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TABLE OF CONTENTS

HOW INDIA GOT HER PEOPLE.....	3
THE INVASION OF ALEXANDER THE GREAT	5
HOW THE MOHAMMEDAN ARMIES INVADED INDIA	8
THE EMPIRE OF THE MOGHULS	11
THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD	13
HOW EUROPE FOUND THE SEA-ROAD TO INDIA.....	17
HOW THE EMPIRE OF THE MOGHULS BROKE UP	20
DUPLEX'S GREAT PLOT	22
HOW CLIVE SAVED THE ENGLISH	23
FROM THE BLACK HOLE TO PLASSEY	27
HYDER ALI AND THE MAHRATTAS.....	31
HOW WE CLEARED THE ROAD TO EMPIRE.....	33
A PLUNDERED LAND	35
HOW THE PUNJAB WAS PAINTED RED	37
THE SEPOY ARMY REVOLTS	40
IMPERIAL INDIA	43

CHAPTER I

HOW INDIA GOT HER PEOPLE

If we look at a map of Asia we shall notice what looks like a great red tongue stretching down into the waters of the southern ocean. This is India, a country as large as the continent of Europe without Russia.

It is the most beautiful part of Asia, containing ranges of huge mountains, wide fertile plains, wonderful forests, and mighty rivers. We shall find there numerous races of people whose forefathers came to India in great armies thousands of years ago, and before they settled down in the country fought and conquered the people who were there before them.

Now we ought to feel a special interest in the Indian people, because very many ages ago our forefathers belonged to the same family or nation. These ancestors of ours were called Aryans and lived in the highlands of Central Asia, where, as time went on, they became so strong and numerous that large numbers of them had to go forth in search of other homes.

So it came to pass that something like two thousand years before Christ, about the time of Abraham's arrival in Canaan, vast multitudes of our Aryan fathers moved away from the old home in the highland country with their wives and children and all their possessions. But they did not all go the same way. While some thought it best to march westward, others resolved to search for new homes to the south-east.

Those who went towards the west moved on and on until they gradually spread over what we now call Europe, and in thousands of years became many different nations. But those who moved towards the south-east pushed on through the great mountains and down into the warm plains of India, where they

found strange tribes of human beings who were the remains of a wild early period of the world about which we know very little.

These people hunted and fought with flint axes and other deftly worked instruments of stone such as we may see in our museums to-day. And before them were beings still wilder and more savage, whose agate knives and rough flint implements are often found to-day buried in the Narbada valley.

These buried implements are all we have to tell us about any of these wild ancient races. But in the beautiful Vedic hymns which the Aryans used to sing to their divine beings, the Devas, or Bright Ones, we read that the people they found in India were "no-nosed " people, which, of course, means that they had flat noses. These words are important because they help us to peer still further into the darkness of the old world, and tell us that long before the Aryans these wild people themselves came over the mountains into India from that part of Asia which we now call Mongolia.

No doubt they conquered the people with the agate and rough flint weapons who were in India before them. But the Aryans were altogether a more cultured and civilised race. They wore armour and helmets, had horses and chariots, bows and arrows, swords and battle-axes. They marched into the land like the Israelites into Canaan, and, driving the wild people before them, took possession of all the country right down to the great Narbada valley where the narrow part of India begins.

This valley, through which flows the Narbada river, runs along the north of that part of the country which is now called the Deccan. Amidst the dense forests and mountains of this region the wild people managed to get beyond the reach of the Aryans, just as the Britons succeeded in holding out against the Saxons in the mountains of Wales. In spite of their superior weapons, the Aryans could never break through the mountain passes into the Deccan, and so had to be content with the country to the north of it, which in time came to be called Hindostan.

Now the strangest thing about these wild races, who fled to the mountains, is that not only did they never die out, but as the ages passed on they never really improved, but remained the same inferior and degraded people they were at first. Their descendants still live in the mountain regions of India, and it has been calculated that they number about twenty millions at the present time. They are like living fossils of those far-away ages, and they worship snakes, trees, mountains, rivers, and everything which seems to them terrible or wonderful. Besides this, the languages which are still spoken by these people are the same which their forefathers used four thousand years ago before the coming of the Aryans. So you see that where the Indian people were left to themselves they were not able to change very much for the better.

Now, after the Aryans had driven away the first inhabitants of the country, they settled down in their new homes and became the ancestors of the Hindu people whom we see in India to-day. If you wonder why they look so different from the white races of Europe, who are also descendants of the Aryans, you must remember that many thousands of years have passed since the two great bodies of the Aryan race parted and marched into Europe and India. Since then these two halves of the Aryan race have lived in very different climates and altogether different natural surroundings for nearly forty centuries, which have been the cause of the great difference we see to-day in the Hindus and the Europeans.

While the Aryans of Europe have for the most part remained strong and vigorous, the Indian Aryans have lost these great qualities. The longer they lived in the soft hot air of the Indian plains the weaker and more indolent they grew, until other races of strong, hardy people came into India and attacked the Aryans just as they had the wild people before them.

But exactly as the Aryans had grown soft and indolent, so did the newcomers in their turn. In the hot plains of Hindostan, far from the fresh, invigorating sea-breezes or the bracing cold of the mountain ranges, the hardy races of the

north, as soon as they had come down and conquered the Indian people, were always conquered by the Indian climate, which turned their resolute hearts, their strong arms, and their quick eyes into placid looks, folded hands, and dreamy minds.

We can understand, therefore, how it is that people living in such a country have always been exposed to invasion, and why the history of India has been one long story of terrible wars, slaughter, and destruction before the British mastered the whole country and gave peace to the land. Even if the Indian people were all united and belonged to one race, they could never escape the attack of more vigorous nations. But they are divided up into numerous races and tribes having different customs and religions, and most of them are bitterly hostile.

Thus there is no such thing as one Indian nation. And not only are the many separate nations and languages as different from one another as any which we find in Europe—like the Celt, the Teuton, the Roman, and the Slav—but the country is also divided into two religions, the Hindu and the Mussulman, which have always been at enmity and are still fiercely opposed to one another. Thus, the only way in which India could obtain a strong and united government was by coming under the rule of a nation like the British, living in a hardy and vigorous climate from which it could send its rulers, its soldiers and civil servants, to govern and guard the land and keep the various races of India from quarrelling and fighting with one another. And, after all, the Aryan people of India are only governed to-day by descendants of a portion of the same race, who, as we have seen, moved westward when the forefathers of the Hindus crossed the northern mountains into the Indian plains.

This chapter has dealt with very early times and with what we may call the dark ages of Indian history, about which very little detail is known. But it will enable us to take a greater interest in the rest of the story, just as we are helped to understand the nature of a tree if we know all about the great roots which lie out of sight beneath the ground.

CHAPTER II

THE INVASION OF ALEXANDER THE GREAT

The last chapter dealt with events which happened so very long ago that when we write or read of them we almost feel as though we were searching for things in a dark night with the help of a lantern.

We now reach a second period, in which we see movements taking place as though in the dim twilight of early morning. And most of these events are great invasions, wars, and battles. Fortunately, about one of them we know a great deal, because the invaders brought with their armies many writers and men of science, who made a careful record of what they found in India at that time.

This important event was the invasion of India by the Greeks under Alexander the Great. It took place three hundred and twenty-seven years before Christ, and was the first time that India ever came into close touch with Europe. A good deal, however, had been heard about her before that; for her trade and merchandise had for a very long time been seen in Egypt and Palestine, and through the merchants of these countries found its way into Europe. Homer knew of many articles of Indian trade by their old Hindu or Sanscrit names, and a long list has been made of Indian products which are mentioned in the Bible.

But it was through the wonderful march of the splendid Greek and Macedonian soldiery whom Alexander led through Asia Minor and Persia that Europeans and Indians first looked into one another's faces. It was the first meeting of the two halves of the Aryan race since their forefathers had parted ten centuries before. We cannot help feeling sorry that the writings of the skilled historians and men of science who accompanied Alexander's army were afterwards lost, but fortunately we are able to find a good deal of what they wrote in the works of

ancient authors like Strabo, Pliny, and Arrian, who have given them to us in a shortened form.



THE FIRST EUROPEAN INVADER.

We learn that Alexander, after crossing the river Indus, from which the Hindus take their name, marched south-eastward to a place called Jalâlpur on the river Hydaspes, or the Jhelum, as it is now called. Now the king of this part of India, whose name was Porus, was a great warrior. His spies had told him long before which way Alexander was coming, and so he made ready a large army with 200 war elephants and many chariots, which he posted near the banks of the river to prevent the invaders from crossing into his country.

Alexander, at once seeing that it was impossible to get his army over the river at this point, kept a large force out of sight behind some hills and looked about for another place where he could "steal a passage," as he said. His scouts soon found a spot about ten miles further up where there was an island in the river covered with trees, and a thickly wooded promontory on the other side which would conceal his movements.

So, leaving the greater part of his army at Jalâlpur to make Porus think he was still waiting there, he secretly marched away, through some deep valleys between the hills, with 6000 foot-soldiers and 10,000 horsemen to the place he had chosen for

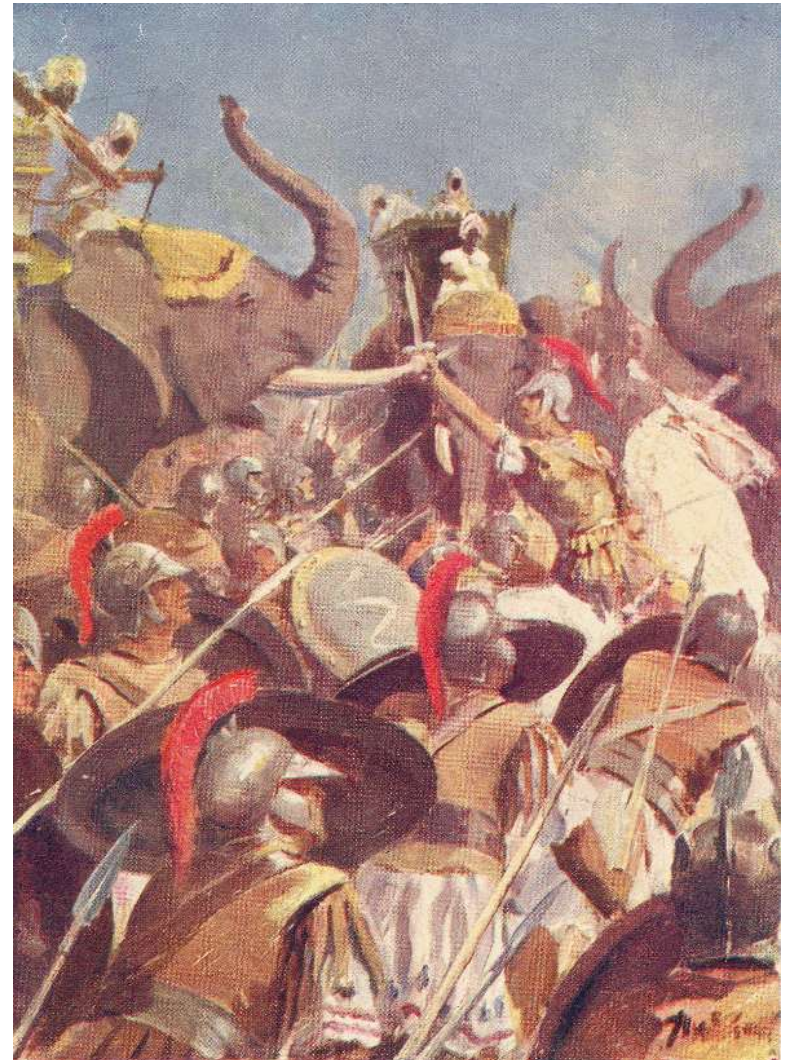
his crossing. He had to lead his men about seventeen miles round, but he reached his goal at night and crossed the river in the midst of a terrible storm of thunder, lightning, and rain.

Now Porus had scouts all along the bank of the river, and hearing from them that the Greeks were crossing higher up, he dispatched his son in haste with a force of chariots and cavalry to stop them. They attacked Alexander about two miles from his crossing-place, but were defeated after a sharp fight, in which Alexander's favourite horse, the famous Bucephalus, was killed by the son of Porus immediately before he was himself slain.

This fight gave Porus time to form up his army in a good position to meet his enemy, and, when Alexander approached, the Indians were drawn up in a line about four miles long, with the great war elephants, thirty feet apart from one another, standing in front of dark masses of foot-soldiers, while the cavalry and chariots were posted on the flanks. It must have been a formidable-looking battle array, and when Alexander with his horsemen got close enough to examine the Indian position, he saw it was useless to attack where the elephants stood with the infantry massed behind them. So, as he had many more horsemen than Porus, he resolved to charge the flanks or sides of the Indian army. His plan succeeded. The cavalry and chariots of Porus could not withstand the powerful attacks of Alexander's numerous horsemen, and were gradually driven in on to the infantry and elephants in the centre, just as you would shut up a telescope.

To save the day, Porus ordered his 200 elephants to charge the enemy, and these huge beasts, with the help of the foot-soldiers, rushed forward and beat back the Greeks for some time. Then Alexander ordered his men to attack the elephants with arrows and javelins, and at last these great animals, maddened with fear and smarting with wounds, dashed madly about, trampling upon friend and foe alike. It must have been a terrible scene. The army of Porus was thrown into confusion. His cavalry and chariots were cut to pieces and his infantry badly shaken by the enemy's horsemen. Then the main force of

Alexander, which had been watching the battle across the river, fought its way over the stream and joined in the struggle. The Indian army at once broke up in confusion and fled in all directions, large numbers being cut down in the retreat.



ALEXANDER'S BATTLE WITH PORUS ON THE JHELM.

After the defeat of Porus, with whom, it is pleasant to record, he at once formed a close friendship, Alexander continued his march to the south-east. He had heard of the mighty river Ganges, and his great desire was to reach its banks. But it was not to be. He and his host of heroes had already done what no other army had ever done before or since. They had marched thousands of miles from their homes in far-off Greece and Macedon. They had crossed great mountains, scorching plains, and broad rivers, which in those days were scarcely known, and had fought and conquered in many great battles against numerous and powerful enemies.

But now the terrible heat of India and the hurricanes of the south-west monsoons were beginning to tell upon his men. We should remember, too, that war in those days was much harder work than now, when men fight in light clothing and generally at a distance with rifles or cannon. But in those early times men met in battle hand-to-hand, fighting one another with heavy swords, spears, and shields. They also wore heavy armour and helmets, so that unless a man were a powerful athlete he had very little chance in those fierce struggles.

After more than a year of heavy fighting and marching, Alexander's army began to think they had gone far enough. For not only were there numerous enemies in their front as well as broad and deep rivers to be crossed, but foes had risen behind them who threatened to cut off their retreat to the west should they meet with any disaster. All, therefore, wished to return; and so Alexander, much against his will, halted his army on the banks of the river Beas, not far from where many centuries later the British were to fight the great battle of Sobraon against the Sikhs.

We need not follow the great Macedonian king in his retirement, partly by land and partly by sea, to Persia. It is enough to say that he founded cities and planted garrisons in various parts of northern India, and the remains of these ancient Greek cities and settlements are visible in many directions at the present time. Even to-day in every little village the name of

"Alik Jullunder sahib," which means Alexander, is spoken of with reverence, and village doctors still boast that they give medicines which were used by the Greeks. But as we look back at it now, we are able to see that this great march of Alexander and his army into India was little more than a wonderful adventure, for time blotted out all its effects. It did nothing to turn the Indian people to Western ways, and it did not even bring about any lasting connexion between India and Europe.

CHAPTER III

HOW THE MOHAMMEDAN ARMIES INVADED INDIA

We must now pass very rapidly over a period of several hundred years, because as the Hindu people were left to themselves once more there were no trustworthy writers to tell us of what happened. All the stories of those times are full of wars, invasions, and the wonderful deeds of Indian heroes, nearly all of which are fables and romances. We do not get a flash of real truth until the Mohammedan armies burst into the country in the year 712 A.D. These, like Alexander, brought with them historians and chroniclers who, although by no means perfect, were really anxious to record facts rather than to invent fables.

They converted to their religion all the races to the north and north-west of India, but in India itself they only remained for forty years, and did not return to the country until over two hundred years later. Then, in the year 997, when Sweyne and Canute were ruling England, there lived at Ghazni, a place in Afghanistan, a fierce Mohammedan sultan called Mahmud. Hating the Hindus because they did not belong to his religion, he determined to attack them and plunder their country.

Twelve times he invaded India, and each time the Hindu armies were defeated. And although he did not remain in the country, he plundered the cities of immense treasure, broke open the temples and cast down all the idols he found in them.

There is an interesting story of his last invasion which is worth telling. Mahmud of Ghazni heard that the Hindus had a great temple which he had not yet seen. It stood on the sea-coast in western India, and was called the Temple of Somnath.

Now the temple contained a great idol, and Mahmud, who hated idols, determined to invade India again in order to destroy it. Another thing which may also have influenced him a little was that the temple was said to contain immense riches, which had been accumulated there for very many ages. Possibly Mahmud thought it would be just as well for him to carry off the treasure at the same time. Whatever were his motives, he led an army into India again for the twelfth and last time.



A GHAZNI WARRIOR.

None of the Indian princes were strong enough to stop him. But a large number of Hindu warriors threw themselves into the great temple. This was surrounded by powerful walls and fortifications, and behind these the brave garrison made a desperate resistance to all Mahmud's attempts to storm the place. But at last, finding that they could not hold out any longer against the great Afghan army, the defenders escaped to their boats one dark night and got away by sea.

The next day, when Mahmud's forces advanced once more to attack the walls, they found no one to defend them, and when a little later Mahmud and his generals rode through the

great gate, the whole place was deserted and as silent as the grave. Then carefully they searched every corner of the huge temple, but failed to discover any sign of the vast treasures they had heard of. The defenders, they supposed, must have carried them away.

At all events, Mahmud was determined to destroy the great idol which stood in the central hall of the temple. But as he entered this place with his great battle-axe in his hand a number of priests of the temple rushed from a secret hiding-place and implored him to spare their god. The treasure of the temple, they said, had been removed, just as Mahmud himself had suspected, but they promised to pay him a great sum of money if only he would not injure the figure of the god which stood before them.

But Mahmud refused to listen to their cries, and said, "Away with you. I have come here to destroy idols, not to sell them." And, lifting his heavy battle-axe, he struck the stone god a mighty blow, which resounded throughout the temple. To the astonishment of Mahmud and his generals the idol broke into two pieces, for it was hollow and the stone was thin. But that was not all, for out of the interior poured an immense stream of rubies, diamonds, and precious stones without number. It was the secret treasure of the temple. For generations it had been the custom of the priests to store all their richest and most valuable gems within the huge idol itself, and had it not been for the battle-axe of Mahmud it would never have been discovered by the Afghan invaders.

Mahmud at once started his homeward march, carrying with him this great heap of treasure and the magnificent sandal-wood gates of the temple. But he had hard work to get back to his mountains, for Hindu armies attacked him by night and day, and Hindu priests, pretending to be guides, led him astray into the wild deserts of Scinde, where thousands of his soldiers went mad from heat and thirst. So no more than a few feeble and worn-out remnants of his great army ever got back to the city of Ghazni.

From that time until 1176 the history of India continued to be a story of constant fighting and bloodshed without any definite result. But in 1176 an important event took place. A great Afghan chief, called Mohammed Ghoti, conquered the greater part of Hindostan. He was not contented, like Mahmud of Ghazni, with destroying idols and carrying away plunder, but set up a Mohammedan kingdom in India, and made the Hindus serve him just as William the Conqueror treated the Saxons after the Battle of Hastings. For the first time there was something like a strong government in India, but on Mohammed Ghori's death the kingdom broke up, and once more a long period of fighting ensued between various Mohammedan sultans, all of them striving to obtain supreme power, as in Saxon England before and during the Heptarchy, while now and then Hindu princes made themselves independent. For the most part, however, the Hindu people were from this time treated as an inferior race and endured terrible oppression.

It will be easier to understand those cruel times from the following story. Awful as it seems, it is only one of many quite as terrible which happened in India at that period. In England the first of our Edwards was on the throne.

Just then the Sultans of Delhi were the greatest power in India, and the one then reigning was Ala-ud-deen. In the "Arabian Nights " the same name is written Aladdin. This ruler was determined to take the splendid city of Chitor, the capital of the Rajputs, a brave Hindu race of warriors who had made for themselves an independent kingdom in the south-west of Hindostan.

Ala-ud-deen assembled a vast army and, marching into Rajputana, laid siege to Chitor. The city was built on a huge rocky hill, from which its palaces and temples looked out over all the surrounding country, and its fortifications, enclosing great masses of building, still frown from the summit of the heights on which they were raised.



THE ARMY OF ALA-UD-DEEN ON THE MARCH.

As long as their food supplies lasted the Rajputs held out, and beat off every attack of the Moslem host which surrounded them on all sides. But the fatal day came at last when there was

no more food in Chitor, and a solemn council was held to decide what should be done. It had to be one of two things—surrender or death. The proud Rajputs did not hesitate. They chose the latter, and their women, being told of the decision, agreed that it was best.

So they planned a great ceremony of self-sacrifice which, terrible as it was, was not uncommon in those desperate times. Great piles of timber and inflammable materials, upon which were piled all their treasures, were raised upon one of the hills within the fortress. When everything was ready, the queen and all the women, to the number of one thousand three hundred, assembled in a great funeral procession, a funeral in which all were to die, and proceeded with solemn rites to the place where the huge dark masses of timber awaited their coming.

Around the pile stood the Rajput warriors, clad in saffron-coloured raiment, their bright swords in their hands and flaming torches in readiness to complete the awful sacrifice of their wives and daughters. As soon as the women were all standing upon the great altar of timber the fire was applied, and as the flames and smoke leapt up from this horrible furnace the Rajputs threw open the gates of Chitor and, rushing forth sword in hand, threw themselves upon their enemies in a last desperate charge.

Most of them were cut to pieces, but some escaped into the Aravalli mountains. The flames and smoke of the terrible sacrifice within the city were still rising above the piles of female victims as Ala-ud-deen led his army through heaps of slain into the great rock-fortress of Chitor. So that, after all, the Sultan of Delhi won nothing but the empty walls of the Rajput city. Horrible as the story is, it gives us a graphic peep at the history of India in those earlier times before the more settled government which followed the coming of the Moghuls in 1526.

Until then we find a state of almost ceaseless warfare between the various Mohammedan sultans, princes, and generals, each and all striving for supreme power and the

possession of the great city of Delhi. But all this internal warfare was suddenly smothered in 1398 by the mighty invasion of Tamerlane, who broke into India with hordes of fierce Tartar warriors. He swept everything before him like a devastating pestilence, and filled the land with slaughter and destruction. The great cities like Delhi, which had been the centres of government, were sacked and burnt. It was just as though everything had to begin all over again, and for a hundred and fifty years after Tamerlane had gone there was no supreme power in India. In fact, there followed a great blank for the space of a century and a quarter, i.e. from the reign of Richard II of England to that of Henry VIII.

Then for a long time we hear of Mohammedan governors and generals who set themselves up as independent potentates, while they fought one another and oppressed their Hindu subjects. At last, amidst the general confusion, the Lodi kings of Delhi made themselves more powerful than any other rulers, and seized the territories of all their less powerful neighbours. But the time was now approaching for the arrival of a new and greater conqueror than India had yet seen. Away over the great mountains of the north in Kabul, Baber, the Moghul, was watching events in India with an eager eye, watching and waiting for a chance to lead his army into the Indian plains. Presently it came.

CHAPTER IV

THE EMPIRE OF THE MOGHULS

At last the Sultan of Delhi became so cruel and tyrannical that the provinces of Oudh, Behar, and the Punjab revolted, and sent messengers to Kabul asking Baber, the Moghul prince, to come down and help them.

Now Baber was not a man to waste any time. His army was ready to move, and without a moment's delay he advanced through the mountains and crossed the Indus. But the Sultan of Delhi had not been idle. He assembled a great army and, marching against Baber, met him at Panipat. Baber's army was not a large one, but he himself was the most skilful general of that time, and in the great battle which followed he completely shattered the army of the Delhi tyrant.

Then the people, who had asked for his help, finding they had nothing more to fear, were anxious that he should return to his own country. But this did not suit Baber at all. He had come to India, and there he meant to stay. Although his army was only a small one, he was a leader like our First and Third Edwards or Henry V, and inspired his men with so much courage and confidence that they were able to fight and overcome enemies far more numerous, as our forefathers did at Crecy, Poitiers, and Agincourt.

So, although the Mohammedan princes and generals who had called him into India collected armies and tried to drive him back to Kabul, Baber defeated them all, and at last they were glad to submit and accept him as their ruler. It was easier for them to do this because, not only was Baber a Mussulman like themselves, but he was not a cruel or oppressive tyrant. In fact, it may be said that there was no better man amongst the leaders of that day.

All that we know of him is picturesque, romantic, and fascinating. He was a poet as well as a soldier, cheerful in times of trouble, and generous in prosperity. He delighted in adventure and deeds of daring, and at the same time he enjoyed the society of men of wit and wisdom. We have been able to learn a good deal of the times in which he lived from the writings of Baber himself.

But although he succeeded in holding the throne during his lifetime, when he died, in 1530, his son Humayun was faced by a revolution which, after hard fighting, compelled him to fly back to Kabul, where he remained for over twenty years. Meanwhile the throne of Delhi was seized by Sher Khan, a cruel but capable leader, who ruled well for six years, erecting many fine public buildings and improving the country with excellent roads.

He was killed by an explosion when besieging a town in 1545, and only ten years later, when his grandson was on the throne, Humayun came back with an army from Kabul. He defeated the Sher family at the battle of Sarhind, and once more sat upon the throne which his father, Baber, had won. His time, however, had come, for very shortly afterwards he fell over the marble staircase in the palace at Delhi and was killed on the spot.

But the empire of the Moghuls had returned to power, and Akbar, the greatest of that famous line, ascended the throne at the age of thirteen in the year 1556. This was two years before the reign of Elizabeth in England. Forty-nine years he reigned in India, and died in 1605, just two years after the great English queen. For another hundred years the great empire of the Moghuls lasted, a hundred and forty-nine years in all, or a hundred and seventy-nine if we reckon from the coming of Baber in 1526.

It was the glory of Akbar that he was no mere Eastern tyrant holding his throne by the strength of his armies, but the real creator of a great and majestic empire, the only native one

that India has ever known. Although his successors greatly increased the splendours of the empire, yet Akbar in a special degree deserves to be considered the greatest of them all. For under him, as never happened again until under English rule, men of all races and religions were treated with equal fairness and justice, and as long as they did not rebel could enjoy their possessions in peace.

Coming to the throne as a boy, he found himself under the guardianship of an able but arrogant old statesman called Bairam, who never let him out of his sight. But Akbar, although only thirteen, was extremely crafty, and while he pretended to be only a quiet, modest boy, he was watching for an opportunity to give Bairam the slip. So one day he said that his mother was ill, and he must ride off to see her. Instead, however, of going to his mother, he galloped away to the army where he had friends, and with the help of these he announced his intention of ruling henceforth by himself. This was the end of Bairam, although he tried to cause a rebellion; but Akbar, generous as he always was, treated his old guardian with the greatest consideration.

We need not dwell on the wars which Akbar undertook. He extended his dominions on all sides, and by the time he was fifty all Hindostan, together with what we now call Afghanistan, formed one great and well-organised empire bound together not so much by the might of Akbar's armies as by just government and equal rights for all men. The Hindus were no longer treated as an inferior race or made to pay taxes which Mohammedans escaped. Not only were all taxed alike, but Hindus received high offices in the State. Their religion was respected and laws were made for their protection.

One of Akbar's greatest triumphs was in turning the Rajputs from bitter enemies into firm and faithful friends. They had always been at war with the former Sultans of Delhi, and they resisted Akbar fiercely to begin with, but at last they were completely won over by his generous offers of fair treatment. Nor were they disappointed, for they found themselves no longer

oppressed by greedy and tyrannical governors, but made princes of the empire with high rank and office.

And so it came about in one of Akbar's wars that on a battle day, when he nearly met his end in a narrow lane, it was two Rajput princes who placed themselves on either side of him, and guarded his head as they fought their way through their enemies.

The truth is that Akbar, like his grandfather Baber, was not a strict Mohammedan. He was a philosopher-king who loved to know something about all religions. So, although on one occasion, to please his stricter Mohammedan subjects, Akbar made a pilgrimage of two hundred miles on foot to a great Mohammedan mosque or church, very many of them were angry with him, and disapproved of his treating the Hindus as well as the Mohammedan people.

But being a man of great and noble mind, he cared nothing for what these smaller men thought or said. And it was because he was more just, humane, and generous than all other men were in those days that he was able to found a great empire which lasted for one hundred and forty-nine years. Then it fell, because Arunzeb, the last of the Moghuls, deserted the ways of his great-grandfather and oppressed all who were not of the Mohammedan religion.

The story of Akbar and how he established the Moghul Empire is of especial interest to English people, because their rule in India is founded on the same principles of justice and good government as was Akbar's. And although we, like him, have to face a good deal of discontent, because there are always some people who want more than they have got, yet the only periods of really just government which India has ever known are the reign of Akbar the Great and the rule of Britain.

CHAPTER V

THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

With the accession of Jehanjir to the throne the history of the empire undergoes a remarkable change. It was the strong, fine character of Akbar which had made good and orderly government possible. But the new emperor possessed none of his father's virtues, and although Akbar's system of government remained, all men soon began to find that the new ruler was a self-indulgent man who cared nothing for goodness, wisdom and justice. Consequently, every one began to plot and strive for his own advantage without caring for the good of the country and the public welfare.

In this evil course the Emperor himself led the way, and before long the reign of Jehanjir becomes one long story of conspiracy, intrigue, and bloodshed. How changed it was from the noble time of Akbar will be seen from what follows.

One of the first acts of Jehanjir was secretly to order the murder of Sher Afkun, one of his father's trusted nobles, a man of great courage and wonderful bodily strength. He was known as the tiger-slayer, because he was said to have killed one of these beasts with his own hands and without a weapon of any kind. His wife was the most beautiful woman of her time, and Jehanjir had long desired to marry her himself. As soon, therefore, as Sher Afkun was dead, after a desperate fight, in which he slew very many of his murderers, his wife was carried off to Delhi, and after some time became the wife of the Emperor, not knowing him to be guilty of her husband's death. She proved to be one of the most extraordinary women that ever lived, and the history of the Moghul Empire at this time is entirely the story of Nur Jehan, "The Light of the World," as the Emperor, fascinated by her beauty, ordained she should be called. Her family were favoured beyond all, and placed next in

rank to the royal princes. She was allowed to assume the title of Empress, and the coins of the realm were stamped with her name as well as with that of the Emperor. In fact, such was the power of this clever and beautiful woman that, although the imperial orders were issued in the Emperor's name, they were always in reality devised by Nur Jehan. It is a great proof of her wisdom that, in spite of much bloodshed and turmoil, the reign of Jehanjir was in other respects one of the most prosperous in Mohammedan history.



INDIAN MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS.

A few years after her rise to power the Emperor's life and throne were endangered by the insurrection of his third son, Prince Churru, who eventually succeeded his father as Shah Jehan. He was a dashing military leader, and had won considerable fame in suppressing a dangerous revolt in the Deccan, when, finding himself at the head of a powerful army, which he completely won over to his designs, he assassinated his eldest brother and proclaimed himself Emperor.

He would probably have been successful but for two people—Nur Jehan and Mohabet Khan, the imperial general, who, like Baber and Akbar, was the most skilful leader of his time. The great Sultana had never trusted Prince Churru, or Shah Jehan, as he now began to be called, and although she found the greatest difficulty in persuading the Emperor that he was a dangerous conspirator, preparations to resist him were at last made, and Mohabet Khan, bringing an army from the north, overthrew Prince Shah Jehan in a desperate battle and compelled him to fly.

But he had a secret friend at court, by whose aid he very nearly out-manœuvred the wily Nur Jehan. This friend was Azif Khan, his father-in-law and a trusted counsellor of Jehanjir. He knew that Nur Jehan's great object was to secure the empire for her own family, and so planned a desperate scheme to give the throne to Shah Jehan.

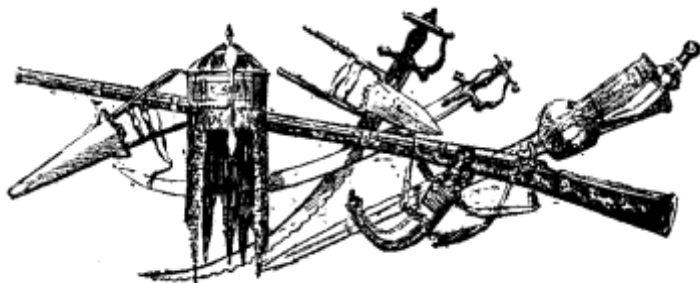
He persuaded Jehanjir to remove the imperial treasures of the Moghuls from Agra to Lahore, and sent secretly to Shah Jehan advising him to intercept and carry them off. These treasures consisted of vast stores of gold and precious stones, which had been accumulated in the treasury guarded by the great fort at Agra ever since the early days of Akbar the Great. If Shah Jehan could seize these on the road to Lahore, he would have enough money to bribe the whole army of the Emperor.

Jehanjir fell into the trap, and before Nur Jehan knew anything about it, his sealed order had been delivered to the imperial treasurer at Agra. The latter officer was a faithful and trusted servant of the empire, and could not help wondering greatly at this strange and sudden removal of all the imperial wealth. So, although he was forced to obey the Emperor's command, he did so unwillingly and with many forebodings.

It was not an easy business, however, to examine the records, make fresh entries, withdraw the numerous cases from the vaults, and superintend their careful packing before they were carried out to the long line of camels upon whose backs they had to be secured for the long journey before them. All this could not be done quickly, and the treasurer, suspicious of he knew not what, contrived that the work should take as long as he could possibly make it. He invented all sorts of delays on the pretext of making extra sure of his charge during the transport, until two whole days passed by before the work was finished.

Suddenly a messenger, breathless and travel-stained, rushed into the fortress at Agra with the startling news that Shah Jehan with a large force was advancing from the south. At once the treasurer saw through the entire plot. Without a moment's

delay he restored the treasure to the vaults of the fortress and dispatched a messenger on a swift dromedary to inform the Emperor at Lahore of what he had done.



INDIAN WEAPONS.

It was a narrow escape. The prince had been too impatient, or he would have captured the vast wealth of the Moghuls on the open road from Agra. Now it was once more safe behind the strong walls raised by his grandfather Akbar. He captured the city and slaughtered the inhabitants in a fury of disappointment, but the impregnable fortress and its treasure defied his attack, and in a few days news reached him that Jehanjir was advancing with an immense army. Once more Shah Jehan had to flee, and was an exile until the death of his father.

The rest of the history of Jehanjir and the beautiful Nur Jehan is stranger than the wildest romance ever invented by the wit of man. But I have only space to tell here how Nur Jehan grew jealous of the great General Mohabet, who had so often saved the empire, how she tried to get him into her power in order to kill him, and how at last she persuaded the Emperor to believe that Mohabet was guilty of treason and to help her take him prisoner.

But the general was too clever to be caught, and when at last he went to see Jehanjir, it was at the head of a large force of Rajputs, with whom he surprised and carried off the Emperor himself, although he treated him with the greatest respect and consideration. Then Nur Jehan followed with an army and,

mounted on an elephant, led her troops across a great river in the face of the enemy's fire, but after fighting desperately and being wounded, she saw her army defeated by Mohabet and swam back across the river. But the end of all was stranger still. For when at last Mohabet had got both the Emperor and Nur Jehan into his power, and when he might also have slain the Grand Vizier, who fell into his hands at the capture of Rhotas, he declared that, having righted his own wrongs, he wanted nothing more, and set his prisoners at liberty, only making the Emperor promise that all which had passed should be forgotten.

The Emperor promised, and meant to keep his word. Nur Jehan, with friendly smiles on her beautiful face, also promised, and meant in her heart to kill Mohabet at the first opportunity. She waited until the trusting general had sent his army away and then threw off her mask. She sent men to kill Mohabet, and he had to fly, leaving all his wealth, while the Empress sent messages to the governors all over the empire ordering them to take him alive or dead.

But while this great man was now a fugitive with a price on his head, he had, without knowing it, a powerful friend at court. This was none other than Nur Jehan's own brother, the Grand Vizier Azif Khan, and father-in-law of Shah Jehan.

He knew that Mohabet, who had spared his life at Rhotas, was the finest general as well as one of the noblest men of his time, and that he had done nothing to deserve the hatred of the Empress. So Azif sent a secret message to Mohabet, telling him that he was his friend and desired to see him. Alone and without a single follower, Mohabet rode four hundred miles to meet Azif at a spot between Lahore and Delhi. Upon seeing the worn and ragged condition of the hero, the Grand Vizier fell upon the neck of the famous old warrior and burst into tears.

The result of this meeting was a compact to proclaim Shah Jehan as Emperor, but the sudden death of Jehanjir once more changed the aspect of affairs. It prevented civil war, but Nur Jehan suddenly placed Prince Bulaki, Jehanjir's grandson,

upon the throne, and for the moment Azif Khan had to keep quiet. He actually assisted the new monarch to assume the crown, for at present Shah Jehan and his supporters had no army in readiness behind them. Accordingly Azif sent to the prince, and between them a plan of amazing craft and cunning was devised.

By the advice of the Grand Vizier the new Emperor sent to Shah Jehan to demand his submission. The emissary found him lying upon a couch seemingly at the point of death with blood oozing from his mouth, and returned with this news to Delhi. Shortly after the prince was reported dead, and his friends requested that as a last favour he might be buried in the tomb of Akbar at Agra. Bulaki, overjoyed at the removal of his dangerous uncle, readily consented.

All this time the supposed dead man was perfectly well, the scene at his sick bed having been a clever piece of acting, with the aid of a mouthful of goat's blood, which completely deceived the Emperor's messenger. Azif Khan, with many signs of deep grief for the death of his son-in-law, advised Bulaki to be present at the funeral in Agra. Nothing loth, the Emperor went to Agra with a small retinue just as Shah Jehan arrived, riding behind a grand funeral bier and followed by a great army. Then Bulaki, seeing the plain filled with horsemen and foot-soldiers, at once suspected treachery, and, turning, his horse only just in time, galloped to Lahore, while behind him sounded a great noise of trumpets and kettle-drums proclaiming as emperor Shah Jehan, who entered the fortress at Agra and ascended the throne of the Moghuls. What became of Bulaki is not known, although it is believed he escaped to Persia.

As for Nur Jehan, the "Light of the World," her power ceased with the death of Jehanjir. She retired henceforth from the world, devoting the rest of her life to study and domestic quiet. The singular beauty of this wonderful woman lasted almost to the very end of her life. During this period of seclusion she invented the perfume so well known as attar of roses, and

she died in 1645 at Lahore, eighteen years after the death of Jehanjir.



A MOGHUL EMPEROR.

The story of Jehanjir's reign, with its maze of plot and counter-plot, war and insurrection, is continued under his successors. Although the emperors are different, yet we find the same sort of things happening. The Imperial Court is surrounded by the greatest magnificence and with all the wealth and splendour of the East. There are wars against the chiefs of the Deccan in the south, with the Persians and Tartars of the north, or against princes of the Royal House who strive to gain the throne. It was only because Akbar the Great had built the empire so well that it stood the strain. Apart from these struggles, the reign of Shah Jehan is chiefly remarkable for the additions he made to the grandeur of the empire.

In memory of his favourite wife, niece of the celebrated Nur Jehan, he commenced to build the magnificent Taj Mahal at Agra, the most beautiful of many beautiful buildings in all India. It was constructed of all the most costly materials at a vast expense, and it took a multitude of workmen twelve years to

complete it. Shah Jehan also made the wonderful Peacock throne. It was of solid gold and blazed with jewels. The figures of two peacocks stood behind it with expanded tails inlaid with sapphires, rubies, emeralds, pearls, and other precious stones to represent the natural colours. Among the ornaments was a parrot of life-size, cut from a single emerald. He also erected many other famous buildings which are the wonder and glory of India to-day. It may be said, indeed, that all the Moghul emperors left behind them some of the most beautiful buildings in the world, while the English have erected some of the ugliest.

In 1657 Shah Jehan, under whom the empire reached its greatest pitch of magnificence, was seized with paralysis, and, as usual, the princes, his sons, at once began to fight for his throne. The struggle was eventually won by the superior cunning and military skill of Aurunzebe, who made a prisoner of his father and overpowered his brothers. The latter fled, but after much desperate fighting were captured one by one and put to death.

We have now seen something of the splendid dynasty of the Moghuls. We have yet to learn how their great empire fell. But first we must see how in the meantime Europe had found its way by sea to Asia, and how among the Western nations the English established themselves upon the Indian sea-coast.

CHAPTER VI

HOW EUROPE FOUND THE SEA-ROAD TO INDIA

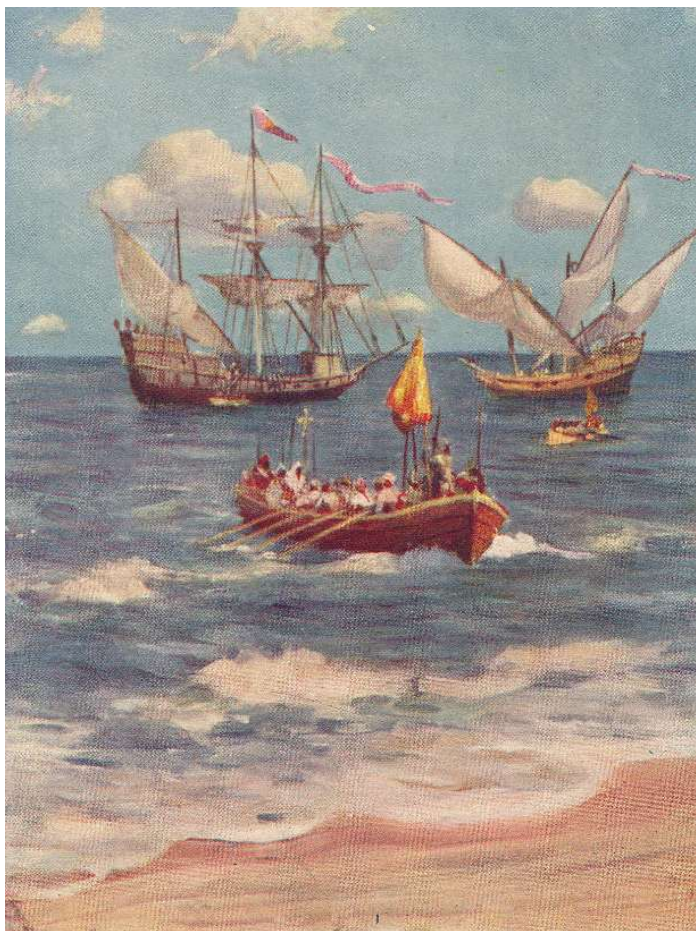
At the end of the fifteenth century there happened suddenly and about the same time two of the greatest events in the history of the world. One of them was the discovery of America, and the other the finding of the way into the Indian seas round the southernmost point of Africa.

When the brave Portuguese captain, Vasco da Gama, and his little storm-tossed ships first beat round that point, which they called the Cape of Good Hope, and sailed across the Indian Ocean to the Indian town of Kalicut in 1498, they changed the entire history of the world. Up to that time the whole of the rich commerce of India and the East had come to Europe overland through Syria or up the Red Sea to Alexandria. The great Turkish Empire, the Venetians, and the Genoese had by means of this trade grown exceedingly rich and powerful, and the other nations of Europe were forced to buy from them alone.

But now, by the discovery of the ocean-way round the Cape of Good Hope, the wealth of the East was to fall into the hands of the seafaring nations of Western Europe. By the end of the sixteenth century this had come to pass, and was the cause of long and bitter struggles among the new adventurers for the sole possession of the rich trade with the golden East.

First came the Portuguese, then the Dutch and English—those bold seamen voyaging in little galleons, barks, and "fly-boats" no bigger than many of our yachts are to-day. It is a wonder to us how these podgy little vessels, with their high stems and sterns, clumsy masts and spars, could have braved the dangers of such long, adventurous voyages. But they seem to

have been as sturdy as the men who sailed them into those unknown seas.



VASCO DA GAMA LANDING AT KALICUT.

For nearly eighty years the Portuguese were the strongest Power in the East Indies. They sent fleet after fleet round the Cape of Good Hope, and, after fighting and beating the Turkish ships which tried to drive them away, possessed themselves of various points in Southern India and built a magnificent city at Goa. So rich did they become that in the merchants' houses at

Goa all the vessels and ornaments were of gold. Indeed, so common was silver that it was thought nothing of in those days.

At that period the Portugals, as we used to call them, and Spaniards claimed the whole of the Indies East and West as their "own house" by right of being the first to discover them. For many years the Portugals kept fleets and armies in India, and did their utmost to drive out all other traders by force of arms. In this way many English and Dutch traders suffered great injustice and often cruelty. But the Dutch, when at last they had beaten the Portugals, who had grown weaker at home, treated the English in exactly the same way.

The English traders belonged to the East India Company, which was formed in the year 1600 to trade with the Spice Islands of the East Indies. They had made little attempt to trade with India itself, or to seize land and build forts like the Portuguese and the Dutch. Their only desire was to carry on their trade in peace, and if it had not been for the cruelty of the Dutch they might never have founded an empire in India at all. However, in 1623 the Dutch, who had long hated the presence of our merchants in the Molucca Islands, although only few in number, attacked and massacred nearly all of them at Amboyna. In fact, for a long time the English were so much weaker than their enemies that both the Portuguese and Dutch thought nothing of sinking an English merchantman, drowning the whole crew deliberately, or of destroying an English trading-station. These things continually happened while England was at peace with Portugal and Holland in Europe, and in those days news took so long to reach home that, if our merchants had not made ready to fight their own battles, they would have been destroyed by either the Portuguese, the Dutch, or, later, by the French.

Fortunately for our traders, who were driven for a time from the Spice Islands trade by the massacre of Amboyna, they found a place of refuge prepared for them in India itself.

Every one of us who feels a thrill of pride in the wonderful growth of British dominion in India will find a special

interest in the little town of Surat on the coast of Gujerat, for it was at this place that our splendid Indian Empire had its first beginning. In 1607 an English vessel bound for the Spice Islands was driven by stress of weather to Surat, and in December 1612, during the reign of Jehanjir, we were given by the Moghul Emperor a formal permission to trade. This was very largely due to the wonder and admiration of the Indians at the victory gained by a gallant seaman, Captain Best, with his two ships, the *Dragon* and *Hosander*, over the Portuguese fleet, which came up from Goa on purpose to destroy them.

Several times the Portuguese came against us in great force, but each time we defeated them with heavy loss. Three years later our traders were greatly helped by an ambassador sent to Jehanjir by King James I. This was Sir Thomas Roe, a man of great tact and energy, who greatly pleased the Moghul Emperor. He wrote some interesting as well as amusing memoirs, which tell us how one day he detected the ladies of Jehanjir's palace peeping through their window-blinds and laughing at him as he stood on the balcony of his house. No doubt the quaint costume of James's time seemed as amusing to them as it would if we saw it amongst us to-day.

To Surat, then, came those English traders who were obliged to fly from the Dutch in the Spice Islands, little thinking at the time that the troubles which drove them there were really helping to build up a magnificent empire in India. For the ways in which Providence works are sometimes hard for us to understand.

For the next forty years, however, our traders continued to suffer greatly from the attacks of the Dutch, whose fleets and soldiers sent from Europe treated the English wherever they found them with great "cruelty, insolency, and cunning circumventing projects," as an old writer tells us. For our men could get no assistance from home while the war raged between the King and Parliament. But when Cromwell came into power his strong and vigorous rule at once helped our Indian merchants to hold their own and make good progress, although the Dutch

managed to seize Ceylon, and continued to make savage attacks upon our ships and trading-stations whenever they could.

So right on through the seventeenth century our merchants traded and fought, while Charles II came to the throne of England and Aurunzebe to that of the Moghuls. Charles helped the Company very greatly, giving them a new and better charter and adding to their possessions the settlement of Bombay, which he had received with the dowry of his Portuguese wife, Catharine of Braganza. Then, in 1672, the French appeared in the Indian seas and occupied several stations on the south and east coasts. Consequently, at that time there was still no sign that our English merchants were in the end to win the great race for the dominion of the East.

Soon after this, however, there broke out those great wars in Europe which engaged both France and Holland in a long and desperate struggle, and while they were thus weakening one another, England began to draw slowly but surely to the leading place in Asiatic conquest and commerce.

It was then that we made good our footing on the Indian coasts. In 1685 we made Bombay our headquarters on the western side. In 1686 Madras had become our chief post on the eastern shore, and a settlement was founded at Calcutta by young Job Charnock. Of him the story is told that he went one day with his guard of soldiers to see a young widow burnt alive with her dead husband, as the custom was until the English in later times put a stop to it. So beautiful was the widow that Charnock at once fell in love with her, and vowed that he wouldn't stand by and see so lovely a creature put into the fire. So he and his guards rescued her by force and carried her away to his lodgings. He married her, and they lived very happily for many years.

Upon these three places—Bombay, Madras, and Calcutta—our Empire was first founded, and from them it eventually spread over the whole of India.

CHAPTER VII

HOW THE EMPIRE OF THE MOGHULS BROKE UP

When Aurunzebe, the last great Emperor of the Moghuls, ascended the throne of Delhi in 1658, the year of Cromwell's death, he deserted the ways of Akbar and began greatly to oppress the Hindu people. Not only did he make them pay heavy taxes, but he burnt down their magnificent temples throughout the land, and forbade Hindus to hold any further employment under the Government.

A noble protest, addressed to him by a great Rajput leader, Rana Raj Singh of Udaipur, helps us to understand the change which had come over the empire. He wrote: "Your Royal ancestor Gul-ul-ud-din Akbar conducted the affairs of State in dignity and security for fifty-two years, keeping every class prosperous, whether followers of Jesus, or Moses, or of Muhamad; were they Brahmans, were they Atheists, all alike enjoyed his favour. . . . Jehanjir also extended for a period of twenty-two years the shadow of protection over his people. . . . Not less did the illustrious Shah Jehan in a fortunate reign of thirty-two years acquire for himself immortal fame, the just reward of clemency and righteousness."

After this the Hindu chief points to the bitter contrast between the rule of Aurunzebe and of those who had gone before him. But all protests were in vain. When the Hindus assembled in crowds to defend their temples he sent elephants amongst them and trampled them to death. So it came about that the Hindu fighting spirit, which had died out for a hundred years, burst forth once more. The Rajputs flew to arms again, and further south in the Deccan a Hindu robber race, called the Mahrattas, who lived in the mountains, found a great leader in a chief called Sivaji. In the north, too, a Hindu reformer, called

Nanuk, formed the fighting sect of the Guru Govin Singh, which in time to come grew into the great Sikh power of the Punjab.

Of all these new enemies Sivaji was the cleverest and most daring. He was a sort of Hindu Robin Hood. For a long time he had carried on warfare against the small Mohammedan kingdoms of the Deccan, and his cunning was extraordinary. On one occasion the Sultan of Bijapur had sent an army against him to punish his constant raids and robberies. Sivaji, instead of flying, pretended to be terribly frightened. He implored forgiveness, and persuaded the Mohammedan general to meet him with one attendant near the hill fort of Partabghar, where he promised to make his submission. But Sivaji was bent on murder. He was very clever in the use of those treacherous weapons called the "scorpion," a crooked dagger hidden in the sleeve, and the "tiger-claws," curved hooks made of steel and fastened to the fingers by rings. They were invisible when the hand was closed, but a terrible weapon when the hand was opened.

At the appointed time on an open slope of the hills stood the leader of the Bijapur army, clad in white muslin and with no more than one attendant. Presently Sivaji, a slim, slight figure also in white, with one follower, is seen descending the rocks from his stronghold. With a submissive obeisance he draws near, chain armour hidden beneath his muslin robe, the deadly tiger-claws on his left hand, and the scorpion-dagger concealed in his right sleeve, near to the hand with which he made his salaam or bow.

He had got very close now. Instantly, before the general realised his danger, the tiger-claws had fastened upon his flesh and he was stabbed to the heart. Meanwhile Sivaji's robber bands, having crept by secret paths round the Mohammedan camp, fell upon the surprised soldiery and put them to flight.

Aurunzebe, instead of helping the sultans of Bijapur and Golkonda to keep Sivaji and the Mahrattas in order, conquered these two small kingdoms and added them to his empire. But,

cunning as he was, he could never destroy Sivaji or the Mahrattas.

Only once he managed to entice him to visit Delhi, but Sivaji, who found that Aurunzebe was going to play him some trick, dressed up as a flower-seller and slipped out of the city. He was pursued, but after numerous adventures managed to get back to his mountains. Later on Aurunzebe sent against him the imperial general Shaista Khan, who marched to Poona to find and punish Sivaji. Nothing could be seen or heard of him. But one day a large wedding procession entered the town amidst great rejoicings. As they passed Shaista Khan's house, where the general was holding a feast, a large part of the wedding procession suddenly rushed in with drawn swords. It was Sivaji and his men disguised. They very nearly captured the general, who had to jump from a window, but they killed his son and many of his retinue, after which they succeeded in escaping.

Aurunzebe tried all sorts of cunning tricks to entrap Sivaji. Once he sent his eldest son to command the army in the Deccan, with secret orders to sham a rebellion against the empire. Many joined him, but the man who was especially wanted sent a message from his mountain stronghold to say that he was all in favour of the rebellion and hoped Prince Shah Alam would succeed in pulling his father from the throne. He promised that when the prince and his army left the Deccan he would keep order for him, but that he was obliged to remain in his hills at present for the sake of his health.

Sivaji did not mean to run any risks, and he must have watched with amusement the rebellion come suddenly to an end and Shah Alam make a sham surrender, while some of those who had joined him were actually beheaded. But, although Aurunzebe had not caught Sivaji, he was pleased because he had made it impossible for his eldest son to cause a real rebellion afterwards, since, of course, no one would trust him again.

It was largely Aurunzebe's crafty and suspicious nature which caused him to ruin the empire. He distrusted every man

who was not safely imprisoned or beheaded, and so made enemies of his best friends and best sons, who would otherwise have remained true.

So wars arose on all sides, and, in spite of his great age, he was ceaselessly in the field with his armies, dashing, like an old lion, now at the Afghans in the north, now at the Rajputs in the west, or, again, at the Mahrattas in the south. But he never completely subdued any, for the overgrown empire was gradually breaking up like a castle of sand around which the waves are beginning to wash.

It is necessary for us to understand what was happening in India at this time, because it was out of the general confusion which followed the death of Aurunzebe that the power and influence of Great Britain, supported by her victorious navy, began to spread in a number of directions. Thirty years after the death of Aurunzebe the Moghul Empire received its death-blow. Once more, as of old, through the Afghan passes, now no longer guarded, came Nadir Shah with a great invading Persian host. Beginning as a robber chief, like Sivaji, he had become a great conqueror like Cyrus or Nebuchadnezzar, and the ruler of a mighty empire from the Euphrates to the Indus.

He was a man of noble presence, with large eyes and a voice like thunder. It is said that his aspect was so terrible that men trembled in his presence. Before him the Moghul armies fled like sheep from a lion, and he entered Delhi with all the pride of a conqueror. That same night the people rose and massacred a number of his soldiers. Next day Nadir Shah took his revenge. From eight in the morning till three o'clock in the afternoon his army of Persians sacked, burnt, and slew, while he himself sat in the public square and exulted with the ferocity of a demon at the awful scene of carnage. The city ran with blood, and when all was over the streets were choked with dead bodies and burning houses. When Nadir Shah marched away he took with him all the treasures of Delhi, and carried them, together with the famous Peacock throne, to Persia.

Meanwhile the Mahrattas, now growing into a great power, were sweeping over central and western India like a mighty flood, and the whole country was covered with wild confusion. The Indian people became a masterless multitude, like leaves blown by the storm, until gradually the different provinces of the old empire emerged as independent states. These the British, after long years of warfare, were to combine into another and greater empire than that of the Moghuls, which with every year became more like a fading shadow.

CHAPTER VIII

DUPLEIX'S GREAT PLOT

But before we could catch a distant view of our final triumph we had to fight and conquer another great European rival who sought to sweep us from his path.

We have now reached the early years of the eighteenth century. The Portuguese and Dutch are no longer our competitors, and the French have taken their place. Pondicherry, which they founded in 1674, was now a flourishing city with seventy thousand inhabitants, and they had also occupied Chandanagore, which had become a settlement of first-rate importance. Both these places were in the neighbourhood of the English stations on the eastern shores of India.

Led by clever and energetic men, the progress of the French had been as astonishing as our own. Now they seemed likely to surpass us, and the reason was this. The English Company, organised and managed by merchants, cared for nothing but trade and profit. The French, however, under their new Director-General, Dupleix, a daring and far-sighted soldier and statesman, saw that not only might trade be increased, but that an empire might be won by taking advantage of the confusion and anarchy which were turning India upside down outside the European settlements.

England and France were then at peace, but Dupleix saw that war might come, and laid his plans carefully. Courteous, tactful, and firm, he won the friendship of the neighbouring Indian princes, fortified Pondicherry, and carefully trained his army. So when, in 1744, war was declared between France and England, it found him well prepared.

Dupleix, victorious by both land and sea—for a British fleet had to withdraw to Ceylon—took Madras after a short

siege. He seized all the British Company's property and, carrying the governor with his officers to Pondicherry, marched them through the town as captives in a triumphal procession. He failed, however, to take Fort St. David, a few miles to the south of him, and the arrival of a powerful British fleet compelled his army to scamper behind the walls of Pondicherry. The tables were now turned. The fleet brought a strong force of English soldiers, and with our native troops we were strong enough to besiege Dupleix in his own town. But our attack was such a clumsy affair that Dupleix beat us off. This added greatly to his renown amongst the native princes and chiefs, to all of whom he sent letters boasting of his victory over the English fleet and army.

Thus, although Madras was returned to the British when a treaty of peace was arranged with France in 1749, Dupleix had been so successful that the native princes were more than ever inclined to take his side.

So ended the first round in the great struggle which had now begun for the mastery of India. The British forces both by land and sea, except at one or two places, had been used with the most ridiculous want of skill and energy. Everything thus seemed at this stage to point to the success of France. That victory, after all, went to England was due to two causes, neither of which Dupleix had thought of. The first was the chance which sent young Robert Clive to a clerkship at Madras, and the second was the great power of the British fleets upon the seas.

CHAPTER IX

HOW CLIVE SAVED THE ENGLISH

The story which now follows is both extraordinary and romantic. It is a story of plot and counter-plot, of battles and adventures of the most desperate description, and the heroic deeds of stout-hearted Englishmen which saved us from complete disaster.

When peace was made between England and France the warfare in India naturally ceased as well. But, although he could not fight the English, Dupleix, who could never rest, saw that he might get the better of them in another way. And this is how he went to work.

A desperate struggle was just then breaking out in two of the native States between rival princes who claimed the chief power. Dupleix at once plunged boldly into the general confusion. Now the English and French settlements of Madras and Pondicherry were both situated in a province on the sea-coast called the Carnatic, and the cunning French leader planned to set up a ruler of this part who would be friendly to the French and have to obey them. That was the first move in the game. The second, which was even more important, was to set up a ruler in the Deccan who would also be under French influence. As the Deccan was the most important State in southern India, Dupleix saw that if he could succeed in both these schemes it would undoubtedly make France the greatest Power in the country, and leave the English of no importance at all.

For some time the French were successful in every direction. They helped their Carnatic pretender to defeat the ruling nabob, or prince, and seized Arcot, his capital. They then marched with their Deccan pretender against the Nizam of that State, who meantime appealed for help to the English. This was granted, but very shortly afterwards this Nizam was murdered by

his own men, and as the French at once placed their friend on the throne, they seemed everywhere victorious. They had got hold of the Deccan, and had all but seized the Carnatic too.

So far the game had gone entirely in favour of Dupleix, and the English realised that they were in greater danger than they had ever been before, because, as they wrote home, the French would soon be able to surround their settlements and prevent provisions or merchandise being brought to them. Of course this would drive us out of India, which was just what Dupleix wanted. Only one place in the Carnatic still held out against the French and their nabob. This was Trichinopoly, which was defended by Mohamed Ali, a son of the old nabob whom the French had driven from Arcot.

The English, knowing that all was lost if this place were captured by Dupleix's native friends, scraped together two thousand men and sent them to the rescue. But the next news of them was that they had been driven back on Trichinopoly and shut in there by the enemy. What was to be done? Scarcely any more troops were left, still fewer officers, and, if Trichinopoly fell, it would be all over with us in India.

The prospect seemed black enough, but it was at this moment that out of the darkness there stepped the figure of the hero who was not only to save the little beleaguered garrison but to win India for the English.

In the little Shropshire town of Market Drayton twenty-six years before had been born a boy called Robert Clive. As he grew up he became a terrible scapegrace, known and reprobated throughout the place as a daring good-for-nothing, a leader of a band of equally bad boys, whom the good people of Market Drayton called "lawless resolute." It was, therefore, with a feeling of general relief that he was at last shipped off to India as a clerk in the East India Company's service.

He seems to have hated the loneliness and drudgery of his life, and one day a friend found him sitting dejectedly at a table with a pistol before him. Fire that thing out of the window,

will you?" said young Clive. His friend did so. And as the pistol went off Clive remarked, "I have twice held it to my head, but it missed fire both times, so I suppose I must be meant to live for something."



CLIVE.

When fighting began Clive at once left his office work and was quickly in the thick of it. Several times he had wonderful escapes from death, and his daring courage was soon noticed by his superiors. But in addition to this he was now to show that he possessed soldierly skill of an unusual kind.

The garrison of Trichinopoly were beginning to despair and the enemy outside were in high spirits at the thought of its speedy capture, when their confidence was suddenly turned to blank dismay. The astounding news had reached them that Arcot, the capital of the Carnatic, whose prince, aided by the French, was attacking Trichinopoly, had fallen into the hands of the English.

It was true. Young Clive had proposed this daring scheme for the relief of Trichinopoly to Mr. Saunders, the Governor of Fort St. David, who, sharp enough to see its cleverness, had sent him off with all the men they could scrape

together, no more than five hundred, mostly sepoys, with eight officers, six of whom had never seen a shot fired.

Five days later, in the midst of a tremendous thunderstorm, Clive and his gallant five hundred rushed the defences of Arcot, to find that the garrison had fled before him and that the capital of the Carnatic was in his power.

By this deed of splendid daring the whole state of things was changed. It was, of course, no good for the French and their allies to take Trichinopoly if they lost Arcot. The capital must be retaken at all costs, they decided, and a force of ten thousand men was detached from the siege and sent off to Arcot.

Meanwhile Clive had thrown himself into the fort, where he and his men worked their hardest to strengthen the old fortifications and build new ones, collect stores, and mount guns. But when all was done the position was a very weak one. For the walls were low, the towers ruinous, and the ditch around the fort was dry. Few could have hoped to hold such a place with a tiny force against the attack of ten thousand.

But for two long months Clive did so, even though fighting and sickness had reduced his little garrison to two hundred men. The story of that defence is one of the wildest of the romances of war. Away in his mountain stronghold Morari Rao, the fierce Mahratta chieftain, was so affected by the splendid heroism of the battle of the few against the many that he swore that if the English could fight like that they should not fight alone.

And so one day the news came that a relief column, escorted by clouds of terrible Mahratta horsemen, was coming from Madras. Hearing this the French and their allies determined on one more desperate attack. Accordingly, in the early morning of November 25, which was a great Mohammedan festival, when the Moslem soldiers were worked up to the wildest pitch of excitement, the besiegers rushed to the attack from all sides.

But Clive had learnt from his spies of what was intended, and all was ready when the moment came. That is to say, as ready as the weakened garrison, now numbering scarce two hundred men, could make ready against twenty times as many foes. Two places in the walls had been broken down by the enemy's artillery fire, and these points, as well as the two gates, were the real objects of attack.

Well might Clive and his brave little garrison have felt their hearts sink as the attacking columns rushed forward in the sunrise of that November morning. Charging in front of the enemy's ranks were elephants, their heads encased in steel to drive in the gates like living battering rams. Two broad causeways led to the gates, and these were swept by a murderous hail of bullets from Clive's men lying behind the ramparts. The huge beasts, struck by the British fire, turned in a frenzy of fear and pain and plunged back in a murderous retreat through the dense masses which were charging behind them.

For one desperate hour the assault went on. At every point of danger there was Clive. At one place where the wall was broken the enemy rushed on in a dense swarm with loud yells and nearly broke in, but Clive, darting to a cannon covering the breach, fired at close range into the faces of the oncoming masses, who fell back in confusion. In the space of sixty minutes Clive's 200 men had fired 12,000 rounds with deadly effect into the crowded ranks of their assailants. Their bravest were lying in heaps in front of the walls, and now the rest refused to face the British fire again.

The siege of Arcot was over, and from that moment the power of the French gradually declined. The news of Clive's wonderful defence rang throughout southern India. The Indians called him "Sabut Jung," the "Daring in War," and such was the terror of his name that wherever he went hundreds of native troops began to desert the French service.

There were years of hard fighting before we finally triumphed, but only three months later Clive dealt the French

another deadly blow. A strong French force of horse, foot, and artillery made a secret dash for Arcot, most of whose garrison had gone with Clive in another direction. Hearing of this, Clive pursued them. Our men at Arcot had been warned, and as the native troops of the French were afraid to attack those deadly walls again, they turned back and concealed themselves in a strong position on the road by which Clive and his weary troops were hurrying along in the pale light of a rising moon.

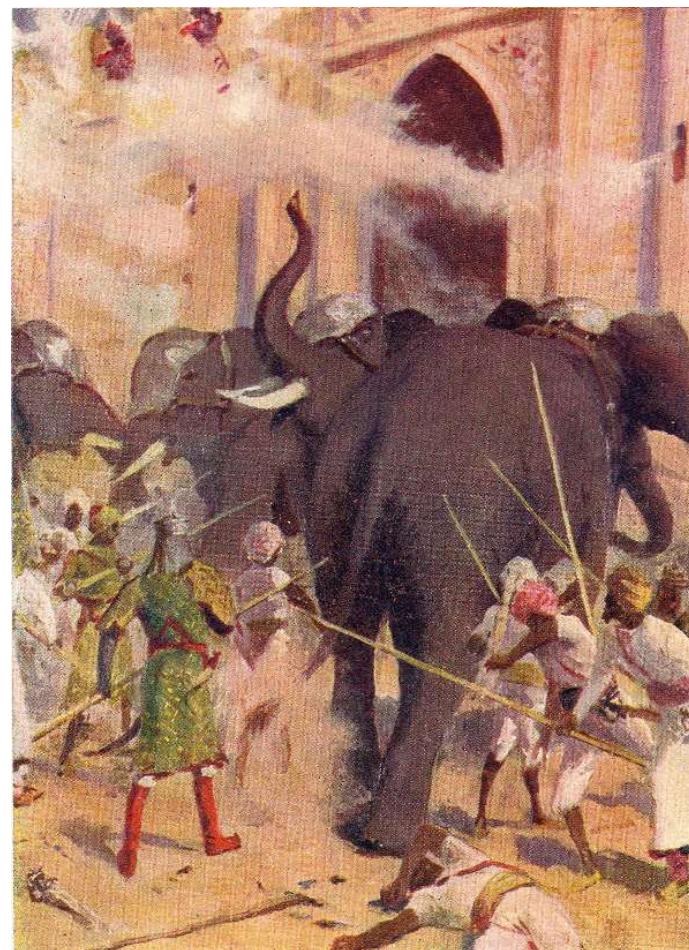
Suddenly, to their utter surprise, a heavy fire burst upon them from the mango-groves of Covrepauk. Without a moment's delay Clive sent his baggage-carts back, threw his men into a watercourse on his left, and brought up his artillery to fire on the French guns. But these were too numerous and too well placed, and Clive, whose gunners were falling fast, saw that unless he could silence the French artillery his force was lost.

Accordingly he sent away Ensign Symmonds—let us record this gallant officer's name—with orders to creep round behind the French position, if possible, with a party of picked men and attack them in rear. Symmonds succeeded in getting well round, and then, crawling forward by himself, stumbled over a trench full of Frenchmen. They shouted to him, but as he replied in their own language they did not bother about him any further.

Then Symmonds, having found out where to make his attack, crept back in the darkness to his own party and, leading them forward to within thirty yards of the very centre of the unsuspecting enemy, lay down and fired a sudden volley right into their midst. That one volley was enough. The French force, panic-stricken to find themselves attacked from behind, at once broke and fled, leaving their guns and baggage in Clive's hands. Instead of defeat it was a brilliant victory, and proved the death-blow of French dominion in India.

Following this, Clive and Major Lawrence pressed the French hard, cut their communications, broke up the army besieging Trichinopoly, and captured the French officers who

were with it. To complete the overthrow of Dupleix's plan to set up native princes in the Carnatic and Deccan under French management, his two native princes were shortly afterwards slain by the Mahrattas, and after two more years of further disaster Dupleix was recalled to France, where the unfortunate man eventually died in poverty and discredit.



WAR ELEPHANTS CHARGE THE GATES OF THE FORT AT ARCOT.

The strangest thing about this war in the Carnatic was that all the time England and France were at peace in Europe, so

that, although their officers and native soldiers were fighting in India, it was always pretended that their troops were merely lent to the rival native princes. Consequently the English could obtain no help from their fleet, nor could they attack the French town of Pondicherry. For the same reason the French could not attack Madras. This very curious state of things was soon to be ended, but in the meantime the English were assailed by a fresh and more powerful foe.

CHAPTER X

FROM THE BLACK HOLE TO PLASSEY

The ruler of the great provinces of Bengal, Orissa, and Behar was Surajah Dowlah. Young in years but old in wickedness, cowardly, revengeful, and cruel, this prince hated the English. Their growing prosperity and power alarmed him, while they had enraged him by giving shelter to a native whom he wished to kill.

Suddenly, with a huge army, he advanced upon Calcutta, burning and plundering all the villages on his way. The garrison was a small one and the fortifications weak. The town was panic-stricken. Had a courageous soul like Clive been present, how different it all might have been. But it is sad and shameful to record that the Governor, Mr. Drake, and Captain Minchin, the commandant, ran away. These cowards escaped to the ships in the river and left the rest, with the women and children, to the mercy of the enemy. The hero of this terrible time was a brave civilian, Mr. Howell. He did all he could to resist and then made terms with Surajah Dowlah, who promised them their safety. But in spite of this occurred the terrible tragedy of the Black Hole of Calcutta.

Those who have not lived in the fierce heat of the Indian plains in summer, when the scorching rays of the sun are succeeded by such stifling heat that even birds fall to the ground gasping for breath, can have no idea of the awful sufferings of those who died in an agony of suffocation on that night of June 20, 1756. In the guard-room of the fort a space of 18 ft. square had been walled in to form a prison cell, and into this 146 men and one woman were driven and crushed with clubs and bayonets, to suffocate in that stifling, airless darkness.

Brave Mr. Howell's words of advice were drowned by the cries and moans of the terrified crowd. Some sank down, to

be trampled to death by those who with frantic shrieks cried for air, or struggled and fought for the few drops of water with which their guards tantalised them in their raging thirst, laughing at their prayers for mercy and entreaties that the dead and dying might be removed. So it went on through the horror of that awful night, the cries and moans ever growing fewer and more faint, until, when the doors were opened in the morning, from the heap of bodies piled upon one another in the Black Hole only twenty-three were carried out alive, amongst them the woman, Mrs. Carey, whose husband had perished.

To add to our misfortunes, war had again broken out with France, and a powerful French force was being prepared in Europe to attack the English position in India. After some delay at Madras, Clive dashed northwards with a force to recover Calcutta before the French could reach the East. Fortunately, their arrival was delayed for two years, and in the meantime Clive and Admiral Watson retook Calcutta.

In connection with this an amusing incident occurred. The enemy were holding Fort William, which Clive was about to attack, and some sailors were landed to help him. One of these, Strahan by name, getting intoxicated, wandered off at dawn and, stumbling on the fort, crawled through a hole which our artillery fire had knocked in the wall. In a moment he found himself among the garrison, but, caring for nothing, he fired his pistol and slashed right and left with his cutlass in the most desperate fashion, shouting lustily the while, "I've took the fort! I've took the fort!" The garrison, believing him to be the leader of a storming party, fired wildly in all directions and fled, and the English troops, hearing the commotion, rushed up to find Strahan in proud possession of Fort William. On being ordered up for punishment next morning he swore that if he were flogged he would never, as long as he lived, take another fort by himself.

When, soon after, Surajah Dowlah again advanced with 40,000 men, Clive broke into the midst of his army in a fog and, although he had to retire in some confusion, Surajah Dowlah

was so frightened by the daring of the attempt that he made peace and retreated.



"I'VE TOOK THE FORT."

But we had trusted the scoundrel too easily. Clive had just seized the French settlement of Chandanagore when we heard that Surajah Dowlah had secretly promised the French his support. But while he thus plotted, others, in true Oriental fashion, were likewise plotting against this monster of cruelty and wickedness. Their scheme was to place Meer Jaffier, the commander-in-chief, on the throne, and they appealed to the English for assistance. It was quite plain that delay would be fatal, for the new French expedition might be nearing India, and unless Surajah Dowlah were crushed at once we should be attacked by a very powerful alliance. Whereas, if successful, we should in reality become overlords of Bengal, Orissa, and Behar.

The details of our share in the plot against Surajah Dowlah are too long and complicated to tell here. Everything depended on swift action, and Clive, whose whole early life seems to have been spent in desperate adventures, now undertook what was, perhaps, the most desperate of them all.

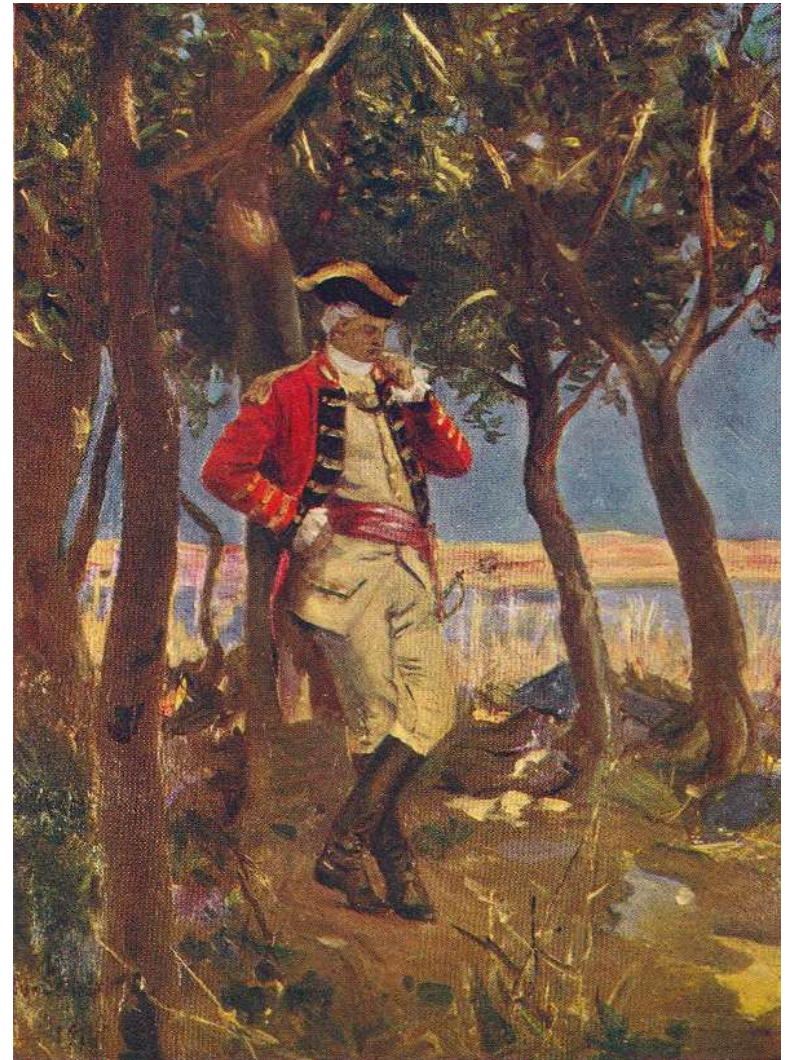
With only 3000 men he set out for Surajah Dowlah's capital, Murshedabad. Barring his way, at a village called Plassey, stood a huge army of 50,000 men, strengthened by a small body of French troops. Part of this was commanded by Meer Jaffier, and although he had promised to come over to the English during the battle, Clive had discovered him to be on such friendly terms with the Nabob that there was good reason to suspect him of playing false. Most probably he intended to see how the battle went before taking any decided step. At all events, an officer of Meer Jaffier's met our leading troops at Cutwa and dared us to advance further. So things looked pretty black. It was at this point that Clive called that famous council of war to decide whether we should advance or encamp where we stood. Every officer but seven voted for delay. Clive himself voted with them, but his heart was with the bolder seven. So, breaking up the council, he retired to the solitude of some trees hard by, and for a whole hour he reconsidered the verdict.

Then, at last, with his mind made up, the young leader returned to his little army and gave the order that all were to advance against the enemy at sunrise on the morrow.

On the evening of June 22, 1757, the little English force halted by a mango-grove surrounded by a low mud-bank close to the village of Plassey. As they lay down to rest that night they could hear strange bursts of native music from the great army in their front. Perhaps they thought of their forefathers at Crecy and Agincourt, for there was much in their situation that was similar.

A few hours later the sun rose on a day that was to decide the fate of India, when Clive and his valiant three thousand stood ready for battle in front of the mango tope, the centre of an immense semicircle of fifty thousand men. Again and again in the history of England our armies have been strangely assisted by some providential occurrence. A storm dispersed the great Armada, and a deluge of rain just before the onset at Crecy soaked the bow-strings of the French archers and rendered them useless. Many a time have we been similarly aided by accidents when the desperate valour of our fighting-men might not have

saved them. Let us not, therefore, boast of our own triumphs, but regard them, in spite of our much wrongdoing, as the will of the Lord of Hosts.



TO FIGHT OR NOT TO FIGHT. CLIVE'S SOLITARY REFLECTIONS BEFORE THE BATTLE OF PLASSEY.

A strange thing now helped us at Plassey. The battle began with a hot fire from the French artillery on the right of the Nabob's army. This compelled Clive, who could not afford to lose many men, to withdraw his force into the shelter of the mangoes, with the intention of holding this position until night enabled him to make an attack in the darkness.

No sooner had he done so than suddenly, as of old at Crecy, a deluge of rain burst over the battle-field. At Crecy our archers cased their bows and kept them dry. So now Clive's gunners covered their guns and ammunition with handy tarpaulins. But the rain destroyed the powder stores of the great host opposed to them, who were in consequence unable to use either muskets or artillery.

Believing, however, that the English were just as badly off, the Nabob's huge army advanced with confidence to crush the small force in the mangoes by weight of numbers. But as they came on in thick masses a terrific fire of shot and shell burst from the English position, and shattered their dense columns to pieces. The ground was heaped with dead and wounded, and the rest of the host, with its best leaders fallen, reeled back in confusion. Surajah Dowlah, with a guard of two thousand horsemen, galloped off to his capital, while his broken army fell back upon its camp still smitten by the deadly fire of the pursuing English.

The French troops made a gallant resistance, but the traitor Meer Jaffier had now drawn his men away from the battle, and the rest of the army broke into wild and tumultuous flight, carrying the French with them. Thus was Plassey fought and won. Strange to tell, our little army lost only twenty-two men, killed and wounded.

Clive pushed on to Murshedabad, and Meer Jaffier was proclaimed as Nabob of the three provinces. Surajah Dowlah escaped for the moment, but was captured three days later by the soldiers of Meer Jaffier and put to death without delay before Clive heard of it.



A SOLDIER OF CLIVE'S TIME.

Thus, when the new French force under General Count Lally at last reached India, we had made ourselves masters of Bengal, Orissa, and Behar, the richest part of India, for Meer Jaffier could only rule under our supervision. We were now free to meet the French, whose fortunes under Lally's leadership soon went from bad to worse. For he quarrelled with his best officers and irritated his Indian allies. He tried to capture Madras, but was beaten off with heavy loss, for our fleet had now driven away the French ships, and although commanding a strong French force, Lally failed to do more for some time than march it to and fro. But at last, after many months of manoeuvring against an English army under Eyre Coote, Lally attempted to recapture the fort of Wandewash which we had taken from the French.

Eyre Coote came upon him at this place, and a fierce battle ensued between the British and French regular troops, as fierce as that in which, only four months earlier, Wolfe had won Quebec on the Heights of Abraham. At Wandewash the brilliant leadership of Coote and Draper won a great victory, which completely wiped out French rivalry in southern India. A year later Pondicherry was taken, and soon after the flag of France had ceased to fly in India.

CHAPTER XI

HYDER ALI AND THE MAHRATTAS

We now come to a time when the government of our growing possessions in India fell into much weaker hands than Clive's. It is the only period in our Anglo-Indian history which throws gross discredit on the English name. Clive had gone home, and men, no longer restrained by his strong hand, no longer behaved with honour and honesty. Prosperity declined, quarrels with native rulers grew fiercer, while they in turn fought and quarrelled with one another.

Clive returned for a short time, and his stern rule once more restored order and good government. But after his final departure confusion returned, until the British Government interfered and appointed Warren Hastings the first Governor-General of the Indian possessions belonging to the East India Company. He was an able man and in many ways resembled Clive, but he was now called upon to face the attack of far more formidable enemies than any who had yet opposed us.

Ever since the days of Sivaji the power of the Mahrattas had been growing. It is true that their attempt to conquer the whole of north India had ended in the terrible disaster of Panipat, where the Mohammedan armies of the north, aided by the Afghan king, had defeated and slaughtered 200,000 of them. But in west and central India they were in great strength. With these restless warriors Hyder Ali, the ruler of Mysore, a man of fierce and determined energy, made an alliance, dragging into it the wretched Nizam of Hyderabad, our own ally, whom we had been helping against him.

Our authorities at Madras, a band of incompetent men, of whom Sir Thomas Rumbold, the Governor, was the worst, disregarded all warnings of the coming storm, when suddenly Hyder Ali, with an immense army, poured down the mountain-

sides and burst into the plains of the Carnatic like a thunderstorm. Slaughter and destruction filled the country far and wide, and the smoke of burning towns and villages darkened the sky right down to the walls of Madras. The English troops sent against him were routed, and if Hyder had only assailed Madras with his full strength the place must have fallen.



DEVASTATED LAND.

Hastings, at Calcutta, lost no time in sending to the rescue a force under Sir Eyre Coote, and this splendid soldier—one of those who had voted for the advance on Plassey—drove Hyder off and saved the town. But we still had to fight the Mahrattas, and their power was not finally destroyed until 1803.

We managed, however, to quiet them for a time by the capture of their great fortress of Gwalior. This wonderful feat of arms was achieved by Captain Popham, one of our forgotten heroes. The fortress, perched upon the top of lofty and apparently inaccessible rocks, was thought so impossible to capture that even Eyre Coote had said it would be insanity to attack it. But the history of our fighting in India is full of wondrous deeds of daring, and this is one of the most remarkable.

For two months Popham watched the fortress high above him on its steep, rocky pinnacles—watched it day and night, while he schemed and devised plans for its capture. First he managed to get native spies into the place, and then one night—it was August 3, 1780—two hundred men, under an English

captain and four lieutenants, supported by two native battalions, crept to the foot of the fortress with their feet encased in cotton-wool.



WARREN HASTINGS.

By means of ladders they scaled the first wall of rock. Above this was a wall of smooth rock 16 ft. high. This, also, was slowly and quietly ascended. From this point a steep ascent of 120 ft. towered above them. All reached the top of this in safety, although only a handful of the enemy might have hurled them to destruction at the bottom; but so certain were the Mahrattas that only monkeys could climb such walls that all were carelessly asleep, and the cotton-wool prevented any noise from the feet of their determined assailants.

The last rock-wall to be scaled was 30 ft. high, and from the top of this ropes were let down by the spies. A few sepoys went up and assisted the rest of the attacking party to follow. Once all had reached the top they formed up and rushed upon the quarters of the slumbering garrison. In a few minutes the mighty fortress of Gwalior was in our hands. So marvellous did

its capture seem to the Mahrattas that their great chief, Scindia, thought it best to make peace without delay.

How dangerous was this period for England will be understood if we realise that we were at war with France, Spain, and Holland in Europe, and with our American Colonies as well. While the French, by means of their fleet, enabled our colonies to shake off our grip in America, they sent a squadron under their famous Admiral Suffren to assist Hyder Ali and the Mahrattas to expel us from India. But the end of a long and exhausting struggle, when Hyder Ali died, found our flag not only flying still but planted more firmly than ever, nor had the strength and fighting power of our enemies, aided by France, been able to tear a single acre of British territory from the determined grasp of Warren Hastings.

Indeed, these constant attacks by the native rulers, when they were not slaughtering one another's armies, were the real cause of our empire's growth in India. For as we defeated each attempt to destroy us, we were constantly brought into touch with fresh States who either wanted us to help them conquer their neighbours or formed plots for our destruction. So, although we long tried to avoid the bother and trouble of governing and controlling new parts of India, the Indian States themselves, by their ceaseless wars amongst themselves and attacks upon us or upon those whom we protected, drove us on the road to empire and compelled us to fight our way, after many years of warfare, from the southern sea-coast to the mountains of the north. It is worth noticing that, although in all the long ages of Indian warfare the invader had always come through these northern passes, the final conquest of India and union into one empire was to come from the south and the sea.

CHAPTER XII

HOW WE CLEARED THE ROAD TO EMPIRE

In the year 1786, when Lord Cornwallis reached India as the second Governor-General, we were faced by the Mahratta power in the west and north-west, and by Tippoo, Sultan of Mysore, the son of Hyder Ali. These were our only really dangerous enemies at that time. The British Government, represented by its Governor-General, had now openly taken its place as one of the first powers in India.

Tippoo, who hated us as much as his father, tried hard to stir up both the French and Afghans against us, and at last we were compelled to unite with the Mahrattas and our untrustworthy ally, the Nizam of Hyderabad, against him. In 1792, therefore, we took his capital and deprived him of some territory on the Malabar coast to prevent the French landing to help him. This, however, only filled him with wilder thoughts of revenge, and, although we offered him many advantages if he would become friendly and cease from plotting with the French against us, we at last had to fight him once more. He was besieged by Colonel Arthur Wellesley, afterwards the famous Duke of Wellington, in his capital, Seringapatam, which we took by storm. Tippoo was killed in a hand-to-hand fight at one of the gates, and his kingdom came to an end. It was then given back to the old Hindu family whom Hyder Ali had driven out, and who rule it well and quietly at the present day.

This left the Mahrattas the only native power of importance in India who were independent of our protection. They possessed large and well-trained armies led by considerable numbers of French officers, who, of course, did their best to increase the influence of France in India, which Bonaparte, our enemy in Europe, had talked of invading.

The Marquis of Wellesley, who was now Governor-General, was a determined and far-seeing statesman. He saw clearly, as no one had done before, that Great Britain would one day have to bring all India under its government. It was certain, of course, that we should have to fight the Mahrattas, but our army was now much stronger than in Clive's days, and besides some fine British battalions we had two splendid generals in Sir Arthur Wellesley and General Lake.



TIPPOO SAHIB.

Soon a couple of the Mahratta leaders, Holkar and Scindia, began to fight furiously against one another, and a third chief, the Peishwar, fearing he would be attacked next, placed himself under British protection. The other Mahratta leaders were enraged at this, and determined to fight us. General Wellesley, who led our army against them, sent a message to Scindia saying, that if he withdrew his forces from our frontier all would be well. But Scindia replied, "You go first." Whereupon Sir Arthur Wellesley said, "I have offered you peace; you have chosen war, and war you shall have."

In four days Wellesley had captured two of Scindia's strong places, and shortly after came up with the enemy at Assaye. Scindia's army was 50,000 strong, a large number being well trained and led by French officers. He also had a powerful artillery of 100 guns. Wellesley had only 4200 men, including

the 78th Highlanders, the 74th Regiment, and the 19th Light Dragoons, but hearing that the enemy intended to move off, he determined to attack them at once without waiting for another force under General Stevenson to come up.



SIR ARTHUR WELLESLEY.

The battle was a desperate one. Our artillery was overpowered by the enemy's numerous and well-served guns. Our advance was stopped and the Mahratta horsemen charged. But before they could reach our infantry the 19th Dragoons crashed into them. It was the first time they had met British cavalry, and they broke and fled in wild disorder. Once more our infantry pressed forward with glittering lines of bayonets, while the cavalry broke the Mahratta infantry at the village of Assaye.

As we swept through their line of guns the Mahratta gunners flung themselves on the ground as though dead, but as soon as we had passed over them they were up and at their guns again, firing them into our backs. It was a very critical moment, but nothing could shake the British infantry, and the 78th, turning about, charged back and saved the day. The battle was won, but we lost more than one-third of our whole force.

General Lake's victories in the north-west were equally important. The Mahrattas, under their French general Perron, fought well, but the most desperate battle of all was at Laswaree at the end of 1803, which we only won with great difficulty.

There is one strange scene upon which we cannot help dwelling for a moment. It was just after Lake had scattered Scindia's forces in a hard set-to outside Delhi. At sunset, after the fight, Lake and the officers of his staff rode into the ancient capital of the Moghuls. It was the first time that an Englishman ever entered the old imperial city as a conqueror.

With eyes wide with eager curiosity, wonder, and perhaps fear, the poor people of Delhi, who had suffered so much from the horrors of war, gathered in their thousands to watch these strange new warriors. What was going to happen to them now? Would Delhi be sacked and plundered again? It was natural that they should ask such questions, for they could not know that these fresh conquerors were bringing a new time—though very slowly, perhaps—of peace, justice, and fair treatment for all men, as good as and even better than Akbar's time.



THE GATE TOWERS OF THE PALACE, DELHI.

In the beautiful palace, which Shah Jehan had built in his pride and glory, Lake found an old, old man seated under a ragged canopy, blind—for the last invaders had struck out his eyes—poverty-stricken, and miserable. It was the successor of the great Moghuls, still holding the empty title, a poor puppet emperor without an empire. When Lake and his officers strode away through the great ghostly palace at night and left the old man to his dreams of the past, he had been told that in future he

and his people would be under the care and protection of Great Britain, and that the Mahrattas would trouble him no more.

After the defeat and submission of Scindia, Holkar, the other Mahratta leader, held out in Rajputana, and by the extreme rapidity of his movements proved, like the Boers in South Africa, a very active and troublesome enemy. He even inflicted a severe defeat upon a British force. But Lake pursued him with restless determination, until at last his forces were surprised and broken up. Holkar himself escaped, but was afterwards glad to return and make peace as Scindia had done before him.

CHAPTER XIII

A PLUNDERED LAND

Thanks to Lord Wellesley's determined policy, the dangerous power of the Mahrattas, which had long disturbed the peace of all India, was now broken. They gave us more trouble at a later period, but were then finally suppressed. We were now the greatest power in India, all the various States being under our direction or protection with the exception of the Punjab, where the Sikhs were becoming a very powerful race.

But now, unfortunately, the British Government and people at home, who had at first been dazzled by the splendour of Lord Wellesley's triumphs, suddenly got panic-stricken when Holkar defeated us in Rajputana. And although Lake conquered him in the end, it was thought that we had won possessions which were too big for us to defend. It was rather cowardly and very short-sighted. But Lord Wellesley was called home, and first old Lord Cornwallis, who was sent out again, and after him Sir George Barlow, set to work to undo all the great work of Lord Wellesley. They gave back territories to bad rulers, broke off alliances with others who depended on us, and refused any longer to protect the weaker States against their oppressors.

In fact, it was thought that we could get along better and make more money by acting a thoroughly selfish part. What happened was a disgrace to the British name. In the west the poor Rajputs, who had refused to help the Mahrattas against us, were left to be punished by this cruel race for their loyalty to us. In fact, the whole of Rajputana drifted into war and confusion.

A single story will show the sort of things that were happening. While the Mahrattas ravaged the country where they pleased, two of the Rajput chiefs were fighting and slaughtering one another's people because both wanted to marry the beautiful daughter of the Rana of Udaipur, and nearly every other chief

took part in the struggle. The distracted Rana of Udaipur offered half of his territory to the British if only they would help him in his trouble. Clive, Warren Hastings, or Wellesley would have done so at once. But now he met with refusal, so he bought the aid of Ameer Khan, an Afghan adventurer, with an army of 30,000 men, the price being one-quarter of his dominions.



NAIK, BOMBAY GRENADIER BATTALION, 1801.

The cruel Afghan at once ordered him to stop the fighting by the murder of his daughter, and when the brave girl was told of her fate she gladly consented to die as the best way of helping her father. Her brother was appointed to stab her, but the dagger fell from his trembling hand. Then they tried poison. She drank it three times, bidding her despairing mother to remember that it was always the duty of Rajput women to sacrifice themselves with gladness. Then she took opium and lay down, never to wake again.

It is a terrible story, and terrible it seemed to old Sagwunt Singh, chief of Karradur, who rode hard to Udaipur to protest against the tragedy if there were yet time. Flinging himself from his horse, he cried, "Does the princess live?" And then, when he

heard the truth, he strode through the palace halls to the Rana, sitting sadly upon his throne. There he unbuckled his sword.

"My ancestors," he cried, his old voice trembling with indignant passion, "have served yours for thirty generations. To you, my king, I dare say nothing, but nevermore will sword of mine be drawn in your service." Then, flinging sword and shield at the feet of his ruler, he strode away.

The story shows there were noble men and noble women among the native people of India then as now. And it is sad to think we might have helped and did not. Nine years later, when our mad fit of selfishness had passed for ever under the strong rule of Lord Hastings, Rajputana, still eager to claim alliance and protection, found us not only willing to grant them, but ready to uphold our will against all comers.

It was indeed high time that we used the strong hand again, for all central India had been wasted with fire and sword by the Mahratta hordes and by swarms of mounted robbers called the Pindaris. Everywhere peaceful villages were burnt, the peasants murdered or horribly tortured, and women and children killed for the mere love of killing by these fiends, who were allowed to do what they liked so long as they did not come on to British territory. It was so wrong, said the British Government and people, to interfere with the liberty of others. So we looked on while all these horrors were taking place, and whole villages killed themselves to escape the tortures of these ferocious brigands. It showed plainly enough what would happen if England left the Indian people to themselves.

At last, after a series of weakling rulers, came Lord Hastings of the strong hand. One day the murderous Pindaris were gathered together in their mountains and jungles, gloating over their plunder and the killing which they had done. Suddenly, without a word of warning, they found themselves completely surrounded by the armies of Bengal and Madras. Then there was some killing of another sort, as the British and native soldiers closed in upon the robber gangs from every side.

Thousands of them were slain and their bands broken up for ever. Then we tackled the Mahrattas once more and for the last time. There was stout fighting. The Peishwar, the Nagpore Raja, and Holkar were all in it. Scindia wisely gave in, but the others had to be well beaten, and they were before Lord Hastings had finished with them. To him alone belongs the credit of bringing peace and happiness to the people of all that unhappy part of India where Mahratta and Pindari had murdered and plundered for so long. For the British Parliament never meant him to do more than stop a few robberies on British ground, and not to fight battles.

No doubt one of the things which induced the Mahrattas to cross swords with us again was the difficulty we had been having in a war with the Gurkhas of Nepal, who, after conquering all the highlands overlooking Bengal, had begun to attack the lowland country under our rule. The war lasted two years and was a terribly difficult business, for our troops had to cut their way through dense forests, to drag cannon up enormous heights, and to make their way along narrow ledges overhanging precipices, or through deep and dangerous ravines.

At first we met with bad disasters, and the Mahrattas and Sikhs began to think that at last we had found somebody who could beat us. But then a clever old Scottish general, Ochterlony, went up to Nepal and at once changed the fortune of war. He took the Gurkha fortresses one by one, and when at last he was marching on their capital of Khatmandu the Gurkhas made peace. Since then these brave little men have always enlisted in our native army, and form some of its finest regiments. They have followed our flag on many a battlefield, and have taken part in many an heroic defence.

CHAPTER XIV

HOW THE PUNJAB WAS PAINTED RED

Ranjeet Singh, the "Lion of Lahore," had a face marked by small-pox, one eye with a roguish twinkle, and a mouth with a very decided look of rascality about it. Although he pretended to be very religious, he rather resembled Herod, King of the Jews, and cut off heads, hands, and feet without mercy.

He was one day shown a map of India. "What do all those red patches mean?" he asked. On being told that they were English territory he flung the map away, saying with a frown, "It will all be red soon."

Having conquered the Punjab, he had decided that it was wise to keep friends with the British, but he had made the Sikhs a powerful military nation and had taken the town of Peshawar from the Afghans.

Just at this time we did not at all like the way Russia was gradually moving towards India in the north. We were anxious, therefore, to make an alliance with the Afghan Amir Dost Mohammed, to whom the Russians had been sending messengers. Dost Mohammed, a rugged, honest soldier, said he would do as we wished if we would only make Ranjeet Singh give him back Peshawar. We refused this, so the Amir at once allowed a Russian envoy to come to Kabul.

We had no real quarrel with the Afghans, but we were urged on by our alarm at finding ourselves again at last, after a hundred years, being approached by another European Power. In former days our rivals had come by sea, where we could beat them. This time the danger was advancing overland through Asia and the north.

So we attacked poor old Dost Mohammed, who fled, and we placed the worthless Shah Soojah back upon his throne. We

remained in military occupation of the country round Kabul and Kandahar for two years until, finding it a very expensive business, we began to stop the allowances paid to the Afghan nobles and chiefs of the hill tribes to keep them quiet. At once they and their people became our enemies, and our position grew daily more difficult and dangerous. For in India behind us there was not a friendly country as there is now. But there were the people of Scinde, who disliked us, and the Sikhs, who were watching us with fierce jealousy, for Ranjeet Singh had died suddenly and there was no one to keep them quiet.

It was this unfortunate state of things which at last ended in the worst disaster which has ever happened to a British army in India. It was, perhaps, a punishment for treating old Dost Mohammed as we did. Almost like a sad, reproachful ghost must have seemed that strange figure which appeared to Sir W. Macnaghten, our Resident at Kabul. As he was riding home one evening with a companion, with whom he had been discussing the gloomy and threatening outlook, they became aware of a man on a horse riding rapidly towards them from the north.

Soon he overtook them, and they saw a poorly dressed but robust and powerful man with a sharp aquiline nose, highly arched eyebrows, and a grey beard and moustache which looked as if it had not been trimmed for a long time. He dismounted from his horse and seized the stirrup rein of the British Resident, bowing low in submissive salutation. It was Dost Mohammed, tired of his exile, who had ridden in to surrender, willing that we should do what we liked with him. So we sent him to India as an honoured guest of the Governor-General with a pension of £20,000 a year.

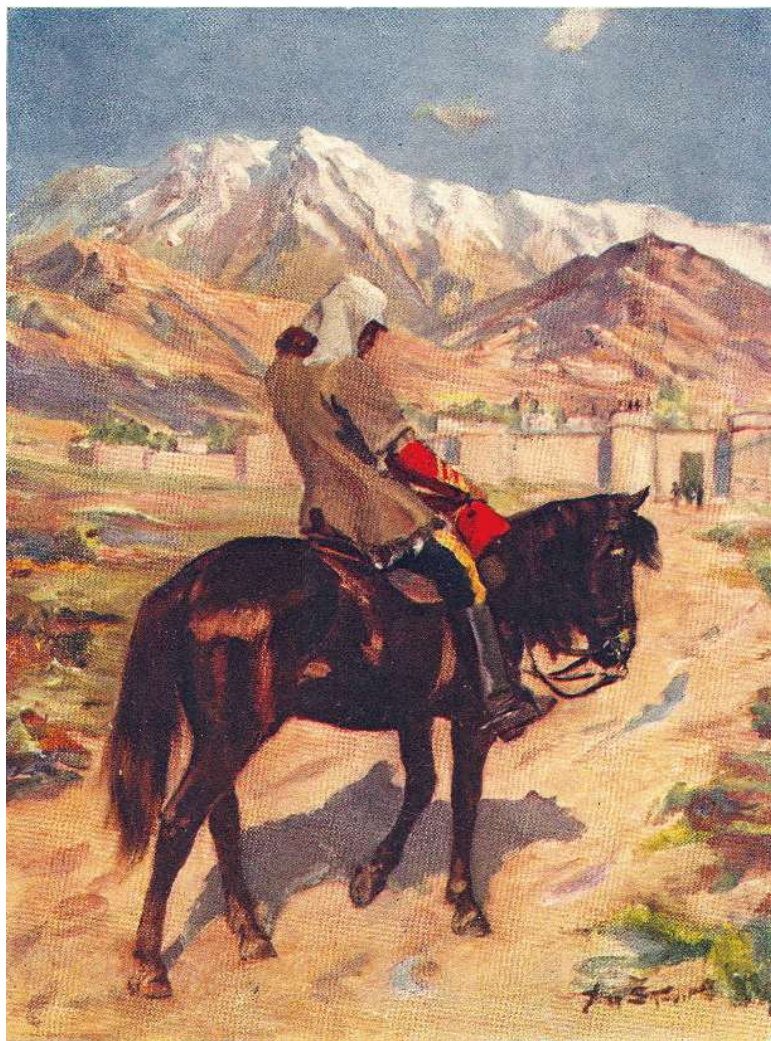
Meanwhile the Afghans rose against us in overwhelming numbers. Our force in Kabul was badly handled. Poor Sir W. Macnaghten and our other officials were foully murdered, and on January 6, 1842, 4000 fighting men and 12,000 followers—men, women, and children—trusting to Afghan promises, set out in the winter cold to find their way through those rugged mountain passes back to India.

But the Afghans had sworn that not one should leave their country alive. The story of that long death march is almost too horrible to be told. It was one long and cruel massacre, in which our troops, without food or fires or rest, fought their way fiercely onwards with numbers which dwindled every moment from exhaustion or the ceaseless attacks of the enemy. At last the end came.

All up the dark length of the Kyber Pass the gallant little army lay dead. Only six officers, better mounted than the rest, reached a spot a few miles from Jallalabad, held by General Sale. But into the town itself rode painfully on a jaded horse, with the stump of a broken sword slung to his wrist, but one. It was Dr. Brydon, and he had escaped by a miracle. When his comrades had been cut down, a single fierce Afghan horseman had ridden near him, watching his chance to strike. Brydon's horse stumbled, and the Afghan slashed at him, broke his sword, and gashed his knee. Brydon bent forward with the pain, and his assailant, thinking he was drawing a pistol, turned and galloped away.

A few months later a British army under General Pollock burst into Afghanistan, captured Kabul, and freed our captive countrymen and countrywomen. Then, after the Afghans had been taught a severe lesson, we left the country.

Almost immediately we found ourselves at war with Scinde in the north-west on the Indus, and three years after we had taken this country came the long-expected war with the Sikhs. After Ranjeet Singh's death there was no one who could control the fierce soldiery with whom he had conquered the Punjab and driven the Afghans from Peshawar. The whole kingdom fell into a state of tumult, and the army, consisting of almost the whole nation, after many mutinous outbreaks and murders, cried out for fresh conquests. At last, the queen-mother, Ranjeet Singh's widow, in order to escape the violence of the military party, gave her consent to an invasion of British territory.



THE SOLE SURVIVOR OF AN ARMY: DR. BRYDON REACHES JELLALABAD ALONE.

Swift battle followed. We, who had been so accustomed to easy victory on the open plains of India, found we had underrated our enemy's fighting power, and their well-served artillery took us by surprise.

In the first battle, at Moodkee, we paid dearly for our success, and three days later, at Ferozshah, began the most deadly and obstinate contest ever fought by us in India, and we only just managed to hold our ground. Two more stern struggles followed, at Aliwal and Sobraon, and the enemy, fighting fiercely, were driven back across the Sutlej and compelled to abandon further resistance.

But the tall Sikhs, who loved fighting, bore us no ill-will. One of them told a British officer afterwards how he had knelt to receive the charging British cavalry at Aliwal, knelt on through three charges until he had fallen senseless amongst his dead comrades. He added, showing a tiny bit of his little finger, "You were only so much better than we—just so much, no more! But you were better led."

A second war with Scinde, and then the Sikhs determined to have one more wrestle with us. We met them at Chillianwala, on the field where Alexander had defeated the son of Porus. The Sikhs were in great force, with an enormously powerful artillery. We managed the battle badly, and only just won after losing a large number of officers and men, and the enemy, being reinforced, were soon stronger than ever. They tried hard to tempt General Gough to attack them in a very strong position, but he waited patiently until a fresh British force joined him, when the Sikhs, who ought to have attacked earlier, moved round him into a much weaker position at a place called Gujerat.

Then Gough went for them, and having now a much more powerful artillery, he crushed their guns and sent his infantry to the attack with such skill that he completely shattered their army and captured the whole of their artillery. The gallant Sikhs had now had quite enough of it and submitted. The Punjab, the last independent native kingdom, was made British territory, and India was now coloured red right up to the great mountains of the north.

CHAPTER XV

THE SEPOY ARMY REVOLTS

At last we were overlords of all India. There was no one left to dispute our rule or break the peace of the land. True, we had once more to fight the Burmese, and added Lower Burmah to the empire, but in India all was quiet for seven years. Then suddenly war and wild confusion broke out. Our great native army rebelled.

All sorts of reasons have been given for this terrible outbreak. There was the story of the new cartridges, which the soldiers were told had been greased by the English with the fat of cows and pigs so as to cause defilement to Hindu and Mussulman soldiers alike. Mischief-makers went about secretly stirring up trouble, saying that the English wished to destroy the ancient native religions and turn all into Christians.

These things no doubt helped to infuriate the native army, but behind all this was the fact that the universal peace in India, which had succeeded long years of war, had left the sepoys, who were proud of themselves and their triumphs, restless and discontented. There was also an old-time prophecy that a white race should rule the sacred land of India for a hundred years, and was it not now just a century since the battle of Plassey?

Although the mutiny took us by surprise, there were many warnings of the coming storm, and it should have been possible to prevent it. There were midnight meetings of the sepoys followed by sullen disrespect to their officers. Also *chupatis*, or small cakes, were sent from village to village far and wide. Few of the English saw what it all meant, but every one felt that some strange secret was abroad in the land.

The story of its horrors and of its heroes will be found in the histories of the Great Mutiny. The record is both horrible and fascinating. The first outbreak occurred at Barrackpore, about one hundred miles north of Calcutta. Thanks to that excellent old officer General Hearsay, it was quelled. But, unfortunately, when the storm burst at Meerut on May 10 the almost criminal folly of General Hewitt gave the mutiny its first chance. Although he commanded a strong force of British soldiers, yet he stood by while the sepoys fired the town and murdered every European, man, woman, and child, they could find.



17TH REGIMENT BENGAL IRREGULAR CAVALRY, 1850.

Then, with their devil's work done, they raced off to Delhi, where our people were all unwarned by Hewitt of what was coming upon them. Bahadur Shah, the doddering old descendant of the great Akbar, was proclaimed their king, and for days Delhi was turned into a slaughter-house full of unnamed horrors, in which all that was English disappeared—men, delicate women, and little children being done to death, often with terrible cruelties. But not all died unavenged. Nine heroes held the Delhi arsenal, with its great store of powder and arms, until the mutinous hordes swarmed in upon them. Then

Lieutenant Willoughby, after firing his last cannon-shot, lifted his hand. Scully fired the powder-train, and the great magazine and fort with all in it went to the skies with a mighty roar which shook the solid earth for miles around.

All over the country little isolated garrisons were staring death in the face bravely. Cawnpore fell in hideous massacre, but Lucknow defied the rebel hosts and held them back from Delhi, where a small British force daringly began the siege. Regiments hurried out from England, the Sikhs stood by us, and the little Gurkhas came down to our succour from Nepal. At last all seemed to hang upon whether we could take Delhi and whether the Lucknow Residency would fall.

Swept by a merciless fire night and day, its garrison of heroes, led by the gallant Lawrence, were holding out with the utmost difficulty against thousands of furious enemies. Even wounded men at times of great pressure would crawl from the hospital to lie down and fire or load for others. Lawrence was killed by a shell, but Havelock and Outram, with a small force, burst through the enemy and strengthened the garrison, for now Delhi had been taken by John Nicholson and the tide was turning. The end came on November 16, when Sir Colin Campbell, with a strong force of British and Sikhs, attacked and carried, one by one, the great sepoy positions surrounding the Residency.

The fighting was desperate in the extreme, as our men stormed their way through or over great walled buildings amidst a rain of bullets. Perhaps most desperate of all was it at the Secunder Bagh, with its high walls, bastions and loopholes, held by a strong force of sepoys. "There never was a bolder feat," said stern old Sir Colin himself, "than the storming of the Secunder Bagh."

The enemy, finding escape impossible, fought with the courage of despair and religious hate. The air was full of horrible noises, the ceaseless rattle of musketry, the curses and yells of the sepoys, and the fierce cry of the British soldiers, "Remember

Cawnpore, boys!" Into the Secunder Bagh we went at last, the fair legs of the Highlanders and the brown legs of the battle-loving Sikhs showing in strange contrast as they charged together through the gardens inside. Next morning the bodies of 20,000 sepoys dressed in their old British uniforms strewed the ground in tumbled heaps.



THE 93RD HIGHLANDERS CLEARING THE SECUNDER BAGH BEFORE LUCKNOW.

By such fighting was Lucknow saved from the awful fate of Cawnpore. More hard fighting lay before Colin Campbell before he could bring all the women and children to safety, but by May 1858 the mutiny had disappeared. It had vanished as the mutineer army at Agra had done on that day in late September after our recapture of the imperial city of Delhi.



CASHMERE GATE, DELHI.

Night found them encamped on the Agra plains, fifty thousand strong, still an organised force, still determined and full of fight. Through the darkness flickered the watch-fires of a vast army, but when the dawn arose it had vanished into thin air and not a man was there to be seen. Suddenly in the night the fierce spirit of resistance had burnt itself out. Panic had set in, and with the morning light all were scattering and hurrying to their homes, anxious only to seem like peaceful peasants and workers in the fields now that vengeance was abroad in the land.

Still stands the gaunt Residency, with its broken walls beaten by the rebel fire, a memorial ruin of the heroes, men and women, who held it. We can still see the place where Lawrence died and where, amidst the crash of shells and musketry, he received that last Communion, and then with a beautiful calmness urged all to resist to the last and on no account to surrender, to protect the women and children from all evil, and

to remain tranquil, trusting in God. All round the Residency are still the various posts, each with a desperate little history of its own, from which we held the enemy at bay, and one of them, called Duprat's Post, is that where a gallant Frenchman of that name did right good service for us.



RUINS OF THE BAILEY GUARD OF THE PRESIDENCY, LUCKNOW.

After the Mutiny we swept away the last shadows of names once famous and formidable in India. First the phantom of a Moghul emperor and his court, which had given head to the rebellion, vanished from Delhi for ever. Secondly, the last pretender to the chieftainship of the Mahrattas disappeared from Cawnpore, where he had shared in the black treachery of Nana Sahib, the murderer of our women and children. Lastly, the entire government of India passed from the East India Company to the Crown.

CHAPTER XVI

IMPERIAL INDIA

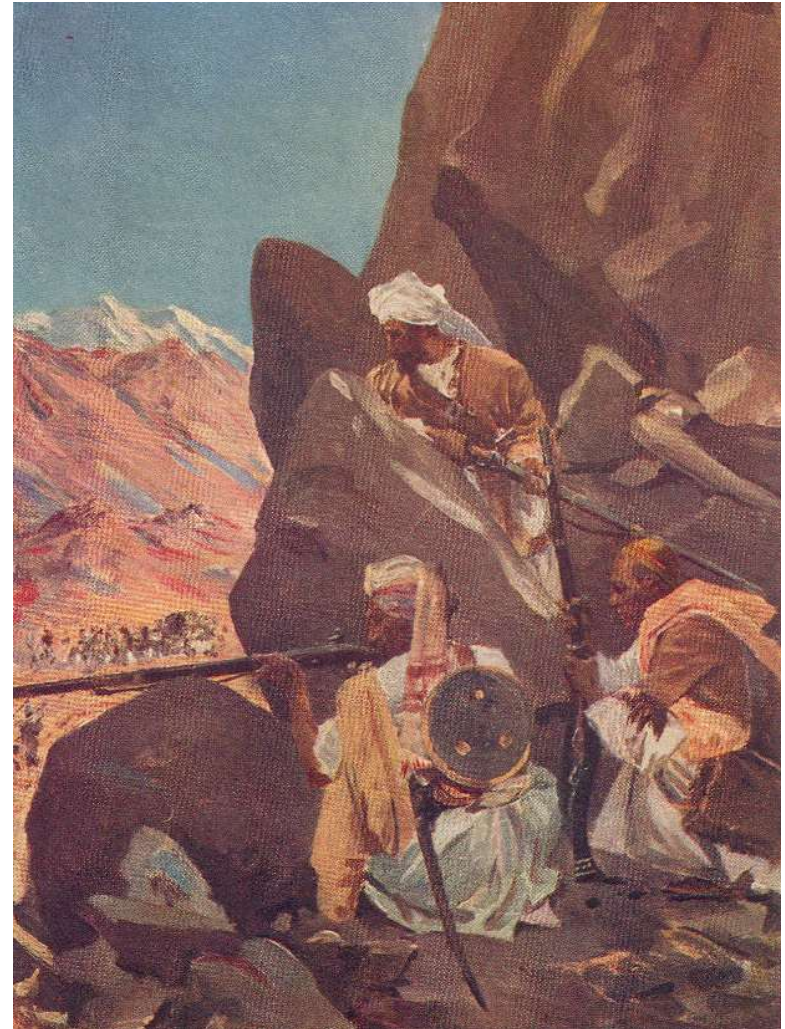
The suppression of the Mutiny was the last severe fighting on a large scale which we have had to do in India. Terrible as it was in its sacrifice of human lives, our nation has always been the better for the splendid and heroic example of its sons and daughters who passed through that fiery trial.

Since the Mutiny we have had smaller wars with Burmah, which we have brought into the empire, with Afghanistan, and with the fierce tribes upon our north-west frontier. But this is just the old history of India beginning all over again. For, as in ancient times, danger always came from the north, so we are now only feeling this as the Moghuls and others felt it before us.

So the only way to understand our wars with Afghanistan, the last made memorable by Lord Roberts's great march through the mountains to Kandahar, is by remembering that they were only part of the measures we had to take to secure India against the steady advance of Russia in Asia. The almost ceaseless warfare with the border clans, numbering about two hundred thousand fierce fighting men, armed to the teeth, is necessary in defence of our Indian subjects, who would otherwise be exposed, as in days gone by, to the constant inrush of these mountain hordes.

No troops in the world are ready to move into action at so short a notice or to strike so swiftly as those who keep the peace on our Indian border-line. Nor are the soldiers of any nation called upon to undertake such difficult warfare as our men among the tremendous tangle of mountains and valleys, mighty gorges, ravines, and passes which darken our north-west frontier. And the warriors who lurk amidst these rocky fastnesses are fierce, blood-thirsty, untamable robber tribes, all

of them splendid shots and loving nothing so much as a cunningly devised piece of black treachery, or a fight to the death against the soldiers of the British *Sirkar*.



HILL TRIBESMEN SNIPING A BRITISH FORCE ON THE NORTH-WEST FRONTIER.

We have generally had quarrels and fighting with the tribes acting separately against us, but in 1897, the year of

Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee, for the first time in our frontier history all the most powerful of the mountain clans flew to arms against us. With extraordinary rapidity we assembled an army on the frontier. Our advance into the mountains, swarming with eager fighters, was like pushing our way into a huge wasps' nest. We lost many men and officers as we beat the enemy back from hill to hill or met their midnight charges of wild swordsmen. One or two of our hill forts fell before the attack of overwhelming numbers, and their little garrisons, fighting to the last man, were slain and cruelly mutilated. But in the end we taught them, in the midst of their own mountains, that although the patience of the British rule is as enduring as a summer day, yet its arm when put forth to strike is as long as a winter night.



A HILL TRIBESMAN.

This is the picturesque language of the Pathan tribesmen themselves. But the lesson has constantly to be retaught and relearnt, and even when the frontier is at peace parties of fierce raiders are continually bursting across it to rob and murder on our territory. So that our border soldiers are for ever on the watch, and many a desperate little fight occurs of which we at home hear nothing.

But all this is a duty which we have to perform while we are the rulers of India. It is a duty which the peoples of India more than ever expect us to perform since that important ceremony on January 1, 1877, when at Delhi in open Durbar Queen Victoria was proclaimed Empress of India. And since then the feeling has been deepened by that greater and even grander ceremony upon the same historic ground when Edward VII was proclaimed Emperor in 1903. Two days before the great Durbar outside Delhi, there took place the state entry of the Viceroy into the ancient capital of the Moghuls. It was the most wonderful sight ever seen in India, because the long and glittering procession represented the whole of India united in one bond of fellowship. Fifty-five ruling princes, dressed in cloth of gold with chains of emeralds and pearls and diamonds, rode behind the Viceroy on immense elephants covered with trappings of gold and a blaze of brilliant colour. The elephants' necks were encircled with jingling silver bells, and their trunks painted with vermilion, blue, and yellow.

There were fierce-looking Afghan and Pathan chiefs from the northern mountains, and chiefs from Burmah and the south. From every part of India and from every race against whom we had fought in the past their great men had come to show their loyalty and respect for the Emperor, to whom all India looks for peace, for prosperity, and national progress.

Only our most jealous enemies will deny that India and its people have benefited by our rule. The greatest proof of this is that ever since the Mutiny was stamped out in 1858 there has been unbroken peace within India itself. No armies have met in the shock of battle, no foreign foe has set foot on Indian soil, and no native ruler has led his armies to the slaughter and plunder of his weaker neighbours. In all her history India has never known such a time of profound peace.

In addition to this, we have cleared the country of robber bands and the murderous Thugs who strangled and robbed many hundreds of victims each year. We have stopped the horrible custom of widow-burning and the murder of infant girls, and

abolished those human sacrifices which were once the custom among the wild Khonds of Orissa. And we did it without using any force.



A RAJAH'S ELEPHANT.

The Khonds, for instance, believed that a great annual sacrifice of human beings was necessary in order to win the favour of an evil goddess. A lot of poor wretches, therefore, were collected and put to death every year. At last a young officer, Captain Macpherson, who went amongst them as governor, got very friendly with the Khonds and persuaded them to try an experiment. The time for the great sacrifice was near, the victims were all in readiness, the special object of their death being to obtain from the evil spirit a good harvest.

Captain Macpherson persuaded the Khonds to hand the victims over to him while they went and told their goddess that she would have no sacrifice that year, but that it was the fault of the British, who said she might do anything she liked to punish them for it. The Khonds were rather nervous, but, as it happened, the harvest turned out a very good one, and nothing happened to the captain. So the Khonds were convinced, and never bothered about human sacrifices again.

It would take me too long to tell all that we have done for India. We know that, in spite of this, there are many Indians still who dislike our rule. But their best men are grateful, and a patriotic and enlightened Indian, Sir Seid Ahmed, in an address to his fellow-countrymen has said: "Be not unjust to the British Government, to whom God has given the rule of India. Be not unjust to that nation which is ruling over you. And think also on this—how upright is her rule. Of such benevolence as the English Government shows to those under her there is no example in the history of the world."

A great Mohammedan prince of central Asia, returning through India from a visit to the holy cities of Arabia, described the English in the following words: "Black is their faith, but pure and blameless is their justice."

It is because we have brought this peace and justice into a land where all was cruelty and oppression that to-day the King-Emperor looks upon all India united under his sovereignty. The whole of Burmah has come under his sceptre. Baluchistan has been brought under his protection. Our railways run right up to the mountains of the north, and Afghanistan itself is encircled by a border-line which we have promised to help her to defend.

Such is our Indian Empire in 1911. In all the history of the world there is nothing more wonderful than the story of its growth from that first tiny trading settlement at Surat in 1612, in the days of Jehanjir and Nur Jehan, when the great empire of the Moghuls overshadowed the land.

THE END.