double Government under another name. But even the double Government will be of little use if the proceedings of the *Indian* Governments are not laid before the Council as a matter of course, to be reviewed and decided on by that body in the first instance. The Council would, of course, have no direct communication with those Governments, nor any other existence, except as a deliberative assembly; and the Secretary might disregard their decisions whenever he thought proper, only recording his reasons. He might also originate any measure or course of measures that occurred to him, whether arising from correspondence with India or not; might call up any particular question suggested in India for consideration out of its turn; or might press the Council for a speedy decision when he thought they were dilatory; but still it must be the special duty of the Council to review the whole of the proceedings of the Indian Governments, to correct any errors they observed in the course of them, and to recommend such new measures as might be suggested by the matters brought under their notice. In this way those opinions would be carefully and dispassionately formed, and would not be held back by the fear of giving offence by officious interference with the conduct of the responsible officer. Now take the opposite line, and suppose all measures of importance to be proposed by the Secretary, The functions of the Council would then be those of *Her Majesty's opposition*—to detect misstatements, to oppose erroneous proposals, to supply omissions, and to bring forward

new measures which might or might not be completely at variance with the views of the Secretary. Where could you find councillors prepared to enter on such a conflict? and if you could, might you not find it would be better to dispense altogether with a Council whose duty it would be to start objections and raise disputes on every question that came before it? I need not say that I mean the Council to carry on all its deliberations separately from the Secretary, but I am not sure that I should object to his having conferences with them when he thought it desirable."

"HOOKWOOD, *April* 30, 1858.

"My dear Colebrooke,

"I shall be too happy if anything I have written can be of use to you in supporting the separate sittings of Council and its *compulsory* review of the Reports from India, and suggestions of suitable answers. I despair of forming a constituency for an elective Council, such as would give it weight with the nation, and I think we may be tolerably safe with a Council for life, especially if the first nominations should be conscientiously made, as they probably would be at a moment when all eyes were fixed on the conduct of the ministry. What is chiefly wanted of the Council is, that it shall supply the place of the Court of Directors, in protecting the interests, opinions, and feelings of the natives against the conflicting interests, opinions, and feelings of the ruling people. However selfish the original motive of this jealousy of European encroachment may have been on the part of the Directors, it became their "*traditional policy*," and has been one great cause of their unpopularity. Now I think the maintenance of this policy is exactly the line which a well-selected Council of Indians would choose for their peculiar province Their other duty would be to guard against attempts of the Ministry, to undermine the Constitution, or to take steps *directly* injurious to the interest of the British. This they would not neglect, but they would feel how little their aid was wanted at a time when the popular element of the Constitution was so decidedly in the ascendant; while in undertaking the protection of the Indian nation they would have a vast field for usefulness and distinction which at present is almost entirely unoccupied. It is indeed astonishing, considering how much our own safety depends on the contentment of our Indian dependants, that in all the late discussions there has not been a single speaker of note, except Gladstone, that has laid the least stress on this part of the subject. They probably rely on the Indian Government for looking

to public opinion among the natives, but what could the strongest Indian Government do against a clamour for levying a new tax (say an income-tax) on India, to make up for the deficit occasioned by *its own expenses*, including the Persian and Chinese wars, and many other charges in which the people of India take quite as little concern?

"I find I am getting into digressions, and think it is high time to leave off.

"Pray give me a line, when you can spare time, to say how the Indian question goes on. My fear is that the House of Commons will so nauseate the subject as to swallow any pill that is offered to it, on condition that it shall be the last."

"Hookwood, *July* 11, 1858.

"My dear Colebrooke,

"I did not answer your letter of the 6th, until I should see the Bill quite through the House of Commons. I entirely agree with you as to its superiority over both of its predecessors, and am encouraged by the instance it affords of the real good intentions and openness to conviction which the House can show when it can be got to make itself acquainted with a subject without the excitement of some violent impulse or of party spirit. The great point, of course, is the Council, and I think that proposed will furnish a body of excellent advisers for an honest, able, and moderate Secretary (such as Lord Stanley appears to be), and that it will supply the deficiencies of a lazy or indifferent one much better than the ordinary clerks of a Board of Control would do, but that it will afford very little protection against a rash, fanciful, and self-willed chief; and none at all against one who shall combine with a ministry in a deliberate plan to appropriate the patronage of India or to make use of that country in any other way favourable to their own power or stability.

"In such a case the presence of some of the councillors in Parliament (respecting which I might otherwise have doubts) would have been an important improvement. In such a case also the evil of a secret department will be seriously felt. I am afraid you count too much on the jealousy of the power of the Crown shown by the House of Commons on the present occasion. In ordinary times it would require another mutiny or a general insurrection to attract its attention to the subject in any shape. So many changes have been made in the Bill, that I scarcely know what has been abolished or what now stands, so that I may pass without notice things which I thought of the greatest consequence when I first heard of them, but

on the whole I have no hesitation in thinking that we have been fortunate in our escape, and are safe *for the present* as far as home government goes. The first trial of the efficacy of the system will probably be on the remodel of the Indian service, civil and military. Though the public are insensible to encroachments of the Crown on the Constitution, the most influential part of them is keenly alive to the danger of their being cheated out of their share of the emoluments of office by the acts of the aristocrary, and their clamour will be for multiplication of places, reduction of salaries, and throwing down all obstacles to *appointments* except some sort of competition, and all restraints on *promotion*, which might tend to keep back merit and shut the right man out of the right place. Many disinterested and well informed people would lean to those opinions from dislike to monopoly, class government, &c., and the most honest ministry would be tempted by the easy access opened to an infinity of appointments exactly of the nature wanted for Parliament both in the House and among the electors. In such circumstances who is to defend the interests of the present service, and those of the natives who are entitled to good government and to a share in administering it as far as circumstances admit?

"This was part of the 'traditional policy' of the Court of Directors, who could make themselves heard when they found they were encroached on, but we can hardly expect it to be taken up to any purpose by the Council. The only hope is that we may have a good ministry, and one not struggling for its own existence, at the time when this and other questions of equal importance come on."

"Hookwood, *October* 26, 1858.

"My dear Colebrooke,

"I am very much obliged for Mr. ————'s letter. It is by far the best view of the general posture of our affairs that I have seen. I agree in all his opinions except about delaying the amnesty, and even on that head I have some doubts, because I wish that when granted it should be complete, except as to a few individuals who should be named.

"I am afraid, from what I hear on all sides, that Lord Canning is open to some of the objections made to him; but what other man have we now from whom we could expect greater perfection? The accumulation of despatch boxes, and the stagnation of business, is a lively copy of the picture one used to have of the most brilliant of his predecessors during the crisis of the war with Holkar (1805).

We must remember also that he was on a scene entirely new to him, and that from the inseparable combination of the political and military affairs, he was obliged to keep both in his own hands, while it was justly thought an instance of the utmost boldness and vigour in Lord Wellesley to entrust the whole of his own powers to the commander of the army in the field, so that 'General Harris carried with him to the gates of Seringapatam the whole powers of the British Government in India.' I hope that military operations will be over before the new year, and that we shall once more have, at least, apparent tranquillity, though never 'that sweet sleep which we owed yesterday."

A few lines will bring this narrative to a conclusion. The description which I have given of his mode of life during the last ten years will apply to its very close. There was no loss of faculties, though one might perceive some failing of his old vigour and elasticity of mind, as the infirmities of age increased. There was, too, some unavoidable depression at having to encounter these trials in solitude; but the cheerful manly tone of his mind remained unimpaired, and the gentleness of his nature showed itself even more as his bodily weakness increased. A friend who visited him a few months before his decease, thought he perceived a painful consciousness of decline of his faculties, and the dread of outliving them. From this he was happily spared. His passage from existence was short and painless. He was seized by a stroke of paralysis on the night of the 20th November, 1859, and his servant, who heard his fall, found him insensible; in a few hours he had passed away.

He was buried privately at Limpsfield, in the churchyard which adjoins the grounds of his residence; and the same spot was soon to receive the remains of his nephew, Lord Elphinstone, to whom he was deeply attached, and to whom he bequeathed the bulk of his moderate fortune.

It will be scarcely necessary to mention the steps that were taken to recognize the public appreciation of his services, for this will be fresh in the recollection of the reader. The names of those who took a part in the public meeting held in the following February, and who headed the subscription list that was then opened, showed a fitting sense on the part of statesmen, of English as well as of Indian reputation, of what was due to the last survivor of a school of Indian statesmen, whose fame is connected with some of the most brilliant passages of our history. The list of subscriptions rapidly filled, and the sum raised will, in the first place, be devoted to the erection of a statue in the cathedral of St. Paul.

I shall make no attempt to portray a character, the nobler features of which may be discerned in the imperfect memoir which I have here given of his career. It is, I am aware, wanting in those lighter sketches of personal interest which are conveyed in private letters, and are now generally expected in a biography; and it in no degree does justice to the many-sidedness of his character, which constituted one of its principal charms. There was in him the union of two natures: the one manly, energetic, and enterprizing; the other having all the tenderness, affection, and shrinking from display that belongs to the other sex. So, too, with regard to his intellectual qualities, perhaps the most remarkable feature was the combination of such sobriety and even caution in his judgment, with a vividness of imagination that is usually supposed to be incompatible with it.

His love for poetry amounted to a passion. He would discuss his favourites with the enthusiasm of a boy, and one of the last occasions on which he left home was to visit in Cornwall the scenes of King Arthur's battles. There was in his character a tinge of enthusiasm which, as he once confessed to me, led him to cherish dreams of ambition of the wildest kind. The force of his imagination cherished by his love of poetry affected his thoughts, gave a grace and charm to his conversation, but never influenced his judgment. The late Allan Cunningham truly described him to me, as the most just thinking man he ever knew. In his public papers and literary works there is a moderation of tone that hardly does justice to the decisive character of the man. No one who conversed with him would mistake this moderation for weakness or doubt; for his opinions were always expressed with force and decision. But in truth, his intellectual qualities were subordinate, and in some measure the fruit of his rare moral endowments. One whose sole thought is, what is the right thing to do, must balance conflicting difficulties, and something of this spirit may be found in his opinions; but when he is called upon to act, he will be decisive in proportion as he is single-minded in his aims. An anecdote that was related to me many years since, will best illustrate this point in his character. A friend was reading to Mr. Elphinstone a letter from a public servant in India, who was placed in a situation of singular difficulty, and worn out with anxiety, describing a hazardous step he was about to take, the anxieties he had suffered, and his recklessness of the consequences to himself. "Is it possible," broke in Mr. Elphinstone, "he could think of himself at such a moment!" This forgetfulness of self which made Mr. Elphinstone so truly public-minded, was the great charm of his private life.

Some instances of this have been given in the preceding pages. I might mention others of that generosity which, in the description of Heber, amounted to munificence; but of this I will only say, that it was systematic, and guided by principle. But mere descriptions of character give a faint impression of the original, and in the present instance his public life and works may be left to speak for themselves.

THE memoir which is now presented to the Asiatic Society was commenced at the instance of its late Director, who urged me to give to the Society a more extended sketch of Mr. Elphinstone's literary and public life than could be compressed within the space usually allotted to an obituary notice. I readily undertook the task, to which indeed I was urged by Mr. Elphinstone's relations, who thought that the long intimacy I had enjoyed would give me some facilities in preparing such a narrative; but I speedily found that the work I had undertaken must be expanded beyond my original design. His public services could not be described with brevity, and the memoir would be incomplete without the reader having the opportunity of judging of Mr. Elphinstone's character from his own writings. My only anxiety has been lest I should interfere with any work more worthy of Mr. Elphinstone's reputation; but the lamented death of Lord Elphinstone, who, I understood, had it in contemplation to give to the world some collections or extracts from his uncle's public and private papers, has made it desirable that some further biography than I at first intended, should be published; and I therefore present my still imperfect work in the present form.