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## THE CORONATION OF AN INDIAN SOVEREIGN

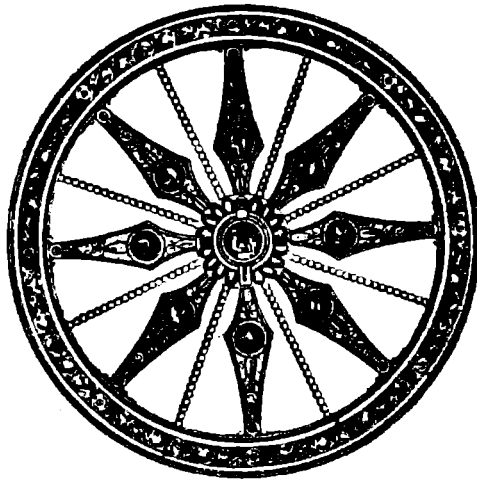
From the Ajanta Frescoes

# THE PRINCES OF INDIA

WITH A CHAPTER ON NEPAL

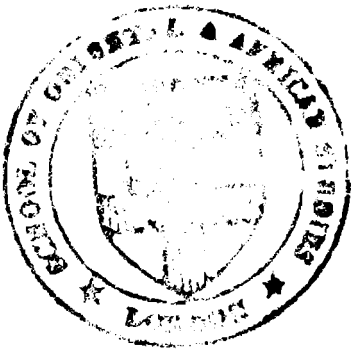
By  
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With an Introduction by  
VISCOUNT HALIFAX  
K.G., G.C.S.I.



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TO  
MY WIFE



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## INTRODUCTION

**W**ITHOUT of necessity subscribing to everything that this book contains, I am very glad to accept Sir William Barton's invitation to write a foreword to this contribution to our knowledge of a subject at present occupying so large a share of the political stage.

Opinion differs widely upon many of the issues raised, and upon the best way of dealing with them. But there will be no unwillingness in any quarter to admit that in the months to come the future of India will present to the people of this country the most difficult task in practical statesmanship with which they have ever been confronted.

If the decision is to be a wise one it must rest upon a sound conception of the problem itself, and in that problem the place that is to be taken in the new India by the Indian States is an essential factor. Should they join the rest of India in a Federation? Would they bring strength to a Federal Government, or weakness? Are their interests compatible with adhesion to an All-India



Federation? What should be the range of the Federal Government's jurisdiction over them? These are some of the questions upon which keen debate will shortly arise.

It is, I think, true to say that less is known in this country of the Indian States than of any other of the principal elements in the Indian question. It is not always remembered, for example, that Nepal, on which Sir William has much of interest to say, is not, and never has been, an Indian State, and rightly values its independent nationhood. Nor, of course, are the Indian States themselves British territory, their inhabitants are not British subjects, and, except for short intervals and in special circumstances, the States have never been administered by the great Indian services which have contributed so much to the welfare of British India and our knowledge of its people.

Sir William Barton in this interesting book fills the gap in our knowledge, and no one is better qualified by long service and shrewd judgment to claim attention upon the subject of which he writes. He would be the last to profess that he has given the answers to all the questions which I have just propounded. But he has set out in clear and arresting form much of the material upon which the answers must be based, if they are to have any value.

His conclusion is that, if the Princes do finally decide to join the Federation, they would be assured, by virtue of their wealth, experience and leadership, of a great position in it, and that they would have both the opportunity and the responsibility of bringing to the Federation that quality of stability, of which they are the chief exponents in political India to-day.

Such is the considered view of one whose experience is unquestioned, and who has no illusions about the difficulties that beset the architects of a durable Indian Federation. That he should reach it may rightly fortify the confidence of those who see in the establishment of such a Federation of All-India the wisest method of dealing with what they hold to be the realities of Indian political development, and the surest way to strengthen the foundations of Indian government.

HALIFAX.



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*The ornament on the cover and title-page of this book is a sketch of one of the great wheels from the 11th-century Temple of Kamarak in Orissa. The Wheel has, from ancient times, been the symbol of sovereignty in India.*

## PREFACE

THE policy of the British Government in attempting a federation of India brings into prominence the fact that one-third of the surface of India and more than a fourth of its people are outside British jurisdiction. As is well known, the government in Indian India is autocratic, and one of the most difficult problems before British statesmen in carrying out the new policy is to effect a synthesis of opposing systems : the personal rule of the States and the democracy of British India.

In these circumstances it is felt that a short but comprehensive survey of the historical and constitutional position of the Indian Princes would be welcomed by many who, while interested in the question of Indian reform, have neither the leisure nor the inclination to study the subject in voluminous classics such as Lee-Warner's *Indian States*, or in the ephemeral literature of recent years.

The Indian States number 562, of which 327 are relatively of very little consequence, and only exist independently as the result of an historical accident. It is obvious that in a book of strictly limited scope it is impossible to do more than touch briefly on the

more prominent States, more especially those directly interested in the Round Table Conference. This explains the omission of a remote State like Manipur, on the Assam frontier, and of the Shan States in Burma.

Again, it may be asked why the chiefs on the Afghan frontier have been left out of consideration. The explanation is that these chiefs are in a different category compared with the Princes of India. All are Mohammedans. Originally their political gravitation was towards Kabul, not to Delhi. Territorially, they are situated between the British administrative boundary and the political boundary between India and Afghanistan, known as the Durand line. As regards their internal administration, these border States are to all intents and purposes independent; there is an implied protectorate against attack from across the Durand line, but the British do not guarantee the chiefs against attacks from the neighbouring border tribes. In contrast to the practice in the Indian States, subsidies are given to most of the border chiefs to strengthen their military position.

There are only seven of these border States, varying in importance from that of the Khan of Kalat, with a wild and arid mountain country of 75,000 square miles, in Baluchistan, and a population of 328,000, to the small state of Phulera on the Hazara border, with an area of 34 square miles. Two of the chiefs, the Mehtar of Chitral and the Khan of Kalat, have the title of his Highness and a salute

of guns. One of the most important is the new State of Swat, founded in the course of the last ten years by the Miangul Shahzada, a descendant of the Ahkhund of Swat, on the Peshawar border.

An attempt has been made to sketch the historical background and to trace the evolution of the British protectorate, which all the Princes are so anxious to maintain.

To the chapters dealing with the States in detail I have prefixed, in the case of those mentioned by name, particulars giving the religion and race, the name of the ruler (preceded by that of the dynasty, where possible), date of accession, area, population and approximate revenue. They will, it is hoped, be of assistance to the reader.

I have added a chapter on Nepal because I feel that readers of the book may desire to have some information on this important kingdom, in view of its association with India during the past century. I hope I have made it perfectly clear that it is not, and never has been, an Indian State. This has been further emphasised in the title.

My acknowledgments are due to Mr. W. H. J. Wilkinson-Guillemard, C.S.I., C.I.E., lately Resident in Nepal, for the loan of photographs ; to Sir Herbert Baker, R.A., for the photograph of the Chamber of Princes at New Delhi ; to Sir Mirza Ismail, Dewan of Mysore, and Sir Krishnama Chari, Dewan of Baroda, for photographs they have sent me ; to officials of the India Office for the use of reference books and for permission to

reproduce the pictures of the Durbar at Udaipur in 1855 and of Old Calcutta ; to the Director of the Victoria and Albert Museum for permission to reproduce the frontispiece and the first illustration, and to Mr. K. de B. Codrington for particular help in connection with these pictures, and with the Wheel from the Temple of Kamarak, illustrated in his book, *Ancient India* ; to Mr. R. E. Enthoven, C.I.E., and the Oxford University Press for the illustration of Colonel Tod, and to the High Commissioner for India and the Oxford University Press for allowing me to use two maps from the Imperial Gazetteer of India as the basis of those which appear in this volume.

I

INDIAN INDIA



## GENEALOGY OF THE MOGUL DYNASTY

Baber (fifth in descent from Timur), 1526-1530

Humayun, 1530-1540

Akbar, 1552-1605

Jehangir, 1605-1627

Shahjahan, 1628-(deposed) 1658

Aurangzeb, 1658-1707

Bahadur Shah, 1707-1712

Jahendar Shah, 1712-(murdered) 1713 \*

Alamgir II, 1754-(murdered) 1759

Shah Ali II, 1759-1806

Akbar II, 1806-1837

Bahadur Shah II, 1837-(deposed) 1857

\* Between 1713 and 1754 six grandsons and great-grandsons of Bahadur Shah, of the junior branches, reigned for short periods.

## CHAPTER I

### INDIAN INDIA

**F**ROM the huge mountain mass of the Pamirs and Karakoram in the north, where political India impinges on central Asia, to Cape Comorin in the south, a distance of nearly two thousand miles, one might travel almost entirely through territory of the Indian Princes without touching British India. You would start your journey in Chitral, a rugged mountainous country where the Mehtar holds sway. Chitral is a British protectorate. You might perhaps meet some of the Kafirs, a fair-skinned people who owe allegiance to the Mehtar, reputed to be descendants of Greeks from Alexander the Great's armies. From Chitral you would pass through Gilgit, a dependency of Kashmir, and thence to the Vale of Kashmir itself, beloved of the Moguls, who have left imperishable monuments of their devotion in the beautiful gardens round Srinagar on the shores of the Dal lake.

From Kashmir your route would lie through small Rajput States in the Himalayas : past Simla to the Sikh State of Patiala in the Punjab plains, a country of prosperous villages and stalwart fighting

men : thence to the desert of Rajputana, home of the blue-blooded Rajputs, with its memories of ancient chivalry : then on to the sphere of the Marathas in Baroda and Indore, secular rivals of the Rajputs. You would then move into the great Moslem State of Hyderabad and on to the southernmost extremity of the central plateau, Mysore, where the climate is always a languorous afternoon. From there you would pass on to Travancore with the unrivalled beauty of its forests and lagoons : and so on to Cape Comorin, fabled abode of the Goddess Kumari, where the Indian Ocean joins the Bay of Bengal. Similarly one may pass from west to east, from the Indus nearly to Calcutta, through country that does not owe direct allegiance to the British Crown.

The traveller may cross the boundary between the two Indias without at once becoming aware that he is in a new political atmosphere. But it is soon borne in on him that the scene has changed. And, in fact, the contrast between the everyday life of the people who are ruled from Imperial Delhi and those who live under the Durbars is almost as great as the divergence in the political ideals of Indian India and those of the Indian politician of the Round Table Conference. They are almost different worlds. The India of ancient tradition, the India that enshrines the achievements of Indian political genius, are to be found at their best in the States.

Here the question naturally presents itself : Why do eighty millions of the people of India stand out-

side British jurisdiction? Why does the imperial writ not run over a third of the sub-continent?

The enquiry is of outstanding importance to the student seeking a pathway through the dense tropical growth of Indian politics. Many of the Indian States have existed for a dozen centuries or more. The largest of them, Hyderabad, is nearly equal in area to Great Britain, and has a population of fourteen millions. With facts such as these it is self-evident that there can be no permanent solution of the Indian problem that does not assign to the Princes of India a position in the Indian commonwealth commensurate with their political status, based on a study of their historical and political significance, their traditions and the part they may be expected to play in the future.

The more advanced school of political thought in India regards the States as an anachronism, a remnant of personal rule that cannot survive in an era of democracy. It imputes to Britain the sinister policy of prolonging an effete despotism for her own selfish ends.

This view entirely overlooks the realities. The truth is that of all the political institutions of India the semi-autonomous kingdom typified in the States is the most persistent. That it has existed for thousands of years not only attests its vitality but is at the same time irrefutable evidence that it conforms to the Indian temperament.

The widely prevalent conception of India as a more or less homogeneous political structure, en-

shrining the tradition of empire since time immemorial, is not in accordance with the facts. Indian political genius, especially in Hindu India, has always shown a preference for the kingdom of moderate dimensions, more or less of the type of the Indian State of to-day.

In the great empires of the past the principle of individualism held good : they were almost invariably based on the semi-autonomous kingdom or state standing in feudal relation to a central authority. A similar principle might have been the dominant feature in the India empire of to-day, had the British throughout repudiated the feudal theories of lapse on the failure of heirs, and escheat as the penalty for breach of treaty obligations. Even where an imperial government has succeeded in breaking the power of great feudatories, it has been unable, over an extended period, to resist centrifugal tendencies : viceroys of remote provinces have declared their independence as the central power weakened ; till creeping paralysis finally extinguished imperial authority and left the country a prey to feudal barons and military leaders fighting among themselves with kingdoms for a prize. The phenomenon has repeated itself with wearisome iteration. In the end a position of unstable equilibrium has developed till a fresh wave of invasion swept down the passes or some new empire-builder absorbed kingdoms adjacent to his own.

How this type of autonomous or semi-autonomous kingdom was evolved is a complicated problem,

shrouded in the mists of antiquity. Originating in Hindu political theory, it has been influenced by the Brahminical caste system with its rigid social and economic structure. Caste goes back at least three thousand years. The scheme of life ordained by its priestly founders, the Brahmins, harmonised best with a government in which the ruler administered a comparatively small territory with the assistance of his Durbar or Council, comprising his ministers, priests, military feudatories and representatives of the castes and guilds ; the Indian people have always prized the opportunity of personal contact with their ruler, be he Prince or British District Officer, which again fosters the vogue of the small political unit. Intimate relations with the ruler were the mainspring of the loyalty of the military caste. The storms of invasion that have perpetually swept over India with their varieties of ethnic structure also contributed to a diversity of political units.

Durbar rule is best seen at work in the more ancient Rajput States of Central India and the oases of the great Indian Desert. Some of these are tribal in origin, and until recently there was in some cases a form of election to the chieftaincy. States like the Rajput principalities and some of the older States in the south—Mysore, Travancore and Cochin, for example—owe their centuries of existence to the loyal support of their nobles and peasantry. There were originally in some of the older States recognisable limits to autocracy.



To obtain a clear view of the position of the States in the political fabric of India of to-day they must be seen in historical perspective. The long-drawn tragedy of invasion, the crash of empires and kingdoms, the bitterness of religious feuds are reflected in the evolution of India's minor kingdoms.

There are no records of the earliest irruptions. Leaving out of consideration aboriginal tribes such as the Gonds and Bhils, India was in early times divided between two great peoples, the Indo-Aryans and the Dravidians, differing from each other in language, religion and physical characteristics.

The Dravidian conquest preceded the Indo-Aryan invasion and covered the greater part of India. From about 2,000 B.C. onwards fair-skinned tribesmen from the Persian and Afghan highlands, speaking the Aryan tongue and conveniently designated Indo-Aryans by modern historians, absorbed northern India, enslaving or ejecting the Dravidians.

Indo-Aryan conquests stopped at the Vindhya, a range of hills which, running diagonally across the peninsula from a point near the Gulf of Cambay in a north-easterly direction, divides the predominantly Aryan north from the Dravidian south. Left unmolested for 1,000 years, the Indo-Aryans evolved a religion, a social system based on caste, and a philosophy of life, which, formed and developed 3,000 years ago, they ultimately imposed on the whole of India, and it has dominated India

to the present time. No other civilisation, except the Chinese, can boast such unbroken continuity.

This civilisation, based on a system best described under the comprehensive term of Hinduism, was largely the work of Brahmin priests. It pervades human life in its religious, social and economic aspect. Brahmin supremacy is, in fact, the real foundation of Hinduism, with its rigour of caste distinction, with learning and culture the monopoly of the priesthood.

Caste is essentially Brahminical. To this day it is regarded as a divine institution by orthodox Hindus. The doctrine of *Karma* or the bondage of works is an essential feature.

The main divisions of caste are between the "twiceborn" and the Sudra, originally the servile caste. The "twiceborn" were at the outset exclusively Aryan; the Sudras mainly Dravidian. The uncivilised tribes were left outside the social pale, forbears of the outcasts of later days. South of the Vindhya there are in practice two castes only—Brahmins and Sudras. The distinguishing mark of the "twiceborn" is the sacred thread with which the initiate is invested by the Brahmin, and which he wears thereafter round his neck.

The popular notion that there were four original castes—Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaisya and Sudra—is now generally regarded by historians as unfounded. The classification adopted by early Hindu writers was mainly occupational, as follows: (1) the learned, literary or priestly order, or Brahmins;

(2) the military and governing classes, or Kshatriyas ; (3) landowners and merchants, or Vaisyas ; and (4) humble folk, peasants, artisans and the like, the Sudra caste. In modern times the upper castes correspond roughly to the upper classes and upper middle classes of Europe : the Sudras to the middle, lower middle and artisan classes according to their occupation. The term " Vaisya " is hardly ever used : occasionally in the south the title of Kshatriya is claimed by people of position who by origin are actually Sudras and wish to improve their social status. The main distinction is whether the sacred thread is, or is not, worn. Within the castes there are infinite subdivisions ; in many cases inter-marriage is confined to the members of a particular group.

Brahminical Hinduism has not always enjoyed unchallenged supremacy. Its greatest rivals down the ages have been Buddhism and Islam. Of the latter something will be said when the Moslem invasions of India are discussed. Buddhism has almost completely disappeared from the India of to-day ; the few remaining Buddhists, four hundred thousand or so, are congregated in the foothills adjacent to Buddhist Tibet. A few are found in eastern Kashmir. Historically it deserves a word.

Buddhism was a reaction against the despotism of the Brahmin. Its founder, Gautama Buddha, belonged to a ruling family of Mongolian origin, a feudatory of the kingdom of Kosala in modern Bihar. His self-imposed mission was to seek a way

of escape from *Karma* and the endless succession of rebirths. His creed, or way of life, aimed at the elimination of the self, as the path to ultimate Nirvana, or union with the Infinite.

Buddha died about 587 B.C. Three centuries later Buddhism became the State religion of the great Mauryan empire under the Emperor Asoka. It failed, however, to oust Brahmin influence, and after a trial of strength extending over several centuries, Brahminism was completely restored.

The caste system was undoubtedly a hindrance to national development and a source of military weakness. This, and religious dissensions, combined to render India an easy prey to new invaders from the north.

In the sixth century Darius the Persian swept over the Punjab and annexed the country to the Indus, establishing an Indian satrapy. He was followed by Alexander the Great in 326 B.C. Western India was at this time divided into several kingdoms and aristocratic republics, mostly at variance with each other. The Greek invader easily overcame Indian resistance and might have conquered the whole of northern India but for the mutiny of his troops, which compelled him to return to Persia, where he died two years later. His generals divided his conquests among themselves, establishing new kingdoms.

Chandragupta Maurya now built up the first great Indian empire. It was composed mainly of subordinate kingdoms and principalities in feudal

relations with the central government. Seleucos, King of Babylon, deputed an ambassador, Megasthenes, to the court of the Indian emperor. The latter wrote a memoir on Indian conditions, extracts from which constitute some of the earliest material available for the Indian historian. He mentions 118 kingdoms in feudal relations with the Empire.

Chandragupta had a brilliant minister, Kautilya, a Brahmin, author of the *Arthashastra*, a work on Indian polity, comparable in its matter and ethics with *Il Principe* of Machiavelli. Rulers are enjoined to give a high place to intrigue and diplomacy. For the benefit of the Treasury liquor bars should be provided with every possible attraction. The police are advised to make use of prostitutes as political informers. An interesting chapter is devoted to the best system of governing the small kingdom, which again suggests that over two thousand years ago that particular type was recognised as the most suitable political unit for India.

Soon after the death of Asoka (269–232 B.C.) the Mauryan empire broke up into a series of petty kingdoms. About 150 B.C. a Greek ruler, driven from the central Asian kingdom of Bactria by the Scythians, founded a kingdom in the Punjab. A century later this was overthrown by the Scythians, who established an empire in northern India for themselves, which lasted till A.D. 200.

The Guptas now recovered the hegemony of

northern India for the Hindus. The Brahmins regained their prestige, and the next century and a half was the golden age of Hinduism. In the fifth century the White Huns, a nomad tribe from central Asia, shattered the Gupta empire. A group of smaller kingdoms took its place. Harsha, a Hindu chief whose capital was near the site of modern Delhi, succeeded in the beginning of the seventh century in uniting most of them in a new empire in the north. It held together for less than half a century, collapsing on his death.

This was the last national empire in India. Its short-lived glory marks the close of Aryan India. The general conclusion from this rapid survey of the period is that the small kingdom in India has more vitality than the wider political synthesis of empire. Will democracy change the tendency? Indications of particularisation are to-day growing more marked, especially in the south.

Two centuries of Rajput hegemony followed, based on a series of small kingdoms in Malwa (Central India) Kanauj in the Gangetic plain and in the Western Punjab. This was another brilliant era of Hindu India. The Rajputs have a diverse origin. Some families go back to prehistoric times; the bulk of them trace their ancestry to the nobles or high military officers of the invaders who had built up for themselves empires, kingdoms or fiefs in India from the first to the fifth century A.D., like the Scythians and Huns. The old Hindu Kshatriya or military families and clans had practically dis-

appeared. Hinduism could hardly hope to survive without the support of the new military leaders, and the only course to adopt was to open the portals of caste to these military chiefs, many of them Buddhists. The Brahmins made the great decision, thereby securing many converts and powerful allies against their Buddhist rivals. In their turn the Rajput barons found Brahmin co-operation and the caste system of great political value in establishing their supremacy. In a few cases Gond rajas and other members of aboriginal tribes who had contracted marriages with Rajputs were admitted into the charmed circle. Many of these families still hold principalities in the central plateau and Orissa. The rank and file of the clansmen under the Rajput chiefs were admitted into the Sudra caste. Rajput, it should be noted, means king's son (*raja-putra*).

The Rajputs were not a nation or even a race or tribe : they were rather a military caste, a new Hindu chivalry. In fact, the Rajput baron of the tenth and eleventh centuries living in his great castle, with his vassals or feudal dependents, his courtly manners, his contempt of death, his love of pillage and the chase, his code of knightly honour, was in many respects the counterpart of his contemporary in the West, the feudal baron of France, Germany or England.

Hindu India in the tenth and eleventh centuries was fortunate in having secured new defenders in the terror that was impending ; but for the Rajputs

Hinduism would probably have been submerged beneath the floods of Moslem invasion. The Brahmins unaided could not have held the people to their faith.

In the beginning of the seventh century an obscure Arab had built up a mighty religion which was soon to take the world by storm. A century later Islam, in its hot crusading youth, had carried the Arab standard to the Atlantic, into France and Spain in the west and to the Afghan highlands in the east, converting to the new creed the wild tribes of the Indian borderland. The curtain was about to rise on the thousand-year feud between Mohammedan and Hindu. By the middle of the ninth century the Arabs had occupied Sindh and the delta of the Indus. Towards the close of the tenth there began a series of Moslem invasions which for the next two or three centuries deluged India in blood. Although in 1191 massed Rajput cavalry drove the invaders across the Sutlej, the victory gained only a short respite; about the same time Bengal, Bihar and Orissa fell before a handful of Afghan horsemen. A new kingdom was established (1202) and Mohammedanism prevailed till Clive's victory at Plassey in 1757. Bengal had been the last stronghold of Buddhism in India, and the people, who had been forced back into the Hindu pale, hated the rule of the Brahmin priests. There were mass conversions to Islam among them, which explains the ease with which the Mohammedans



held Bengal ; incidentally it is the reason for the Mohammedan majority in Bengal to-day. Buddhism had a sting in its tail.

The Mohammedans had now established their empire in India, an empire that was destined to last for six or seven centuries. It was not long before they subdued the Deccan, while in 1311 the imperial general Malik Kafur carried fire and sword to Cape Comorin.

The strength of the first sultanate of Delhi soon waned. True to the character of Indian history, there was the inevitable development of centrifugal forces. Bengal broke away : separate Mohammedan kingdoms were established in the Deccan, comprising what is now the dominion of the Nizam of Hyderabad. Other kingdoms seceded, Gujarat, Malwa, Khandesh. New hordes of Moslem invaders swept down the northern passes, and in 1398 Tamerlane the Tartar captured Delhi, but did not found an empire in India.

Throughout the first four centuries of Moslem rule the armies of the foreigners had been continually reinforced by recruits from the central Asian highlands. Their chief opponents, the Rajputs, with their limited resources in fighting men, were not long able to maintain the field. Refusing to admit defeat, they found a refuge in the oases of the great desert now known as Rajputana ; in the remote fastnesses of the central plateau north of the Vindhya, and in the peninsula of Kathiawar. Here they established small kingdoms, most of which be-

came, later on, fiefs of the Mogul empire. On the central plateau many of the smaller Rajput barons became feudatories of the Moslem kingdom of Malwa.

The courts of these Rajput rulers preserved the culture, the traditions and religion of the Aryan age. Most of them have survived the storms of centuries and form the bulk of the Indian States of to-day, attesting the vitality of the political system they embody.

Elsewhere the Brahmins, unable to absorb the new invaders, strengthened the barriers of caste against their oppressors. The Brahmin thinks in centuries : the work of the moment was to preserve caste and the religion of the Vedas. The *Kalayuga*, the age of despair, would not last for ever. The hated despotism would pass away.

The greatest of the Moslem empires in India was founded by the Mogul Baber after the battle of Panipat in 1526. His ancestry was almost a presage of empire. Fifth in descent in the direct line from Timur, he claimed Ghenghiz Khan as an ancestor through his mother. Timur was a Barlas Turk ; Ghenghiz a Mongol. "Mongol" and "Mughal" are really equivalent. Turks and Mongols inter-married freely, after the Mongols had been converted to Islam.

Baber's grandson Akbar, greatest of the Moguls, a contemporary of Elizabeth of England, had realised the necessity for conciliating his Hindu subjects. He abolished the poll-tax on Hindus.

In a series of campaigns he subjugated the Rajputs both of Rajputana and of the central plateau (Malwa). Most of the larger Rajput States of today, Udaipur, Jodhpur, Bikanir, Bundi and Kotah were then in existence. The siege of Chitor, capital of Udaipur, by Akbar is one of the most famous events in Indian history.

After their submission Akbar established quasi-feudal relations with the Rajput chiefs, many of whom rose to high office as statesmen or soldiers in the Mogul empire; while the emperors married Rajput ladies. The mothers of the emperors Jehangir and Shahjahan were Rajput princesses. Rajput chiefs and nobles with their vassals were in constant attendance on the emperor. Rajput troops, especially cavalry, were of special value as a counterpoise to the great Mohammedan nobles.

But the last of the great emperors, Aurangzeb, a fanatical bigot, lost the support of the Rajputs by establishing a regime of persecution of the Hindus, combined with an orgy of destruction of Hindu shrines and temples. This weakened the military fibre of the Mogul empire, already strained to the breaking point by the wars with the Moslem kingdoms in the Deccan.

About the middle of the seventeenth century there appeared on the horizon a new portent, the rising star of Maratha nationalism. Maharashtra, or Maratha country, is a great block of the Deccan tableland a little to the south of the Vindhya.



شهبان شجاع باہر و اورنگ زیب اور مراد بخش علی الملک

[By permission of the Victoria & Albert Museum]

### THE THREE YOUNGER SONS OF SHAH JAHAN

The inscription is written by the Emperor Shah Jahan himself and reads :  
“ The pictures of Shah Shujaa Bahadur, Aurangzeb Bahadur and Murad  
Bakhsh, painted by Balchand.” Date, approx. 1635



Most of this territory was included in the Moslem kingdoms of the Deccan. The Marathas were, and are, a hard-working peasant folk belonging to the Sudra caste and of Dravidian origin. Living among them were the Chitpavan Brahmins, astute and able men from whom the Moslems selected many of their civil officers and clerks. The village organisation had been left untouched by the foreign conquerors, which made national resurgence easier.

For the first two or three centuries of their rule, from the fifteenth century onwards, the Moslem sovereigns of the Deccan employed mercenary armies composed of Afghans, Abyssinians, Persians and Arabs, who are, by the way, the progenitors of the Moslem population of the Nizam's dominions. The hostility of the local Moslems to new immigrants was making recruitment difficult by the beginning of the seventeenth century, and various governments were forced to adopt the alternative of employing Marathas in their armies, which gave these Hindu clansmen military training and experience, at the expense of the Moslems. With the capitulation of Golconda, the capital of what is now the modern Hyderabad, to Aurangzeb, the time was ripe for an effort of Hindu nationalism to throw off the yoke. A leader was found in Shivaji, born in 1627, who, beginning his career as a robber baron, with a hill fortress in the Ghauts near Poona, soon became the terror of the countryside. He harried all impartially, and by the middle of the seventeenth century had founded a kingdom pro-

tected by an almost impregnable chain of hill forts in the western Ghauts against which the Emperor Aurangzeb's forces exhausted their energy in vain.

Shivaji died in 1680. None of his successors had a trace of his genius, and the control of the Maratha State soon fell into the hands of the Chitpavan Brahmins, who first as Ministers, and later as Peshwas, or Presidents, usurped supreme political power. The earlier Peshwas were men of great ability and character, and, though Brahmin rule weakened the national character of the movement, the initial impulse lasted for another half-century, carrying Maratha arms as far as the Indus. The fall of the Mogul empire rapidly followed on the death of Aurangzeb in 1707, and the final blow at the central power of the Moguls was struck by Nadir Shah, the Persian emperor, who sacked Delhi in 1739.

Maratha tactics were peculiar to themselves. Their armies consisted of huge bodies of light horsemen which swept like swarms of locusts over India from end to end. By 1758 they had penetrated as far as Delhi. A little earlier they had invaded Malwa and established their supremacy over the Rajput principalities. Had the Rajputs as a whole been able to combine, they might have held their new enemies in check. The genius of Asaf Jah, ancestor of the present Nizam, saved the south from complete domination by the Marathas. He had been appointed Governor of the Deccan province formed from the Mohammedan kingdoms of the Deccan by Aurangzeb after the final over-

throw of Golconda already referred to. By 1723 he was independent in all but name. Another great Mohammedan leader, Hyder Ali, kept Mysore out of Maratha clutches. Maratha generals, Sindhia, Holkar, the Gaekwar, the Bhonsla, began to carve for themselves fiefs out of the conquered territories for the support of their armies. In this way the Maratha States of Gwalior, Indore, Baroda and Nagpur or Berar were established. Kolhapur in the south throughout continued in the family of Shivaji.

The Marathas as a rule did not concern themselves with administration, and frequently, instead of annexing territory, they preferred to levy *chaunth* or tribute of one-fourth of the revenue. Even Hyderabad paid blackmail in this form till the final overthrow of the Marathas by the British.

In 1758 the Marathas occupied the Punjab. This movement was resented by Ahmad Shah Durani, who had founded a new kingdom in Afghanistan. He moved across the Indus and ejected them. The Peshwa was, however, determined to try conclusions with the Afghan king, and moved up an immense army to Delhi to oppose him. Maratha Hindu and Afghan Moslem met in 1761 at Panipat, again a scene of battle. The result was the almost complete destruction of the Maratha army. Ahmad Shah would have established a new empire at Delhi, but for the mutiny of his troops, which compelled him to return to Kabul.

The government of the Peshwa never recovered



from the defeat of Panipat, which seemed to intensify the separatist tendencies already developing in the efforts of Maratha generals to found principalities for themselves; while about this time some of the Maratha leaders, notably Sindhia, adopted new military tactics, relying mainly on infantry trained by European officers rather than on their irregular mounted troops, a change which lost them their mobility.

By the middle of the eighteenth century most of the Indian States as we know them to-day were formed, or were in process of formation. In the north, on the Kashmir border, the Dogra Rajput ruling family, which was to acquire Kashmir from the British, was already established. The Sikhs of the Punjab had instituted their military brotherhood and the Sikh States of to-day were in existence. The Moslem State of Bahawalpur had been founded at the expense of the Rajputs on the western border of Rajputana by an Afghan from Sindh early in the eighteenth century. Sindh was at the time a province of the Afghan kingdom of Kabul. So was the frontier province. The Rajput States of Rajputana, Jaisalmer, Bikanir, Kotah, Bundi, Jaipur, Jodhpur, Udaipur, all of whose rulers are now numbered among the Princes of India, had practically thrown off their allegiance to Delhi : already they had felt the heavy hand of the Maratha plunderer. An insurrection of the Jats, a Hindu tribe of sturdy peasants to be found in most villages in the Punjab, had brought into existence two in-

dependent Jat States, Bharatpur and Dholpur on the Jaipur border, within two or three marches of Delhi.

Further north an Afghan chief with a strong body of his tribesmen had seized Rohilkhand, a province west of Oudh. Later the Afghan conquest shrank to smaller dimensions in the present Mohammedan State of Rampur. Oudh was practically independent under its Nawab Wazir; so was Bengal. In Central India most of the Rajput States had been submerged in the tide of Maratha invasion. Only a few of the larger States maintained a precarious existence as Maratha tributaries. Most of Rajput territory in Malwa was divided between Holkar and Sindhia. A new Mohammedan State, Bhopal, had been carved out of Rajput territory in south Malwa towards the end of the eighteenth century by an imperial officer, an Afghan, ancestor of the present Nawab. The Bhonsla family of Marathas held the country south of Bengal, including Cuttack, with the wild forest tribes and their Rajas as tributaries, now mostly included in the Central Provinces.

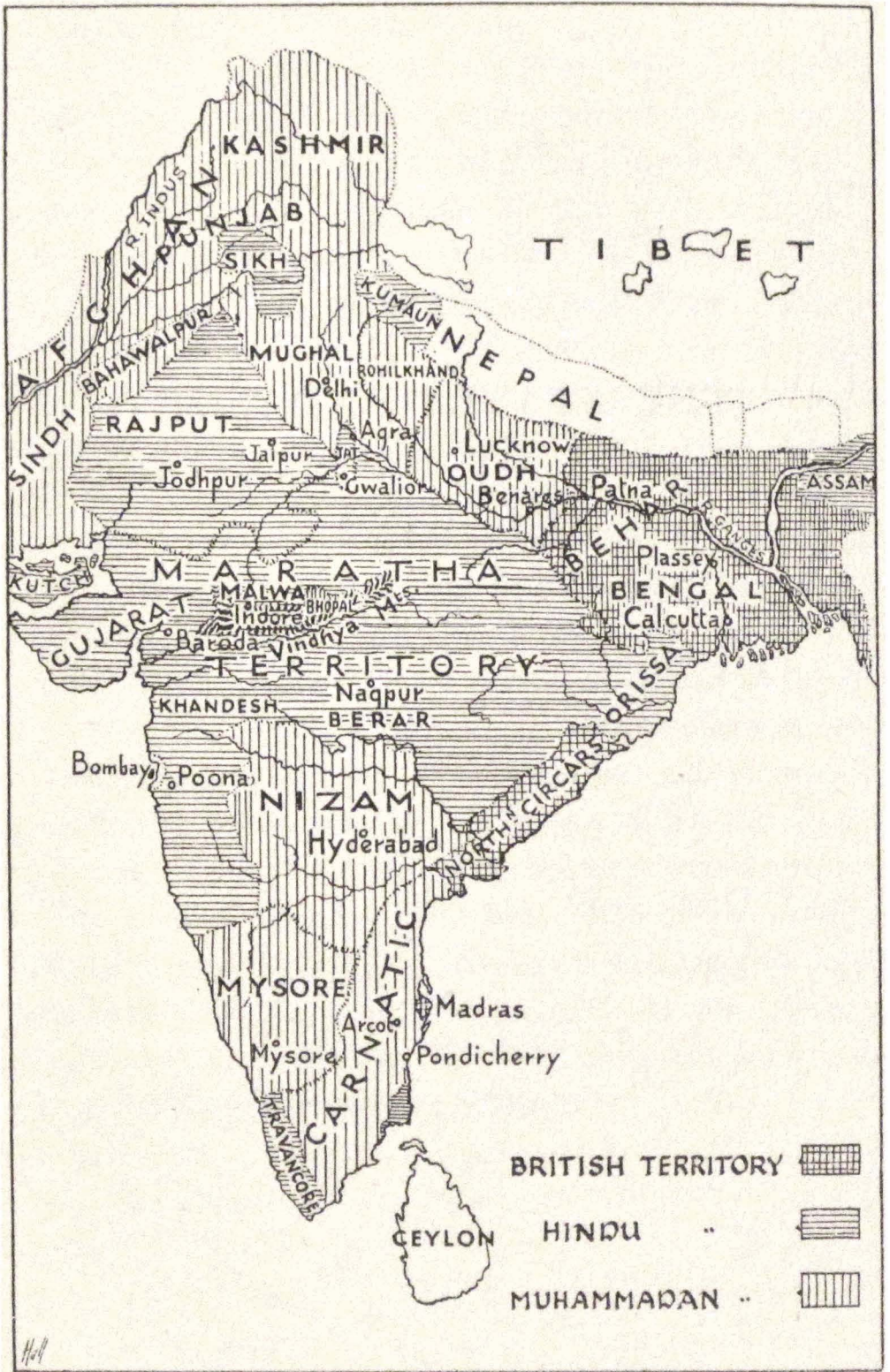
On the west, the Gaekwar held most of the old kingdom of Gujarat. The Rajput chiefs of Kathiawar, including Jamnagar, Nawanagar, Kutch, etc., were his tributaries; so were the chiefs, again mostly Rajputs, of the small hill States on the western slopes of the Malwa plateau. In the Deccan the successor of the Nizam Asaf Jah ruled over a vast territory extending from near Poona to the Bay of Bengal and from the Godavari to south Madras. The Nawab of Arcot, his feudatory, held the Car-

natic to Cape Comorin, including the greater part of the Madras presidency. The usurper Hyder Ali had trebled the territories of his former master, the Maharaja of Mysore. Beyond the Ghauts in Travancore, an ancient Hindu family had welded a group of small chieftaincies into a kingdom : to the north was Cochin, another Hindu State. North of Mysore to Baroda, between the sea and the Nizam's dominions, was the territory, with Poona as its capital, of the Peshwa, titular head of the Maratha confederacy. Included in this territory was the State of Kolhapur, and many small feudatory States held mostly by Brahmin officers of the Peshwa. Most of them still exist.

The Mogul empire, the focus of political power in India for nearly two centuries, was sinking into a dishonoured grave. The shadow emperor was practically a prisoner in the hands of his rebellious subjects. Centrifugal tendencies were visible everywhere. The dream of the Marathas of founding a Hindu empire was doomed to disappointment. India was awaiting a new empire to end an era of chaos and anarchy. It is at this moment that the British appear on the scene.

## II

# THE STATES AND THE EVOLUTION OF BRITISH POWER IN INDIA



INDIA IN 1765

## CHAPTER II

### THE STATES AND THE EVOLUTION OF BRITISH POWER IN INDIA

INDIA has never achieved anything in the nature of maritime supremacy. Her seaborne trade, the coastal trade partially excepted, had been for a thousand years in the hands of Arabs, Chinese and Abyssinians, when the Portuguese appeared in the Indian Ocean at the beginning of the sixteenth century, and in the absence of effective opposition secured a practical monopoly of the trade of India and the Far East for the hundred years that followed. They founded settlements on the Indian coasts : attempted to rule a considerable tract of country at Goa, south of Bombay, and occupied most of the low country in Ceylon. At the beginning of the seventeenth century the Dutch challenged Portuguese predominance in Eastern waters and in the next fifty years had firmly established themselves in the Far East. They ousted the Portuguese from Ceylon and built a settlement at the Cape of Good Hope.

The British followed the Dutch at a short interval. Elizabeth in 1600 gave a charter to a group of

London merchants authorising them to establish a company with the monopoly of Eastern trade. The group founded the East India Company.

The first British trading station was established at Surat on the west coast north of Bombay, about 1612, with the permission of the Mogul governor of Gujarat. The Portuguese made desperate efforts to oust them, but were beaten off. The capture of Ormuz, the Portuguese station in the Persian Gulf, completed their discomfiture, and the British were able to follow their lawful occasions without further molestation. Their success over the Portuguese gave them prestige at Delhi.

Throughout the seventeenth century the British company built up a great and thriving trade. They acquired Anjengo on the west coast, in the centre of the pepper trade, from a ruling chief in Travancore : the governor of Masulipatam on the east coast, then the seaport of the Moslem kingdom of Golconda, allowed them to open a factory there in 1625. In 1639 Madras was founded on a site acquired from a Hindu chief.

The position of the Company on the west coast was greatly improved in 1663 by the grant of Bombay by Charles II. This gave them a fortified settlement. Calcutta was established in 1690 on a site purchased from the Emperor Aurangzeb. Other smaller settlements had already been opened on the Hoogly.

All alike were harassed by local officials and exposed to the attacks of the Maratha freebooter,

until the Company had to build forts to protect their interests.

The rapid decay of the Mogul empire left no central authority in India able to enforce its decrees. The national monarchy built up by the Marathas was by 1750 approaching its zenith. From Poona, the nerve centre of the confederacy, the Peshwa, aided by astute Brahmin brains, dominated the greater part of India, though he hesitated to declare himself emperor. The opportunity passed after the crushing defeat of the Marathas at Panipat.

Meanwhile there was a new arrival. The French were comparatively late in their appearance on the Indian scene, but rapidly made headway. Pondicherry, their chief settlement, was founded in 1674 ; others speedily followed. From these small beginnings they soon attained a position of outstanding influence.

It began in this way. In 1735 Dumas became governor of Pondicherry. The event is of importance, as it was he who initiated the policy of establishing closer relations with the various Indian rulers, a policy which was ultimately to lead the British along the path to empire. In 1738 Dumas sent a small force to support one of the claimants to the vacant throne of Tanjore. He was rewarded with a grant of territory. In 1740 the Marathas invaded the Carnatic and killed the ruling Nawab. His successor fled with his family to Pondicherry. The Maratha general demanded his surrender.



Dumas defied him and beat off repeated attacks. The fame of the achievement spread through India. The Mogul emperor showed his approval by bestowing the title of Nawab on the French governor. He handed it on to his successor Dupleix, one of the most brilliant of administrators from the West who have wielded power in India.

The issue to be fought out was whether French or British were to have the predominating influence at the court of the Nizam of Hyderabad, and of his feudatory, the Nawab of Arcot. Fortune at first declared in favour of Dupleix. In 1750 there were disputed successions in both these principalities. Dupleix in each case was able to install his own nominee. The Nizam rewarded him by proclaiming him Nawab from the Kistnah river to Cape Comorin.

The situation was saved for the British in 1751 by the brilliant strategy of Clive, who suddenly seized Arcot, the Nawab's capital, while he was besieging his rival in Trichinopoly. The result was the discomfiture both of the Nawab and of Dupleix.

Meanwhile one of the officers of Dupleix, de Bussy, had escorted the new Nizam to Hyderabad with a contingent of French troops. These troops were maintained by the assignment of the northern Circars, then a province of Hyderabad. The troops thus placed at the Nizam's disposal were known as a "subsidiary" force. This was the first example of the policy of acquiring political control in an Indian

State by means of a force paid for by an assignment of the territory of the State.

Clive, who had conquered Bengal on the field of Plassey in 1757, decided to take measures against the French menace in Hyderabad. To achieve this he despatched a force by sea which seized the northern Circars and so deprived the French of their base, which led to the break-up of their army.

The authorities of the Company now made up their minds to adopt the policy of Dupleix, of acquiring a commanding influence at the courts of Indian Princes by placing at their disposal the superior military capacity of the European. Both the Nizam and the Nawab of Arcot stood in need of protection against the Marathas. The Nawab, in return for British military support, was very ready to place the Company in control of practically the whole of the revenues of his territories. This gave the Company the sinews of war. The Nizam followed his example by leasing the northern Circars to the British, in return for a pledge that they would supply him with two battalions and guns, whenever he should require them.

In Bengal after Plassey, the ruling Nawab, driven to desperation by the extortions of the Company's servants, murdered all the Europeans in his power and then fled to Oudh, where his cause was espoused by the ruler of that country known as the Nawab Wazir, and Shah Alam, the titular emperor. The confederates were, however, utterly defeated at Buxar in 1764 by Hector Munro.

Oudh lay at the feet of the British. They had, however, no desire to annex it, and restored it to the Nawab Wazir, two districts, Allahabad and Korah, being reserved as maintenance for the exiled emperor, who had come under British protection. The latter had left Delhi during the disturbances following the Maratha occupation of the city about 1756. He had succeeded to the imperial title on the murder of his father in 1759. In return for this concession the emperor conferred the *Diwani* of Bengal, or authority to collect the revenues, on the victors. The general administration remained in the hands of the Nawab. This dual system was not a success, and in the end the British had to assume full responsibility. Whether with different methods native rule could have been maintained is an open question.

In 1771 the fugitive emperor returned to Delhi and placed himself in the hands of the Marathas, the sheet-anchor of whose finance was the plunder of their neighbours. At the period under review they were levying *chaunth* on most parts of India not actually in their possession: for example, the Carnatic, Hyderabad, Kathiawar, Gujarat, Rajputana, the eastern Punjab. It was obvious that under such a system the British, with their military responsibilities, could not permanently avoid a clash.

The peace was not, however, broken till 1775, and then the responsibility lay with the British. The President of the Council of the Company's govern-

ment in Bombay desired to acquire the neighbouring island of Salsette and the port of Bassein, twenty-six miles away, which the Marathas had recently captured from the Portuguese. A disputed succession to the throne of the Peshwa at Poona gave Bombay its opportunity. The principal claimant, Ragoba, promised the Company what it wanted in return for its support. The war lasted for seven years. This military operation was grossly mismanaged by the Bombay authorities, and would have ended disastrously, but for a bold stroke of policy by Warren Hastings, now the Company's governor-general, in sending an army under General Goddard from Oudh right across India to Bombay. The treaty of peace concluded at Salbai in 1782 gave Bombay Salsette, but otherwise restored the *status quo*. The friendly relations thus restored between British and Marathas continued for over twenty years.

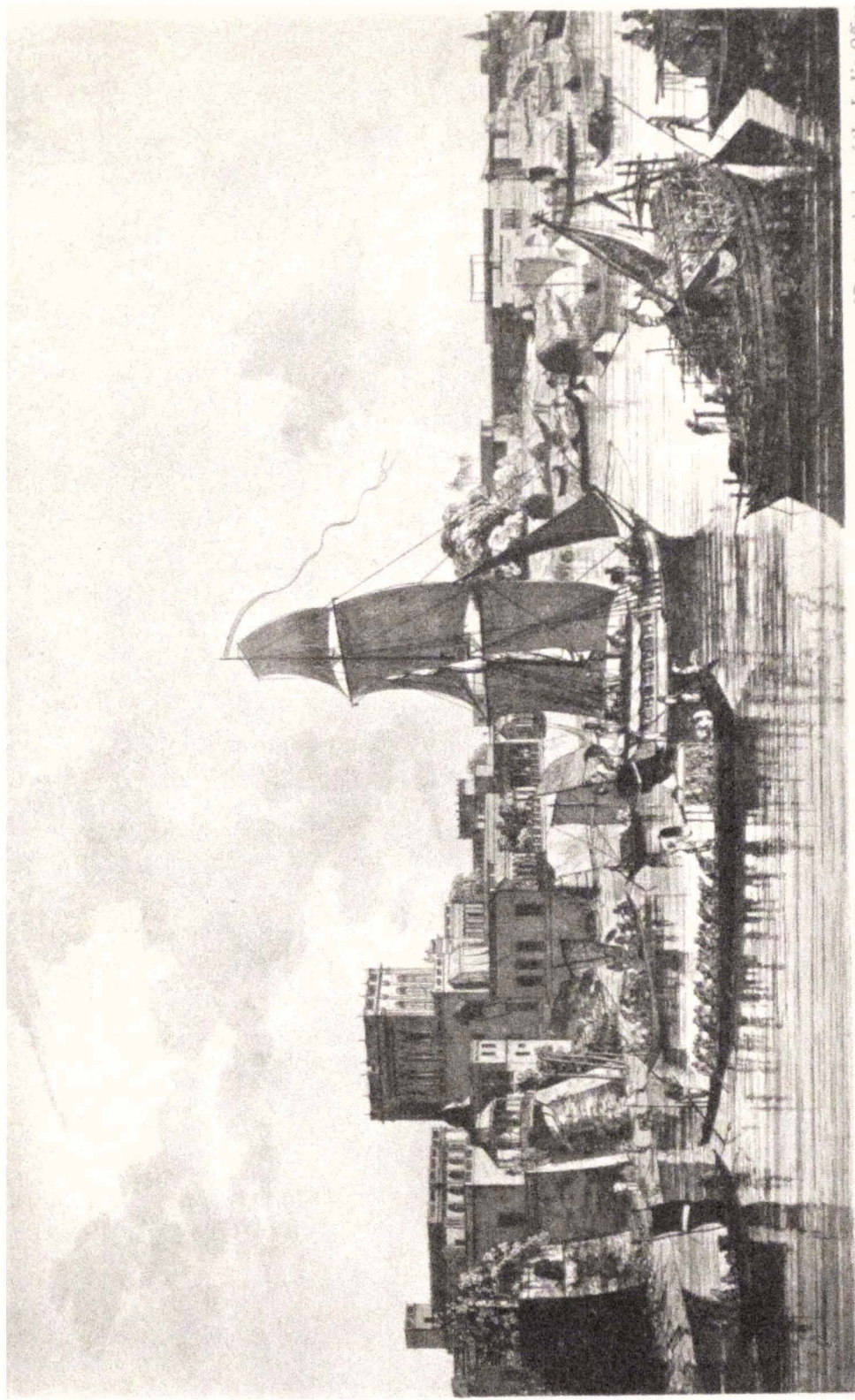
During the Maratha war the Nizam of Hyderabad, incensed by the abrupt seizure of the district of Guntur by the Company's authorities at Madras, allied himself with the Marathas and Hyder Ali, Moslem ruler of Mysore, against the British. Hastings was equal to the occasion. A force was despatched from Bengal along the coast through Cuttack to the assistance of Madras; the Nizam was propitiated by the restoration of Guntur. The result was that Hyder Ali had to fight the British alone. He was utterly defeated in 1781 at Porto Novo by Eyre Coote. Peace was concluded in

1784, shortly after Hyder's death, by his son and successor, Tippoo Sultan.

Eight years later war with Mysore broke out afresh in consequence of Tippoo's invasion of Travancore, with whom the Company had concluded a defensive alliance. The Nizam, irritated by Tippoo's absorption of his northern feudatories, joined the British. Tippoo soon found opposition hopeless. In the peace of 1794 he was stripped of half his dominions. The Nizam recovered his feudatories. The British took Malabar and Coorg in the west and a large block of country south of Mysore. Coorg was restored to its former Raja.

The British were in a very strong position after the peace with Tippoo. They could rely on the military support of Hyderabad : the resources of nearly the whole of southern India were at their disposal : Oudh was their close ally. Had they chosen, they might have had the Rajputs on their side. That, however, would have been a serious provocation to the Marathas. For the real danger lay in Poona. A trial of strength for the prize of empire between Maratha and Briton was only a matter of time.

Mahadji Sindhia was the outstanding personality in the Maratha confederacy in the last part of the eighteenth century. He had by this time acquired practical control over the country round Delhi and Rajputana, very largely through his French general, de Boigne, and his corps of regular troops officered by Frenchmen. Sindhia had realised that his light



[By permission of the India Office

### THE RIVER FRONT, OLD CALCUTTA

From a coloured aquatint by William Daniell, c. 1784



horsemen would always be swept from the field by the massed cavalry of Rajputana, and that they were useless against the strongholds of the Rajputs, impervious to anything except siege artillery.

Mahadji Sindhia died in 1794. De Boigne soon afterwards left Gwalior service and retired to France. He was succeeded by Perron, who, under the regime of the youthful successor of Sindhia, Daulat Rao, acquired a predominant influence in northern India. He held the fortress of Agra and imperial Delhi : the person of the emperor was in his charge : he had built cantonments for twenty thousand men and an impregnable fortress at Aligarh. The great Rajput rulers of Jaipur and Jodhpur paid him tribute. The richest province of the Doab was in his possession. His position was an *imperium in imperio*. Daulat Rao Sindhia, with Perron behind him, was practically supreme in Maratha councils.

Jeswant Rao Holkar, of Indore, the rival State to Gwalior, competed with Sindhia for the spoils of Rajputana. At the close of the eighteenth century these chiefs were at open war. In 1800 both marched on Poona to intervene in a disputed succession to the throne of the Peshwa. Sindhia, who was first in the field, succeeded in establishing his nominee, Baji Rao. Shortly afterwards, however, Holkar routed the combined forces of the Peshwa and Sindhia outside the walls of Poona. Baji Rao fled to Bassein and threw himself into the arms of the British. A defensive alliance was concluded



with him, known as the Treaty of Bassein : in addition the Company agreed to station at Poona a force of six thousand men, for which the Peshwa was to pay. He was afterwards reinstated at Poona by a British army. A Resident was appointed to the Poona Court.

About the same time trouble occurred at Baroda between rival claimants to the *gadi*. The minister appealed for British help, suggesting that British troops should be permanently stationed at Baroda. The proposal was accepted and a treaty concluded. The British installed their claimant. A week later they recaptured Baroda from the Gaekwar's Arab mercenaries, who had practically got control over the State.

The strategic position of the Company against the Marathas was greatly strengthened by the treaties with the Gaekwar and the Peshwa. Meanwhile they had attained complete military predominance in the south as the result of a treaty with the Nizam of Hyderabad. The latter had been compelled to face in 1795 a powerful combination of all the Maratha Princes, formed on the pretext of extracting from the Nizam a huge sum on account of arrears of *chaunth*. The Nizam appealed for British assistance. At first refused, in breach of the treaty, the importance of this request was promptly appreciated by Lord Wellesley, who realised that the Hyderabad alliance was the keystone of the political arch in the Deccan and that without the moral and material support

of that great State the menace of Poona and of Tippoo Sultan at Mysore could hardly be faced. He offered the Nizam what he most desired, a complete military guarantee against the Marathas on condition that he disbanded his French officers and their troops. The Nizam agreed : a new treaty was concluded in the terms desired and a force of Company's troops, six thousand strong with guns, known as the Hyderabad subsidiary force, was stationed at the Nizam's capital.

This was in 1798. War with Tippoo broke out in the following year. The Hyderabad subsidiary force and a large contingent from Hyderabad took part. Tippoo was slain, his government overthrown and the Hindu dynasty restored. Tribute was imposed on the new ruler, and Lord Wellesley stipulated that in the event of misgovernment the Company would take over the administration.

A new treaty with Hyderabad followed. The subsidiary force was raised to ten thousand men. The Nizam assigned for their maintenance the territories which had been given to him as his share of the spoils of Mysore. They had originally been held by the Nizam's feudatories.

A year or two later the Nawab of the Carnatic was deprived of his territory, which was annexed to the Madras presidency. This was a proceeding that cannot easily be defended. It is true that the Nawab, Muhammed Ali, was hopelessly incompetent, but he never had a real chance under the dual system of government imposed on him,

hounded and harassed as he was by concession-hunters and shady financiers, British and Indian, whom the Madras government allowed to prey on the country. The Nawab's support had been of immense value to the British for half a century : without it they could not have held their own against the powerful military monarchy of Mysore. Their prestige in the south, which enabled them to acquire a commanding influence at Hyderabad, depended very largely on their association with the ruler whom they so lightly deposed. They would have added to their reputation for straight dealing had they given a trial to the policy of putting the administration on a sound basis, as they did later in Mysore. The deposed ruler received the title of Prince of Arcot and was given a pension.

Wellesley had greatly strengthened the military position both in the north and the south before he was driven to try conclusions with the Marathas. The treaty of Bassein was obnoxious to the three great Maratha chiefs, Sindhia, Holkar and the Bhonsla Raja of Nagpur, who put great forces in the field, but were finally disposed of before Wellesley left India in 1805. One of the ablest of British governors-general, he had set before him the policy of making British power paramount in India. This he attempted to achieve by his system of subordinate alliances, the object of which was to give the Company's government control of the political relations and military resources of the allied States, and this object would have been

attained but for his premature recall. All that remained to be done was to bind down Holkar with a treaty similar to that concluded with Sindhia and Bhonsla of Nagpur : to admit the Rajput States into the system of alliances and finally to confine Ranjit Singh, the Sikh ruler, to the country beyond the Sutlej.

The timidity and lack of vision of the responsible authorities in England prevented the realisation of this policy, and condemned Central India and Rajputana to fifteen years of anarchy and chaos almost unprecedented in history. A period of drab inaction and moral cowardice succeeded the brilliant era of Lord Wellesley. Lake could have crushed Holkar of Indore beyond remedy. Sir George Barlow, the new governor-general, insisted on the whole of his dominions being restored to him with full permission to harry Rajputana. The Rajput States in vain pleaded for British support. A treaty already concluded with Jaipur was shamefully repudiated : a fresh agreement was concluded with Sindhia which gave him, too, a free hand in Rajputana. The result was that the unfortunate Rajputs were almost torn to pieces by the Marathas and hordes of wandering banditti known as Pindaris.

The so-called policy of the ring fence, which repudiated any kind of responsibility beyond the sphere of the Company's territories, held the field till 1817. There was one important deviation when Lord Minto, who became governor-general in

1807, refused to allow Ranjit Singh, the Sikh ruler of the Punjab, to extend his conquests south of the Sutlej. This saved Patiala, Nabha and Jind from extinction.

Ten years of anarchy and chaos in Central India and Rajputana discredited the policy of isolation. The British decided that they must intervene and exterminate the Pindari banditti, even at the risk of bringing on a general war with the Marathas. In the first instance a diplomatic network was thrown over the countries involved. The Rajputs joined the alliance on the promise of military protection ; so did Bhopal. Amir Khan, the most prominent of the Pindari leaders, threw in his hand and was given a small fief, Tonk in Rajputana, where his descendants still rule. In the war that followed the Pindaris were destroyed : Sindhia isolated and rendered immune : the Maratha ruler of Nagpur and the Peshwa of Poona, who appealed to arms, hopelessly defeated : so were Holkar's mutinous troops. All India, except the Punjab and Sindh, lay at the feet of the conquerors.

Britain, through the Company, could now no longer avoid the responsibility of paramountcy. Every State, from the Sutlej to Cape Comorin, was brought into the system of subordinate alliance. The Peshwa was deposed and his territories annexed. Holkar of Indore ceded territories to support a subsidiary force ; so did Nagpur. The Rajput States were rescued from Maratha clutches and their existence assured.

### III

## LIFE IN THE STATES



## CHAPTER III

### LIFE IN THE STATES

**A**S will have been seen, no surviving State in India is in direct descent from the empires of the past. Up to the Mutiny there was one such State, for the British preserved the legitimate descendant of the Mogul emperors as king of Delhi, and, though little of his power was left, he still retained some of his old prerogatives and dignities. Thus before 1857 each successive Nizam of Hyderabad made a point of having his accession to the *masnad* confirmed by the Mogul, in much the same way as Khedives of Egypt up to 1914 obtained a *firman* from the Sultan at Constantinople on their accession, long after Turkish suzerainty over Egypt had practically disappeared.

Historically the States may be grouped under the following heads :

(a) Very old Hindu States, such as the Rajput States of Rajputana, Central India, Kathiawar, Mysore and Travancore ; and the small Rajput States of the Himalayas.

(b) Provinces or fragments of the Mogul empire whose viceroys or generals became independent



and founded kingdoms, as was the case in Hyderabad and Rampur. Other States of this kind before the era of the British conquest were Oudh and Bengal, of which the latter was the earliest British annexation.

(c) Principalities established by military adventurers in the chaos that followed the break-up of the Mogul empire. The most important States in this group are the Maratha (Hindu) States, Gwalior, Baroda, Indore, Kolhapur. Bharatpur (Hindu), the Sikh States, and the Moslem States of Bhopal, Tonk and Bahawalpur, fall in the same category.

There is another group of States of minor importance from a political point of view—the feudatory States of Orissa and the Central Provinces. These States were mostly founded by Rajput refugees after the Moslem invasions. For the most part they are situated in mountainous country difficult of access : undeveloped, with a population mainly aboriginal. Kalahandi, Mayurbhanj and Bastar are typical examples. Only a few of them, e.g. Mayurbhanj, have full internal jurisdiction.

Here it may be as well to explain a few anomalies in the status of some of the great Indian nobles, as compared with ruling chiefs. Why, it may well be asked, are great hereditary nobles like the Maharaja of Burdwan in Bengal, the Maharaja of Darbhanga in Bihar, the Maharaja of Jaipur in the Madras Agency tracts, the Rajas of Bobbili and Viziana-

gram in north Madras, inferior in status to a petty chief in Kathiawar, with possibly not a fifth, in some cases not a twentieth, of the area they hold. It is purely a matter of historical accident. The Madras Rajas at least might very well have been given the status of the Rajput chiefs of Rajputana. Their territories were comprised in the northern Circars, a province of the Nizam. They were, in fact, the Nizam's feudatories, and might have been treated as such when the province was assigned to the British in 1762. Apparently both in the case of the Circars and Bengal the Company treated the semi-independent chiefs as great landowners.

Another curious anomaly may be mentioned at this stage. The position of the Raja of Benares was up to 1911 very much the same as that of the Maharaja of Burdwan or the Raja of Bobbili. In that year, in contrast to the earlier policy, the State of Benares was recreated and given to a member of the family of the former rulers. The new Maharaja was given a salute of thirteen guns and the status of a typical Indian Prince.

The policy of isolation, so long observed by the British Government in its relations with the States, has to some extent impeded progress in Indian India. It has not, of course, been possible to prevent Western influences from crossing political boundaries, especially in States surrounded by British-administered territories, as, for example, Baroda and Mysore. Still, almost everywhere in the country of the Durbars people stand upon the ancient ways.

For one thing, purdah is more strict : life conforms more closely to the joint-family ideal of Hindu law : caste restrictions are stronger : social ambitions are less insistent. One does not develop the night-club and theatre-supper habit in the eyries where the castles of Rajput nobles frown across the Indian desert. Parsi girls, and the daughters of Indian merchant princes, who patronise thés-dansants at the Taj Mahal Hotel in Bombay, or dinners at Firpo's in Calcutta, have few imitators on the other side of the border. Nor do the politically minded young women who picket liquor shops and join in boycotts in Bombay and Calcutta find recruits from the zenanas of Rajputs or Marathas.

Industrialism has not stretched out its tentacles into the States as in some of the big cities in British India : there are no great ports : banks are few and far between : the big financier does not find the Durbar atmosphere congenial.

Indian India does not believe in a free and irresponsible press ; it views politics from a different angle from the Indian politician : economic boycott, displays of soul force, civil disobedience—these distractions of British India do not ruffle the surface of life in the States. The village as an economic and social unit is still intact : there is more cohesion in rural life : the grip of the money-lender is less rigid. The solidarity of the village community is a check on the oppression of minor officialdom : there is far less government interference : the horde of officials brought into exist-

ence in British India by the ever-increasing volume of social legislation has no counterpart in the majority of the States.

But, if Western influences are less in evidence in Indian India than in the India of the British, there is much to relieve the monotony of life in an Indian State. Even to watch your Maharaja riding on an elephant through the bazar is more entertaining than the sight of a pale-faced collector in his car. Away from the searchlight of modern journalism things happen in Indian India which would not be entirely congenial to the British socialist. There are Indian States where tigers are more important than blue-books : where first-class polo ponies threaten budget stability : where a pretty face may be a passport to political influence : where the polo player who hits the winning goal may be rewarded by a week's tenure of the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer. Indian India is indeed a country of lights and shades, and of many of the courts, small and great, tales might be told which would rival the *Arabian Nights* in vividness. Court life, especially in the smaller States, touches very closely the life of the common people : the ruler keeps contact through his Durbars, or audiences, attended by his nobles and officials : even the humblest may fling down his *pagri* (turban) on the threshold of the Durbar Hall and demand justice : in his frequent tours and shooting excursions the Prince establishes intimate relations with the country folk.

In some States hundreds of small hereditary posts on the court establishments, in the Civil Service and the military and police forces, mostly sinecures, constitute a further link between court and people. Some of these remind one of the purchase system in the British Army under which a child of four might succeed to the commission of an officer and slowly mature into a general. The military *mansabs* or hereditary commissions in Hyderabad presents similar anomalies. A curious survival of the kind, reflecting a superstition that is still widely held in India, is worth mention. It concerns a pension granted in perpetuity to a certain family, for having provided, two centuries ago, an aged member as a foundation sacrifice to the genius of a river over which a bridge was being built. The body was buried under one of the piers. The pension is still paid.

Pageantry, ceremonial, sport, the frequent Durbars, all this helps to identify palace and people. Most striking of the pageants are the State processions, such as the wonderfully staged Dussurah and Birthday processions in Mysore : the Dussurah procession in Baroda and other States. Kashmir has a pageant all its own in the stately procession of gondolas down the river that meanders through the capital city. The Dussurah is celebrated in most of the States as a great religious festival. It enshrines both for Princes and their people memories of ancient days when armies were embodied for the winter campaign or to overawe and collect tribute from recalcitrant vassals.

Palace life, especially in some of the older States, is full of colour. Dynasties more recent in origin have adopted many of the ancient customs, sometimes borrowed from the court etiquette of the Moguls. Ritual stands for much in the psychology of the Durbars, much as it did in the smaller courts of Europe until the War swept them away. To some of the junior Princes of Rajputana, for example, it is a question of importance whether they are placed on the left or right of the Princes of the more ancient kingdoms. Another weighty question of politics is whether the senior Prince meets his junior at the railway station or deposes his minister to do so when the junior is paying him a visit. Precedence at Delhi or Simla is a matter of the first importance, and quite recently a conference of chiefs debated at length whether they should place before the Viceroy proposals that an eleven-gun chief should be given seniority over governors of British provinces, and whether at Delhi and Simla the chiefs should be met at the station by the Military Secretary of the Viceroy instead of by an A.D.C. There have even been discussions whether the King should not allow the Guard at Buckingham Palace to turn out and salute all senior Princes.

The Guard of Honour is everywhere regarded as an essential part of the ceremonial at the reception of a distinguished guest. The quality of the troops varies through all the gradations, from the highly trained and perfectly accoutred regular troops of

Mysore and Hyderabad, to an irregular line of naked Bhil archers or a wisp of untidily dressed Amazons—the latter, of course, for a lady visitor.

Western ceremonial is followed in another particular—the National Anthem. Most of the up-to-date States have invented one of their own.

If, as is the case in many of the larger States, there is a British Resident or Political Agent accredited to the court, the ancient ritual of the Durbar is observed on formal occasions when the British representative is present, as, for example, at the ceremony of the installation of the Prince. The Kharita Durbar, at which a newly appointed British Resident presents his credentials to His Exalted Highness the Nizam of Hyderabad, is a typical ceremony of the kind. The Resident, accompanied by his staff and the leading military officers of the cantonment, proceeds to the hall of audience, where he is received by the Nizam. The latter is attended by his principal nobles and high officers of State. He conducts the Resident to the dais : after a few minutes of polite conversation the Resident presents the Viceroy's letter of appointment : this is read out and the Nizam then makes the complimentary presentation of garlands and perfumes, after which the Resident leaves the palace. A hundred years ago British officers, even when in full uniform, were expected to remove their shoes or boots when visiting the chiefs, and up to about 1850 this practice was

followed by the Resident at Hyderabad when visiting the Nizam.

Mere social position in British India counts for little in the more ancient courts. A few years ago, for example, a British Indian peer of the realm was on a visit to Udaipur. He wished to see the Maharana, but was told that if he did so he would be expected to make the obeisance customary with his caste : to remove his shoes and to sit on the floor. He had no objection. The British Resident had, however, heard of what was going on and an informal conversation between him and the Chief Minister led to the Maharana readily agreeing to receive the distinguished visitor as he would an Englishman of a similar status.

The Political Department of the Government of India, with its blue-and-gold uniforms, its Orders of the Star of India and of the Indian Empire, and the elaborate etiquette observed in its relations with the Princes, adds vividness to court life. Nevertheless, it is an exaggeration on the part of ribald detractors of the department to suggest that the Political Agent spends a great part of his time before a ceremonial visit in measuring the number of paces he should step in advancing to meet his princely guest.

The precedence and importance of the Princes are reflected in the salute of guns to which they are entitled when officially visiting the imperial capital or a British cantonment. One speaks, for example, of a State as a nine-gun State, or a



twenty-one-gun State, to indicate its standing. Some rulers have personal salutes higher than those assigned to their States, for services to the Empire or for other reasons. Honorary rank in the British Army is frequently offered and accepted : British Indian titles are commonly given, and there are few Princes of position who do not wear the grand cordon of the imperial orders of knighthood. Some of the Princes have established orders of their own—for example, the Maharaja of Mysore confers the decoration of the Ganda Bherunda, or double-headed eagle : the Nizam of Hyderabad gives the title of Nawab, Maharaja or Raja. Such decorations can be accepted by British Indians only by permission.

The ancient kingships of Rajputana and Central India were based on the feudal system. The result is seen in the great aristocracies of Thakurs and Sirdars which surround the courts of the leading Rajput States and the Maratha States, carved later out of Rajput territory. This ancient feudal baronage adds to the prestige and glamour of the courts of the Princes to whom it owes allegiance, but, secure under the ægis of imperial Britain, many of the Princes now show an increasing tendency to depreciate the political and moral value of their aristocracies, and there has been a constant encroachment on baronial privilege and jurisdiction.

In some cases the Thakurs, or feudal barons, oppress their tenantry and so invite interference from the ruler. And it seems inevitable that the

moral fibre of a feudal nobility should weaken in an atmosphere of peace and inertia such as British rule has induced.

If the mighty strongholds rising among the crags of the Aravallis in Rajputana, the hill masses of Central India and the escarpments of the Ghauts in the south attest the military prowess of the past, one cannot resist the impression that tragedy has brooded and still broods in the dark labyrinths of many of the palaces of the princely families of India. Imagine the intrigues, the hates and the thwarted instincts of the old-fashioned zenana, where in some cases two hundred palace ladies, most of them young, live unnatural lives of idleness and boredom. It is true, nevertheless, that life behind the purdah has its excitements. Feminine influence counts for much in the affairs of State, and an intrigue in the ladies' quarters may deflect policy and compass the ruin of some of the pillars of government. Distinguished Chief Ministers have told me that State business is often paralysed for days because of the inaccessibility of the Prince, when once he has passed through the four gateways to the innermost recesses of the harem, where maids of honour stand sentinel to keep off the intruder, whatever his business.

The zenana is frequently a law unto itself. A case of the kind occurred not so many years ago when the palace physician was nearly beaten to death with shoes by the palace ladies because they thought he had allowed to die a baby boy reputed

to be the long-desired son of the Maharaja. The physician was a Brahmin and a highly qualified medical expert with a British degree. Intrigue is sometimes more effective than direct methods. A pretty slave-girl had caused offence in the harem of an old-fashioned court because her charms had attracted the Maharaja's gaze. Jealousy found it easy enough to work up a false charge of the theft of a pearl necklace against her. The Maharaja tried to extort a confession by beating the girl. Excited by drink, he outraged moderation and the girl died. Rumours of the trouble reached the ears of the Political Agent, but proofs of zenana tragedies are not easily obtained and no action was taken, especially as the Maharaja had the best of reputations. But Fate was unpropitious. He had mismanaged his finance to the verge of bankruptcy, and the Indian Government, with paternal solicitude, had put a British officer in charge to restore equilibrium. The death of the slave-girl haunted the Maharaja's mind and he felt compelled to make a pilgrimage to a holy city to expiate his sin. For this he wanted money and he had to ask his British financial expert to provide it. He frankly explained the whole position without attempt at concealment. The result was that the high political authorities called upon him to abdicate, which he did gracefully.

Unauthorised beauty in a zenana cannot, in fact, long avoid the dangers of intrigue and jealousy. Sometimes, it is true, the interloper is clever



#### AN ELEPHANT HUNT

Roping wild elephants in a kheddah, or enclosure, where the beasts are so closely packed that they are unable to move in any direction. A spectacle arranged for the Viceroy in Mysore



enough to defeat her rivals. There is the case of a palace attendant who succeeded, a few years ago, in putting his pretty wife in the path of the Maharaja, who adopted the lady as the favourite of the palace. Ostensibly she was divorced from her husband : actually the pair worked together, and between them, through the influence of the lady over her princely lover, they practically ran the State. By skilful manœuvring they made their position safe against all intervention.

There are few Princes of position who do not possess vast accumulations of jewels, mostly inherited from past ages, and still worn in profusion on State occasions. The collections exist chiefly for this purpose ; the ladies of the palace usually have their own. Many of the great nobles who have adopted the Western style of dress have now little use for their ornaments. You cannot wear great emeralds in a dinner jacket. The story is frequently told how the late Nizam used as a paper-weight a huge uncut diamond worth nearly £100,000, because the Government of India had seen fit to suggest to him that he had been swindled by the dealer who sold it to him.

Indian India maintains its reputation for princely hospitality ; tiger shooting and other big-game shooting, small-game shooting, polo tournaments and pig-sticking are a few of the diversions offered to the State guest. Banquets and sometimes balls are given on the occasion of the visit of other Princes or high officials, and viceregal visits always

entail a series of brilliant functions in the larger States. The Birthday and Dussurah weeks in Mysore are classic examples of princely hospitality, and Hyderabad has great traditions of the same kind. So have many of the other States. Here one may comment on the surprisingly large number of people in England who think themselves entitled to ask permission to shoot a tiger from a Prince they may not even have met.

Zenana ladies naturally do not attend palace entertainments. They view the drama below them through discreet apertures in the hangings over the minstrels' gallery. And from what one hears they find it highly entertaining.

Paramountcy and its incidents naturally inspire in the Princes generally a desire to stand well with imperial Delhi. Apart from this, the interests of the States are so closely and variously interwoven with the policy of the Indian Government—as in questions affecting, for example, customs, tariffs, railways, posts, telegraphs, opium, excise and salt—that it is a cardinal principle of political tactics with the State governments to cultivate friendly relations with high authorities at the imperial capital. Not all the chiefs subscribe to the epigram of a member of their order that a house in Park Lane is worth half a dozen palaces in Delhi, and many of the Princes already have splendid residences in the latter. Most of them are built in the Indo-Saracenic style adopted for the public buildings. The Delhi Horse Show in the last part of February coincides

with the session of the Chamber of Princes. This brings a large number of the chiefs to Delhi : they entertain largely and add to the gaieties of the end of the social season. Opportunities are taken to cultivate and renew friendships in high places, though sometimes such friendships have been detrimental to a chief's best interests, by deflecting intervention that might have saved him from ruin. This happened very recently in the case of a young Maharaja whose State had ultimately to be placed in charge of an officer of the Political Department in order that it might be rescued from bankruptcy. The Maharaja's tragedy had been to own one of the finest duck shoots in India, within easy distance of Delhi.

It is an invariable custom with the leading Princes to invite the Viceroy to visit their capitals at least once during his term of office. Lavish expenditure is incurred to make the visit a success, and the occasion is one of stately ceremonial and pageantry. The platform of the station is a blaze of uniforms, Durbar dress and incredible masses of jewels, when the Prince and his leading nobles and ministers assemble with the Political Officer and his staff to await the arrival of the white-and-gold viceregal train. The order of presentation is often a difficult problem. After leaving the station, the Viceroy and his host lead a procession in a carriage-and-four through dense crowds of bazar folk to the viceregal residence. The place of each noble, State official and British official in the procession



is defined with meticulous exactitude. Later, a deputation of nobles and high officers waits at the viceregal residence to enquire after his Excellency's health. Members of the Viceroy's staff return the compliment; the exchange of visits follows, a ceremony resembling a Durbar. The Prince with his nobles and high officials waits on the Viceroy. A reception is held at which the earlier introductions are solemnly repeated, and then after a short informal conversation with the Prince the Viceroy closes the proceedings by garlanding his guest and giving him *itr* and *pan* (perfumes and betel nut): the Political Secretary does the same to the senior nobles and officers: a junior British or Indian officer officiates in the case of the other members of the retinue. The Viceroy pays his return visit almost immediately afterwards; the same ceremonial is observed as at the Prince's visit. The procedure is worked out to the minutest detail, much of it repeating the etiquette of the Mogul emperors in Delhi.

The State banquet is another imposing function. On this occasion the Prince proposes the health of the Viceroy in a set speech in which he reviews the administration of his State, and his relations with the Indian Government, with an allusion to his hopes and aspirations. The Viceroy has had a copy of what is to be said which gives him material for his reply. It sometimes happens that he takes the opportunity of offering a little friendly advice, and, when the State government has a doubtful

reputation, the language of allegory may be used with a not too obscure meaning. At times important political announcements affecting Indian India are made on such occasions, of which a well-known example is still remembered. It occurred soon after Lord Curzon's viceroyalty. The central tenet of that great proconsul's political gospel was efficiency, and, in trying to inoculate the States with his theories, he caused irritation and alarm in many quarters.

A wave of unpopularity broke over the Political Department, which had not been responsible for the policy, and Lord Curzon's successor desired to convey to the Princes generally an assurance that there was no intention to encroach on their privileges or prerogatives. A great banquet was in progress at Udaipur. The Viceroy used language which suggested that in future the Princes should look upon the Residents and Political Agents as their friends and helpers, responsible as much for promoting the interests of the States as those of the Empire. The announcement evoked loud applause. The Maharana did not speak English. He eagerly enquired from a member of his staff, placed behind his chair, what the Viceroy had said. The official, whose knowledge of English was limited, attempted to summarise in simple Urdu, which being interpreted meant: "The Lord Sahib says that in future you may look upon your Resident as your table-servant." The Maharana expressed his astonishment. He had always

lived in amity with the Residency and had no desire to see its prestige tarnished. Later he learnt that the Viceroy's speech was not intended to sound the death knell of the Political Department.

The people benefit at least in one respect from Viceregal visits : the roads along which his Excellency will pass are always put into good repair, which with luck may last out till the next visit.

Brahmin influence, even at the courts of the more enlightened States, still counts for much, and Brahmin astrology is particularly prominent. The Maharaja of a great State who died only a few years ago would not enter his palace on the return from a journey unless the omens were favourable. Needless to say, the soothsayer often kept the Prince uncomfortably camping outside his residence. In another large Hindu State, the Maharaja had to adopt an heir (now ruling) because a Brahmin soothsayer had prophesied that if he had an heir of his body his own death would follow immediately. In some courts astrologers submit periodical reports on future events. Their guesses are sometimes correct. Only a few months ago the Brahmins, when examining the horoscope of the young Princess of Gwalior on the occasion of her marriage, advised her to avoid travelling by motor-car between certain dates. She forgot the warning and, when driving her car on one of the unpropitious days, the car skidded and overturned. She was fatally injured. The strength of religious superstition is sometimes seen in unexpected

quarters. One Hindu ruler, highly cultured and well known in London drawing-rooms, poses as a semi-divinity in his own State. He must never touch leather, and will only shake hands if he is wearing gloves, which are always cotton. But, although half-divine, the Maharaja a few months ago walked barefooted through the bazars of his capital to a sacred shrine, bearing on his head a jar of Ganges water. He had imposed the penance on himself to conciliate the gods in his favour and so avert a crisis which he felt was impending.

At times the cult of the sacred cow upsets economic equilibrium, as when Brahmins convinced the late Maharaja of Kashmir that the *nilgai*, really an antelope, had bovine characteristics. The destruction of these animals was prohibited, with the result that they overran the countryside, until the villagers induced other Brahmins to prove the *nilgai* was a deer. In Bharatpur a herd of half-wild cattle living in a State forest was allowed under similar influences to increase to such an extent that the crops of dozens of villages both in the State and in British territory were devastated. A tactful British officer solved the problem by inducing the Maharaja to confine the cattle in a ring fence.



IV

POLITICS IN THE STATES



## CHAPTER IV

### POLITICS IN THE STATES

**T**HE older school of Indian Princes cherished the idea of the divine right of kingship ; and subconsciously the feeling is still there. In some ancient principalities the maintenance of regal splendour is more important than sound administration. There are others in which there is no clear border-line between the expenses of the court and the administration. This often means that essential services are starved. It is unquestionable that caste, which has lost but little of its pristine vigour in the States, is a buttress of autocracy, and predisposes the people to view with tolerance the vagaries of their rulers, so long as the economic balance of life is not disturbed and ancient customs unassailed. Left to themselves, the majority of the States would have little to fear from the popular agitator. But the writing is on the wall, and disaster may overwhelm those Princes who do not completely identify themselves with their people, as was once the case.

In England one may pass one's life without seeing anything of officialdom beyond the policeman and



the postman. The position is very different in India, even in the States. Nearly half a century ago Kipling sympathised with the peasant as "the much administered man." The administration is even more comprehensive now, though less so in the States. Even in the States, however, the citizen, and especially the peasant, can never escape contact with the subordinate official. Officialdom begins in the village with the head-man, or mayor, the accountant and the village constable. These posts are generally hereditary in the States. The village community, organised on a caste or clan basis, is, in fact, the foundation of the administrative system. From it rises the superstructure of the official hierarchy. The peasant must stand well with the official trinity of his village if he desires a peaceful existence. The accountant keeps the record of rights in land in the village: he writes up the amounts due from each peasant for land revenue: he reports on and sometimes appraises the crops: Indian crop forecasts, which influence the markets of the world, are, in fact, based on his figures. Crime again is less rife in the States than on the British side of the border, possibly because police methods are more rough and ready.

In the larger States—e.g. Baroda, Mysore, Hyderabad, Travancore, Gwalior and Bhopal—the higher grades of the Civil Service are as a rule tolerably efficient. In the majority of the States, however, they are underpaid and proportionately unreliable.

Appointments are not always made with due regard to merit and suitability ; a highly trained electrical engineer, for example, may find himself posted to the Palace Amusements Department ; a chief engineer, responsible for great public works, may suddenly be transferred to a confidential appointment on a Princess's staff. It is barely twenty years ago since in one small State the inspector of dancing girls on £150 a year was given an extra £10 for acting as Chief Justice. In many States the old system of administering justice has been superseded by the complex hierarchy of Bench and Bar on the British model. Whether the innovation is a boon to the people is open to doubt. Competent authorities will tell you that justice is speedier and more in accordance with equity when a decision is reached by the traditional methods of the village or guild *panchayat* (council of five), and the ultimate appeal to the Durbar, than is the case when the regular law courts function.

The larger States generally have High Courts. It is a not unusual practice for rulers to appoint retired British or Indian High Court judges as Chief Judges of their High Courts, which increases the confidence of outsiders who may desire to establish business relations in State territory. In some States the ruler delegates most of his authority to a minister, who is frequently supported by an Executive Council. Given an able and efficient minister, the quality of the administration is gener-

ally good. It frequently happens that Brahmins, who have had administrative experience in British India, are selected for ministerial posts by Hindu rulers. Officers so lent have in many cases rendered excellent service. The States in the last hundred years have offered a splendid field for the Indian administrator.

The quality of the government, even in the larger States which adopt modern administrative machinery, depends almost entirely on the personality of the ruler. Where he takes a close interest in what is going on, knows how to select his men and keeps in close touch with his people, the system is more satisfactory than the impersonal system which exists in so many parts of British India. The experience and inside knowledge which a ruler who realises his duties towards his people can build up in the course of years makes it possible for him to keep a strong check over oppression by his officers, especially if he follows the example of his late Highness Ranjitsinhji, the Jam of Nawanagar, who used to go unattended into the villages to hear his people's complaints.

This is, however, mainly true of the larger States which have set up a system of administration approximating to the British model. In the huge agglomeration of States comprising Indian India there is naturally a great diversity of standards of government. In the small states in the Himalayas round Simla, for instance, the Raja's powers are circumscribed : he rules paternally subject to

appeal to British authority, much in the same way as a minor baron of the Middle Ages in Europe. There are many similar States in Kathiawar, Central India, Bombay or elsewhere, dealt with on similar principles by the British Indian Government. In such cases the administration is supervised by the Political Agent.

Elsewhere—sometimes even in the larger States—a more conventional façade often conceals a medley of irregular practices, official delinquencies and oddities. There was, for instance, a well-known Maharaja who used to keep his budget in his head. The result was chaos, accompanied by a form of civil disobedience on the part of his clansmen and the aboriginal hill tribes, and ultimately the reluctant hand of paramountcy was stretched forth. In another State the Moslem ruler showed a sporting instinct in reprieving and taking into his zenana a pretty young girl sentenced to death for poisoning her husband. In Hyderabad the old Quranic law of *qisas*, or retaliation, still prevails, and no Moslem is sentenced to death for murder unless the relatives of the victim demand the extreme penalty. According to the sacred law the sentence should be carried out by the relatives, as is still done in Kabul. It is worth noting that this practical immunity from the death penalty has not made murder common in Hyderabad. Here and there one meets cases of what is practically domestic slavery. It is the custom in one Moslem State for nobles and high officials to take orphan girls into their households

by a show of adoption. As the girls grow up they become house slaves.

A curious practice reminiscent of court methods in imperial China and indeed of imperial Rome existed till recently in Hyderabad. The story is told of the late Nizam that, if he wished to remove a highly placed officer suspected of irregular practices, he would send him officially a gold ornament as a present. This was a delicate hint of the ruler's intention and was invariably taken. A self-imposed ostracism became prudent. An example of the practice which occurred towards the end of last century is often referred to in conversation in Hyderabad. The minister in charge of the public works had amassed a huge fortune out of government contracts. He was a cultured man, popular in British military and Residency society in Secunderabad. His hospitality was greatly appreciated. One afternoon he was giving a garden-party to his British and Indian friends. As he was standing in the midst of his guests on the lawn a small group of uniformed orderlies approached bearing a gold bracelet on a silver salver. It was announced as a present from the Nizam. The officer knew the signal : he took a hasty farewell from his guests and disappeared that night from Hyderabad.

Cases have occurred even in recent years in which people obnoxious to the ruler have been put out of the way by plots so carefully hatched as to make death seem accidental. This kind of thing sometimes involves serious consequences. Two or three

years ago in a Rajput State, a Brahmin, known to be offensive to the Maharaja, was barbarously done to death by several of the palace myrmidons. They were Mohammedans : probably no Hindu would venture to incur the dire penalties attached by superstition to the murder of a Brahmin. The chief police officer thought the wisest course was to burn the body and so destroy all traces of the crime. The bazar rose in protest and besieged the minister and the police officer in the house of the former. The Maharaja, who was probably not a party to the conspiracy, was powerless. In the end a wire was sent through to the Political Agent, who speedily arrived with two motor-lorries of irregular troops and rescued the beleaguered officials. The Maharaja, whose government had for some time attracted criticism, was advised by the British Government to appoint a British Chief Minister and to give him adequate authority.

The quite recent story of the Maharaja of Indore who risked and lost his throne for a dancing girl is well known. The favourite of the zenana had fled the palace. To recapture her was the predominant issue at the court. The palace servants, including an A.D.C. and military officers, pursued the fugitive to Bombay and, watching their opportunity, attempted to kidnap her at dusk on Malabar Hill from a car in which she was driving with her new husband, a wealthy Bombay mill-owner. They shot the husband, and would have got off with the girl but for the appearance on the scene of two

British officers, who, attracted by her cries, went to her assistance. One of them was seriously wounded, but the assailants fled and the girl was saved. The Maharaja subsequently abdicated. His father, too, had abdicated in Lord Curzon's time. One of the favourite occupations of this Prince was to drive a team of high-caste bankers round his racecourse. This was apparently a hereditary trait, for a remote ancestor used to relieve an inferiority complex by making Brahmins run the gauntlet and taking pot shots at them as they ran.

Such are some of the vagaries into which a few among the Princes occasionally fall as a result of the temptations of virtual irresponsibility which face them and of the unhealthy environment in which many of them have been brought up. It is not suggested for a moment that they indicate a general tendency. One can hardly expect every ruler in remote or backward States to live up to the standards of conduct of the best type of his order.

In some respects governments of the States are able to move more quickly than the British Government along the path of social reform. This is mainly because of the closer identity of the ruler with his people, especially if his family have been with them for generations. Baroda, for example, prohibited child marriage long before the British Government ventured to legislate on the subject, and the same State has made primary education compulsory. There are doubtless many evasions, but it is something to have the principle recognised.

The Nizam of Hyderabad recently carried out a reform long desired by the Bar of British India, the complete separation of judicial and executive functions. The scheme has not been a success, judging from the criticisms one hears in Hyderabad, and it is very expensive.

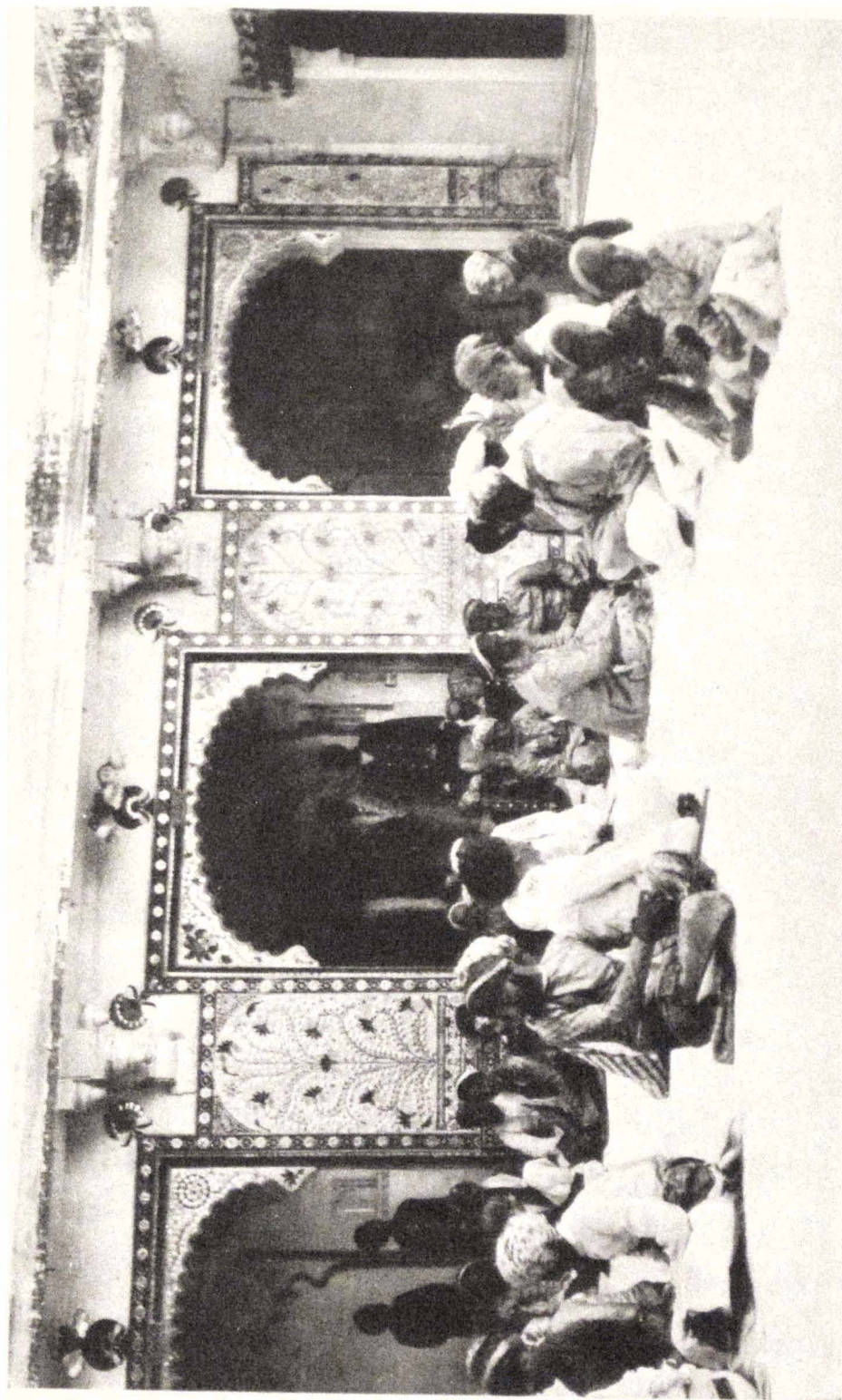
Passion for intrigue is more insistent in Eastern than in Western psychology. It is rife in British India : it is still more so in the States, where the prizes are more numerous, ranging in the official sphere from a village accountancy to the post of Prime Minister. The greater rigidity of the official machinery makes the game more difficult in British India : the cold impartial eye of the British administrator acts as a further check. The predominance of the Brahmins, in the civil services of Bombay and Madras, maintained by similar methods, is a matter of history. A classic example of intrigue in an Indian State is worth recording.

It is a well-known fact that the great officers surrounding the court of a ruler are rarely acceptable to his successor. A year or two after the death of the late Nizam, the new ruler appointed to the important post of Commissioner of the City Police, in Hyderabad, an officer known to be extremely obnoxious to the minister in charge of the administration and other prominent officials and nobles. The new Commissioner was aware that his master did not desire to retain all his father's officers, most of whom, as well as several of the leading nobles, were believed to be not entirely loyal to the new



regime. Shortly after the new officer's appointment he placed in the Nizam's hands a document known as a *mahzarnama*, purporting to be a memorial addressed to the Viceroy by the minister and all the principal nobles and officials praying on a variety of grounds that the Government of India would remove the Nizam from his position as ruler of the State. The discovery of the alleged plot brought on a crisis. The Nizam, however, showed moderation, and under advice he ordered an enquiry in which the handwriting expert of the Government of India assisted. The result was to prove that the majority at least of the signatures were unquestionably forged. The whole thing was, in fact, the outcome of a carefully laid intrigue to ruin half the leading men in the State thought to be unpopular with the Nizam. The latter showed both self-control and forbearance in a difficult situation.

When the administration is in disorder or difficulties, the Paramount Power occasionally advises a State government to employ British officers or British Indian officers in key positions. On the other hand, many rulers themselves apply for the loan of British experts both from the Indian Civil Service, the Public Works, Finance, Police, Military and so on. Retired I.C.S. officers are frequently employed, especially in the more progressive States. The Princes, it would seem, place a high value on such help, and State ministers will tell you how greatly they appreciate the services of British



RAJPUT NOBLES AWAITING AUDIENCE

[*Times of India*]



officers, especially where strict impartiality is difficult to secure, as where there is tension between Moslem and Hindu. British officers who have worked under Durbars could tell many a vivid story of their experiences and of their clashes with vested interests. Some have narrowly escaped poisoning ; others, unless they held an impregnably dominant position, have had to fight endlessly against petty harassments and intrigue.

In alluding to some of the old-world peculiarities of Indian India, I do not wish to suggest that State governments generally are unprogressive, if not reactionary. A majority of the rulers of the more important States recognise that they can only justify their existence by good government, and that to secure such conditions must be their chief concern. Democracy, as known in British India, they do not find alluring. In the States majority rule suggests too strongly a scheme of life in which the Sudra caste would dominate the twiceborn castes above it, which to the ruling race is an inversion of the traditions of three thousand years. Nor are the mass of the people in most States greatly interested in democracy, especially where the administration, judged by their standards, is efficient. Even where a form of representative government exists, as in Mysore, the peasantry are not enthusiastic in its support. It is too much in the hands of the urban intelligentsia.

Politics, after all, are largely a matter of environment. You will meet in the States Brahmins, in

intellectual calibre and education the equals of the great Brahmin leaders of political India, yet at opposite poles in political thought. Brahmin officials in Indian States will tell you that people do not want democracy, that they have not even the most elementary qualifications for a democratic regime : some of them will add that democracy in British India has only led so far to an increase in graft and nepotism or to a decrease in administrative efficiency. Three or four years ago I got into conversation with an old Brahmin at a railway junction. My new friend was highly cultured, with a command of fluent English, and had recently retired from a high appointment in Travancore. Talking of politics, he deprecated a ballot-box government, especially in the States. "After all," he said, "it is the peasantry you have to consider. If they are loyal, happy and prosperous, nothing else matters. You want officers who will watch their interests, who will go to the villages and ascertain their needs : whether they require cheap credit to redeem mortgages, or wells or tanks or irrigation, a better breed of bullocks and other things concerned with village economy. You would ask, too, whether the local officials, police or revenue, were dealing with them fairly. That is democracy, at least for the States—complete identity of the people with their rulers."

This probably reflects the ideals of most Indian rulers. Critics might reply that the Brahmin theorist had the background of a hopeless reac-

tionary, a rigid belief in caste and an equally firm conviction that Heaven could devise nothing better for the non-Brahmin than a Brahmin bureaucracy. That is true up to a point : but the views were mainly the product of the environment in which he lived and were suited to it : in Bombay he would most probably have been a Nationalist.

What the great Princes of Indian India stand for in the eyes of their subjects and of the greater India beyond their frontiers is a question which naturally presents itself to anyone anxious to get a balanced view of Indian politics. It is not easy to frame a reply in general terms : there are too many factors to be considered. For example, to Moslem eyes the government of the Nizam enshrines the memories of eight centuries of Moslem dominance in India : it is for them the symbol of Moslem power, and among Indian Moslems any diminution of the influence and prestige of the Hyderabad government would create widespread resentment. On the other hand, to the Maratha Hindus of Poona and the Deccan, the despotic rule of what they consider an effete Moslem oligarchy over thirteen million Hindus is a sheer monstrosity. On balance it may fairly be said that with tolerably good government, where they have not been influenced by the permeation of political ideas from the British side of the frontier, the Hindu subjects of the Nizam are loyal enough to the Moslem dynasty. The rule of the Brahmin pundits, through the Hindu dynasty, over the Moslems of Kashmir,

has been as almost completely anathema to the Moslems of the Punjab as Moslem rule in Hyderabad to the Hindus of the south. Generally speaking, it would be true to say that the Hindus of British India regard the Hindu States as a settled element in Indian polity ; they look to the great Hindu rulers with respect and admiration. Mysore, Travancore and Kolhapur, in particular, are popular with the Hindus of the south. The progressive Rajput and Maratha States farther north are not obnoxious, even to the political Hindu intellectuals. At the same time the more extreme Hindu politician has of late years attacked many of the Princes in the Press, mainly because they have not responded to his invitation to join Congress in ousting the British.

An important point about the Hindu States (which are the great majority) is that even where the dynasties are comparatively recent, as in some of the Maratha States such as Baroda, Indore, Gwalior and the Sikh States of the Punjab, there is a feeling at least of solidarity between the people, the ruler and his administration. For them no break has occurred in the old-time Hindu tradition.

In the thousand-year-old States of Rajputana and the Rajput States of Central India the link between dynasty and subjects is so close, the bond of a common tradition so strong, that the people would find it difficult to contemplate a change of regime. The Sikh States generally are popular in the Punjab, though some have come recently under

a heavy fire of criticism in the British Indian Press. Administration is less rigid and complex in the States ; economic life is on the whole easier ; that the people are generally contented may be inferred from the fact that migration to British India is infrequent except in an orgy of misrule, while there is no hesitation on the part of British subjects to move into well-governed States where economic advantages offer themselves, as, for example, in the canal colonies in Bikanir. The States stand for a conservative policy : with their antiquity and their achievements of political genius enshrined in their history they are the most stable element in political India at present, and their importance as a factor in the Indian empire of the future can hardly be overrated. A heavy responsibility will lie on the shoulders of their rulers in a federated India. Their rôle in the new scheme of things will be discussed in a later chapter.





V

THE RAJPUT STATES  
OF RAJPUTANA, CENTRAL  
INDIA AND KATHIAWAR

## I. RAJPUTANA

*Alwar* : Hindu. Kachhwaha Rajput. Maharaja H.H. Sir Jey Singh. 1892. *Area*: 3,185 sq. miles. *Population*: about 701,000, of whom the majority are Hindus. *Revenue*: £400,000.

*Bikanir* : Hindu. Rahtor Rajput. H.H. Maharaja Sir Ganga Singhji. 1887. *Area*: 23,000 sq. miles, mostly sandy desert. *Population*: nearly 1,000,000: 84 per cent. Hindus; 11 per cent. Moslems. *Revenue*: nearly £1,000,000.

*Bundi* : Hindu. Hara Rajput. H.H. Maharao Ishwari Singh. 1927. *Area*: 2,220 sq. miles. *Population*: about 216,000, mostly Hindus. *Revenue*: £12,000.

*Jaipur* : Hindu. Kachhwaha Rajput. H.H. Sir Man Singh. 1922. *Area*: 15,600 sq. miles. *Population*: 2,500,000: 90 per cent. Hindus. *Revenue*: about £1,000,000.

*Jodhpur* : Hindu. Rathor Rajput. H.H. Maharaja Sir Umed Singhji. 1918. *Area*: 35,000 sq. miles. *Population*: about 2,000,000: 83 per cent. Hindus; 8 per cent. Moslems. *Revenue*: about £1,000,000.

*Jaisalmer* : Hindu. Bhati Rajput. H.H. Maharawal Shri Sir Jawahar Singhji Bahadur. 1914. *Area*: 16,000 sq. miles, mostly forest. *Population*: 76,000, mostly Hindus. *Revenue*: £28,000.

*Jhalawar* : Hindu. Jhala Rajput. Maharaja Sir Rajindra Singhji. *Area*: 810 sq. miles. *Population*: about 100,000: 80 per cent. Hindus. *Revenue*: about £50,000.

*Kotah* : Hindu. Hara Rajput. H.H. Sir Omed Singh II. *Area*: 5,684 sq. miles. *Population*: 630,000, the majority Hindus. *Revenue*: £400,000.

*Udaipur* : Hindu. Sesodia Rajput. H.H. Maharana Sir Bhupal Bahadur Singhji. 1930. *Area*: 12,691 sq. miles. *Population*: about 1,500,000: 76 per cent. Hindus; 13 per cent. Animists (mostly aboriginal Bhils). *Revenue*: about £400,000.

## II. CENTRAL INDIA

*Datia* : Hindu. Bandel Rajput. H.H. Maharaja Sir Lokendra Govind Singhji. 1907. *Area*: 911 sq. miles. *Population*: 150,000: 95 per cent. Hindus. *Revenue*: £120,000.

*Ratlam* : Hindu. Rahtor Rajput. Col. H.H. Maharaja Sir Saijam Singh. 1893. *Area*: 693 sq. miles. *Population*: 107,000: 62 per cent. Hindus; 16 per cent. Animists (mostly Bhils). *Revenue*: £80,000.

*Rewa* : Hindu. Baghel Rajput. H.H. Maharaja Sir Gulab Singhji. 1918. *Area*: 13,000 sq. miles. *Population*: 1,500,000: 76 per cent. Hindus; 21 per cent. Animists (mostly aboriginal tribes). *Revenue*: about £500,000.

*Orchha* : Hindu. Bandela Rajput. H.H. Maharaja Sir Yadvendra Singh Bahadur. 1930. *Area*: 2,080 sq. miles. *Population*: 300,000: 95 per cent. Hindus. *Revenue*: about £80,000.

### III. KATHIAWAR

- Bhavnagar* : Hindu. Gohil Rajput. H.H. Maharaja Sir Krishna Kumarsinghji. 1919. *Area*: 2,800 sq. miles. *Population*: about 500,000: 86 per cent. Hindus; 8 per cent. Moslems. *Revenue*: about £800,000.
- Kutch* : Hindu. Jareja Rajput. H.H. Maharaja Sir Khengarji II. 1875. *Area*: 7,616 sq. miles. *Population*: about 500,000, the majority Hindus. *Revenue*: £250,000.
- Dhrangadhra* : Hindu. Rajput. H.H. Sir Ghan Shyam Singhji. 1911. *Area*: 1,167 sq. miles. *Population*: about 188,000, mostly Hindus. *Revenue*: £180,000.
- Gondal* : Hindu. Jareja Rajput. H.H. Maharaja Sir Bhagvat Singhji. 1869. *Area*: 1,024 sq. miles. *Population*: 206,000, mainly Hindus. *Revenue*: £370,000.
- Idar* : Hindu. Rahtor Rajput. H.H. Maharaja Sir Daulat Singhji. 1931. *Area*: 1,669 sq. miles. *Population*: 226,000, mostly Hindus. *Revenue*: £120,000.
- Rajpipla* : Hindu. Rajput. H.H. Sir Vijaya Singhji. 1915. *Area*: 1,517 sq. miles. *Population*: 168,000: 75 per cent. Hindus; 12 per cent. Bhils. *Revenue*: £170,000.

(The Jat States are not included.)



CHAPTER V  
THE RAJPUT STATES

ONE day long ago a young Maharani sat at a latticed window in a palace of white marble and looked out over the silver lake and beyond to the low hills whose slopes the rays of the late afternoon sun had transmuted into purple and gold. But the eyes of the Maharani were not drinking in the glories of the sunset : they were fixed on a crowd on the opposite shores of the water where the lake narrowed to a valley in the hills. She knew what the scene meant, although she could not clearly distinguish the people. For had not her lord and master made a wager with his favourite dancing-girl that she would not walk the width of the lake on a tight-rope, a wager made in a drunken delirium and the reward to be half his kingdom ? How she hated the girl and yet shuddered at this cruel test !

At last she could see what she was looking for : a speck moving swiftly across space. A second and she hid her face. In her imagination she heard the splash and the shriek, and felt the shiver which ran through the watching crowd. For some of the

great nobles had foreseen the ruin of the State if the wager were won, and nothing was easier than a surreptitious twitch of the rope, and to place obstacles in the way of a rescue. What mattered the sacrifice of yet another lovely girl to the whim of the Lord of the Earth?

That is a story of the Rajputana of two centuries ago : a story of the white palace on the shores of the beautiful lake of Udaipur. Times have changed. The shadow of paramountcy has banished such vivid possibilities from everyday life. Behind the purdah the ruler may still be a law unto himself. A Prince may forfeit his throne for a dancing-girl. But in the glare of the open sunshine the palace no longer provides such spectacles for the people of the bazar.

From the Himalayas to the borders of Madras Rajputs have governed kingdoms and principalities for two thousand years. No other race in India has such an unbroken continuity of rule.

The States are generally shown in yellow patches on ordinary maps of India, British India being coloured pink. A huge mass in the north, Kashmir, is ruled by a Rajput : a great belt of Rajput country extends from the Indus to the Bay of Bengal, absorbing most of the Central India plateau (Malwa) with Kathiawar and Kutch. In fact, the territories where Rajputs rule take up nearly half of the area (700,000 square miles) which the States comprise. It is true that in Malwa Rajputs in many cases hold their fiefs under a Maratha over-

lord : also that Kashmir is for the greater part inhospitable mountains, while Rajputana is largely desert.

Despite the great extent of territory they occupy, Rajputs in the States number roughly only one and a half millions : in almost every Rajput State an oligarchy rules over subject races. On the British side of the Rajput frontiers there are, it is true, several millions of people classed as Rajputs, dispersed over a wide range of country from the Punjab to Bengal. They have, however, lost touch almost entirely with the aristocratic Rajputs of Indian India. In the States Rajputs are strongest in the tracts known as Rajputana (including most of the Indian Desert), Malwa, the broken hill country north of the Vindhya and the peninsula of Kathiawar.

The Aravalli mountains divide Rajputana into two unequal parts. North-west is the great Indian desert dotted with oases where the Rajputs settled, as in Jodhpur, Bikanir and remote Jaisalmer, still eighty miles from the rail-head. The desert extends almost to the Indus.

South of the Aravallis lie several of the more important States, Udaipur, Bundi, Jaipur, Tonk, in a land more favoured by Nature than the desert region. The whole country has a crisp and bracing climate in the cold weather months. It is a land of romance and chivalry, of spacious life and great traditions, where the bard still sings of epic warriors ; where Princes and nobles trace their



genealogies, sometimes five feet long, to the sun god, the moon goddess or the god of fire. It is a land where you will meet all that is best in Hindu architecture and painting : the temples of Abu, the marble city of Amber (now deserted), the lake palaces of Udaipur, the thousand-columned hall of the Jodhpur palace with its massive stronghold that might have been built by demi-gods ; not least of all the storied ruins of Chitor. The Rajput school of miniature painting, later influenced by the Persian-Mogul school, is famous.

The area of this vast tract of country is 128,000 square miles. The population is 11,000,000. Of these the Rajput oligarchy claims 668,000, while 800,000 Brahmins represent the priesthood. Before the great anarchy they held a fifth of the cultivable land, striking evidence of the strength of superstition.

The Jats are the backbone of the economic structure, a sturdy peasant folk, Hindu by religion, possibly of a Scythian origin. They form the bulk of the population in Jaipur and are found in all the States. Not till two centuries ago did they find national leaders to give them political expression. Two Jat States, Bharatpur and Dholpur, emerged from the Jat insurrection brought on by the anti-Hindu policy of Aurangzeb.

Other tribes in Rajput country are aboriginal tribes like the Bhils, found mostly in the Aravallis, the Minas and the Meos. The latter are Minas who have embraced Islam. They are reputed to

keep the feasts of both religions and the fasts of neither. Recently they have been in insurrection against the Alwar government. Such is the ethnographical structure where the Rajput rules.

Under the Moguls Rajputana was an imperial province with Ajmere as its capital : so was Malwa : Kathiawar was part of the province of Gujarat. Kashmir, too, was a Mogul province.

The Rajputs had fought fiercely for their independence against the Moguls. Baber, grandfather of the great Akbar, only prevailed against the Rajput horsemen with the help of his field artillery, the first ever seen in India. Mewar (Udaipur) and Jodhpur held out to the last.

The story of Chitor, capital of Udaipur, is still the favourite theme of the Rajput minstrel. It has endured some of the most famous sieges in history. Built on a long straggling ridge of rock steeply scarped, it was almost impregnable in ancient times, and, when the enemy has prevailed against it, it has been by either treachery or starvation. Three times—first in the thirteenth century—has the dreadful rite of *johur* been performed before the fall of the fortress, since Rajput honour demanded that the women of the garrison should be committed to the flames before the final sally. This accomplished, the defenders would don the saffron robe, denoting “death or victory,” and fling themselves on the spears of the besieging Moslems.

The tragedy of such a siege, involving the holo-

caust of thousands of women, had again befallen Chitor in 1533 while Humayun, Akbar's father, was fighting for empire in Bengal. The victors were the Moslem kings of Gujarat and Malwa, still unsubdued by the Moguls.

There was in ancient times a graceful custom among the Rajputs which permitted a lady—young, old, married or unmarried—to send her bracelet to a cavalier who might appeal to her fancy, thereby constituting him her knight and her adopted brother. She might never have seen him : never hope to see him, but the pledge could not be refused. Its acceptance was signified by the gift of a corset of silk, embroidered with pearls. A province at times went with it. Ordinarily it was sent only when the sender was in danger. The gift of such a bracelet might set ten thousand lances in rest.

The young Queen of Udaipur, thrilled with the exploits of Humayun the Mogul, though he was a Moslem and ostensibly the enemy of her race, chose to send him her bracelet and so enlist his assistance. Flattered by the delicate compliment, Humayun pledged himself to her service. And like a true knight, when the news of the Maharani's distress was brought to him, he hastened back to Delhi, recovered Chitor and restored it to its lawful sovereign, Udai Singh, the baby son of his adopted sister of the bracelet.

Soon afterwards, Humayun lost his empire. Thirty years later his son Akbar founded it afresh.

He set himself to conquer Rajasthan. Chitor was besieged for the third time in 1569. Once more the rite of *johur* was performed ; once more the Rajputs put on their saffron robes and immolated themselves on the Mogul spears.

So perished the glories of Chitor. From that time onwards Mewar has had a new capital, Udaipur, founded by the Udai Singh who owed his kingdom to Humayun's chivalrous intervention.

Mewar fought on for twenty years after the fall of Chitor. On its final submission the Maharana was exempted from the obligation of sending a Princess to the imperial harem, as well as from attending court and from the duty of prostration. Bundi, another Rajput State, was similarly privileged.

The Rajputs during the Mogul period were closely identified with the imperial court and often deeply involved in its intrigues. For example, Raja Maun of Jaipur, then known as Amber, whose sister the Emperor Akbar had married, conspired to secure the succession to his imperial nephew, Khusru. The Raja, with his mighty following of Rajput horse, was too powerful to be arrested. Akbar countered the plot by sending him as governor to Bengal, where he died. After his death Jaipur influence at Delhi waned until another Rajput Princess, daughter of the Bikanir chief and wife of the Emperor Jehangir, used her influence to get Jai Singh, grandson of Raja Maun, recognised as Raja of Amber. Later Jai Singh was one of Aurangzeb's best generals :

indeed, his influence was so great that the emperor had him removed by poison in 1667.

The Moguls had played on the jealousies of the Rajputs and so prevented any kind of national unity. Internal dissensions, with the weakness induced by the long wars with Aurangzeb, made it almost impossible for the Rajputs to oppose a united front against a worse enemy than the Moguls, the Marathas, men of their own religion if not of their race and country.

How the Marathas harried Rajput country everywhere—in Malwa, Kathiawar, Rajputana—has been described elsewhere. The period of Moslem domination in Malwa was almost a golden age compared with the chaos and anarchy of the Maratha regime. But the British settlement of 1818 brought in an era of peace which has continued unbroken down to the present day.

The Rajputs may claim to have saved Hinduism in the north. That is their chief title to renown. Almost equally important is their gift to India of the most enduring of her political institutions, the Rajput State. Let us for a moment examine the structure of this institution. The basis is feudal. The King or Maharaja is the supreme authority as head of the clan or group of families that originally settled on the soil. The associated families are represented by barons or Thakurs holding on a service tenure: under them are minor landowners down to the smallest unit, the holder of which was responsible for producing a single horseman for the

feudal levy. The nobles have the right to advise the ruler : in the old days they frequently elected a new sovereign when the direct heir was unfitted to succeed.

The caste system, with its little social and economic republics, fitted easily into this semi-feudal framework. The heads of castes and guilds represented their communities with the ruler and had seats in the Durbar. They were made to feel that they were part of the body politic. Caste kept the land in the feudal group. A rich moneylender could not aspire to hold an estate liable to feudal services. Village administration was mainly through the *panchayat*, and a characteristic feature of everyday life in a State is the interest taken by the people generally in local politics, from the porter at the city gate to the Thakur in his medieval stronghold. All this makes for solidarity.

The Rajput system was based on the need for self-protection. The British protectorate by removing the fear of foreign invasion sapped its moral foundations. Was it to be expected that the Rajput would turn his sword into a ploughshare, that he would break with the traditions of a thousand years? He could hardly do so and retain his qualities as a soldier and a leader of men. The Rajput system had its foundations deep in human nature, and it is possible that with some reshaping of its internal structure it might have been adapted—might still be adapted—to the needs of a progressive community, combining with

the patriarchal element some form of representative government.

The British policy of subordinate isolation was not likely to create a new moral anchorage, unless they were prepared to give to the Rajputs the place they had filled in the imperial polity of the Moguls. But, apart from intervening to protect the chiefs against insurgent barons, the British have left the Rajputs very much to themselves. The general tendency has been to strengthen the central government at the expense of the feudal elements. The power and influence of the Thakurs have been slowly undermined, and there are now left few picturesque figures like the late Maharana Sir Fateh Singh of Udaipur or the late Maharaja of Jaipur. The Maharana, surrounded by his Thakurs at a Durbar, might have stepped out of the seventeenth century. His prestige with his brother chiefs stood high. There is a story of the confusion he once produced in appearing without due notice at an informal meeting of Rajput and Maratha Princes, at which head-dress and belts had been discarded, and little short of a scrimmage occurred in the effort to offer the distinguished visitor the almost viceregal honours to which he was accustomed. His methods of administration were of almost equally respectable antiquity. There was, for example, no system of finance, no supervision of local officers. This kind of thing, combined with political agitation directed from British Ajmere, led to trouble a dozen years ago with

the indigenous tribes. Unfortunately the British Government felt it necessary to deprive this old and loyal ruler of most of his powers, a measure which embittered his declining years and caused alarm among the princely hierarchy. He died in 1930.

The late Maharaja of Jaipur, Sir Madho Singh, who died in 1922, was for many years one of the outstanding personalities among Rajput Princes. His early career had an element of romance. His father had died while he was a small boy, leaving, besides his mother, another widow with a young son. Each widow claimed for her son the large fief their husband had held. On the recommendation of a jury of Thakurs the then Maharaja decided against Madho Singh, who thereupon went into outlawry. Shortly after, at the sacred shrine of Hardwar, a Yogi saluted the boy as the future ruler of Jaipur. His mother promised that she would build a temple at the place where they had met, should the prophecy prove to be true. The promise was kept. On growing up, Madho Singh went to live in Tonk, a State on the Jaipur border. From there with the help of his partisans he supported himself by committing dacoities in Jaipur. Suddenly in 1880 there was a change in his fortunes. The ruler of Jaipur lay dying. He was childless and had not adopted a successor. The nobles in attendance at the court were summoned to his bedside. To them he acknowledged that the decision in the case of Madho Singh had been unjust. The only way in which adequate redress was pos-



sible was that he should adopt Madho Singh as his son and in lieu of his fief give him the Jaipur State. He called them to witness that Madho Singh was his heir.

The new Maharaja ruled for over forty years (1880-1922). The King-Emperor had no more loyal friend and supporter. Strictly orthodox, he nevertheless overcame his religious scruples and chartered a ship to convey him and his suite to England for the coronation of King Edward, taking with him enough Ganges water for six months. Because his ancestors had always remained standing in the presence of the Mogul emperors, he refused to be seated when the King-Emperor was present, but laid his sword at his feet in token of homage. He had many friends among British officers and formed the tie of brotherhood of the exchanged *pagri* or turban with two or three of those with whom he was most intimate. He would sometimes give the Rajput embrace to his British friends. In his later years the influence of zenana and priest dominated his life. To acquire merit he prohibited the destruction of all animal life (except goats) within ten miles radius of the capital, with the result that the countryside was overrun with wild boar, deer and village dogs. Ultimately he agreed to appoint a British administrator. He avoided having a direct heir because the Brahmins told him the appearance of a son would be to his disadvantage. With all his faults a great Rajput and a friend worth having.

The three great States of Rajputana in ancient times were Mewar (Udaipur), Marwar (Jodhpur) and Amber (Jaipur). Round these the political life of the Rajput centred. Most of the other States in Rajputana were founded under their auspices. Mewar had the pride of place, and its dynasty has unchallenged priority among Rajput Princes.

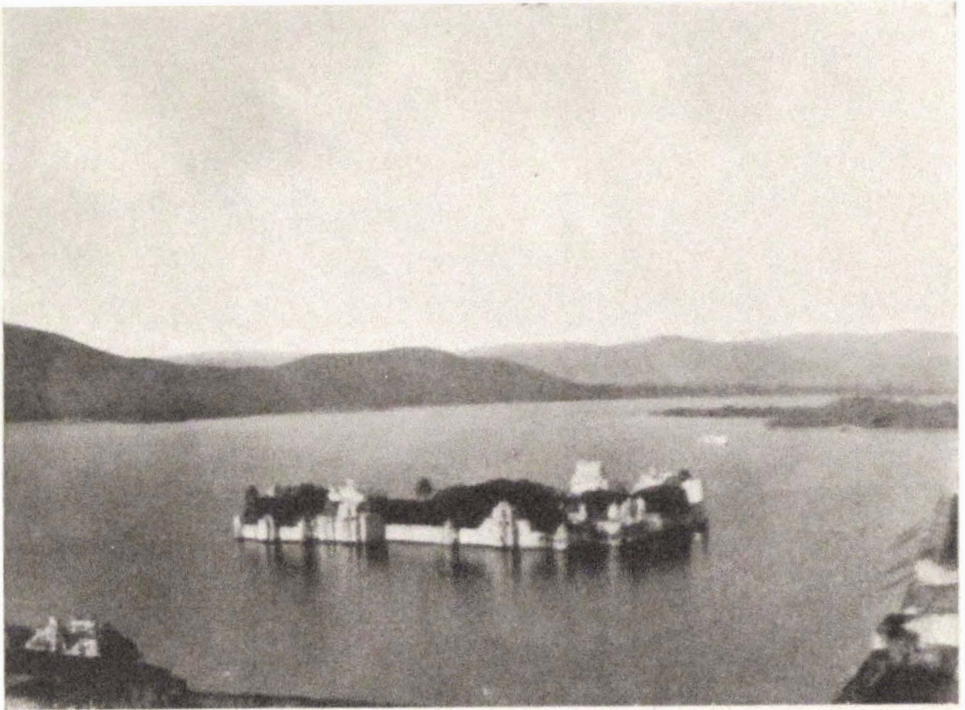
It is impossible within the scope of this book to do more than mention briefly the more important States.

The Udaipur family belongs to the Sesodia clan. The Maharana is the acknowledged head of all the Rajputs in India. The claim of the family to descent from the sun god is illustrated in its insignia, a golden sun on a sable disc. The State was founded twelve hundred years ago. It held its own against the Moslems for nearly two centuries until finally compelled to make terms with the Emperor Akbar. The power and wealth of the State at this period are shown by the fact that fifteen thousand horse followed the standard of Mewar when the Rajput clans gathered to oppose the Mogul Baber. Remote from Delhi the Princes of Udaipur were able to keep aloof from court life.

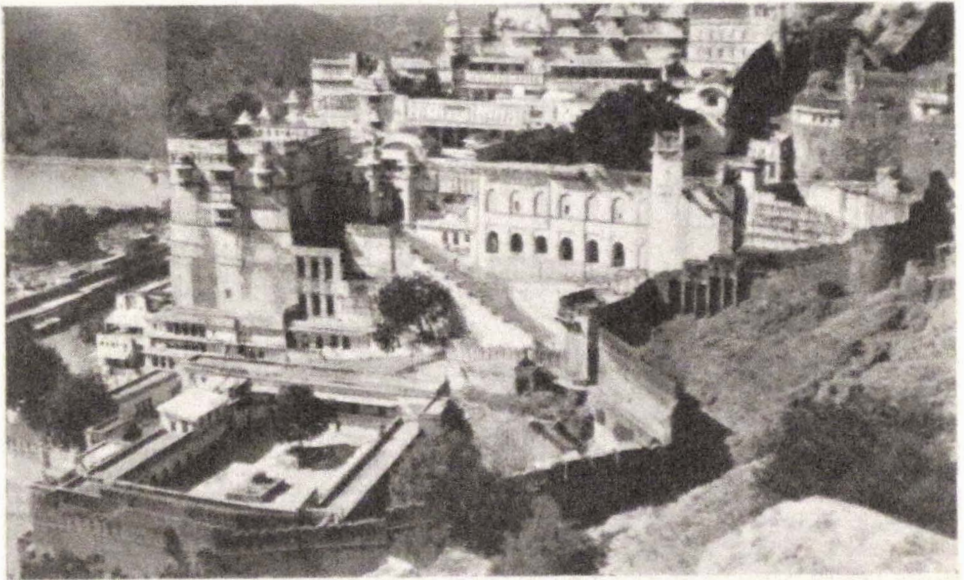
At the beginning of the nineteenth century Udaipur was squeezed like an orange by the Marathas, from which after a hundred years it has barely recovered. It was unfortunate that at the time when the Maratha peril was at its worst in 1806 its fate should have been in the hands of

a weak and incompetent ruler, Rana Bhim. The descendant of a hundred kings was destined to drink a more bitter cup of humiliation than defeat in the field. The tragedy involved the three great Rajput houses, Udaipur itself, Jaipur and Jodhpur, while the Maratha Chief Sindhia and Amir Khan, a notorious leader of banditti, played a prominent part. The tragic heroine was Kishna Kumari, daughter of Udaipur, famous throughout Rajasthan for her charm and beauty. Jaggat Singh, Maharaja of Jaipur, claimed her hand. His claim was disputed by Raja Maun of Jodhpur on the ground that the girl had been betrothed to his predecessor. The Jaipur Prince sent an embassy with three thousand men to Udaipur to press his suit. Sindhia, who was occupied in plundering the countryside, supported Raja Maun and demanded the dismissal of the Jaipur embassy. To enforce his demand he laid siege to the capital. The embassy was thereupon dismissed. To avenge the insult Jaggat Singh assembled a huge host of one hundred thousand men and beleaguered Jodhpur. Raja Maun summoned Amir Khan to his assistance and Jaipur was compelled to retreat.

Both claimants now appealed to Lord Lake, the British general at Delhi, to intervene. This was naturally refused. Amir Khan then proceeded to Udaipur to settle the question for his client of Jodhpur. He proposed two alternatives : that the girl should be married to Raja Maun, or, like a modern Iphigenia, she should be sacrificed to the



THE WATER PALACE, UDAIPUR



THE PALACE, BUNDI



exigencies of State. Amir Khan on diplomatic grounds preferred the sacrifice. Her craven father, forgetful of the example of his ancestors at Chitor and terrified of Jaipur's vengeance if he gave his daughter to Jodhpur, supported him. No one could be found to use the dagger, and the execution had to be entrusted to the women of the harem. After trying to comfort her mother in her paroxysms of grief, the girl, surrounded by her wailing attendants, gazed calmly for the last time across the lake and then drank the poisoned cup presented to her. Her knight of the bracelet, summoned to her rescue, arrived too late to save her. To this day the heroine of Mewar is a theme of Rajput song.

Steeped in tradition, with a powerful baronage that still stands on the ancient ways, remote from the great centres of activity, Udaipur has progressed less rapidly than some of the other Rajput States. Yet the country is reasonably prosperous and well governed. Sir Fateh Singh was succeeded in 1930 by his son Sir Bhupal Singh. The new ruler, known generally as the Bapji, is partially paralysed. Despite this physical disability he moves about his State and takes part in shooting expeditions. He practically ruled the State when his father's powers were curtailed, and it was only by the utmost tact and forbearance that he contrived to make good in the extremely difficult position in which he was placed by the Government of India.

From Udaipur to Jodhpur is about 150 miles across the Aravallis through arid wastes. Jodhpur

is the homeland of the great Rahtor branch of the Rajputs. The State covers 35,000 square miles and has a population of over two millions.

The Rahtors have always shown a keenness for adventure, and many of the cadet members of the clan have founded small kingdoms for themselves. Bikanir, Kishangarh, Idar in the Bombay presidency, Ratlam, Jhabua, etc., in Central India are examples of their exploits.

The clan gave generals and governors to the Moguls. Greatest of his time was Raja Jeswant Singh, Aurangzeb's general, who died while governor of Kabul. For nearly half a century after the 1818 settlement there was a trial of strength between the palace and the baronage. Insurrections followed, and British intervention was frequently involved. Throughout all this, however, the Rahtors remained loyal to Britain and five thousand of them marched in 1857 to protect Ajmere from the mutineers. Sixty years later the Jodhpur Lancers took Haifa at the gallop during the Great War.

The position now is greatly improved. The administration is in the hands of a Council of which the Maharaja is President. The State employs several British officers. The economic position is strong: the revenue (nearly a million sterling) ample for requirements.

The Maharaja, still young, is a keen sportsman, a fine polo player and an expert airman. Ostentation does not appeal to him, but this does not pre-

vent him from dispensing the most delightful hospitality both at Jodhpur and in his palace at Ootacamund, in the Nilgiris. He is not greatly interested in Indian politics : he is chiefly concerned to maintain a regime of law and order. It is, however, expected that he will bring Jodhpur into the Indian federation. Strict purdah is observed in the palace, but her Highness relaxes the rules of seclusion when she visits England. She told my wife that, though she found Woolworths interesting, Harrods attracted her most.

There is a fine aerodrome at Jodhpur, used as an airport between Delhi and Karachi. The Maharaja has started a flying club and most of his officers are learning to fly. They have as their instructor an expert English pilot. The polo ground is one of the best in India. The soft green turf, almost like an English lawn, with its background of desert, suggests the hand of a magician.

Among the striking personalities of the Jodhpur family was Sir Partap Singh, who was one of the best-known men in India. A keen soldier, a lover of horse and hound, the intimate friend of three British sovereigns, he was a type that appealed to the Englishman. His devotion to the British Crown was almost a religion. For more than twenty years he was the life and soul of the Jodhpur administration, coercing recalcitrant Bhils and Minas in the outlying districts, and handling truculent Thakurs. He speared leopards single-handed,



and he thought nothing of flinging himself off his horse on to a wounded boar in thick jungle, putting it on its back and trussing it. His Jodhpur polo team held at one time the championship in India.

Henry Newbolt has written a poem on an episode which shows the courage and broad-mindedness of this great Rahtor. A British subaltern, a friend of Sir Partap, had died in Jodhpur. Four Englishmen had been briefed to carry the coffin. At the last moment, one of them, struck down with fever, was unable to appear. No Hindu could touch the coffin without losing caste. There were no volunteers. The only expedient seemed to be to commandeer an outcast scavenger. Sir Partap Singh stepped into the breach. "A soldier knows no caste with a brother soldier," he said, and took the place of the fourth pall bearer.

He fought in most of the Empire's wars, in '97 on the Afghan frontier, in China, and in France and Palestine in the Great War, and firmly believed in a Spartan life for the young Rajput.

His political testament is a document worth quoting, especially the passage which runs : " Indian Princes should keep the administration of their States in their own hands. One great lesson taken out of my experience of life is this : give up a life of ease and luxury ; make yourself in every respect fit to rule."

The ruling family of Jaipur is known as the Kachhwaha, or the tortoise clan. Originally they

held the great fort of Gwalior and the adjacent country. By reason of proximity to Delhi the Jaipur Princes were closely associated with the Moguls. The intrigues of Raja Maun to secure the succession of his nephew to the imperial throne on Akbar's death have been already mentioned. The Raja was one of the most brilliant personages at Akbar's court, his greatest general and administrator.

A later ruler, Jai Singh II, who succeeded in 1699, rivalled the greatness of his predecessor. Despite his preoccupations in war, the intrigues of the court, and remote civil governments, he nevertheless found time to patronise the arts. He collected a splendid library, and his fame as an astronomer almost equalled his fame as a general. He founded the modern Jaipur, now one of the first cities in India. The greatest of the Kachh-wahas died in 1745.

Jaggat Singh, a later ruler, an actor in the tragedy of Kishna Kumari, lived a dishonoured life till 1820. He brought his State almost to the verge of ruin. For years the country was ruled by a Musalmani dancing-girl who had so infatuated the Maharaja that he gave her half his kingdom, including Jai Singh's library, which, to the great loss of posterity, was dissipated.

The State is now one of the most progressive in Rajputana. The population is nearly three millions : the revenue over a million sterling. Here again the Thakurs resist the policy of a strong

centralised government. Intrigue is rife among certain elements of the class. Great Thakurates, like Sikar and Khetri, are almost an *imperium in imperio*.

Jaipur is the spiritual home of the Marwari moneylender, who lays India under contribution from Lahore to Cape Comorin, and enriches his mother-country with the spoils. He practises petty usury in almost every bazaar in India: the bigger men of his tribe handle most of the high finance of India. There are said to be at least a dozen Marwari millionaires in the State.

The present Maharaja, his Highness Sri Man Singh, was adopted by his predecessor. He spent a year at Woolwich and holds an honorary commission in an Indian corps of sappers and miners. He is one of the best polo players in the world (handicap 7) and for three years his team has held the polo championship of India. Only twenty-three years of age, he embodies the finest qualities of the Rajput. There is a modesty in his bearing which is attractive: to polished manners he adds a cultivated drawl. He belongs to the type that might, if it chose, be the cynosure of London drawing-rooms: to the finer side of the Rajput character, however, the social limelight seems, so far, to have little appeal, though there are plenty of people who try to spoil him. A perfect host, he has surrounded himself with a well-bred staff that compares in efficiency with Government House standards in British India. He should have before

him a great career both as a ruler and a statesman in imperial India. The testing time has still to come, but the young Maharaja has already shown judgment in dealing with difficult situations, and he is always disposed to avail himself of the best advice, British and Indian.

He governs his State through a strong executive Council on which there are three British members.

Jaipur city, as already mentioned, owes its origin to the mathematical Maharaja, Jai Singh, who two centuries ago decided that space in his beautiful marble city of Amber was too restricted. And so he founded a new city, to which he gave his name : a city wall, streets thirty yards wide, of a uniform pink that blends with the background. But he left romance at Amber.

The Palace of the Winds is one of the most striking of the buildings in this modern city. Opinions differ as to its architectural merit. Sir Edwin Arnold lost himself in rhapsody in attempting to describe "its audacious beauty," as a "vision of daring and dainty loveliness." Lord Curzon, at the other extreme, stigmatises it as "a pretentious plaster fraud." Whatever its artistic merits may be, Jaipur, with Amber in the background, attracts the British and American tourist in large numbers.

Of the other Rajput States Bikanir is the largest and most progressive. It was founded in the fifteenth century by Bika, a scion of the Rahtors of Jodhpur. The country was occupied at the time

by pastoral commonwealths of Jats who accepted the Rajput adventurer as their ruler, on condition that the Jat elders should place the *tika*, or sacred mark, on the forehead of each of his successors to the *gadi*.

The area of the State is 23,000 square miles. Much of it is desert, but in the last five or six years a large tract of country has been colonised with the help of irrigation, made possible by a canal constructed by British engineers in the Punjab as part of the great irrigation scheme from the Sutlej, known as the triple canal project. Bikanir paid its share of the cost. Already the State has sold over three million pounds worth of land fertilised by the canal. The population, now nearly a million, has increased by 40 per cent. during the last few years. The increase is largely due to immigration from the Punjab, attracted by the prospect of cheap irrigated land.

The Maharaja has a European reputation as a statesman and a spokesman of his country in the councils of the world. He represented India at the Imperial War Conference in 1917 : again at the Peace Conference in 1918 : at the League of Nations and at the Round Table Conference. He was a leading member of the group of Princes who supported the scheme of Indian federation, and has played a prominent part in pressing the claims of the Princes in the Princes' Chamber since its inauguration. His tall commanding figure is as well known in London society as in Delhi and Cal-

cutta. His loyalty to old friendships is perhaps one of the most attractive elements in his character. He fought for the Crown in China, France and Egypt.

The Maharaja has one of the finest sand-grouse shoots in the world, constituting a magnetic attraction to the great ones of the land. In fact, he has been described as King of Bikanir "by the grouse of God." The desert lends itself to other forms of sport, and the great bustard, a difficult bird to stalk, is outwitted by the speed of a Rolls-Royce. Black buck are also shot at a few yards distance from a car, travelling at a terrific pace. A Christmas-week shoot as a guest of Bikanir is a thing to be remembered. These ancient Rajput houses have the very genius of hospitality.

Kotah and Bundi are closely associated. The former was granted as a fief by the Emperor Jahangir to a son of the Maharaja of Bundi. It is a well-run State, thanks to the tradition established by Zalim Singh, who was so successful as a sort of Mayor of the Palace in maintaining Kotah intact against the Marathas, that after 1817 the small separate principality of Jhalawar was formed out of the former territory and conferred upon his family. At some distance from the railway, Bundi lives a secluded life in the midst of unforgotten traditions. The palace and temples of the town are of almost fairylike beauty. The administration is inclined to be primitive. Only recently there was an émeute in

the city because the bazar believed that the myrmidons of the Raja had been guilty of a brutal murder. The Diwan was besieged in his house and the Political Agent had to intervene to restore order. The Chief Minister is now a British-lent officer.

Tonk is the only Moslem State in Rajputana. Amir Khan, the Pindari leader whose infamous conduct in the Kishna Kumari tragedy has already been referred to, had for a long time occupied the country as a military base. Wearied of the turbulence of his wild Pathan troops, who would frequently bastinado him if he were in arrears with their pay, he accepted the offer of the British in 1818 that he should be given the status of a ruling chief in the territory he held, and disbanded his army. His successors have for many years administered their State through British-lent officers.

Rajput rule is naturally at its strongest in the district which perpetuates its name. Central India, comprising the Malwa plateau, stands next in importance. Including Gwalior, once Rajput territory, the area is 76,000 square miles. The population is 10,000,000. Of these a little less than eight hundred thousand are Rajputs. With more than half the country in their hands, and many of the Rajput States their tributaries, the Marathas number 30,000 only. Yet they completely dominated the country till the military forces of Sindhia and Holkar were shattered in the Maratha and Pindari wars. It will be remembered that the

problem at the 1818 settlement was to effect some kind of stable equilibrium between the Rajput and his hated conqueror. The course adopted has been already described. The British guarantee reassured men's minds and made possible the acceptance of Maratha overlordship by Rajput tributaries.

There are twenty-eight States in Central India, all Rajput with the exception of the Maratha States of Dewas, junior and senior, Dhar (all three quite small), the two great States of Indore and Gwalior, two small Moslem States, Baoni and Jaora, and the important State of Bhopal.

The Central Indian Rajput State is constructed on much the same lines as in Rajputana. The most important is Rewa, with a population of 1,500,000. The baronage is numerous and powerful, and its scheme of life is not always conformable to the best interests of the State. The Maharaja, who is still young, is a ruler of strong personality, inclined to take an independent line in the recent political negotiations in London. The story is told of him that when some of the Princes were discussing the Congress proposition of abolishing the India Office and the Secretary of State he roundly expressed the opinion that but for the Secretary of State half the principalities of India would disappear. Like his brother-in-law, the Maharaja of Jodhpur, and the Maharaja of Jaipur, he utilises the services of British officers. He has no extravagant



tastes. His chief diversion is tiger shooting, and his ambition is to increase his bag to a thousand tigers. I believe he is already long past the five hundred mark.

Another country where Rajput rule predominates is the peninsula of Kathiawar with Kutch, though Rajputs can only claim 227,000 out of a population of 4,000,000. There are seventeen Salute States, all Rajput excepting two, which are Moslem, Junagadh and Radhanpur.

The country is a fertile plain broken by ranges of hills, of which the Gir is the most prominent. Here are found the maneless lions, last survival of the species in India.

The majority of the States of Kathiawar are absurdly minute. There are 202 of them, apart from the seventeen Salute States. You will meet rulers of every type in this agglomeration, from the chief educated at a British public school and university and administering his State on modern lines, to the Thakur who can barely read and write, and rules as the father and mother of his people. You will meet chiefs like the Maharao of Kutch, a type of the older school, the doyen of the Rajput Princes, like most Rajputs a fine sportsman, courteous and simple in his manners and tastes. He has represented India at the League of Nations. You may wonder at the polished manners of Harley Street in the Maharaja of Gondal until you realise that he is an M.D. of Edinburgh University. A scholar himself, he has done a great

deal for education, and Gondal is one of the few places in India where female education is compulsory. The Maharaja recently celebrated the golden jubilee of his reign, and in accordance with ancient custom was weighed against gold subscribed for by his people. The value was about £14,000. Did his subjects, one wonders, ask themselves what this able and efficient ruler was really worth to the community? How would such an estimate compare with Sir James Jean's estimate of 3,000 millions sterling as the value of Edison to the world?

In the interests of economy and efficiency most of these small States are grouped into convenient units and administered in association with British officers, a modified form of Home Rule which suits local conditions.

All the Kathiawar States were tributaries of the Gaekwar or of the Peshwa at Poona when the British appeared on the scene. They inherited the Peshwa's interests, and in 1820 intervened between the Gaekwar and his tributaries, and guaranteed future payments.

The most important States in the group are Bhavnagar, Junagadh, Nawanagar and Kutch. The first of these enjoys the valuable privilege of a free port on the Gulf of Cambay. This means that it retains the customs levied on goods that pass on into British India, thereby adding greatly to its resources. It is one of the most progressive

States in India. Its Maharaja is young and has only recently been invested with full powers. He has had the advantage of the advice and assistance of a veteran statesman in Sir Prabhu Shankar Pattani. An outstanding example of the progressive policy of the Bhavnagar government is its handling of the question of rural indebtedness. All over India, but more in British India than in the States, the peasant is heavily involved with the village shroff or moneylender. Interest is rarely less than 25 per cent., and once in the clutches of the usurer the peasant rarely, if ever, escapes from his toils. The Bhavnagar government have solved their problem by compulsorily scaling down the moneylenders' debt : buying him out, and relending the money to the peasant at a low rate of interest on easy terms of repayment. This bold experiment is well worth the consideration of other States and of British India. It is a striking example of what can be done by these small semi-autonomous governments. Such States as Bhavnagar certainly justify their existence.

The privilege accorded to Bhavnagar is denied to the other maritime States, which constitutes a grievance—especially to the late Jam of Nawanagar. He had spent a good deal on developing his port at Bedi Bandar on the Rann of Kutch. It is an all-weather port, and owing to lower port dues and other facilities attracted a good deal of trade till the Indian Government, a few years ago, in order to protect the British Indian tax-payer, imposed a

customs line (the Viramgam line) across the neck of the peninsula. The dispute between the Jam and the Indian Government was referred to the arbitration of a British High Court Judge and has now been decided.

A typical Rajput State, Nawanagar was fortunate in having as its ruler his Highness Sir Ranjitsinhji, until his untimely death better known, in India, as the Jam Sahib, the "Ranji" of the British people. An elder statesman, his services would have been invaluable to the Empire in the difficult time ahead. He was a fine athlete and an all-round sportsman, and there was much in his attitude towards life generally that was essentially British. Indeed, men who knew him best described him as the typical English country gentleman. He had a beautiful country house at Slough and a salmon river in Ireland. He kept in very close touch with the village people in his State, and knew every detail of the administration. All which is the only real antidote to corruption, oppression and inefficiency. Jamnagar under his fostering care has grown into a beautiful and spacious city.

Kutch with its Bhayad or brotherhood of chiefs lies off the beaten path and lives a drowsy life apart from the main currents of progress. Its curious social and political system is hardly a stimulus to progress. Still, there are signs of a reaching after a wider life, and with railway and port development Kutch should take the place which is demanded by its headship of the great

clan of the Jadeja Rajputs, to which most of the Kathiawar Rajputs belong. Two small Rajput States, Idar and Rajpipla, on the eastern borders of Baroda may be mentioned. In Idar the ruling family are Rahtor Rajputs, closely related to the ruling house of Jodhpur. In fact, Sir Partap Singh of Jodhpur was for several years ruler of the State. The present ruler is a minor. The ruler of Rajpipla is a Gohel Rajput. He was a member of the Imperial Cadet Corps founded by Lord Curzon. He is very much up to date in his scheme of life and is well known in London society. Both States pay tribute to Baroda.

Stretching almost across the breadth of India, the Rajput hierarchy of States naturally wields a considerable influence, more potent than ever now that the British policy of isolation has been finally abandoned. But Rajput rule has never recovered from the deadly blows it received from the Marathas. The Rajput-Maratha feud is indeed one of the tragedies of Indian history. Why did fate set these two great Indian races, Hindus by religion and culture, at each other's throats at a moment when unity might have given them the prize of empire? Was it Maratha policy which brought about the catastrophe, or was it the irreconcilable difference between the north, with its Aryan traditions, and the Dravidian south, where memories might still linger subconsciously of the oppression of their darker-hued predecessors by the fair-skinned Aryans? Was the repugnance felt by the auto-

cratic Rajput Kshatriya for the Maratha Sudra a contributing factor? To this day there is no intermarriage between the leading families of the two clans.

Whatever the causes, the gulf is still unbridged. Ask almost any Rajput chief if Marathas and Rajputs will establish a close alliance, and he will not hesitate to express his doubt, even while realising that combination would add greatly to the influence of the States in a federation.

Will the Rajputs themselves combine? That too is doubtful. They have always found cohesion in any form a difficult problem. At present there are various political groups among them. One feels that their leaders must grasp the necessity for a closer unity if their interests are to be adequately defended in a federal India.



VI

KASHMIR, THE RAJPUT  
STATES OF THE HIMALAYAS  
AND THE SIKH STATES



## I

### KASHMIR AND THE HIMALAYAN STATES

*Chamba* : Hindu. Rajput. H.H. Raja Ram Singh. 1919. *Area* : 3,216 sq. miles (Himalayan States: two ranges of snowy peaks and glaciers run through its territory). *Revenue* : about £60,000.

*Kashmir* : Hindu. Dogra Rajput. H.H. Maharaja Sir Hari Singh Bahadur. 1925. *Area* : 84,258 sq. miles. *Population* : about 3¼ millions. *Revenue* : about £2,000,000.

*Sirmur* : Hindu. Rajput. Lt.-Col. H.H. Maharaja Sir Amar Parkash Bahadur. 1911. *Area* : 1,198 sq. miles (Outer Himalayas). *Population* : 140,000, mostly Hindus. *Revenue* : £50,000.

## II

### THE SIKH STATES

*Kapurthala* : Sikh (Ahluwalia). H.H. Sir Jagatjit Singh. 1877. *Area* : 630 sq. miles. *Population* : 284,000.

*Nabha* : Jat Sikh. H.H. Maharaja Partap Singh. 1928. *Area* : 928 sq. miles. *Population* : 263,000, mostly Hindus. *Revenue* : about £200,000.

*Patiala* : Jat Sikh. H.H. Sir Bhupindar Singh. 1909. *Area* : 5,932 sq. miles. *Population* : 1½ millions : 55 per cent. Hindus ; 22 per cent. Sikhs ; 20 per cent. Moslems. *Revenue* : £1,250,000.

## CHAPTER VI

### KASHMIR, THE RAJPUT STATES OF THE HIMALAYAS AND THE SIKH STATES

**E**NSHRINED in towering mountain masses, the valley of Kashmir is one of the loveliest of lands. At 5,000 feet up the climate is delightful for the greater part of the year. Almost everything that grows in the temperate zone is found in profusion—peaches, nectarines, grapes, pears, apples, plums, strawberries and every kind of vegetable. In the spring the countryside is carpeted with irises: there is a welter of flowers through the summer and autumn. The lotus on the Dal lake in June are incredibly beautiful. The lake itself is a thing of beauty; the Mogul gardens on its shores add to its charm; the glamour of an autumn sunset on its waters must be felt to be believed. Gulmarg, twenty-six miles away from Srinagar, is a succession of green meadows studded with flowers in the midst of pines and cedars. At 9,000 feet it is a delightful summer resort. The view from the ridge over the valley below to the great peak of Nanga Parbat eighty miles away is magnificent. No wonder that

the valleys of Kashmir are beloved of the British in India.

The valley of Kashmir is, however, but a small part of the great State with its area of 80,000 square miles. There are several provinces—Jammu, Kistwar, Ladakh on the Tibetan border where the people are mostly Buddhist; outlying frontier regions like Gilgit, Baltistan, and semi-independent fiefs like Hunza-Nagar, Dardistan and Chilas on the Afghan borderland. Most of the country is a labyrinth of huge mountain ranges.

The population of these remote regions is small. The bulk of the inhabitants are found in the provinces of Kashmir and Jammu, 2,500,000 and 1,500,000 respectively. Eighty per cent. of the population is Moslem.

The Jammu province is almost entirely mountainous. It rises in a series of ranges from the foothills to the great Pir Panjal range, which separates it from Kashmir proper. There are over half a million Hindus, including Rajputs, and about fifty thousand Sikhs in Jammu. The rest are Moslems.

The Jammu people are known generally as Dogras whatever their origin. A considerable proportion of them have fighting qualities—Rajputs, Sikhs and Moslems. Beyond the northern mountain range in the Kashmir valley the people are utterly unwarlike, listless and cowardly to a degree. A thousand years of tyranny and oppression have sapped their virility. The "honour of Islam"

has not given them self-respect : perhaps it is true, as sometimes asserted, that they are still Hindus at heart.

Throughout history Kashmir has been an appanage of empires in India. Only when there was no strong rule in the north she has broken away and lived her own life beyond her ramparts of mountains. From the beginning of the fourteenth century the iron fetters of Islam were riveted on the Kashmiri. Mass conversion soon followed. In 1588 the Mogul Emperor Akbar conquered the valley and made Srinagar his summer resort. A century and a half later the Durani King of Kabul seized the country and a cruel despotism brooded over the valley till 1819, when Ranjit Singh, the Sikh, ousted the Afghans. To the latter a Hindu life was about as important as a mosquito. Sikh rule was as unpleasant from the Moslem point of view. The penalty imposed on a Sikh for slaying a Moslem was only twenty rupees.

The present ruling family, Rajput by origin, had held the Jammu principality for centuries before Ranjit Singh absorbed it in 1820. He re-granted it to the head of the family, Gulab Singh, who, in the next twenty years, brought the neighbouring hill chiefs, Rajputs like himself, under his suzerainty.

In 1846 the British, in dictating the terms of peace to the vanquished Sikhs, required an indemnity of a million sterling. In lieu of this they agreed to accept the cession of Kashmir. They were, however, reluctant to add to their frontier commitments

—there was then no idea of annexing the Punjab—and Kashmir was remote from their base. Accordingly when Gulab Singh offered to pay the indemnity if they would hand over Kashmir to him as their feudatory, they welcomed the proposal. They assigned the country to him on the usual terms of subordinate alliance. If the question had come up three years later when the Punjab was annexed the decision might have been different. Kashmir is a country which Europeans might have colonised, had it been open to them.

Gulab Singh proceeded to absorb the valley and the outlying provinces. His troops, composed of Dogra Rajputs, Sikhs and Moslems, were adequate to the purpose.

An oligarchy of “Kashmiri Pundits,” as the local Brahmins are called, was now permitted to rule the valley. The position was much the same as in Hyderabad with the rôles of the two great communities reversed, a small group of Rajputs and Brahmins in Kashmir dominating a vast majority of Moslems. The Pundits made Rajput rule unpopular.

Trouble soon developed as the result of misrule. There was a dreadful famine in 1871, in which nearly three-fifths of the population died. The heavy mortality was mainly due to the revenue system of the Pundits, which left no reserve of grain with the peasantry. Meanwhile, as a result of the Afghan War of 1878–81 and Russian activities in the direction of the Pamirs, the frontiers of Kashmir

adjacent to those regions and to the country of the independent Afghan tribes began to assume a new importance. There was trouble with the tribesmen of Hunza-Nagar north of Gilgit, and ultimately the British Government felt it necessary to intervene, after the succession of the late Maharaja Sir Partap Singh (not to be confused with the Rajput noble of the same name in Jodhpur) in 1885. His Highness was undoubtedly the victim of the intrigues of a group of his own Pundit officials whose object was to oust the Maharaja in favour of his brother. They went so far as to forge letters suggesting that Sir Partap was in treasonable correspondence with Russia. The Indian Government were not inclined to attach much importance to this correspondence, but the Maharaja's administration was so inefficient, Pundit influence so baneful, the problem of frontier defence so urgent, that they could not allow the existing state of things to continue. The Maharaja was practically superseded. The administration was placed in the hands of a Council composed of his brothers Amar Singh and Ram Singh with British advisers to help them, the whole system being under Residency supervision. The Maharaja was nominally president of the Council. A land settlement of the valley was carried out by a British officer (Sir Walter Lawrence) ; it constituted a charter of liberty to the Kashmiri peasant. The frontier districts, Chilas, Gilgit, Hunza-Nagar, were placed in charge of British officers. The Kashmir army was reorganised by British officers

and made responsible for garrisoning the frontier outposts.

The policy of the British Government has been heavily criticised. There is, however, little doubt that the situation had got out of hand and intervention, especially in view of frontier complications, was justified. Whether the hand of paramountcy fell too heavily is another matter. The administration improved rapidly, and in 1905 the Maharaja assumed direct control with Amar Singh as his minister.

Sir Partap died in 1925. Too prone to superstition, too much under the influence of the Pundits, he had in many ways an attractive personality. If he allowed the Pundits to rule, by his sympathy and kindness he did much to mitigate the harshness of the system. His great desire was to maintain the seclusion of his beautiful country, and he refused to allow a railway to be built up the Jhelum valley. Who shall criticise him for this? He had a passion for cricket and entertained cricketers with lavish hospitality. He played himself, even in the later years of his life, in gold embroidered slippers and flowing robes. There was a secret convention that at the match with which he celebrated his birthday he should be allowed to make as many runs as the years of his life, the rules of the game being strained to prevent the premature loss of his wicket. He never noticed the deception.

The late Maharaja had been induced by a Pundit

minister to adopt as his son the son of the Raja of Poonch, a feudatory of Kashmir. The object of the minister was to keep off the *gadi* the real heir, Sir Hari Singh, son of Sir Amar Singh, nephew of the Maharaja. The intrigue was facilitated by various Brahmins, who persuaded the aged ruler that unless he had a son he could not escape Hades on his death. From the religious point of view an adopted son takes the place of one naturally born. The British Government, however, refused to recognise the adoption except for religious purposes, and the plot failed. Their reason was that the treaty of 1846 reserves the succession to the heirs male of the body of Gulab Singh with whom the treaty was concluded. Sir Hari Singh fulfilled that condition. The deviation from the promise made after the Mutiny, that the succession of adopted sons would be recognised, is undoubtedly justified.

The new ruler had served for several years on the Executive Council of the State before his accession. A keen polo player, he did a great deal to attract British polo players to Srinagar and Gulmarg in the summer months before he came to the *gadi*. He entertained Gulmarg society lavishly. Like his uncle, he is not inclined to open up the valley freely to European and Indian enterprise, though he is susceptible to modern ideas and ready to promote economic development. It seems that his advisers are nervous lest rapid economic expansion might mean predominating European influence, especially as jurisdiction over Europeans vests in the Resi-



dency. The Pundit oligarchy is still powerful, and a criticism of the Maharaja that is sometimes heard is that he is too constitutional and leaves things to his ministers which his subjects would prefer him to take up himself. He is generally credited with ideals of good government. According to some of his friends he occasionally finds the influence of the Residency a little overpowering as a result of various encroachments during the period of Residency predominance, which the large influx of European visitors tends to accentuate, in view of the fact that they are under Residency jurisdiction. It is believed that the Government of India is only too anxious to remove anything that obstructs friendly relations between Palace and Residency, so far as this can be done consistently with its historic position in Kashmir.

Sir Hari Singh is a prominent figure in the Chamber of Princes and took a leading part in the Round Table Conference. Considering the outstanding importance of Kashmir and his own personality, it may be anticipated that he will be one of the Princes who will have great influence in the India of the future.

A wave of disaffection has recently swept over the State. By some the trouble is said to be due partly to various innovations introduced by the Maharaja, especially in relaxing purdah restrictions. The unpopularity of Pundit administration and the reactions of Indian politics and especially of Hindu-Moslem tension in Kashmir are the main

causes. There is some ground for suspecting Bolshevik influences. The trouble is all the more unfortunate because it is believed that Sir Hari Singh was trying to give the Moslems a chance by appointing Moslem officials. Serious disturbances in Srinagar and in Jammu occurred between the two communities. The Hindus were in most cases the worst sufferers. Their houses and villages were destroyed and they fled in thousands to the Punjab. There is no doubt that this was largely due to outside agitation on the part of the Moslems. Large bands of Moslems known as *jathas* tried to force their way across the frontier in order to join their co-religionists. British troops had in the end to be called in to suppress the troubles. The Pundit Chief Minister was replaced by a member of the political department, and a commission presided over by an officer of the same department was appointed by the Maharaja to enquire into Moslem grievances and make suggestions for their removal.

The commission has reported. Minor grievances have been remedied and the Kashmir government has pledged itself to give the Moslems a reasonable share in the administrative posts. It has now been decided to establish a Legislative Council on the Morley-Minto model with the object of identifying the people with the administration. In other words, there is to be a Council with a non-official majority which will pass legislation, discuss the budget, ask questions, and pass resolutions.

The root of the trouble is the awakening of a

feeling of self-respect among the oppressed Kashmiri Moslems. Much of this is due to outside stimulus, which will grow stronger when the Punjab as a predominantly Moslem province has control of its political destinies. Moslem Kashmir seething with discontent would be a danger spot, with Islam militant in the Punjab and on the frontier. And that there is a feeling of militancy abroad is unquestionable. It is the natural result of the growing tension between Moslem and Hindu. The hope of a peaceful future depends on whether Hindu rule can be made acceptable to the Moslem majority. It is a difficult problem with a heterogeneous agglomeration of Pundits, Rajputs, Sikhs and Moslems. With moral support from the British Government a solution should not be out of the reach of calm and courageous statesmanship. Let us hope that Kashmir will be left to solve her own problems, without interference from outside, whether by Moslem or Hindu politicians.

Next to Hyderabad, Kashmir is the most important of Indian States. This is largely due to its position as a frontier territory and its consequent military responsibilities. Its regular army, trained on British models, is slightly larger than that of Gwalior and has three batteries of pack artillery. There are seven battalions of infantry composed of good fighting material. It is also one of the few regions in India where British settlement on a more or less extensive scale is possible. The policy of isolation has prevented anything of the kind. Not



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unnaturally an influx of British residents is regarded with suspicion by Indian States governments lest an expansion of British interests should create opportunities for interference by the paramount power. But times and policies have changed and such fears have little if any foundation. In point of fact, with goodwill and sympathy on both sides, a strong British element should in the peculiar circumstances of Kashmir be a source of strength to the administration. It might help to hold the balance between the two great communities. And while there are ten-pound brown trout to be caught in streams meandering through delightful valleys, and mighty mahseer in the Jhelum ; while there are stags and bears to be shot, and snipe and duck, geese and chikor abound, the British settler would not find politics attractive. All he would desire would be a stable government.

A point of some importance as regards federation is the privilege Kashmir enjoys of importing sea-borne merchandise in bond. This privilege was accorded in return for an agreement on her part to permit free trade with central Asia across her frontiers. That trade to-day is only worth about £150,000 a year. Kashmir's Indian customs revenue now amounts to over £200,000.

A group of small Rajput States extends from the Kashmir frontier almost to Nepal, from Chamba in the west to Tehri Garhwal in the east. Most of them are in picturesque mountain country on the fringes of the Himalayas ; splendid forests cover

the hill-sides where they are not terraced for agriculture. Here in mountain fastnesses Rajput chiefs found refuge from the deluge of Moslem invasion. Most of them paid tribute to the Mogul and later to Ranjit Singh, the Sikh or to the Gurkhas. These remote little Rajput principalities, left for hundreds of years in practical isolation, preserved much of the ancient culture of the Hindus. In particular some of the best examples of the Rajput school of miniature painting are to be found in collections of the hill chiefs.

In extending their protectorate to Chamba, Mandi and Suket in 1846, the British authorities prohibited the practices of *suttee*, slave-dealing and the burning of lepers.

The Sikhs have had a romantic history. Recruited from the rough peasant tribes of the Punjab, they have throughout been a religious brotherhood rather than a nation. The foundations of the new creed were laid by a religious mystic, Guru Nanak, about the middle of the fifteenth century. His object was to effect a synthesis between Islam and Hinduism which would break down caste and unite the hostile sects in the service of a universal Deity. He was followed by an apostolic succession of nine Gurus, or saintly leaders. The Emperor Akbar, who was impressed by the Sikh teaching, granted the fourth Guru the site of the Golden Temple in Amritsar. The sixth Guru transformed the sect into a fierce military order known as the Khalsa, or the pure,

as the only means of saving the faith from the growing persecution of the Moslems.

Aurangzeb endeavoured to force the ninth Guru, Tegh Bahadur, to embrace Islam, and on his refusal put him to death. While imprisoned at Delhi the Guru was charged by the emperor with turning his gaze towards the ladies' apartments in the imperial palace. He met the accusation with the retort that it was not towards the palace that he was looking, but in the direction of the sea for the Europeans who were coming across it to the shores of India to tear down the imperial purdah and destroy the Mogul empire.

His prophecy was firmly believed by the Sikhs, so much so that they adapted it as a battle cry when fighting for the British at the siege of Delhi during the Mutiny.

The tenth Guru, Govind Singh, was murdered in 1708 at Nander, in the Nizam's dominions, where a famous Sikh shrine preserves his memory. He had welded the fraternity together by instituting two sacraments : the *pahul* or baptism : and a rite of communion intended to destroy caste. The Granth or Sikh bible is regarded as the successor of the Gurus.

The onset of paralysis in the Mogul system gave the Sikhs their opportunity. Another point in their favour was that Brahminical Hinduism was weak in the country between the Sutlej and the Indus, considered as an impure land for the orthodox Brahmins, and the new creed was for



that reason easy of acceptance for the Hindu peasant tribes. By the middle of the eighteenth century the Sikhs had formed *mists* or confederacies which, in fact, constituted a parallel government to that of the Mogul and later of the Afghans after the invasion of Ahmed Shah Durani.

How the Sikhs ultimately absorbed the Punjab and Kashmir under the leadership of Ranjit Singh belongs to the general history of India. We are only concerned with the survivals of the Sikh regime, the Phulkian States, Patiala, Jind and Nabha ; and Kapurthala and Faridkot. Of these the only State of outstanding importance is Patiala.

The ruling families of the Phulkian States trace their origin to Jaisul, a Bhatti Rajput chief who founded Jaisalmer, one of the States of Rajputana. The claim of the Maharaja of Patiala to Rajput descent is now more or less generally admitted. The first independent ruler of the State was Ala Singh, who was created a Raja by Ahmed Shah Durani after the battle of Panipat in 1761. His immediate ancestors had for two or three generations been employed by the Mogul governors of Sirhind as deputy governors. They acquired in this way great local influence.

The Phulkian family succeeded in maintaining itself through the anarchy of the last half of the eighteenth century. Early in the nineteenth the threat of absorption by Ranjit Singh drove them to seek British protection. A treaty was concluded with the Sikh ruler by which he pledged himself

to respect the territories of the cis-Sutlej Sikh States. The result was to bring Patiala and the other States referred to, except Kapurthala which lies west of the Sutlej, into the British protectorate.

Patiala was a tower of strength to the British during the Mutiny. The Maharaja was at that time the acknowledged head of the Sikhs in the eastern Punjab, and his attitude helped to mobilise Sikh opinion in favour of the British.

The administration, though not developed on constitutional lines, is of a liberal nature. It is in the hands of an Executive Council of five members, including a Prime Minister, at present a Moslem, Sir Liaquat Hayat, who represented the Patiala government at the Round Table Conference. Sir Frederick Gauntlett, late Auditor-General in India, is Finance Minister.

The area of the State is 6,000 square miles ; the population over one and a half millions, the revenue over a million sterling. A large area is irrigated from one of the great Punjab canals.

The total number of the Sikhs in the Punjab is over four millions. Of these Patiala can claim a million. There was an increase of 31 per cent. in the Sikh population between 1921 and 1931. This was largely due to conversions following on the Akali agitation of several years ago. The Akalis are a fanatical sect of the Sikhs (Akali = immortal) : they had come into conflict with the Punjab government over their claim to appropriate several important Sikh shrines, without due process of law.

The movement was closely associated with extremist agitation in India generally. The Patiala government remained strictly neutral during this troublous period and as a consequence the Maharaja's influence with his fellow-Sikhs beyond his frontiers was to some extent diminished. The rumours of misgovernment fostered by a venal press had a similar tendency. These rumours later on were held to be baseless by a highly placed officer, specially deputed at the Maharaja's request, to hold an enquiry.

Several years ago the Maharaja of Nabha, as a result of differences with his powerful neighbour, started a virulent campaign in the press against the Maharaja of Patiala. The Patiala government at the same time complained that seditious movements were being promoted by the agents of the Maharaja of Nabha in Patiala itself. The scandal developed to such a degree that the British Government were compelled to intervene. The Nabha ruler was deposed.

The Maharaja of Patiala, is a splendid figure, with a striking and forceful personality, a delightful host and a great conversationalist, with a keen sense of humour. About a high British official he remarked to my wife : " He was not present when tact was being distributed." His vignettes of his fellow-Princes were clever and witty. His kennels are wonderful. He has ninety-five dogs, mostly gun dogs, many of them champions. They have wonderful quarters, specklessly clean, with tiled

walls and electric light. Three Englishmen are in charge. They have a dog hospital with three wards and an operating theatre which would shame some military hospitals I have known in India. Some of the dogs cost over £300. One was bought from an Englishman for £200, and the Maharaja gave him another £50 because he wept when parting from it.

The Maharaja showed us a pearl necklace said to be worth over a million sterling. No wonder, he said, the Soviets want to loot India. He seemed to think they had already formed a plan of campaign. Another of his interests is cricket, and he has done much to improve the standard of the game in India. During our visit about two years ago, a practice match was being played at Patiala between the team selected to represent India in England and a Patiala eleven.

His Highness has played an important part in the deliberations of the Princes with regard to their general policy and their attitude towards federation. At one time he was inclined to favour the principle of a confederation of the Princes as a preliminary to federation, but it is believed that he has now modified his views.

As head of a great Sikh State, with his political experience and his undoubted ability he should wield a great influence over the Sikh community of the Punjab, especially if he has the support of his own people.

Another prominent Sikh Prince, though his

State is small compared with Patiala, is the Maharaja of Kapurthala. He visits Europe usually every year and is well known in London and in continental capitals. He speaks French like a Parisian. He was at one time morganatically married to a Spanish lady. His five sons were all educated in England. One of them, Captain Amarjit Singh, was recently nominated by the Government of India to conduct the French General Gouraud through India, a commission which he performed very ably and tactfully.

The military traditions of the Sikhs and the strong Sikh element in the Indian Army give the community a position in political India out of all proportion to its numbers. Hitherto its spiritual home has been Lahore, with its satellite, Amritsar. If, as seems probable, the Punjab is treated as a predominantly Moslem province in a federated India, it may very well happen that the Sikhs will turn their gaze to Patiala as the national centre, especially if the Sikh ruler makes it an article of faith to govern wisely and to attract the affection of his subjects.

VII

MYSORE AND TRAVANCORE

*Mysore* : Hindu. Kshatriya. *Dynastic name*:  
Wadiyar. H.H. Maharaja Krishnaraja  
Wadiyar. 1902. *Area* : 29,464 sq. miles.  
*Population* : about 6,000,000, mostly Hindus;  
340,000 Moslems. *Revenue* : about £3,000,000.

*Travancore* : Hindu. Nayar. H.H. Maha-  
raja Raja Rama Raja Varma. 1924. *Area* :  
7,626 sq. miles. *Population* : 5,000,000;  
66 per cent. Hindus; 25 per cent. Christians;  
about 7 per cent. Moslems. *Revenue* :  
£1,750,000.

*Cochin* : Hindu. Nayar. H.H. Sir Rama  
Varma. 1914. *Area* : 1,417 sq. miles. *Popu-  
lation* : about 1,205,000 : 66 per cent. Hindus;  
27 per cent. Christians; 7 per cent. Moslems.  
*Revenue* : about £600,000.

## CHAPTER VII

### MYSORE AND TRAVANCORE

**T**HE origin of the ruling family of Mysore is shrouded in legend. Early in the fourteenth century, according to the traditional story, the poligar, or feudal chief, who held the then small principality of Mysore, had wandered off into the forest in a fit of mental aberration, leaving his wife and young daughter unprotected. A neighbouring poligar, the hereditary enemy of the Mysore family, seizing the opportunity, demanded the hand of the girl in marriage, threatening to invade Mysore and take her by force if his request were refused. The demand was hateful to both mother and daughter, but resistance was hopeless. At this crisis two young Rajputs in quest of adventure appeared on the scene with a small retinue. They had sailed from Dwarka in Kathiawar to the Malabar coast. On hearing the story of the distressed damsel, they at once proclaimed themselves her champions, rallied the forces of the State and led them against the disturber of the peace, slew him and annexed his territories. The elder brother then married the daughter of Mysore : was ac-



cepted by the people as their ruler and so founded a new dynasty.

There is no reason why the family romance should not be treated as genuine history. The Rajputs at the time were seeking new homes out of the reach of the Moslem invader, and young members of the clan may very well have attempted to start a new career in the south. The tradition is in any case generally accepted.

The country itself is full of charm, a land that lotus-eaters would delight to make their own. The main feature is a series of uplands with an average elevation of 2,000 feet above the sea. The climate has a languorous warmth in summer : in winter endless sunshine with a tinge of chilliness that is almost bracing. Westward the plateau is flanked by the Ghauts and their outlying buttresses, like the Baba Budan hills, where the coffee estates of British planters have invaded the forest. To the south is the great mountain mass of the Nilgiris. The scenery is diversified by great excrescences of Deccan trap, steep ridges of rock and huge isolated hills, known locally as *droogs*, many of them crowned with ancient forts. In the south-west and west are magnificent forests, the haunt of the bison, the elephant and tiger. The great river Cauvery, rising in the Ghauts, flows through the State. At the point where it flings itself off the highlands into the plains of Madras, its force is impressed into the service of man to produce electric current to light the great

towns, and to mine gold from quartz, a mile or more below the surface of the earth at Kolar, a hundred miles away.

Temple architecture bears witness to the culture of the ancient kingdoms. There are noble buildings of different styles and periods almost everywhere. The best known are the Hindu sanctuaries at Halebid and Belur. The colossal image, fifty feet high, of the Jain apostle Gomata, carved from the solid rock on a high ridge, towers over the countryside at Sravana Belgola. It dates from the tenth century. The palaces, gardens and broken battlements of Tippoo Sultan's capital at Seringapatam recall memories of a great feat of arms.

The age of the classic builder is past, but for all this modern Mysore and Bangalore are beautiful cities. Mysore in particular, with its symmetry of design and its wealth of gardens, is particularly attractive. Above the city is the Chamundi hill, sacred to the patron goddess of the Maharaja's family.

Bangalore is one of the favourite residential centres of the south for Indian and European alike, besides being the administrative capital and the headquarters of the British Resident. The British part of the city, officially described by the hybrid title of the Civil and Military Station, has a large garrison of British and Indian troops. There is a large resident European and Anglo-Indian population.

His Highness the Maharaja rules over 6,000,000

of people and a country two-thirds the size of England. The great majority of his subjects are a hard-working Hindu peasantry. There is a strong infusion of Brahmins, who have played a prominent part in the life of the State since it was handed back to the ruling family in 1881.

The setting of Mysore in the general history of modern India has been sketched elsewhere. The half-century of British administration from 1831 was unquestionably of great benefit to the country. It set up a standard which the new government naturally felt a moral obligation to maintain. A provision in the treaty requiring the concurrence of the British Government to the repeal or substantial alteration of the code of laws introduced by its agents established the beginnings of a constitution. This provision has, it may be noted, been cancelled recently as a mark of appreciation of the progressive policy of his Highness's government.

A Brahmin Civil Service assumed the mantle of the British Commission. It has adopted British efficiency as its ideal, and with excellent results. A succession of able Diwans or Chief Ministers, mostly Brahmins, has been an important factor. Above all, the rulers themselves, since the rendition, have closely identified themselves with the public interests.

The ruling family is popular with everybody. His Highness combines culture and perfection of breeding with sportsmanship in its best form. He had as his tutor when a boy a senior member of

the Political Department, Sir Stuart Fraser. In his younger days a fine polo player, he still plays an excellent game of racquets, tennis and squash. His prowess at the latter game added to his popularity with the Prince of Wales, who enjoyed being beaten by his Highness when other Indian opponents had appeared to think that Eastern politeness did not allow royal guests to lose at games.

As a relaxation from the cares of State he sometimes indulges in pilgrimages to sacred shrines in the heart of the Himalayas, a practice which puts a strain on the endurance of his entourage. Yet with all this he takes a very broadminded view of life and politics generally, and it is a cardinal principle of his policy to give equal opportunities to all his subjects, including the outcasts.

The following episode illustrates the Maharaja's popularity with the humbler folk of his State. My wife and I were driving across country with his Highness in a bullock tonga to a tiger shoot which he had himself organised for us as his guests. We passed through a small village on the outskirts of which were gathered an eager little crowd of the inhabitants, who clapped vehemently at our approach. As the bullock tonga lumbered past, the leading man advanced, carrying a portrait of the Maharaja hung with garlands of fresh flowers. They salaamed profoundly and again the clapping (an Indian substitute for Western cheering) rattled through the crowd. Then his Highness explained apologetically that a petition from the village asking

for a school had been turned down by the Educational Department on the ground that the population was too insignificant to be favoured with learning. Hearing of this, he had himself provided a school for them from his private purse. Little acts of kindness and sympathy of this kind endear his Highness to all who know him.

The Maharaja is strictly orthodox and does not dine with Europeans. He has never been to Europe, mainly because of the difficulties the strict Hindu has to face in crossing the seas. On the other hand, his brother and heir, the Yuvaraja, lives in Western style and frequently visits Europe. He is fond of dancing and cultivates the society of Europeans. The Maharaja, despite his orthodox habits, dispenses a great deal of hospitality—for example, he gives dances at his palace in the hills at Ootacamund : hunt-breakfasts at the same place, where he rides to hounds himself : tennis parties, and attractive musical evenings in the palace at Mysore. On these occasions the best exponents of Indian music are requisitioned : the members of the palace string band play chamber music : there is usually an organ recital. The Maharaja is fond of Western classical music and was at one time an expert violinist. He usually has an English private secretary to help in the palace entertainments.

The Maharaja is a great patron of the Brahmins. Still, he refused to allow them a monopoly of Sanskrit learning in the State, as was claimed by

an ultra-orthodox group. He himself is a Sanskrit scholar.

Until her recent death, a striking personality in the circle of the Mysore ruling family was her Highness the Dowager Maharani, mother of the present Maharaja. For twelve years when her son was a minor she ruled the country from behind the purdah ; even the dentist had to pull out her teeth and those of her womenfolk through a slit in the curtain. But in spite of such cramping circumstances she still reigned supreme, dominating her family by sheer force of mind. Few affairs of State were not discussed with her before the ruler made his decision—and the deep and lasting affection between mother and son was a very attractive feature of the family life of the palace. That this great lady was capable of real friendship was shown by her devotion to an English woman friend, the wife of a British officer of the Indian Medical Service, once Chief Medical Officer of the Mysore State. He retired many years ago and went to England with his wife. The Maharani, however, soon found that the latter was almost indispensable. She was invited to return with her husband, and to the end remained guide, counsellor and friend to the ladies of the palace. She and her husband were as carefully treated as bits of old china.

On the occasion of the great national festivals of his Highness's birthday in June and the Dussurah in the autumn the State dispenses lavish hospitality to its guests, European and Indian. The proces-

sions are the great feature of the weeks, when the Maharaja rides through the town on an elephant, painted to its toe-nails, with his troops, retainers and officials. The countryside gives itself a holiday and swarms in to view the pageant. The immense and variegated crowd is not the least interesting element in the spectacle. The processions are carefully staged and are marked by the restraint and sense of good form which characterises public life in Mysore.

At the Dussurah there is a series of Durbars at which the Maharaja receives deputations from all classes of his subjects. These proceedings, which last about three weeks, have a religious significance, and at the close the Maharaja is supposed by many of his subjects to have reached, temporarily, a state of semi-divinity as a result of his austerities. The climax of the Dussurah celebrations is the European Durbar, a ceremony unique in India. It is attended officially by the British Resident at the Mysore Court. It takes place in the evening. The outline of the huge pile of the palace is picked out with thirty thousand electric lights, presenting an illusion of fairyland. The Resident drives in state from the guest house in a carriage and four, escorted by a troop of the Maharaja's bodyguard, to the courtyard of the palace, where a guard of honour awaits him. The ritual is carefully elaborated to the smallest detail. Having received the Resident in the drawing-room, the Maharaja proceeds with his guest to the Durbar Hall in which



THE START OF THE DUSSURAH PROCESSION, MYSORE

H.H. the Maharajah is on the left of the picture, with his nephew and brother on his left





a throne four or five feet high is placed, with a canopy of strings of pearls over it. The Maharaja makes a circuit of the throne, offering it obeisance. He then climbs up it and seats himself cross-legged on the top. The Resident at the same time takes a seat close by. The guests, all Europeans, are then introduced. They consist chiefly of British military officers and their wives, and civil officers both of the British and Mysore Governments. All the officers are expected to wear full dress. No Indian is allowed to be present. The guests bow to the Maharaja and then pass on to a row of chairs beyond. After the presentations are over displays of wrestling and gymnastics are given in the brilliantly lighted courtyard below. After a short time the Resident expresses his desire to depart. He is then garlanded by the Chief Minister and afterwards takes leave of the Maharaja, bowing as he passes him. The guests follow, the Maharaja presenting a bouquet to each lady.

The origin of this unusual ceremony is obscure. The points which distinguish it from the ordinary type of Durbar are that ladies do not appear in ordinary Durbars: that in such Durbars the Indian element predominates, and that the chief would ordinarily meet the Resident as he approaches the dais and conduct him to a seat by his side.

Mysore politics are an interesting subject for study. As in the Deccan among the Marathas, Brahmin ambition and the non-Brahmin reaction

it provokes have been prominent. During the present century the political aspirations of the masses have been confined to obtaining a reasonable share in the day-to-day administration which the Brahmins by reason of their greater mental aptitude and educational qualifications had practically monopolised. Brahmin rule, though efficient, is not always popular. Across the frontier in Madras the non-Brahmins after a bitter struggle had obtained control of the Reformed Council in 1921, with unpleasant consequences to the careers of many Brahmin officials. The people of Mysore, influenced by the example of Madras, desired to impose a limit on Brahmin predominance. They charged the Brahmins with having utilised their official influence to crowd out non-Brahmin students both from the secondary schools and the Mysore University, thereby depriving the lower castes of the opportunity of qualifying themselves for Government service. "Let the best man win," was the Brahmin retort. In the end the Maharaja's government adopted the policy of reserving a due proportion of official appointments for the non-Brahmin castes.

Meanwhile Congress influence had established itself in the State. This, combined with dislike of the Government's non-Brahmin policy, led to agitation for political reform, mainly inspired by a Brahmin group. His Highness, although the demand was anything but universal, decided to liberalise the constitution. A scheme of reforms was intro-

duced based largely on the British Indian model, with dyarchy left out. In other words, there would be no popular ministers and the Executive Council would continue to be entirely official, and responsible for the administration. The reformed Legislative Council is composed of fifty members with a non-official elected majority. It has the power of making laws and regulations ; passes the budget, and moves resolutions. Certain financial items and matters affecting the ruling family and the relations of the State with the British Government are excepted from its cognisance. Much the same kind of safety valves are provided in the new machinery, as in British India.

Sir Mirza Ismail, a Moslem of Persian descent, has been Chief Minister of the State for the last eight years. His appointment constitutes a break in the traditions of this Hindu State and is a striking testimony to the broadmindedness of the Maharaja. His choice has been more than justified by the ability, energy and imagination Sir Mirza has brought to bear on his difficult task. Not unnaturally his administration was unpopular with a certain group of Brahmins, and agitation, for which they were responsible, culminated four or five years ago in serious rioting, in the course of which a crowd of schoolboys and college students attacked the residence of the Minister. The situation was dealt with firmly and the trouble subsided, largely because the Maharaja, who has been a personal friend of Sir Mirza from his boyhood, gave

him his full support. (Sir Mirza had been chosen, when quite young, to work as a student with the Maharaja.) There had been tension between Hindu and Moslem, and the police had not been entirely reliable. The Chief Minister, in order to secure impartiality, has now appointed a British officer as chief of the force. All which shows that State governments have at times to face problems of much the same kind as those confronting the rulers of British India.

What the party of advanced reform now demand is control of the executive. There is, however, no political group in the country with a sufficiently strong backing to exercise such power.

It is, indeed, uncertain whether the reformed Legislative Council has the confidence of the people. Their wishes and aspirations are much more strongly reflected in the Representative Assembly, a consultative body that meets during the Birthday and Dussurah weeks, to discuss budgets and finance, to hear the government policy explained, to ask questions and present petitions and to give its views on proposed legislation. This assembly was constituted as far back as 1881 and in the course of half a century has gained experience, self-consciousness and prestige, and has, in fact, been an excellent school for a political training, so that it is a matter for surprise that it was not utilised as the basis for a closer association of the people with the work of government.

There is no State more loyal to the British con-

nection than Mysore. Still, as is so fashionable in many of the States, it regards paramountcy with mixed feelings. Its chief discontent is the subsidy. This is now £175,000, or 25 lakhs : till a few years ago it was a quarter of a million sterling. The Mysore government regards this as an unfair impost. Why should they pay so much more than anyone else for military protection simply because after Tippoo's defeat in 1799 the kingdom was restored to the despoiled Hindu dynasty? And over and above this Mysore pays more than three-quarters of a million sterling in sea customs. The whole of the subsidy, it is claimed, should be remitted before the initiation of the federal regime.

The question now is mainly academic, as in a federal government differential taxation among the units would be against federal principles. Unfortunately it is considered that the financial position will not for years permit of more than partial relief. This seems to be a contradiction in terms. Why should Mysore be penalised because federal finance is likely to need nursing at the outset?

The success of the great hydro-electric scheme on the Cauvery has greatly stimulated economic development. The State derives a very large revenue from its electrical department : also from royalties on the gold mined in Kolar by electric power. Nearly one and a half millions sterling is now produced. Great stretches of the countryside have been electrified, which affords opportunities for irrigating from wells and the introduction of cot-

tage industries. There is a rapidly expanding silk industry. Cotton spinning and weaving, stimulated by cheap electric power, are of growing importance. The huge Krishnaraja Sagara dam across the Cauvery feeds a canal irrigating about 100,000 acres, and impounds water for the Cauvery installation. Other big hydroelectric schemes are under consideration, and in the course of time the whole country will be electrified.

Mysore is unquestionably one of the most favoured countries in India. It is, with the possible exception of Travancore, the only State where something approaching a national government exists ; and where the population is sufficiently coherent to have any national feeling. It has as its hereditary ruler a statesman with over thirty years' administrative experience, in close touch with his people ; a ruler whose ideal is the happiness and prosperity of his State. If homogeneity of race, interest and ideals, in the bulk of the population, and the identity of the people with the government, are essential qualities in the normal unit of a federation, Mysore should be one of the best qualified of all the members of the future federation of India.

Shut off from southern India by the great barrier of the Western Ghats, Travancore, although drawn into the net of Brahminical culture, has lived a life of isolation, affected but little by the rise and fall of Hindu kingdoms in the Indian peninsula.

The country has a characteristic beauty of its own. The Ghauts, covered with dense primeval forests, throw out their spurs in many places to the coast. There is a narrow belt of lowlands along the sea which presents throughout an almost unbroken mass of coconut and areca palms. Along the seashore a continuous series of lagoons extends for over a hundred miles from Quilon to Cochin. Most of the trade of the country moves along this waterway.

Travancore is about the size of Wales. Much of it is primeval forest unfitted for human habitation. The population is over five millions : the density is very heavy, nearly two thousand to the square mile of cultivated land. Sixty-one per cent. of the people are Hindus : there are 1,600,000 Christians and 350,000 Moslems. The Christians are chiefly Romo-Syrian and Roman Catholics. There is a great deal of rivalry between the sects. The Syrian Christians date back to the third century. According to a well-known legend, St. Thomas the Martyr made the first converts.

A peculiar feature of the countryside is the absence of villages. Most of the people live in isolated homesteads consisting of tiled or thatched cottages : a field of tapioca with a patch of coconut palms and bananas ; the whole plot enclosed with a wall or fence. Motoring from Trivandrum to Cape Comorin, one gets the impression of a long-drawn scattered village.

On the high ranges of the Ghauts there are ex-



tensive tea estates, mostly British owned. At lower elevations rubber is grown. Pepper is another staple product. The earliest voyages of the British to Travancore were mainly in search of this commodity to season their diet of salt beef in the winter. The palmyra palm is largely cultivated for jaggery, from which sugar is made. Oil pressing and the weaving of coir mats from coconut fibre are subsidiary industries.

The ruling people are the Nayars, a military caste which owns a large proportion of the land. Caste restrictions are very stringent. Distance pollution is still strong and many of the outcasts pollute caste people at varying distances up to forty yards. As a meeting between members of the two classes within the prescribed distance involves ceremonial purification of the person polluted, outcasts are accordingly expected to keep out of pollution range, which involves, for instance, waiting at a respectful distance while Brahmins and the like cross a bridge. In the old days the law of the country allowed the military Nayar to cut off the head of the outcast who inadvertently polluted him.

Brahmin influence is strong but is less potent than formerly. The most exclusive of all the Brahmins in India, the Nambudiris, are found in Travancore. Ceremonial purity is stringently observed by the sect. Only recently a case was reported in the Press in which a Nambudiri girl was outcasted merely because in an involuntary impulse she put out her hand to prevent the collapse of a

heavy basket of fruit which a low-caste man was delivering in the household. The Nambudiris are the only people in Travancore who observe purdah. Only the eldest brother contracts a legal marriage with a Nambudiri woman. The younger brothers marry Nayar women morganatically. These super-Brahmins so far have shown little interest in Western education or Indian politics. According to repute they converted the Travancore people to Hinduism. This was missionary work : the Nambudiris had no national or military backing : their own Aryan forbears were a thousand miles away in the north : caste exclusiveness was the only means of maintaining a moral supremacy.

Despite the strictness of caste observance in Travancore, there is in many respects a wider freedom in the social life of the country than in the Hindu social system in India generally. This is due in large part to matriarchy, a system of inheritance through the sister's son, which naturally places women in a very strong position. The ruling house follows the practice. The Maharaja's marriage is consequently of little moment and the social position of his son is not of much greater importance than that of a commoner. His (the Maharaja's) father is in much the same case, a humble subject of the ruler. If the Maharaja has no sister or his sister dies childless he has to adopt a girl as his sister. This happened in the case of the last Maharaja, Rama Varma IV. Two girls were adopted, belonging of course to the ruling family. They

became in due course their Highnesses the Senior and Junior Maharani respectively. The elder produced daughters only : the Junior Maharani had a son, the present Maharaja. In accordance with custom, however, the Senior Maharani acted as regent during the Maharaja's minority.

The high degree of literacy among women in Travancore (17 per cent. against 3 per cent. in India generally) strengthens their position still further. Christianity, too, exerts an indirect influence in the same direction. So, too, does the absence of purdah. And, still more important, women are regarded politically as on a footing of equality with men both as regards the franchise and eligibility for election to local bodies and the legislature. It is a strange inconsistency that in a country where such progress has been made caste should still be so formidable. It is strong proof of its vitality.

The present Maharaja, the adopted nephew of his predecessor, assumed full powers in 1931. He was brought up with English tutors, and had an administrative training in the Mysore State. He has an attractive personality with a quiet charm of manner and an old-world courtesy which contrasts with his youthful appearance. He paid his first visit to England last year. He spent a lot of time studying economic questions, visited several large works and accepted an invitation to Broadcasting House, where the authorities stopped their programme and invited him to speak to India. I was

much impressed with the readiness with which he stepped forward and spoke a few words entirely suitable to the occasion. His life at the palace with his mother, H.H. the Junior Maharani, brother and sister, is simple and pleasant, resembling English family life. He is less strictly orthodox than his predecessor and adoptive uncle, for whom the sight of a European before breakfast involved ceremonial purification ; but, like the Maharaja of Mysore, he does not dine with Europeans.

Travancore politics are complicated by sectarian quarrels between different religious groups among the Christians and between Christians and Hindus. To ensure the impartiality of his administration the Maharaja lately employed a British officer of the Indian Civil Service as his Chief Minister. He has now appointed to the post a distinguished Mohammedan, Sir Muhammad Habibullah, once a member of the Viceroy's Council.

The advice and guidance of the Junior Maharani, a woman of strong personality and of marked ability, have been of the greatest value to the youthful ruler. The Maharaja has utilised the services as political adviser of a friend of the family, Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar, an able Brahmin lawyer and politician who served for five years on the Madras Executive Council.

The Maharaja employs several European officers, e.g. in the public works, in his army, and in the medical, educational, police and judicial services. For their benefit he maintains at State expense an

attractive little golf course. His Civil List is very small compared with other States.

As with women, so for the whole population, Travancore has the highest percentage of literacy in India, which to some extent has been responsible for the great progress made in the development of constitutional government, though doubtless the example of British India has been a contributing factor. The system is much the same as in Mysore. The Legislative Council with an elected majority passes the budget, legislation and resolutions ; it also discusses policy. There are reservations and safety valves, as in the British Indian system of dyarchy. As already observed, sectarian quarrels give the authorities a good deal of trouble, the chief difficulty of the government in this respect being to meet the attack on the ascendancy of the ruling Nayar oligarchy in the elective councils. The Nayars are barely one-fifth of the population, yet they have a majority of the seats, even though they are only 36 per cent. of the electorate. The Christians in disgust boycotted the last elections. With other communities they assert that the constituencies have been arranged so as to give preponderance to the Nayar landowner.

At one time a non-co-operative movement was threatened, but it is believed that the firm attitude of the Maharaja's government, which, supported by the Government of India, refused to listen to grievances pressed by methods incompatible with law and order, has had a steadying effect. Demo-

cracy has its complications in the States as in British India.

It is typical of Mr. Gandhi's methods that he should have chosen Travancore, a stronghold of caste, as the stage for his first massed attack on untouchability. The movement began several years ago with a campaign organised by untouchables with a view to securing the right of entry into Hindu temples. The Gandhi methods of civil disobedience and passive resistance were practised at several centres and led to serious rioting. Ultimately the government regained control of the situation. The effect has been to arouse the political conscience of Travancore against the anomaly of untouchability in a country claiming to be democratic, and legislation abolishing distance pollution and opening public wells and public places to untouchables is under consideration in the legislature. This should be an example to the rest of India. It will be interesting to watch the result of this experiment of dealing with snobbery through the police and magistracy.

The problem of economic development is of pressing urgency. Travancore cannot support her own population and huge quantities of grain have to be imported. She can, of course, pay for these imports with plantation products—copra, tea, rubber, pepper, etc. The plantation industries cannot, however, absorb the surplus population. The only means of raising the standard of living is to develop industries. The government are alive to their

responsibilities and are now taking a step in the right direction by initiating a big scheme of hydro-electric development. With cheap power made easily available everywhere there should be a possibility of village industries on a large scale. This would make it possible to avoid the factory system of the big towns and the social evils it involves.

Trade with Great Britain is considerable. Travancore has always had a preference for British goods, chiefly because of their quality. The boycott that has affected British trade in other parts of India has not extended to Travancore. There are several big British shipping firms in the ports of Alleppey, Quilon and Cochin, which handle most of the export trade. British co-operation in developing the country through commerce and the plantation industries is undoubtedly appreciated.

There are about six hundred Europeans in the State, mostly occupied in commerce and the plantation industries. Travancore needs British capital and technical skill in developing her industries, and in an atmosphere of goodwill Briton and Travancorean should be able in many directions to work together for their mutual benefit.

Cochin, adjoining Travancore on the north, with a great difference in area and population, reproduces very closely the conditions prevailing in the neighbouring State. It has about a fifth both of the area and population of Travancore. The ruling race, the Nayar, is the same : the ruling

family claim descent from the same royal house. The structure of society with the Nambudiris in the uppermost layer is identical. The matriarchal system governs inheritance. Political development and the characteristics of the people complete the parallel.

Cochin port merits a passing reference. The sandspit on which the old town stands has an opening about a quarter of a mile wide leading into a broad lagoon. The lagoon constitutes the new port. A couple of miles or so away on the opposite shore of the lagoon is Ernakulam, capital of the State. The British Residency is picturesquely situated on a small island between the capital and the port. It is a fine old Dutch building dating from the eighteenth century, heavily timbered with magnificent hardwoods. Now, apart from Marmugoa, a fine but little-frequented harbour in Portuguese Goa, there is no all-weather port on the west coast south of Bombay. The result is that the bulk of the heavy traffic of the south is diverted northwards to Madras, involving a much greater cost in freight for goods destined for European markets than if shipped from the nearest point on the western coast. Cochin has the necessary qualifications of such a port. British-owned territory is not, however, of adequate extent, and partnership with the State of Cochin was essential. Cochin agreed to come into the scheme. Travancore also agreed to take a third share. The three governments are dividing the expense and sharing the customs



equally. Already the trade of the port has reached nearly eleven millions sterling. Passenger steamers are beginning to call at the port, and one day it will rival Colombo. Most of the trade of the country south of Madras will ultimately gravitate towards Cochin by reason of the shortness of the railway route compared with that to the former port.

Docks are being built inside the lagoon. The south-west monsoon causes heavy siltation and dredging is a permanent necessity to keep the approach channel at a proper depth. There are difficult problems of jurisdiction, admiralty and civil, to be decided, since Cochin is strongly opposed to handing the port over to the control of the Government of India.

By reason of difference in race and geographical isolation neither Travancore nor Cochin has any particular association with the people of the Madras presidency in the south, although they have largely borrowed their politics and educational system from Madras.

VIII

THE MARATHAS

## PRINCIPAL MARATHA STATES

*Baroda* : Hindu. Maratha. *Dynastic name* : Gaekwar. H.H. Sir Sayaji Rao Gaekwar. 1875. *Area* : 8,135 sq. miles. *Population* : 2,500,000, mostly Gujarati Hindus. *Revenue* : about £1,750,000.

*Dewas (Senior)* : Hindu. Maratha. *Dynastic name* : Puar. Maharaja H.H. Sir Tukaji Rao Puar. 1898. *Area* : 446 sq. miles. *Population* : 77,000, mostly Hindus. *Revenue* : £75,000.

*Dewas (Junior)* : Hindu. Maratha. *Dynastic name* : Puar. H.H. Maharaja Malhar Rao Babasahib Puar. 1892. *Area* : 419 sq. miles. *Population* : 70,000. *Revenue* : £46,000.

*Dhar* : Hindu. Maratha. *Dynastic name* : Puar. H.H. Maharaja Anand Rao Puar. 1926. *Area* : 1,775 sq. miles. *Population* : 43,000, chiefly Hindus. *Revenue* : £125,000.

*Gwalior* : Hindu. Maratha. *Dynastic name* : Sindhia. H.H. Maharaja Jayaji Rao Sindhia. 1925. *Area* : 25,382 sq. miles. *Population* : 3,500,000: 84 per cent. Hindus; 6 per cent. Moslems; 7 per cent. Animists. *Revenue* : £1,800,000.

*Indore* : Hindu. Maratha. *Dynastic name* : Holkar. H.H. Maharaja Yeshwant Rao Holkar. *Area* : 9,519 sq. miles. *Population* : about 1,500,000: 91 per cent. Hindus; 8 per cent. Moslems. *Revenue* : £1,100,000.

*Kolhapur* : Hindu. Maratha. *Dynastic name* : Bhonsla. H.H. Sir Rajaram Chhatrapati. 1922. *Area* : 3,217 sq. miles. *Population* : about 1,000,000: 90 per cent. Hindus, chiefly Maratha. *Revenue* : about £900,000.

*Sangli* : Brahmin. Maratha. *Dynastic name* : Patwardhan. H.H. Sir Appa Sahib. 1903. *Area* : 1,112 sq. miles. *Population* : 258,000. *Revenue* : about £106,000.

CHAPTER VIII  
THE MARATHAS

**A** WONDERFUL panorama of mountain scenery meets the gaze of the traveller as the electric train climbs up the ridge of the Western Ghats between Bombay and Poona. The tortured crest line of the range stretches as far as the eye can reach, while broken crags, castellated rocks, resembling the bastions of some mighty fortress, straggling spurs and deep gullies strewn with boulders, crowd the lower slopes.

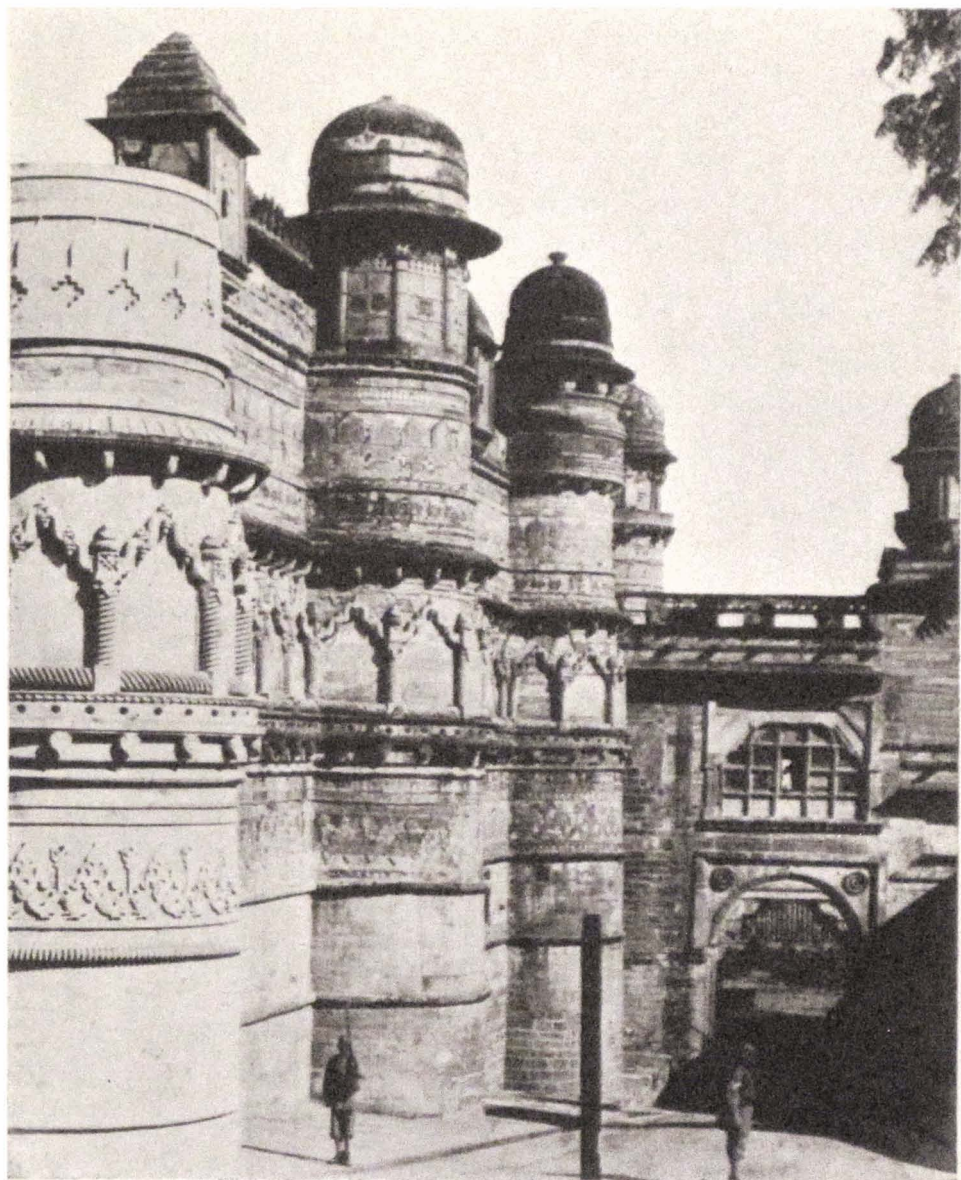
In this wild and inaccessible hill country are to be traced the beginnings of Maratha power. For centuries Maratha chieftains held small fiefs in the Ghats, owing a light allegiance to the Moslem kings of Bijiapur, one of the Deccan kingdoms. Rallying the hill tribesmen round his standard in the middle of the seventeenth century, Shivaji began his career of conquest against the Moguls.

At its inception the Maratha insurrection was a national Hindu movement of Sudra (low caste) peasantry under a great military leader. Shivaji founded a national State, and had he lived another ten years Maratha history might have been written

differently. On his death the Brahmins got control of the new State. The consequence was to break down the unity which had hitherto existed. The Maratha generals and high military officers, sprung mostly from the peasant class, aspired to the higher social position of the twiceborn Kshatriya, the second rank in the hierarchy of caste. The Brahmin rulers refused the concession probably with a view to keeping the generals under control. There were to be two castes only as before, the Brahmins and—at a great distance—the Sudras.

The new policy weakened the national spirit. The Brahmins played off one great leader against the other, in this way strengthening their own position. To keep the soldiery occupied they adopted a policy of distant conquest and plunder. The effect of this was to drive the Moslems of the south and the north into the arms of the British, as well as Hindu States like Travancore and finally the Rajputs. Baroda, mishandled and bullied by the Brahmin Peshwas, placed its destiny in British hands. Poona had given Britain her opportunity, and the Marathas lost the greater part of their conquests.

Still, much has been saved from the wreckage of their half-built empire. There are the two great States of Gwalior and Indore with the small States of Dhar and Dewas, senior and junior, in Central India : there is the big State of Baroda in the Bombay province of Gujarat ; and Kolhapur with the minute southern Maratha States in the Deccan.



[W. Taylor

THE MAN SINGH PALACE, GWALIOR



Fifty thousand square miles of territory are administered by Maratha rulers : their Rajput tributaries in Central India, Gujarat and Kathiawar hold an area of half as much again.

Yet, when it comes to counting heads, the Maratha element in all the States, with the exception of Kolhapur, is extraordinarily weak. In Gwalior there are only 14,000 Marathas : in the Maratha States of Central India, 16,000 : in Baroda, 12,000. On the other hand, there are nearly half a million in Kolhapur. The bulk of the Maratha people are in the Deccan. Bombay has 4,500,000 : the Berars 287,000 : Hyderabad 1,500,000. Mysore with 60,000 has more than the three great States of Baroda, Indore and Gwalior put together.

The reason is not far to seek. Military service outside their homes in the Deccan was not popular with the Maratha peasantry, and the great military leaders were compelled to raise mercenary armies. These were composed mainly of Arabs, Afghans, Abyssinians, and Mohammedans generally, with some Rajputs. Maratha Brahmins followed up the armies and organised the administration of the conquered territory. They are the backbone of Maratha government to this day.

The national spirit of the Maratha people is stronger in British India than in the States. The cult of Shivaji, the founder of Maratha nationalism, has of late years acquired a widespread popularity : combined with the revival of the worship of the



national deity of the Hindus, Ganpati, it has helped to awaken memories of Maratha glory. This is largely due to the political ambitions of the Maratha Brahmins which, dormant for half a century, have sprung into vigorous life within the last thirty or forty years. Their outstanding leader was Tilak, himself a Maratha Brahmin, a politician bitterly hostile to the British connection, who had a large following in southern India.

This national movement of the Marathas has found little, if any, encouragement in the States, except in Kolhapur, which was almost in the centre of the movement. The Brahmins again adopted the tactics of two hundred years earlier, and set themselves in opposition to the ruling Prince. Their hostility was due to the efforts of the Maharaja to resist Brahmin pretensions. Ascending the *gadi* in 1892, he found his State in the hands of an oligarchy of Brahmins and his big jagirdars or feudatories (several of them Brahmins) practically independent. His policy was to give the Maratha Sudra an opportunity for service. The effect of this was to rally the whole Brahmin hierarchy against him both in the State itself and in the Deccan outside. The attack was led by Tilak.

The Brahmins used their power to give or refuse the privilege of the Vedokta ceremony, or religious rites of the twiceborn. The performance of these rites by the Brahmin implied the tacit admission of the rank of Kshatriya in the family so privileged. The Brahmins refused the Vedokta to the Maharaja

and proclaimed to the world that the family was low-caste Sudra : that the great Shivaji himself, its ancestor, was also a Sudra. This despite the fact that the Maharaja of Udaipur, of bluest Rajput blood, had recognised Shivaji's family as a branch of his own, the Sesodia. The Maharaja refused to be intimidated and pressed on with his policy, which soon developed into an anti-Brahmin movement throughout the Deccan. The Brahmins saw their danger and suggested a compromise. They would recognise the ruling chief as a Kshatriya and perform the Vedokta for him, but the honour would be confined to him. His sons and daughters would remain Sudras. The Maharaja refused to accept the proposal. He appointed priests from the Marathas and continued the fight for non-Brahmin political equality till his death in 1922.

Efficient administration in the course of the last thirty years has brought about a not unwilling acceptance of Maratha rule in most States. After all, Maratha rule is Hindu rule. With a modern system comprising most of the administrative advantages of British India, a local bar, high courts, municipal government, opportunities of service to non-Marathas, and a liberal policy of education, the local people may very well be expected to identify themselves with their rulers. So far the principle of representative government has not been recognised, but in some States, e.g. Baroda and Indore, the people are to a certain extent

associated with the government in the framing of laws.

The generals who built up the great States of Baroda, Indore and Gwalior were men of outstanding ability and character. All had sprung from the small landowner class.

Madhaji Sindhia, who founded Gwalior, began his career in a minor appointment at the Poona Court. He was wounded at the fatal battle of Panipat in 1761. Thereafter he took advantage of the weakness of Poona to establish himself in Central India and the north. His policy of raising regular troops trained by French officers has been referred to in Chapter I. A rough and rugged personality, he was, if anything, a better diplomatist than a soldier. Like other Marathas, he recognised the social superiority of the blue-blooded Rajput and even as a conqueror appreciated a mark of favour in matters of etiquette from the Udaipur Court.

The foundations of the famous house of Indore were laid by Mulhar Rao Holkar. A soldier and a politician like Sindhia, he too took advantage of the disaster at Panipat to create a large semi-independent fief in Malwa. He died in 1765. His son had predeceased him : his grandson was insane—there seems to have been a streak of madness in the Holkars. His mother, Ahalya Bai, acted as regent on his behalf and on his death became the acknowledged ruler of the State. Her reign lasted for

thirty years till her death in 1795. This lady is regarded as one of the greatest of India's heroines. She kept her country free from invasion. She raised Indore from an insignificant village to a rich and prosperous city. Sympathy and consideration were shown to all classes of her subjects, and the Ahalya Bai era is still regarded as the golden age of Indore. The support of Madhaji Sindhia, who admired her fortitude and energy, was an important factor in the maintenance of her position. He had at the time unchallenged supremacy in Upper India.

The Holkar who fought Lord Lake in 1804 was an illegitimate son of Ahalya Bai's general, not a member of the ruling family. He finally drank himself to death. His mistress, Tulsi Bai, adopted an illegitimate son of another mistress of Holkar's, who succeeded to the *gadi* in 1818, the illegitimate son of an illegitimate father. Tulsi Bai with her Brahmin paramour ruled Indore for nearly ten years.

The founders of the Gaekwar family at Baroda for three generations were distinguished soldiers. On the death of the third of these, Damaji Gaekwar, there was a disputed succession. This enabled the Poona government to play off one claimant against the other. In the end, as already noted, the heavy-handedness of the Peshwa drove the rightful heir to seek British assistance, and Baroda by the end of the eighteenth century was lost to the Maratha confederacy.

A brief sketch of the four largest States, Gwalior, Indore, Baroda and Kolhapur, will help to show the importance of the Maratha element in the India of the Princes.

Of these Gwalior is by far the largest and most powerful. Despite the vast territories it forfeited as a consequence of defeat, it still has an area of 26,000 square miles and a population of 3,500,000.

Up to 1861 the Gwalior government had constant trouble with its armed forces. On one occasion in 1844 they assumed control and had to be broken up by a British force. The British Government thereupon imposed a limitation of armaments.

It took time to weld the incoherent elements in the State—Rajput Thakurs, Maratha Sirdars, Moslems and Hindu peasantry—into some semblance of unity. The only possible method was a strong centralised government. This has been the policy from 1860 onwards, and Gwalior is now one of the best administered States in India. This is largely due to the genius of the late Maharaja, whose untimely death in 1925 was a great loss both to Gwalior and India generally. Always a loyal supporter of the British Crown, he played a fine part in the Great War. With a budget that would turn a post-War finance minister green with envy he built up a great trust fund for the economic development of his country. He welded his army into an efficient military instrument : it is one of the strongest and best disciplined in all the States. All arms are represented, since the British Government years ago

so far relaxed their policy as to allow the Maharaja to maintain a pack battery of artillery equipped with modern guns. Incidentally the Maharaja's admiration of the royal family was such that he named his son and daughter "George" and "Mary."

Crowning a huge isolated rock, the historic fort of Gwalior, as if brooding over the fate of forgotten empires, frowns majestically over Sindhia's modern capital, straggling round its base. It is a symbol of power that appeals to Maratha pride: more strongly still its former owners, the Rajputs, regret the loss of "the pearl in the necklace of the castles of Hind."

The young Maharaja, now about seventeen years of age, has been very carefully brought up by British tutors. He likes hockey and tennis and sports generally, and obviously does not wish to be grown up too soon and assume the responsibilities of government. It is said that his mother cooks his food for him, to obviate all risk of his being poisoned. His sister, a very fine girl and keen on sport, died tragically a short time ago as the result of an accident when the car she was driving skidded and turned over.<sup>1</sup>

Surrounded by officers who stood high in his father's counsels, the Maharaja should begin his rule under favourable auspices. Meanwhile a Council of Regency in which Brahmins, Marathas and Moslems work together (the late Maharaja's

<sup>1</sup> See p. 60.

nominees for the most part) under the presidency of H.H. the Junior Maharani is efficiently administering the State.

The Holkars of Indore had the same difficulty as in Gwalior, arising from the lack of cohesion in the various elements composing the State. The last two Maharajas abdicated. Of these, the first retired in 1903. He had on occasions been known to handle high financiers more roughly than circumstances justified. Subject to mental aberrations, he still had a sense of humour. The well-known conflict between Lord Curzon and his Commander-in-Chief, Lord Kitchener, two years later gave him his opportunity. One of the two had to be sacrificed : the Conservative Government decided to recall Lord Curzon. At Bombay the retiring Viceroy received a telegram from the ex-Maharaja, "I deposed greet you deposed," an expressive summary of the position. Twenty years later his son sacrificed his *gadi* for the sake of a Moslem dancing-girl. He was succeeded by his son, still a minor. The new Maharaja spent three years in England at a public school, and later he went for three years to Oxford. He attended the Round Table Conference, where, like the Maharaja of Rewa, he was distinguished by the independence of his views. It is believed that he was inclined to favour a confederation of States as a first step towards a federal system in India. In appearance he is slim, with a complexion like an Italian or

Spaniard. The Maharani is very much the type of the modern English public-school girl, a good tennis player, and very up-to-date in fashions of dress. Their Highnesses have built a new palace in Indore, resembling a modern English country house equipped with all the latest conveniences—electric kitchens, electric heating, a cocktail bar, and so forth.

The administration is in the hands of an Executive Council with a Prime Minister. An attempt has been made to identify the people with legislation by means of a committee with elected members representing various interests, e.g. the bar, land-owners, industrial organisations. The committee was constituted in 1925. Its object is to bring the laws of the country more or less into line with the legal system of British India. The State is prosperous and economically strong.

Baroda has been in alliance with the British Government for a century and a half. The State has paid heavily in cessions of territory for the benefit of military protection, having handed over to the British an area of about 4,000 square miles, almost a third of its original territory. It is obvious that in recent years, with the heavy contribution in sea customs added to the revenues from the ceded territories, Baroda has paid a far larger proportion than is equitably due from it for its share in the cost of military defence. And be it observed that the British never defeated Baroda in the field. Over



and above all this the Gaekwar in 1820 lost his position as suzerain of his numerous tributaries in Kathiawar, and in the hilly country east of Baroda, who formerly owed allegiance to the Baroda ruler. The tribute is, of course, paid. That is guaranteed by the British Government. But most of the prestige has gone. The deprivation was inevitable in the circumstances of the time, and the Baroda government was itself to blame for those circumstances. But it is hardly surprising that his Highness feels a sense of grievance. He would naturally wish to be reinvested with the suzerainty over his former feudatories. This is not an easy problem for many reasons, one of which is the old feud between Rajput and Maratha.

The truth is that Baroda is paying for the inefficiency of its government for the half-century following the death of Damaji Gaekwar. Competent and energetic rule at that time might well have given Baroda the whole of the Mogul kingdom of Gujarat, including Kathiawar.

In 1873 the British Government deposed the Gaekwar, Mulhar Rao, for gross misrule. The widow of his predecessor, Khandi Rao, whose administration had been of a commendable nature, was allowed to adopt a successor to the *gadi*. In 1875 she selected the present Maharaja, then a boy of twelve years of age. The new ruler was very carefully educated and trained for his great responsibilities by British tutors.

His Highness, who was invested with full ruling

powers in 1881, has successfully governed Baroda for over half a century. The State is unquestionably one of the best administered in India. Primary education is free and, in theory at least, compulsory. Infant marriage was abolished years ago, though how far the law is effective it would be difficult to say. We were told when visiting Baroda a couple of years ago that the fines imposed for the infringement of the law paid for the nursing establishment at the big headquarters hospital. The percentage of educated untouchables is the highest in India. Government grants are withdrawn from schools or villages if untouchables are not admitted to the privileges of the caste people in the school classes, the use of wells, temples, etc.

An effort has been made to associate the people with the administration. The policy of the Gaekwar's government is to build up from the village *panchayat* as the foundation; from the *panchayat* to the local boards and so to the Legislative Council for making laws and regulations, which contains an elective element. The system should ensure steady progress.

There is a strong Executive Council with an able Brahmin, Sir Krishnama Chari, as chief minister. He belongs to the British service.

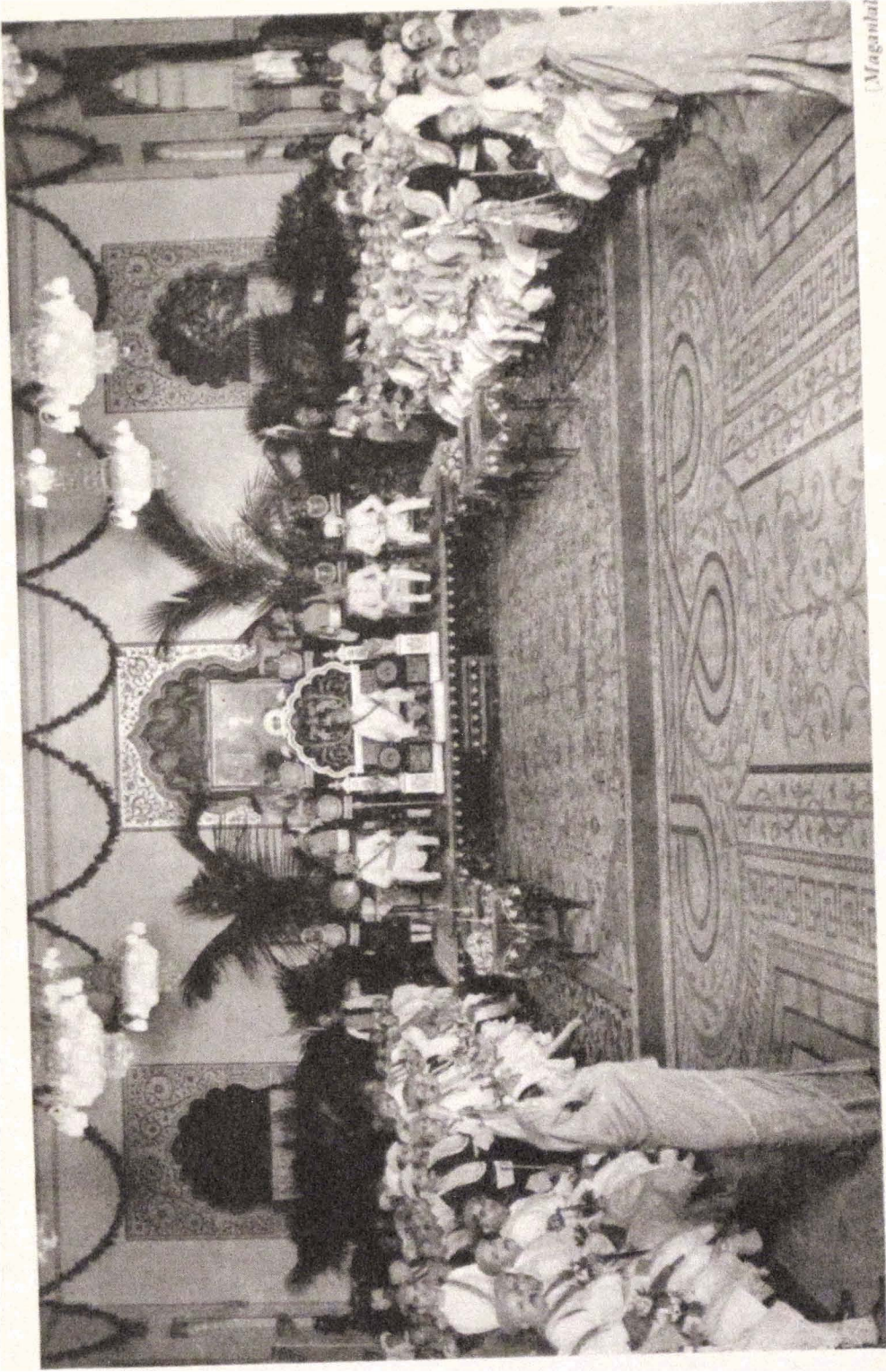
Structurally Baroda is unsatisfactory. Made up as it is of several patches of territory in Gujarat and Kathiawar, it lacks geographical cohesion. It splits up the Gujarat people. The Gujaratis in

the State are not likely to identify themselves completely with the Maratha government so long as this lasts. The Gujarati is not a fighting man, but makes up for the lack of virile qualities by a marked capacity for intrigue and political agitation. This agitation has had its reactions in Baroda, though there has been no serious challenge to the Gaekwar's rule. There have been boycotts of government schools and colleges and student strikes, but the attack was against the British rather than the Baroda government. It has been suggested by the Indian States Committee of 1932 that at least a partial retrocession of territory to the Gaekwar might be considered. But the Gaekwar, as already noted, has his political ambitions, and whether he would feel disposed to throw in the lot of Baroda with the political Gujarati is a doubtful point.

Baroda is a spacious city with fine public buildings, including a magnificent hospital, high court and a great secretariat building.

Till quite recently it was the Gaekwar's custom to invite the British Resident at his court to take part in the Dussurah procession with him. The two, the Baroda ruler and the British representative, used to ride side by side on elephants. This courtesy on his Highness's part emphasised the unity of interest between the Empire and its "favourite son," an oriental title conferred many years ago on the Gaekwar by the Queen Empress.

The Gaekwar may be described as the doyen of



[Magambal]

A DURBAR HELD BY H.H. THE GAEKWAR OF BARODA

The figures in the foreground are nautch girls



the Indian Princes, and one of India's elder statesmen. With a quiet charm of manner, he is a very attractive friend. His broad views on life and its problems are reflected in the enlightened and progressive policy of his administration. A loyal supporter of the Empire, he nevertheless feels that he has not always been treated as a "favourite son" in matters where imperial and provincial interests have clashed with those of his State, e.g. in the policy regarding opium, salt, sea-ports, railway jurisdiction and military defence. Towards Indian politics his attitude is conservative, though he would support proposals for a progressive constitution in India, buttressed with adequate safeguards. He has been a great traveller and has visited America, Japan and Europe, where he frequently spends the summer, largely for reasons of health.

A keen student, he generally has European or American scientists at his capital in the educational service of the State, whose society he cultivates peripatetically, to the improvement of his own knowledge. Realising the misery and suffering caused by alcoholic excess in some of the princely families of India, he sets a good example by abjuring alcohol. His four sons were all educated in Europe or America: one was a cricket blue at Oxford. Three of them have died. The heir is a grandson, also partly educated in England. The Maharani, a lady of great personal charm, usually accompanies his Highness to Europe. Her daughter (the Gaekwar was twice married) is the Princess

Indira, a beautiful and attractive girl, who, to escape a great Prince (the Maharaja Sindhia) much older than herself, to whom she had been betrothed by her parents, contracted a runaway marriage with the Maharaj Kumar of Cooch Bihar. He afterwards succeeded to the *gadi* and died in 1922. The Maharani of Cooch Bihar is well known in London and in hunting circles in the shires.

The only Maratha State that can claim to be called national is Kolhapur. About half as large as Yorkshire, it has a population of nearly a million, of whom about half are Marathas. It lies partly in the Ghauts and partly on the Deccan tableland. In its early days the influence of the ruler extended to the seaboard, and at times his subjects indulged in piratical enterprise. The first treaty in 1766 with the State had as its object the suppression of these depredations.

A third of the State is in the hands of jagirdars or feudatories, of which there are nine. They were originally great officers of State, and, as in the newer States, they were given assignments of land for the maintenance of troops. Constant disputes between the Raja and these people led to the interposition of a British guarantee. Later there was trouble with the State troops, most of whom were hereditary guards of the forts. These hereditary posts were abolished, which led to an insurrection. A large body of British troops was necessary

to suppress it. Thereafter the influence of the Residency was supreme for nearly half a century.

The late Maharaja was invested with full powers in 1892. He had been, like the Maharaja of Mysore, brought up by Sir Stuart Fraser, and was a fine sportsman, a lover of horse and hound, and a strong and forceful personality with plenty of moral courage. His policy and his conflict with the Brahmins have been described earlier in this chapter. He strongly opposed the seditious movement inaugurated by Tilak in the Deccan, and the assistance he gave to the British Government in dealing with it in 1909 was of great value. Indeed, his loyalty exposed him to virulent attack in the extremist press. In the Great War his influence was much appreciated. During the siege of Kut, for example, when the garrison ran short of food and the Maratha sepoys had scruples about eating horse-flesh, the Maharaja volunteered to go by aeroplane to Kut and to talk to the men. This proved impossible, but he sent a strongly worded appeal, which achieved its object, and helped to prolong the resistance.

The Maharaja will long be remembered among the Marathas of the Deccan for his efforts to promote their moral and material progress. He identified himself closely with the movement to alleviate the lot of the outcast. His influence among the Marathas generally was very great, as the following episode shows. It had been arranged that the Prince of Wales was, during his



visit in 1922, to unveil in Poona a statue of Shivaji, the founder of the Maratha confederacy. The Congress Brahmins were determined to stage an anti-British demonstration similar to that brought about in Bombay on the day the Prince landed in India, which led up to ferocious rioting in which several hundred people were killed. The Maharaja, who was largely responsible for the Shivaji celebrations, heard of the plot, and arranged a counter-demonstration of Marathas from the villages in the neighbourhood who, led by their patels, or head-men, swarmed in their thousands into Poona, and overawed the Brahmins.

While the Maharaja desired to associate his people with the administration, he felt that this must be by a gradual process of building up from the village council. Developments were, however, hampered by the fact that most of the hereditary village offices were in Brahmin hands, and the Maharaja was not able to carry his policy very far. The great improvement in the administration induced the British Government to relax Residency supervision over the relations between the Maharaja and his feudatories.

The loss of this forceful personality by premature death in 1922 was a heavy blow to the State and to Maratha interests generally. His son, who succeeded him, received part of his education in England. He is carrying on his father's policy as regards his attitude towards the Brahmins. He is keen on racing and field sports.

His sister now lives with him and helps him in the administration. She is an able woman and he places great value on her advice. She is a keen rider, and is frequently seen in the hunting field. The lady is the wife of the Maharaja of Dewas (senior), a Maratha State of Central India, but left him many years ago. He has subsequently retired to Pondicherry.

Though the Kolhapur family cannot claim the political leadership of the Maratha people, Kolhapur is still regarded as the national centre by the Marathas of the Deccan, and a strong and able ruler will always exercise considerable influence beyond his frontiers.

Pride in a great past should unite the Marathas both of the States and outside. No other people have such a strong cement of tradition and achievement. And over and above this they still have their old martial qualities, as the Great War proved. But to carry their full weight in the new India there must be unity and leadership. Does the key to this lie in Brahmin hands ?



**IX**

**HYDERABAD**

## HYDERABAD

Moslem. Traces descent to Abu Bakr, first Khalifa. *Dynastic name*: Asafjahi. Nizam H.E.H. Sir Osman Ali Khan. 1911. *Area*: 82,000 sq. miles. *Population*: about 13,500,000, some 12,500,000 Hindus. *Revenue*: about £7,000,000.

## CHAPTER IX

### HYDERABAD

**F**LUNG almost completely across the Indian peninsula, the great State of Hyderabad holds a strategic position of the first importance, both from the political and from the military point of view. In an emergency it could practically isolate the predominantly Hindu south from the north, where Moslem influence and traditions of rule are at their strongest. Well governed, conscious of herself, her military strength developed, her prestige untarnished, she might play in a federal India a part not unworthy of the best traditions of Islam in the Deccan.

The country is a series of vast rolling uplands with an average elevation of 1,200 feet above sea-level. Broken hill masses and fantastic boulders diversify the landscape. Two of the mightiest rivers of the Deccan, the Godavari and the Kistnah, traverse part of the State. In the summer rains hundreds of miles of the country become a prairie with grass often a couple of feet high. In these prairies were bred the horses for which Hyderabad was famous a century and a half ago, when huge

bodies of irregular cavalry were the predominant element in the armies both of the Marathas and their Moslem rivals. Unfortunately in this mechanical age the horse has almost disappeared from the countryside. In its place motor-buses enveloped in clouds of dust carry the villager and townsman about their business.

Relics of the past are met with throughout the country. On the east are the temples and palaces of the Hindu kingdom of Warangal destroyed five or six centuries ago by the Moslems. Ancient forts suspended precariously on crags and scarped cliffs are seen everywhere. Golconda, on the outskirts of Hyderabad city, once famous as a mart for diamonds, has one of the most interesting types. Among the most wonderful strongholds in the world is the fort of Daulatabad on the extreme west. Cut out of a huge isolated rock, it is scarped artificially to a great height. Its summit, nearly a thousand feet above the surrounding country, is reached by a succession of corridors drilled in the solid rock. On the crest a colossal gun, now dismantled, once frowned over the countryside. One feels that only a cohort of giants could have mounted it in its lofty eyrie. A legend assigns the honour of the achievement to an Italian engineer who was put to death immediately afterwards as a military precaution lest he might betray the secrets of the fortress to an enemy. There is a tragic beauty in the deserted castle and palaces of Bidar, once the capital of the first Moslem kingdom in the south.

The rock temples and monasteries of Ellora and Ajanta stand in the front rank of Indian achievements in architecture. In both places the scheme comprises domed halls, long corridors, monks' cells and inner shrines, with spacious porticoes adorned at Ellora with elephants and columns all cut from the solid rock. At Ajanta the walls and ceilings are covered with wonderful frescoes dating from the fifth century, though much of the construction is earlier. The main inspiration is Buddhist. The Archæological Department of the Nizam's government has made these splendid relics the objects of its special care. Needless to say, the department had not come into existence when, according to a well-known story, a zealous Moslem official white-washed the frescoes over in preparation for a visit from the then Viceroy, Lord Curzon.

The people, who number thirteen and a half millions, are almost entirely Hindu. Though they are the dominant community, the Moslems number only a little over a million. Three great Hindu races of the south converge in the Nizam's dominions, the Telegu, Maratha and Kanarese. The Hyderabad frontier severs these peoples from their kinsmen in British India, which has to some extent made it easier for the Moslems to maintain their supremacy, though of the three races, one only, the Marathas, numbering a million and a half, has any pretensions to martial qualities. The bulk of the Hindus are a patient, industrious peasantry, content if left to till their lands in



peace and allowed to enjoy a modest share of the produce.

The Moslem element in the State is a mixture of diverse races—Afghans, Persians, Arabs, Abyssinians, Turks, Moguls, mostly fighting men from the north recruited by the Moslem kings for their armies. In fact, the Moslems have been for more than five centuries a military oligarchy superimposed on a client population of a different religious and ethnographical texture, which outnumbered them by ten to one. They have never been absorbed and are separated from the Hindus to-day as rigidly as they were when they first conquered the south. The great military leaders were given assignments of land, which they held on a quasi-feudal tenure, keeping up for military service a certain quota of Moslem retainers.

The Moslems never colonised, and there is practically no Moslem peasantry. This is undoubtedly a source of weakness. Rural life would have prevented the physical degeneration which is reducing the military value of the town-bred Deccani Mohammedan. To-day the lower orders of the Moslem community find employment mainly in the army, police, the subordinate ranks of the civil service and the households of the great nobles. A certain proportion are shopkeepers and artisans.

Untouchables or outcasts number a couple of millions or so. Rejected with scorn by the caste Hindus, they might have become staunch allies of the Moslem conquerors had the latter thought it

worth while to proselytise. Tippoo, Sultan of Mysore, conferred "the honour of Islam" on the outcasts of Malabar. Their descendants to-day are a turbulent crowd, fanatical supporters of the religion of the Prophet. Many Moslems regret the absence of such an element in Hyderabad. It would have strengthened the panoply of Islam in the south.

The great personality of Asaf Jah, the first Nizam, dominates the stage when Hyderabad, early in the eighteenth century, emerges into history with an identity of its own. His was the most outstanding genius of his contemporaries in India. But for his military prowess and skill in diplomacy there is little doubt, as has been said, that the rising tide of Maratha nationalism would have submerged Islam in the south. This would almost inevitably have been followed by a great Hindu empire from the Vindhya to Cape Comorin. Had this happened, the British rise to power in India would have developed with less rapidity.

With the Marathas Asaf Jah played a double game, promoting old dissensions, setting one chief against the other, yet keeping on terms with the central authority, the Peshwa at Poona, so that he might, if circumstances dictated, use the Marathas against Delhi. On one occasion when trapped by the Peshwa he gave to the latter the Delhi province of Malwa, which was not his to give, a characteristic method of politicians in all ages.

His dominions were of immense extent, comprising the greater part of southern India. The boundaries

were ill defined. On the south they included most of the Madras presidency. His deputy or feudal subordinate, the Nawab of Arcot, ruled the Carnatic : there was a chain of Moslem fiefs, Cuddapah and Kurnool, etc., to the Mysore frontier ; Mysore itself was in theory his tributary. On the west his territory extended almost to Poona : on the east to the sea. This region, the Northern Circars, stretching 500 miles along the Bay of Bengal, was mainly in the hands of Hindu feudatories like the Rajput Rajas of Vizianagram, Bobbili, Jaipur, etc., who paid tribute to Hyderabad.

Asaf Jah died in 1748. A year earlier Madras had been captured by the French. The governor of Fort St. David entreated the Nizam to intervene and compel the French to restore the city to its rightful owner. Asaf Jah received the petition favourably and sent peremptory orders to the Nawab of Arcot to punish the French and restore Madras to the subjects of the English King. The Nawab in compliance with these orders sent a large force to Madras. It was annihilated by a tiny French army.

Half a century later a change had come over the scene. The once all-powerful Nizam had lost nearly half his territory to the suppliants of his predecessor, now his allies ; they had imposed upon him an overwhelming military force which made their influence supreme in Hyderabad. This was the price of protection from the Marathas.

Asaf Jah left no one able to fill his place in the political scheme of the south. Wars of succession

weakened the fibre of the government and led to what was really a French dictatorship in Hyderabad under de Bussy for several years from 1751. How the British ousted the French has been related.

By Clause 15 of the Treaty of 1800 the British Government pledged itself to have no manner of concern with any of the Nizam's children, relatives, subjects or servants, in respect of whom it declared the Nizam's authority absolute. It was soon found impossible to maintain this pledge. British military policy necessitated complete harmony between the Residency and the palace. It was clear almost at the outset that the Nizam and his entourage were anything but friendly. The first step was to put pressure on his Highness to maintain in power a minister of whom the British approved. Later the minister and the Resident in conjunction proceeded to raise a large irregular force later known as the Hyderabad contingent. The force was placed under British officers who were appointed by the Resident, and it soon became for all practical purposes a new subsidiary force. This policy was to a great extent justified by the hopeless chaos prevailing throughout the Nizam's dominions for the first three decades of the nineteenth century. The country was overrun by disbanded mercenaries, Arabs, Pathans, Rohillas. The Hindu feudatories, of whom there were several of importance, were everywhere in revolt.

The action taken by the Resident was based on Article 12 of the Treaty already quoted. By it

the Nizam was bound to provide nine thousand horse and six thousand foot to support the British subsidiary force stationed at his capital in the event of war. That force, as already mentioned, was ten thousand strong. The troops the Nizam was pledged to maintain did not exist. They were urgently required to restore order : the Nizam's government unaided were unable to fulfil their obligation : therefore the British must intervene and raise the troops, even if this meant straining the terms of the treaty. That was the logic of the policy.

The necessary finance had to be provided by the Nizam's government. There was no really adequate control of expenditure and staffs were often on an absurdly lavish scale. The consequence of all this was a chronic state of bankruptcy of the Nizam's government. In the end the arrears were so heavy that the Indian Government insisted on an assignment of territory as security for payment. The Berars, richest of the Nizam's provinces, was taken over in 1853 for the purpose. Even with this, the arrears amounted to eleven millions of rupees after the Mutiny. They were cancelled in recognition of the Nizam's services, and it was agreed that the surplus of the Berars revenue, after meeting the cost of the Contingent, should be paid over to the Hyderabad government.

The province was, it should be noted, administered on behalf of the Nizam by the British Resident. The calculation of the amount of the annual surplus led to constant friction between

the Nizam's government and the Residency. The former criticised the administration as unnecessarily expensive: the Residency insisted that British standards must be maintained. Finally, in 1902, Lord Curzon induced the then Nizam to lease the Berars in perpetuity on payment of a quit-rent of twenty-five lakhs of rupees. He agreed with the greatest reluctance, and only on the assurance that no British Government would ever dream of restoring the Berars to Hyderabad after half a century of British rule. The Contingent was absorbed into the Indian Army.

Much of the bitterness aroused by the heavy-handed methods of the paramount power died down in the next twenty years. But the palace could not forget its lost province, and in 1925 the present Nizam attempted to reopen the whole question. In the first stage of the diplomatic contest that followed he was told that a matter, once settled by the Imperial Government, could not be agitated afresh. He met this by challenging the right of the Crown to settle unilaterally what was really an affair of internal policy. Hyderabad had only ceded to the British Government control of her foreign relations: as regards internal policies the Crown and the State were on an equal footing. It was implied further that undue pressure had been brought to bear on his predecessor to enforce his agreement.

This provoked a definite assertion of the prerogative, with the additional argument that the late

Nizam had of his own freewill concluded a treaty which his son could not now challenge. At this point we may well compare the relative positions of the British and the Nizam in 1747 and 1925. The suppliants of the eighteenth century had become the dictators of the twentieth.

So ended a long-drawn controversy. It would serve no useful purpose at this stage to examine in detail the merits of British policy in connection with the Berars. This much may be said, that Englishmen looking down the vista of years will not find it easy to condone the straining of a clause of the Treaty of 1800 in order to justify the raising of a large force, British in all but name but paid for by the Nizam, which practically doubled the subsidiary force and imposed such a heavy financial burden on the State that its budget was thrown out of equilibrium for seventy or eighty years.

Supreme military predominance rendered other acts of paramountcy inevitable. As already observed, the situation would have been impossible with a minister hostile to the British. The Residency was in consequence forced to insist on the appointment of a minister on whom the British Government could rely. From this a convention was developed in the next fifty years in accordance with which the Nizam was expected to intimate to the Residency any changes he proposed to make in the ministry. Supported by the Residency with irresistible military power behind it, the minister was able to carry out his policy unopposed.

Despite British influence, the administration was appallingly bad. Finance was hopelessly muddled. The countryside for half a century was dominated by Arabs and Rohillas, mostly disbanded mercenaries from the Maratha and Pindari armies. At one period the Arabs practically overshadowed the government. They held most of the important forts, including Golconda : they had their own law courts : their own officers, and were to all intents and purposes a military republic superimposed on the Hyderabad administration. The big bankers employed armed contingents of these marauders to coerce their debtors : the farmers of the revenue utilised their services in a similar manner. They served in the Nizam's armies. In fact, there was reason to believe that the Nizam tacitly supported the Arabs as a counterpoise to the minister. This was the gravamen of the indictment of the Governor-General in 1851 when he told the Nizam that the Arab soldiery were his masters and not his servants. What, one is tempted to ask, was the use of the Contingent if it was not allowed to keep the Arabs, of whom there were at this time about eight thousand in the Nizam's dominions, in order ?

Sir Salar Jang became minister in 1853 and remained in office till his death thirty years later. He was one of the greatest administrators in India of modern times. Under his regime Hyderabad discarded much of the old-fashioned, outworn policies of past ages and emerged into a new era.



The strong hand replaced a paralysed administration. An efficient judicial system was introduced : a police force organised : the revenue system was completely reformed. Perhaps his greatest achievement was keeping Hyderabad loyal during the Mutiny. During that crisis of British rule the great Moslem State acted as a buffer between north and south, and in the south its active support did more than anything else to maintain tranquillity. Had Hyderabad joined the movement practically every Moslem in India would have followed the Nizam's lead. A despairing telegram from the Bombay government, " If the Nizam goes all is lost," reflects the feeling of the time. This telegram, by the way, has been frequently quoted by the Indian Press in late years as an example of what the British owe to the Nizam, with the suggestion that they had repaid him with ingratitude.

How explosive the situation was in Hyderabad at the time is shown by the fact that a *jehad*, or holy war, was declared in Hyderabad city : the green flag was raised and a fanatical mob attacked the Residency. It was beaten off with the assistance of the minister. The Arabs kept aloof, probably because they had too much to lose.

Feeling in the city was very anti-British. Early in 1859 an Afghan fanatic attempted to murder the Resident as, arm-in-arm with Sir Salar Jang, he was leaving a Durbar at the palace. A shot was fired at close quarters, but missed : the would-be murderer then rushed forward with his sword, but

was cut down promptly by the minister's retinue. The Nizam's household troops escorted the Resident through the bazars, the roofs of which were crowded with spectators, most of whom were obviously in sympathy with the "witness"<sup>1</sup> for Islam.

After the Mutiny Sir Salar Jang grasped the Arab nettle. The Arabs were practically in control of the city and the State generally. The minister abolished their prisons: took over their forts and deprived them of their private jurisdiction. The British authorities assisted by stopping the influx of Arabs from the Hadramaut. Hyderabad was no longer the Arab el Dorado.

The financial position deteriorated after Sir Salar Jang's death in 1883. This was largely due to the absence of a Civil List and of due control of the palace expenditure. To avert bankruptcy Lord Curzon intervened in 1902 and strongly advised the Nizam to appoint a British finance minister and to fix a definite sum for his private expenses. The advice was accepted: the Civil List was settled at fifty lakhs of rupees, and Sir Casson Walker, a Punjab civilian, appointed minister. The policy was eminently successful and in a few years the deficit was replaced by a surplus; financial anxieties disappeared. At the same time the Nizam appointed several British officers to other departments, police, public works, medical and revenue.

His Highness Mahbub Ali died in 1911, universally regretted. In status the first gentleman in

<sup>1</sup> "Shahid," literally "a witness," also means "a martyr" in the Arabic.

India, he undoubtedly filled the rôle. He was generous to a fault: his hospitality was unbounded: he was popular with his nobles and his subjects, both Hindu and Moslem, and with the British officers of the big cantonment of Secunderabad. An idea of his profusion may be formed from the fact that, after his death, his valet, a Baghdadi Armenian, bought a large estate in Devon and sent his sons to an English public school. The British Empire had no more loyal friend. The last twenty years of his reign constitute a brilliant epoch in the social life of the capital.

An instance of his magnificence is worth recording. The Nizam was visiting the house of his Commander-in-Chief, Sir Afsar ul Mulk. The latter's small son in a fit of gaucherie was rude to his father's princely guest. Sir Afsar, shocked at the sacrilege, was ready to slay the offender. The Nizam intervened. "It is the first time in my life," he said, "that anyone has been rude to me. I appreciate it as a moral tonic, and to show my appreciation I hereby confer a *mansab* (pension) of £100 a year for life on your little son." The pension is still drawn.

Sir Salar Jang subscribed largely towards the cost of the British Officers' Club at Secunderabad on condition that a certain number of nobles and high officers of the State should be admitted as members. This has helped to bring British and Indians into intimate relations and promoted friendship and goodwill. There are few places in

India where the two races are on better terms.

Hyderabad, the capital of the State, with the adjacent British cantonment, has a population of nearly half a million. There are many fine public buildings in the Indo-Saracenic style which impress on the city the stamp of its Mogul associations. The suburbs extend to a radius of four or five miles from the city. Here are situated the residences of officials and military officers of the State and the palaces of the great nobles. Some of the palaces are in the heart of the bazar and are almost small towns in themselves. The Arab swashbuckler, armed to the teeth, is less frequently met in the bazars than in the old days, but regulations still require a pass from the Residency before Europeans visit the city.

Practically the whole of the great Moslem aristocracy live in Hyderabad in preference to their estates in the districts. Most of them have received a Western education : many of the young scions of the leading families have been sent to English public schools or universities. You will meet Cambridge men with an Oxford accent who will converse gracefully on philosophy and religion : men from either university whose ethics are singularly innocent of Aristotle : engineers who have gained the highest academic distinctions in England. Brahmin lawyers and Moslem barristers add variety to the social mosaic. And there are wealthy bankers who would give almost anything for an English knighthood : one offered me a

hundred thousand pounds, to be utilised in charity, for a baronetcy—provided the title did not descend to his eldest son, whom he hated !

The older school with its stately manners is dying out. It is still found in great gentlemen like Sir Kishan Pershad, the first noble in the State though a Hindu, Nawab Fakhr ul Mulk and a few others. Sir Kishan Pershad, at the moment President of the Executive Council, has married ladies belonging to the Hindu and Moslem communities, a domestic policy which one imagines might complicate family life. The offspring of the Moslem wives remain Moslem. Sir Kishan still keeps up the old-time habit of scattering largesse when he drives to the Council Chamber. Like several other of the great nobles he is well known for the lavish dinner parties he gives to his European friends.

Many of the noble families trace their ancestry to the pre-Mogul Moslem kingdoms : others came with Asaf Jah to the Deccan. Their tenure was and is semi-feudal : most of them have their own police : their own troops : their own law courts : some of them their private bands. One old friend of mine kept his band playing the whole night when he was ill, because he woke when it stopped. Another of my friends, an old Etonian, liked his musical performers to play the Eton Boating Song to an oriental setting for long stretches at a time.

Intrigue is in the air at Hyderabad, a vigorous survival from Mogul, and still earlier, times. It is

with some people almost a pastime. Often the methods are clumsy and easily seen through : on the other hand, there is frequently a delicacy of touch, a finesse worthy of the trained and cultured brain behind it, the whole constituting a drama very interesting to watch as it unfolds.

The persistence of ancient traditions is illustrated by a regulation of the Ecclesiastical Department, which prohibits the destruction of the pages of any official law-court records, or newspapers, in which the sacred name of the prophet Mohammed occurs. As this name is commonly borne by members of the public the work involved when such records are destroyed in the ordinary course is heavy. A special staff is appointed for the purpose. Wire receptacles are placed in the streets in which people are invited to place sheets of newspapers where the name occurs. Islam, once the State religion of nearly the whole of India under the Moguls, still retains much of its old influence as the State religion of Hyderabad.

The honours bestowed by the Nizam are greatly valued by his subjects. These again are Mogul survivals. The highest is "Jah," usually reserved for members of the ruling family. The most frequent is the title of "Nawab" in its varying gradations. These are Moslem orders. The Hindu titles are usually "Maharaja" and "Raja."

Public finance has been very carefully handled since 1902, by Sir Reginald Glancy in succession to Sir Casson Walker, and for the last twelve or

thirteen years by Sir Akbar Hydari, a Moslem from British India. The result is that the financial position of Hyderabad is very strong. Revenue runs into several millions sterling. There is always a large surplus. The State has its own currency ; issues its own currency notes ; floats its own loans. It owns a great network of railways which pay a large dividend. The railways and motor transport are under a London board of experts. It speaks well for the broadmindedness of the Hyderabad government that they should entrust the management of this great property to Englishmen six thousand miles away. The idea was to keep the railways outside politics, and all the complications political interference would involve.

The Hyderabad government have recently made the bold experiment of establishing a university of which the official language, contrary to the custom elsewhere in India, is Urdu. The scheme, for which Sir Akbar Hydari is largely responsible, is not entirely popular with non-Moslems, but it is making headway. It should help to establish Hyderabad as the cultural centre of Islam in India.

The new policy of confidence adopted by the British Government with regard to the military establishments of the States has induced the Nizam's government to take up the question of reorganising their army, hitherto, apart from the Imperial Service regiments, of a medieval character and of a corresponding military value. A competent staff of British officers has been appointed :

funds are ample and Hyderabad should soon have a large and efficient army equipped with modern weapons and with at least one battery of modern field guns. Needless to say, the added prestige will strengthen the position of the State in the India of the future.

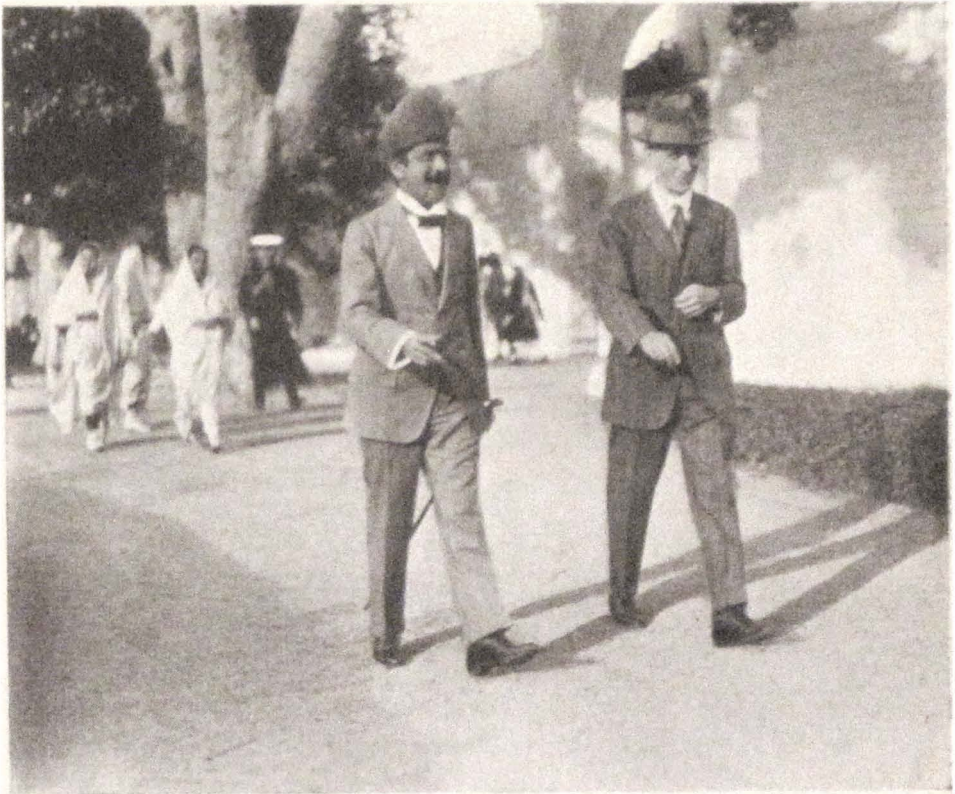
There are great possibilities of economic development. For one thing, there is a scheme of utilising the waters of the Kistnah in the south for irrigating over a million acres. There are many opportunities for hydro-electric schemes which would provide cheap power. The State has extensive coal fields. Cotton of high quality is grown in vast quantities. Castor-oil seed is another staple product and has brought great wealth to the country. With the progressive policy sponsored by the Hyderabad government there should be a rapid increase in prosperity.

The present Nizam, his Exalted Highness Sir Mir Osman Ali, succeeded his father in 1911. Like his father he is small and slight. Heir of the greatest province of the Moguls, he shows in his temperament traces of the imperiousness inspired by the once unchallenged supremacy of the old Delhi emperors. It may indeed be said that Hyderabad is still redolent of Mogul tradition. The Nizam's prestige with his nobles, officials and entourage is enormous. The spectacle of his nobles forming a double row in the portico of the Residency at a dinner party, and bending double as he passes, with the gesture that implies the removal of



dust from the feet of greatness, is most impressive. Court etiquette is strictly observed, and no courtier would venture to approach the Nizam unless wearing the official belt (*baglus*). Another traditional practice that is still observed is the presentation of *nazars* on a visit to or by the Nizam. A *nazar* is an offering of money—so many gold mohurs—fixed according to the rank of the visitor. The social climber of the lower grades of society is happy when the privilege of presentation is conferred on him. Stories about palace dinner parties which used to be current in Hyderabad suggest a puckish sense of humour in the Nizam's temperament, as reflected in his treatment of bibulous guests at the dinner table. On one particular noble, for example, credited with an almost superhuman capacity for whisky, the Nizam would inflict the penalty of a plain soda : on another a gingerade : while those in favour drank champagne.

The Nizam was brought up very strictly by his father and given a comparatively small allowance. It was largely due to a suggestion of the Viceroy that in his adult years an English tutor was appointed to assist in his education. The choice fell on Sir Brian Egerton. He had previously been tutor to the Maharaja of Bikanir, who still speaks of him affectionately as his *guru*. The Nizam too has a great affection and respect for his old friend : gave him a position of trust when he succeeded his father, and still keeps in touch with him. He invited him to take a responsible post on the



H.E.H. THE NIZAM OF HYDERABAD

Walking with the author. The Nizam's daughters are following



staff of his sons when they visited Europe two years ago.

With a Civil List of £1,000 a day and vast areas of Crown lands, bazars, house and other properties, huge accumulations of jewels, bullion and cash, the Nizam is probably the richest man in the world. Rumour sets the fabulous value of thirty millions sterling on his jewels : but it is almost impossible to assess the money equivalent of such a store. With all this he is a complete stranger to ostentation and display. His nobles may flash through the streets in silver-plated Rolls-Royce cars : he is perfectly happy in an old Buick. His standard of life approaches an almost spartan frugality, emphasised doubtless by the rigidity of his upbringing. Princes with a tenth of the revenues of Hyderabad will spend half a million sterling on a palace they may not require : the Nizam still lives in the residence assigned to him by his father, a building which is a bungalow rather than a palace. He does not keep horses except for his sons : he does not shoot and has no outdoor amusements except that he occasionally attends the local race-meetings and goes for motor drives. He likes the theatre and often goes to performances by English touring companies at the theatre of the British military station at Secunderabad. Lately he has paid visits to Delhi, where he stays at the palace he has built at the new imperial capital. On such occasions he takes with him the whole of his *zenana*, said to consist of two hundred ladies, and two special

trains are required to accommodate the palace suite.

In his lighter moments the Nizam used to write Persian love idylls. A collection of these was translated into graceful English by one of his officers, Sir Nizam Jung, and made available in an edition de luxe.

His family life is simple. He is fond of his sons and daughters. Purdah is strict in Hyderabad, but the Nizam's unmarried daughters are exempt from its rules. They attend palace and Residency parties, and accompany their father to races.

The Nizam's two sons have been brought up very strictly. Their education is considered complete, and they have extensive establishments of their own. The elder, Sahibzada Azam Jah, recently married a daughter of the ex-Sultan of Turkey. His brother, Moazzam Jah, married a niece of the ex-Sultan. Both ladies are beautiful and accomplished, and brought up in accordance with European standards. The ex-Sultan receives a pension of £4,000 a year from the Nizam's government : other members of the Turkish royal family also enjoy his bounty.

As is the usual practice in Indian States the Nizam maintains an efficient State entertainment department. Hyderabad shooting camps are wonderfully well run : so too are the ceremonial and hospitality of a Viceregal visit. As an example of Hyderabad generosity, the recent gift of £35,000 for a mosque in London may be mentioned.

The Nizam undoubtedly has his ambitions, which centre in the prestige and greatness of the Asafjahi dynasty, which has now ruled a great kingdom for over two hundred years. Probably he dreams no longer of the restoration of his lost province of Berar, the garden of the Deccan. It is believed that a compromise has been reached on this long-standing controversy, which, while affirming the Nizam's sovereignty and preserving the sentimental association of Berar with Hyderabad, makes it possible for Berar to enter the federation as a component part of the Central Provinces. The Nizam takes very little interest in Indian politics and temperamentally is not inclined to democracy. Nevertheless, he is not unprepared to take Hyderabad into the proposed federation, and he sent to the Round Table Conference one of his ablest statesmen, Sir Akbar Hydari, as his representative, assisted by Sir Richard Chenevix-Trench and Nawab Mahdi Yar Jung. Sir Akbar Hydari played a very prominent part in the London negotiations.

Finally it may be said that the Nizam stands for the maintenance of the culture and traditions of Islam in India, and there can be no doubt that the hopes and aspirations of most of the Indian Moslems are now turning towards Hyderabad and its ruler.

The late Nizam used to say that Sir Salar Jang had converted the Hyderabad government into a limited monarchy as a result of the traditions and

conventions with which he had surrounded the ministry. His son decided to be his own minister and to rule the State without any intermediary. A distinguished Parsi, Sir Feridun ul Mulk, acted as his assistant minister. This was the regime during the War. The Nizam's services at that time were of great value. His proclamations to the Moslems of India urging them to maintain their loyalty to the British throne helped greatly to steady Moslem opinion. Two regiments of Hyderabad Lancers were sent to Palestine and did excellent service. Later, when in 1919 the Afghan war broke out, the attitude of the Nizam helped to keep the Indian Moslems calm.

The titles of his Exalted Highness and of "Faithful Ally of the British Government" were conferred on the Nizam in recognition of his services from 1914-19.

After the War the Nizam took up the question of constitutional reform. The British Government had for some time been pressing him to appoint a minister. The innovations took the form of an executive council of a president and six members, each in charge of one or more portfolios. Of late years the Nizam has appointed several British officers to assist in the administration, notably in the police and revenue departments.

The subject of Hyderabad has been treated in some detail for several reasons. For one thing, it is felt that Englishmen should realise to what extent

Hyderabad and its rulers have co-operated in the building of the British Empire in India. It is true that the foundations of the Empire were laid in the field of Plassey and at Arcot by Clive : it is equally certain that without Hyderabad at their back the British would not easily have broken the power of the Maratha confederacy. The immense territories they acquired from Hyderabad, the Northern Circars, the Carnatic, the "ceded districts" of Bellary, Anantpur, Karnal, etc., in Madras, and finally the Berars, provided them with the finance they needed to complete the structure of Empire. There followed the supreme service of the Mutiny, and finally the willing co-operation of the Nizam's government in the Great War.

Apart from all this, British relations with Hyderabad extending over one hundred and seventy years illustrate in a striking manner the evolution of the theory and principles of paramountcy and their concrete application.

The loyalty and co-operation of Hyderabad have been one of the strongest buttresses of the British Empire in India. A powerful, well-governed Hyderabad should, in the future, under federation, be an unbreakable link between India and the British Crown.





X

THE SMALLER MOSLEM STATES

## SMALLER MOSLEM STATES

*Bhopal* : Moslem. Afghan, Orakzai. Lt.-Col. H.H. Nawab Sir Hamidullah Khan. 1926. *Area* : 6,002 sq. miles. *Population* : about 750,000 : 73 per cent. Hindus ; 13 per cent. Moslems. *Revenue* : about £500,000.

*Bahawalpur* : Moslem. *Dynastic name* : Abbasi Daudputra. H.H. Nawab Sir Sadiq Muhammed Khan, Abbasi V. 1907. *Area* : 15,000 sq. miles. *Population* : about 800,000 : 83 per cent. Moslems. *Revenue* : £350,000.

*Junagadh* : Moslem. H.H. Nawab Sir Mahabat Khan Babi Pathan. 1911. *Area* : 3,336 sq. miles. *Population* : 544,000 : 73 per cent. Hindus. *Revenue* : about £600,000.

*Khairpur* : Moslem. *Dynastic name* : Talpur. Mir Ali Nawaz Khan. 1921. *Area* : 6,000 sq. miles. *Population* : 237,000, mostly Moslems. *Revenue* : £120,000.

*Rampur* : Moslem. H.H. Sir Hamid Ali Khan. 1930. *Area* : 892 sq. miles. *Population* : 500,000 : 55 per cent. Hindus ; 45 per cent. Moslems. *Revenue* : £325,000.

*Palanpur* : Moslem. Lohani Pathan. Major H.H. Nawab Sher Muhammed Khan. 1918. *Area* : 1,765 sq. miles. *Population* : 250,000 : 75 per cent. Hindus. *Revenue* : £80,000.

*Tonk* : Moslem. Pathan. H.H. Nawab Sir Muhammed Ibrahim Ali Khan. 1930. *Area* : 2,579 sq. miles. *Population* : about 317,000 : 82 per cent. Hindus ; 15 per cent. Moslems. *Revenue* : £120,000.

## CHAPTER X

### THE SMALLER MOSLEM STATES

LIKE Hyderabad, the Moslem States generally may be described as succession States to the Mogul empire. There are a dozen or so of them, varying in size from Janjira (with an area of about 350 square miles) and Cambay, both small fiefs conferred on former Abyssinian admirals of the Mogul Navy, to Bahawalpur, 15,000 square miles in extent. Bhopal is the most important Moslem State after Hyderabad : Bahawalpur is a good third : Khairpur, Rampur and Tonk might be bracketed together, though in precedence Tonk, with a seventeen-gun salute, is senior to the other two, which have fifteen guns only. Junagadh (Kathiawar) in wealth and population is superior to these three : its salute is, however, less by two guns. There is not much to choose between such States as Palanpur (Rajputana), Jaora (Central India) and Radhanpur (Kathiawar).

The country ruled by these Moslem Princes is altogether 38,000 square miles, with a population of about three and a half millions. Of these less than half are Moslems. The Moslem population

of all the Indian States is roughly eleven millions, but even including Hyderabad only about three millions are the subjects of Moslem rulers. In fact, in weight of numbers the Moslems in the States are heavily overbalanced by the Hindus. The proportion is nearly eight to one as against about five to two in British India.

Bhopal was founded by Dost Muhammad, an Afghan military adventurer, towards the end of the seventeenth century. He refused to ally himself with Asaf Jah, the first Nizam, against the Delhi government, and nearly lost his country in consequence. He was compelled to give his son Yar Muhammad as a hostage to the Nizam, who took him to Hyderabad. A few years later, after the death of Dost Muhammad, the Nizam assisted Yar Muhammad in securing the succession. He conferred on the new Nawab the insignia of the *Mahi Maratib*, the dignity of the Fish, one of the highest honours of the Mogul empire. This is still the coat of arms of the rulers of Bhopal.

The famous march of General Goddard across Central India (1779-81) through Maratha country to assist the government of Bombay in their war with the Marathas gave the Nawab of Bhopal the first opportunity of establishing contact with the British. Goddard's force had met with nothing but hostility till it reached Bhopal. The Nawab and his people did everything in their power to assist the British general. This was done at great risk to themselves : in fact, their attitude

attracted the vengeance of the Marathas after the British had left.

The reactionary influences that succeeded to Wellesley's policy of extending the British protectorate over Central India rendered futile the Nawab's efforts to contract an alliance. He had to fight for years against the combined attacks of Pindaris and Marathas. At last when Bhopal was on the verge of collapse the British intervened and extended their protection. This was in 1817.

Women have played a great part in the history of Bhopal. To begin with, from about the middle of the eighteenth century, the widow of Nawab Yar Muhammad practically ruled the country for nearly fifty years. Her position was due not only to her strong personality but to the fact that the ruling Nawabs during her regime were mere ciphers, religious recluses with no inclination to government. The Begam's firm rule probably saved the State. Again, from 1844 to 1925 the sovereigns of Bhopal were Begams. In this case there had been a failure of direct male heirs. The first of these Princesses was Sikandar Begam. She was succeeded by her daughter Shah Jahan Begam, who was followed on the *masnad* by her daughter the Nawab Sultan Jahan Begam. Sikandar Begam received the special thanks of the British Queen for her services during the Mutiny, particularly in protecting British refugees.

In 1926 the British Government decided at the request of the Begam to recognise her surviving son,

Nawabzada Hamidullah Khan, as her heir to the exclusion of the sons of her elder deceased sons. Shortly afterwards she abdicated in favour of the Nawabzada. The Nawab has no son, and his eldest daughter has now been recognised as his heir by the British Government.

Her late Highness, Nawab Sultan Jahan Begam, was one of the outstanding personalities among Indian rulers of her generation. Born in 1858, she did not succeed to the *masnad* till the death in 1901 of her mother, Shah Jahan Begam. The latter had, on the death of her first husband, contracted a second marriage with one of her officers, Nawab Sidiq Hassan, who in the course of a few years acquired such a complete ascendancy over her that he became the virtual ruler of the State despite the fact that the Government of India had laid down the principle that the Nawab consort was to have no concern with the administration. Bitterly hostile to his wife's eldest daughter and heir, he succeeded in bringing about a complete estrangement between the two, and for ten years or more the future Nawab and her husband were almost prisoners in their palace, until at last the Government of India intervened.

In her autobiography Nawab Sultan Jahan Begam vividly describes the scene. The agent to the Viceroy for the Central Indian States, Sir Lepel Griffin, paid a sudden and unexpected visit to Bhopal and at once summoned the Begam, her husband, and the nobles and high

officers of State to a Durbar. When the opening ceremonies were over the agent turned to the Begam and told her that the Viceroy had directed that her husband Nawab Sadiq Jang should be deprived of his titles and salute, and ordered to abstain from all interference in the administration. The Viceroy expected her Highness to appoint a reliable chief minister to bring the affairs of the State into proper order. The Nawab Begam felt this public disgrace of her husband very keenly and made determined efforts to get him reinstated, but without success.

On her accession Nawab Sultan Begam chose able men as her coadjutors and with their assistance introduced an era of prosperity and progress in the State. She was an able and enlightened ruler and intensely loyal to the British Crown ; while her charm of manner and the wide range of her interests made her popular with her friends, British and Indian, whom she would entertain with lively and witty conversation, preferably in Hindustani. She attended both the Delhi Durbars of this century, appearing on State occasions completely veiled. Ordinarily she wore a yashmaq, which she would remove when talking to friends. I remember how much my wife and I were impressed by the Begam's keenness on a new hobby—sketching in water-colours—when she visited us at the Bangalore Residency. She went to Europe two or three times and on pilgrimage to Mecca. Her autobiography is an interesting record of palace life,



customs and administration in an Indian State, and of the relations of the ruler with the Indian Government. The Begam stands high in the list of those who have deserved well of the Empire.

Her son, the present ruler, Nawab Hamidullah Khan, was educated at the Aligarh University, which perhaps to some extent explains his interest in, and knowledge of, Indian politics. He has played a prominent part in the Chamber of Princes and has closely identified himself with the leading group of Princes, practically all Hindus, known as the Big Eight, at the Round Table Conference. He stands strongly for the British connection. He is a brilliant polo player and a fine all-round sportsman. He shoots tigers with a .270, always hits the exact spot aimed at, and thinks nothing of walking up to a wounded tiger with the same weapon. His administration is on modern lines and the State has a Legislative Council. A senior British officer of the Indian Civil Service is in charge of the revenue administration. A British colonel holds the military portfolio.

The family life of the Nawab's palace runs very much on Western lines. The Begam is a very charming hostess and up-to-date in her outlook on life. She plays tennis and other games with her daughters, who do not despise beach pyjamas for sporting wear. Mother and daughters are keen on Girl Guides and other good works. Another amusement they indulge in is to rush off into the

forest at night in a car to shoot stags by spot-light. Young India is progressive !

Bhopal, the capital of the State, is one of the most attractive of Indian cities. It is picturesquely situated on the shores of a beautiful lake six miles long, with its white buildings and palaces gleaming in the sun. It is kept immaculately clean, a characteristic one rarely meets in India. The Nawab's palace is like an English country house, furnished in ultra-modern style suggesting luxurious comfort. There is a complete lack of ostentation, but everything is perfectly done. And with all this the Nawab does not make a heavy claim on State revenues for his personal expenses.

There is no doubt that the Nawab will play an important part in the new India.

Bahawalpur lies on the verge of the great central desert with the Rajput States of Bikanir and Jaisalmer as its neighbours. Most of its territory was taken from the latter State. Its history in brief is that a border tribe known as the Daud-putras, or Sons of David, domiciled in northern Sindh, were, about 1737, driven across the Indus by the Governor of the Persian emperor, Nadir Shah, on account of their turbulence. Like the children of Israel they wandered off into the desert and finally settled down on the left bank of the Sutlej. The State takes its name from Bahawal Khan, eponymous leader of the pilgrims.

A century later, threatened with extinction by

Ranjit Singh, the Sikh, the then ruling Nawab entered the British protectorate on the usual terms. An army of Daudputras moved across the Sutlej to assist the British against the Sikh rebel, Mulraj, at Multan in 1849. They took part in the battle of Kinairee, described in Edwardes' *Year on the Punjab Frontier*, a classic of the Indian borderland.

The Bahawalpur government have joined forces with the Punjab and Bikanir in the Sutlej valley canal project. About two millions of acres of land in the State should come under irrigation. Its share of the cost is over seven millions sterling. The money has been lent by the Government of India. It was expected to be recouped by sales of land, but owing to the slump in agricultural prices this has not materialised. Immigration will be necessary if all the land is to be taken up. The present population is nearly a million, most of whom are Moslems. The State with its economic resources should have a future, but the general opinion is that the people lack drive and energy.

The Nawab, who is still young, was brought up by English tutors. He was Honorary A.D.C. to the Prince of Wales in 1922 and is an honorary captain in the Indian Army. He frequently visits London, where he entertains lavishly.

Rampur is all that is left of the military State of Rohilkand, founded by Afghan adventurers early in the eighteenth century. The regime of the

Moslem oligarchy over the Hindu peasantry was cruel and ineffective. The Rohillas, as the Afghans were called, were dangerous and turbulent neighbours of the protected kingdom of Oudh, not above joining with the Marathas to disturb the peace of their co-religionists beyond their frontiers. There was at one time the threat of an invasion by the Afghan king, and Warren Hastings was afraid that the Rohillas might invite the invader to attack Oudh. He accordingly agreed to the policy of the ruler of Oudh, the Nawab Wazir, to annex Rohilkand to his own kingdom. British troops were lent for the purpose. This was in 1774. The Rohillas were driven out of the province. They deserved none of the sympathy lavished on them by Burke and other detractors of Warren Hastings. Rohilla rule was one of the worst of despotisms : it had not even the support of tradition.

The chief of Rampur was allowed to retain his territory as a feudatory of the Nawab Wazir.

The present ruler succeeded his father in 1930. He paid his first visit to Europe in 1934, when he chartered a special air liner from Paris to London. He has done much to modernise the administration. His chief minister, Sir Abussamad Khan, is his father-in-law. The State maintains a well-known Arabic college, which attracts scholars from all over India. The instruction is mainly theological. This progressive little State, with its enlightened ruler, should exercise considerable influence over the Moslems of northern India.

Junagadh has been referred to in the sketch of Kathiawar. Till the fifteenth century it was a Rajput State. Since then it has been Moslem. The present family was founded by a Moslem general in 1737.

The State pays tribute both to the British and Baroda governments. On the other hand, such was its influence two centuries ago that it was able to exact tribute from several of the neighbouring Rajput States. This tribute is still paid.

The Gir forest, habitat of the maneless lion of Kathiawar, is situated in a mountain-range in Junagadh.

The antecedents of Khairpur are of special interest. It is a relic of the independent confederacy of Sindh which the British used as their base in the Afghan war of 1837-41, in defiance of treaties, and finally annexed on the flimsiest of grounds after that war was over, in 1845. The laconic description of his exploit in destroying the army of the Amirs—" *peccavi*—I have Sindh,"—alternatively attributed to Napier himself and to a writer in *Punch*, invests his policy with its true character. The ruler, who is known as the Mir, has had some difficulty in administering his State and has of late years employed British officers to assist him.

Tonk has already been referred to in the chapter on the Rajputs. It is a pleasant old-world spot and has not moved as rapidly with the times as some of its neighbours. The Nawab of late years has



[*"Times of India"*]

A GATEWAY IN THE PALACE, JUNAGADH



generally employed a British officer of the Political Department as his Diwan.

The other States are small and do not call for detailed comment.

It will be seen that the Moslem element in the States is relatively weak as against the Hindus. Except in Kashmir it is widely diffused. The smaller Moslem States, as satellites of the great State of Hyderabad, with the exception of Bhopal, revolve in remote orbits. Cohesion is accordingly difficult. Still there are no traditional enmities between the Moslem States as there are between Rajputs and Marathas, and unquestionably the Nizam of Hyderabad attracts more support from the eighty million Moslems of India than his Hindu rivals from more than twice the number of Hindus. All this will add to Moslem influence in a federation.

In an earlier chapter allusion has been made to the curious fact that several of the feudatories of the Moguls in Bengal and Madras—for instance, the Maharajas of Burdwan, Jaipur, Vizianagram, Bobbili—were reduced to the rank of ordinary nobles for no particular reason by the British, while hundreds of minute fiefs were preserved in Kathiawar and its neighbourhood.

A still more striking anomaly is presented by the peculiar position in India of a great Moslem noble the Aga Khan, who is not only in enjoyment of the title of Highness, but also has a salute of guns



and the status of a first-class chief without, however, exercising any territorial jurisdiction or possessing great estates. And yet perhaps he wields as great political influence as any of the Indian Princes.

Most people in England, and in Europe and America for that matter, have heard of the Aga Khan. Who is this man—this great religious leader—who is as much at home in the mosques of the desert as in the drawing-rooms of London, or the paddocks of British racecourses?

His wealth and influence are largely hereditary, especially the religious influence of his family, which goes back nearly a thousand years. By popular tradition, one of his ancestors was the Old Man of the Mountains, head of the sect of the Assassins. The family itself traces its origin to Ali, son-in-law of the Prophet Mohammed, and founder of the Shia sect of Islam. Later, the family contracted alliances with the Shahs of Persia. Some of the Aga's ancestors ruled in Egypt as Caliphs; others were governors of Persian provinces. His grandfather held such a governorship early in the nineteenth century, but had to fly the country on incurring the Emperor's displeasure. He took refuge in India in 1840 and settled in Bombay, the present headquarters of the family. He was recognised as a chief by the British Government by reason of his being the head of the great Ismailiyah sect, which included many British subjects.

The present Aga Khan (the third) has had a

very distinguished career : as a religious chief his influence is enormous. His millions of devoted followers invest him with almost divine attributes : for his humblest disciples he holds the keys of heaven and hell. I have met such devotees on the slopes of the Pamirs beyond Chitral, where they are known as the Maulais. They wrest a meagre subsistence from tiny fields cut in the mountainside, yet they spare a few annas to send as an offering to Bombay. Most powerful of the Ismailiyah sects in India are the Khojas (mostly converted Hindus), a wealthy business community in Bombay, Karachi and Kathiawar. Many of them are to be found in Persia, Arabia, Zanzibar and East Africa, where in former days the Aga Khan's influence obtained special concessions for them from the German Emperor.

The Ismailiyahs are allied to the Shiahhs, the great protestant division of Islam. Strictly orthodox Moslems would regard their theological position as irregular. The vast majority of Indian Moslems are orthodox Sunni, and one would have imagined that the head of the Ismailiyah would have had little influence with Indian Islam. Nevertheless, by his broad tolerance and his strong championship of Moslem interests in India, the Aga Khan has acquired such a dominant position that he is acclaimed as the uncrowned king of the Indian Moslem intelligentsia, and he is to-day unquestionably the most prominent leader of Moslem India.

His services to the British Government have been of immense value, especially during the War and afterwards, in opposing Gandhi's campaign of non-co-operation in 1920. Though a Moslem, he was the leader of the British Indian delegation to the Round Table Conference, and he represented India at the Disarmament Conference at Geneva. There are rumours of late that the Government of India is considering the possibility of conferring on him a principality, a proposal which though irregular would, if carried out, give great satisfaction to Indian Moslems.

The Aga Khan derives a large income from the offerings of the Faithful, for millions of whom it is a religious duty to send their mite to their religious chief. A rough-and-ready system of religious administration exists in countries where the Ismailiyahs are numerous. The officers are mostly elected. It is a sort of *imperium in imperio*. The most powerful weapon of the hierarchy is excommunication. It is feared almost more than death.

In politics the Aga Khan's influence has been on the side of moderation, though he supports a further advance towards democracy. His views on the position of Indian States are interesting. So far back as 1918 he maintained that the States must be brought into any scheme of self-government for India. Though most of them are Hindu, he regarded the States as of paramount importance in Indian policy, and thought the British position would have been infinitely stronger if they had

resisted the temptation to annex Oudh, Nagpur and Satara.

He is a great racing man and has won most of the classic races in England, including the Derby with Blenheim in 1930. He is now married to a French lady, of whom it has been said that "she is one of the most beautiful women of Europe and one who carries with superb aplomb the magnificent jewels the Aga Khan has showered on her."



XI

NEPAL

## NEPAL

Hindu. Chattari Gurkha. H.M. Maharaja  
Dhiraja Tribubhana Bir Biram Jung Bahadur.  
*Prime Minister* : H.H. Maharaja General Sir  
Judha Shumsher Jung. *Area* : 50,000 sq.  
miles. *Population* : 5,639,000. *Revenue* : no  
figures available.

## CHAPTER XI

### NEPAL

THE decision of the Nepalese government, in the spring of 1934, to despatch a mission to London is an important event in the history of British Indian politics, marking, as it does, a break with the tradition of diplomatic isolation preserved through the centuries by the rulers of Nepal. Further, the representation of their country at the Court of St. James brings into relief the position of the Nepalese kingdom as an independent State, outside the British Indian protectorate.

The mission, led by the special envoy, Commanding-General Shumsher Jung Bahadur Rana, eldest son of Maharaja Sir Judha Shumsher Jung, Prime Minister of Nepal, arrived in London towards the end of May. The envoy brought with him for presentation to the King Emperor the insignia of an order known as the Rajanya, recently established by the King of Nepal, and reserved for the acceptance of royalty. The envoy subsequently established a Legation in London.

With the great mountain wall of the Himalayas



as her northern boundary, Nepal belongs geographically to India rather than to central Asia, and her political gravitation is unquestionably towards her great southern neighbour. Moreover, Hindu religion and Hindu culture are firmly established in her territories : a Rajput military oligarchy, infused to some degree with Mongolian blood, is the dominant factor in politics. Yet despite all these affinities with India, Nepal has not been drawn into the net of the British protectorate. It is true that at one time the Nepalese government allowed its sovereignty to be diminished in favour of the British Indian Government. All such restrictions have now disappeared and the British Government recognise the complete independence of the country. Nepal is not, therefore, an Indian State. Still, in view of its past history and of its close contact with India a brief sketch of this mountain kingdom may be given here, even if only as a study in contrasts.

For 500 miles Nepal forms the northern boundary of India. The country may be described as an irregular parallelogram about a hundred miles in breadth, in area roughly equal to England. A narrow strip of the Gangetic plain, known as the Terai, forms the southern boundary. The rest of the country is a tangle of mountains extending to the Himalayan wall, which separates it from Tibet.

In the heart of the kingdom is the valley of Nepal, 4,500 feet high and 250 square miles in area. It is shut in from the surrounding valleys, which lie

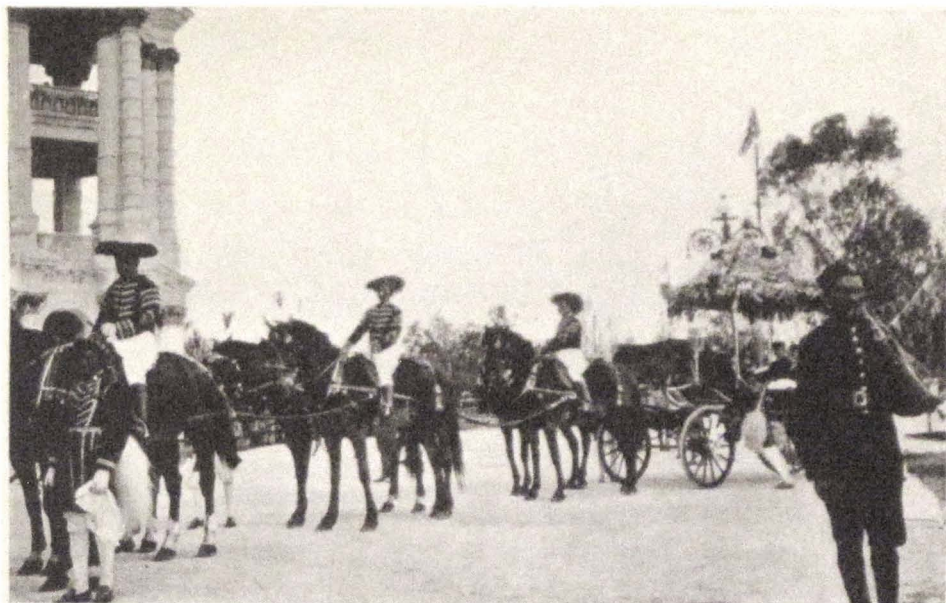
at a much lower elevation, by a ring of mountains 9,000 feet high. This valley is the political nerve-centre of the country. It contains Kathmāndú, the capital, a city of 90,000 people, and two other large towns. Up to quite recently its only means of communication with the outside world was a bridle road impassable to wheeled traffic. Motor-cars had to be carried up in parts and reassembled on arrival. There are good roads in and around the capital.

The people are of Mongolian origin. There is, however, a strong admixture of Indian blood in many sections of the community, as a result of the immigration of Hindus driven from their homeland by Moslem invaders from the twelfth century to the fifteenth. Among the immigrants were Rajputs and Brahmins, many of whom inter-married with the women of the country. The descendants of these high-caste people are known as Chattaris. The dominant races in the country, the Gurkhas, have in most cases Indian blood in their veins, but are nevertheless typically Mongolian. It should, however, be noted that the people do not speak of themselves as Gurkhas. They have their tribal names, e.g. Khas, Magar, Thakurs, etc. The British Indian Army authorities are mainly responsible for the use of the term : with them it is confined to the military tribes, Mongolian in origin but infused with Hindu blood, who are recruited for the Indian Army. The name is taken from a town, Gorkha, the capital of the Rajput chief who ultimately established his rule in Nepal.

As regards religion, Hinduism and Buddhism divide the population between them. The Gurkhas and kindred military tribes are Hindu : the Newars and other purely Mongolian tribes are Buddhist. The religion of the latter is, however, so interpenetrated with Hinduism as to be hardly recognisable as Buddhism. There is, in fact, a compromise between these great religions in Nepal.

A dense belt of tropical jungle runs through the Terai along the whole frontier. This has proved an effective barrier to the penetration of Indian influences after the immigration of refugees in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, which was mainly from the west. The result is that once the Terai has been crossed, one is in a different atmosphere. The prevalent note is Chinese. The architecture, the physical types, the method of agriculture, the bazars—all suggest Mongolia rather than India. Women have a higher status, more like that of Burmese women, more independence, more influence in the economic life of the family, than among the Hindus of India.

The reigning family claim descent from the Sesodia Rajputs of Udaipur. The present king is Maharaja Dhiraja Tribubhana Bir Biram Jung Bahadur. He succeeded in 1911. If legend is to be trusted, the progenitors of the dynasty came to Nepal after the capture of Chitor in 1303 by the Moslem emperor Ala-ud-din Khilji. At this period the chief Mongolian clan was the Newars. From Kathmāndú as their capital they maintained their



### BRIDAL COACH AND EIGHT

At the wedding of the Prime Minister's son, Nepal



### A STREET IN PATAN, NEPAL

Patan is one of the three former Newar capitals. The buildings, which are the work of the Newars, are in red brick, with red-tiled or copper roofs



overlordship till the middle of the eighteenth century, when Prithvi Narain, a Rajput chief of a small hill principality whose capital town was known as Gorkha, started a career of conquest which brought about the extinction of Newar rule, and established the present ruling house.

During the course of these operations the first contacts were established between the East India Company and Nepal. In 1765 the Newars in their extremity sought British help. In compliance with this request a small British force was sent into the foothills. With its *moral* weakened by the malignant type of malaria prevalent in the Terai it was easily repulsed by the Gurkhas. The latter, having completely subjugated the Newars, endeavoured to enter into relations with the Company, and in 1791 a commercial treaty was concluded between the two powers. A few years later the Gurkhas invaded Tibet. The Lamas sought the intervention of their overlord, the emperor of China. A Chinese force 70,000 strong marched 1,400 miles over the mountains on Kathmāndú. The Gurkhas appealed for help to the Company's Governor-General at Calcutta, Lord Cornwallis. He despatched a force to Nepal and at the same time offered to mediate. Help arrived too late, however, and the Chinese general had meanwhile dictated peace, practically at the gates of the Gurkha capital. The Gurkhas acknowledged Chinese suzerainty and in token of their subordination pledged themselves to send an embassy bearing

presents to Peking every five years. The practice was kept up till the fall of the Chinese empire in 1912.

For the next twenty years following the Chinese invasion, the Gurkhas extended their conquests to the west along the foothills, disputing with the Sikhs the overlordship of the Rajput principalities in those regions. They pushed their boundaries as far as Kashmir. Elated with their successes, like warlike hill people generally, they felt themselves entitled to lay the rich plains beneath them under contribution. They even talked of washing their kukris in the Ganges and dreamt of holding Bihar in fee. These ambitions soon brought on hostilities with the Company. After two years of desultory warfare the Gurkhas had to admit defeat. A treaty was concluded in 1816 by which they ceded their conquests in the Himalayas outside Nepal ; placed their external relations in the Company's hands ; agreed not to employ Europeans and Americans without British approval, and to receive a British Resident.

Peaceful relations between the two Governments have never since been broken, and there has been no question of a military protectorate. To prevent political penetration the Nepalese adopted a policy of isolation which they have throughout maintained, the dense belt of malaria-haunted forest which lies opposite to the Indian boundary making it easy to keep out intruders. The Nepalese had seen in India that subordinate alliance led to interference

on the part of the paramount power, and ultimately to domination if not actually to annexation. The free ingress of British and British Indian nationals must have led to complications involving in the end a menace to the cherished freedom of the hill man. The British on their side merely wanted to ensure that Nepal was friendly ; that foreign influence should be kept out ; that the country should be available as a recruiting ground. All this they have had.

There are now twenty battalions of Gurkhas in the service of the Government of India, constituting some of the finest material in the Indian Army. Besides this, there are many Gurkhas in the military police of Assam and Burma and in the armed police of Bengal, who, by reason of their aloofness from local religious and political prejudices, are almost as reliable as British troops, and the latter, who find comradeship with Indian troops difficult, have always readily fraternised with the Gurkha. The British have certainly no reason to regret the policy which has kept Nepal independent and self-reliant.

Their defeat at the hands of the British weakened the prestige of the ruling dynasty, and for thirty years after the peace chaos reigned in Nepal. Finally, in 1846, one of the military leaders, Jung Bahadur, by ruthlessly exterminating his rivals, succeeded in establishing a dictatorship. Order was now restored, and by 1850 Jung Bahadur, who may be truly described as the maker of modern Nepal, felt his position secure enough to admit of his



visiting Europe. He was the first Indian ruler to do so. He accepted an invitation to visit London from Queen Victoria and was a prominent figure in the social life of the capital in the following season. The splendour of his dress, his vivid personality and well-bred manners created a great impression.

On his return to Nepal he was offered, but refused, the crown. Instead he substituted a hereditary Prime Ministership for the dictatorship, which he buttressed with a military oligarchy, all the important appointments in the army being made hereditary in his family. The post of supreme Commander-in-Chief was combined with the Prime Ministership. The monarchy was retained but reduced to a merely ornamental position. The new system, in fact, resembled the Shogunate in Japan or that of the Mayors of the Palace in France. Reforms were introduced into the administration. The old savage code with its ordeals of fire and water and its punishment by mutilation and torture was abolished. The killing of cows, however, remained a capital offence. *Sati* was prohibited, but not actually abolished until later.

Jung Bahadur ruled Nepal till his death in 1877. An unswerving ally of England, he led 10,000 Gurkhas to the assistance of the Company's troops in the Mutiny. He was rewarded by the gift of a large tract of land in the Terai containing valuable forests. He was also created a G.C.B., an honour which he greatly appreciated.

The system of government introduced by Jung

Bahadur is in full vigour to-day. Its vitality is largely due to the fact that the paralysing influence of a minority administration is avoided by the rule that the eldest member of the family succeeds, if qualified by ability and character. Another feature of the constitution that makes for stability is that the Prime Minister reappoints all the high officials annually. He controls the military oligarchy : his sons are born generals and all the higher military appointments are held by his near relatives. But perhaps the strongest reason is that a Prime Minister of outstanding personality, Sir Chandra Shumsher, ruled Nepal from 1901 to 1929. Like his great predecessor, he regarded the British alliance as the keystone of his policy, and on the outbreak of the Great War placed the whole of his resources at the disposal of the King Emperor. Ten Gurkha battalions were added to the Indian Army : a force of 10,000 men was sent to India to help in maintaining peace on the Afghan frontier. Altogether over 100,000 Gurkhas fought for the Empire during the War. Nepal, in fact, placed the British under a debt of gratitude that it is almost impossible to repay.

After the War the Indian Government offered an annual present of a million of rupees to their ally. This was accepted. The titular sovereign, the Maharaja Dhiraj, was recognised as his Majesty the King : the Prime Minister as his Highness the Maharaja. A new treaty was concluded in 1923, by which all traces of inferiority were swept away :

the internal and external independence of Nepal specifically declared, and the proviso regarding the employment of Europeans and Americans cancelled. The designation of the British representative was changed from "Resident" to "British Envoy": the "Residency" to "Legation." Further, Nepal is permitted to import arms and munitions of war without restriction so long as her relations with India continue to be friendly.

Apart from her services in the War, the loyalty of Nepal in refusing to allow her territory to become a refuge or a base for political agitators has been of the greatest advantage to the Indian Government. With their Mongolian affinities one can perhaps hardly describe the ruling military oligarchy of Nepal as Hindu in the sense that Mysore, for example, is Hindu. At the same time the religion of the politically important groups is Hindu and society is organised on a caste basis. If the Nepalese government had chosen to sympathise with political agitation in India it might have created a difficult position for the Government of India, especially in view of the large Gurkha element in the Indian Army. Pressure could only be exercised by the use of military force or by an economic blockade, both practically unthinkable.

Sir Chandra Shumsher was a statesman of distinction, and as an administrator did much to improve conditions in Nepal. He had qualities which made his friendship a privilege. Among

other reforms he modified the time-honoured policy of exclusiveness to the extent that he connected Kathmāndú with India by telephone, and a motor road linking up with a railway through the Terai. He abolished slavery and liberated 60,000 slaves at the expense of the State. He has been criticised for setting a slow pace in education, even though he founded a well-equipped college at the capital and allowed his subjects to study at Indian universities. Well educated himself (he was a graduate of an Indian university), he retorted to his critics that he thought the British had been unwise in India in turning out thousands more graduates and educated young men than the market for higher employment could possibly absorb, thereby creating a focus for disaffection that could not easily be dissipated. He had no intention of creating a similar problem in Nepal.

General Sir Judha Shumsher Jung, the present Prime Minister, is carrying on the policy of his predecessor. After his installation two years ago he convened a special meeting of State officers, nobles and merchants, for his inaugural address, at which he announced an important programme of reforms. The remodelling of the system of education has the foremost place in the Maharaja's new policy. His ideal is to combine religious and moral training with secular education. It is in this respect that British educational policy has failed so lamentably in India. The stress in Nepal is to be on vocational training. Industry and commerce are to be de-

veloped by improving communications and providing cheap power.

The establishment of a Nepalese Legation in London has already been mentioned. The Maharaja recently agreed to relax the old restrictions against the entry of outsiders to the extent of permitting a land and air expedition to Mount Everest. All this points to a slow disintegration of the policy of isolation. Obviously the leading Nepalese feel that if they wish to maintain their position it can only be by opening up their country to new ideas, by creating fresh wealth as a means of increasing her power and influence, and thereby making her alliance still more valuable to her great neighbour. But there can be little doubt that should imperial power at Delhi show signs of a breakdown, India would certainly lose its Gurkha battalions, and in that event the Gurkhas might again look forward to washing their kukris in the Ganges.

XII

THE POLICY OF SUBORDINATE  
ALLIANCE



## CHAPTER XII

### THE POLICY OF SUBORDINATE ALLIANCE

**T**HE evolution of British power in India is reflected in the long series of treaties concluded between the East India Company and the Indian Princes from the eighteenth century onwards. There are three phases of these treaty-making activities.

The first series of treaties, up to the end of the eighteenth century, was in almost every case negotiated on the basis of equality between the contracting parties. This is the position in the earlier treaties with Hyderabad, Travancore, Oudh, and with the Maratha Princes of Baroda, Gwalior, Nagpur and Kolhapur.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century the British took up a second and stronger position. Hyderabad, Oudh, Baroda, the Maratha Peshwa at Poona, desired military protection. The Company accepted the responsibility and gave effect to it by stationing a large body of troops at the capital of each State, known as the "subsidiary force." These troops were maintained at the expense of the States concerned, either by an assign-



ment of territory or by a cash payment. An inevitable incident of the protectorate thus established was the control in some form by the Company of the external relations of the protected States. Otherwise it might have found itself involved against its will in a war with its allies. The treaties of the period accordingly stipulated for control of the external relations of the protected States so far as the Company's allies were concerned. This is known as the "policy of the ring-fence."

In other words, the Company considered its responsibility for maintaining peace to be confined to its own boundaries and those of the allied States. It would preserve peace between the Peshwa of Poona and the great Princes of Baroda, Gwalior and Indore. Marathas should not attack each other ; nor should they attack Hyderabad, Oudh, Mysore or Travancore. They might, however, harry at will the Rajput States of Central India and Rajputana and the unfortunate Moslem State of Bhopal, to which the British had refused a treaty in 1802. The result of the policy of the ring-fence was a period of hopeless anarchy, from 1805 for over a dozen years, during which the machinery of government was practically obliterated in northern India from the Indus to Bengal, and at last the British had to interfere to restore order.

This brought on the third phase. The policy of the ring-fence was repudiated, and from 1812 to 1820 a new series of treaties was negotiated which

brought Bhopal, the Rajput States, and the cis-Sutlej Sikh States (Patiala, etc.) into the protectorate. The British now took complete control of the external relations of all their Indian allies. This system is generally known as the policy of subordinate alliance, carrying with it isolation from their neighbours of the States which accepted it. The British on their part recognised the absolute independence of the Princes within their own spheres.

The great anarchy of 1805 left an aftermath of political complications. Many of the old landmarks had been swept away : half the Rajput chiefs of Central India were outlaws or in revolt against their Maratha overlords. Some of them, indeed, were so forgetful of the Vedas that on many occasions they had swooped down from their fastnesses and cut off the sacred noses of Maratha Brahmins. The feudal barons in Rajputana were fighting for their own hands against their Princes : the Gaekwar was unable to control his tributaries in Kathiawar or Gujarat. Resettlement and pacification were necessary over half India.

The year 1818 marks the dawn of a new empire in India : the British could no longer avoid the responsibilities of the paramount power. They now decided to sweep away the sovereignty of the Peshwa and to annex his dominions. He had, by the treaty of 1817, renounced his supremacy over the Maratha confederacy, and it was generally expected that he would be allowed to rule over his

diminished territories, but the character enjoyed by Baji Rao, the Peshwa, negated this possibility. As a special act of favour, however, a small principality, Satara, was created and conferred instead on a direct descendant of the great Shivaji, founder of Maratha nationalism.

The work of reconstruction was confined mainly to three areas: Rajputana, Central India and Gujarat, including Kathiawar, in the sphere of influence of the Gaekwar.

The treaties ultimately concluded in 1817 with the Rajputs were negotiated by Colonel Tod, who in 1803 had been Assistant Resident at the court of the Maharaja Sindhia. In 1812 he was appointed political agent in Rajputana and in that capacity negotiated the new treaties with the Rajput States. After the war of 1818 he was appointed Resident at the court of Udaipur and was responsible for the pacification of that country. He retired in 1823.

Tod occupied his leisure during his service in Rajputana in compiling a history of the Rajputs, entitled *Annals and Antiquities of Rajastan*, now a recognised classic.

Every court in the old Hindu kingdoms had its official bards and annalists, whose duty it was to maintain the genealogies and chronicles of the ruling dynasty. Many of these were still in existence in Tod's time, and with the assistance of pundits learned in Sanskrit, he carried out laborious researches into the origins, customs, traditions and

history of the Rajputs. In this way he collected the material of his great work. The Rajputs owe a debt of gratitude to him for his sympathy and for his labours in interpreting them to the people of Britain.

The main feature of the Rajputana settlement was the complete elimination of Maratha influence, though two or three States still paid tribute to Maratha chiefs. Tod gives a vivid description of the desolation of the countryside and of the delight of the people at British intervention. Everywhere the British mission was greeted with shouts of "Long live British rule." Towns and villages deserted for years were reoccupied. Confidence was everywhere restored.

In most cases the Rajput States were called upon to pay tribute in return for military protection. Kotah paid on the scale of its former tribute to the Marathas. Various States contributed to the cost of irregular corps maintained for the control of aboriginal tribes such as the Bhils, and turbulent clansmen like the Meenas and Mhers. Two of these corps still survive in Rajputana, the Meena Corps and the Mewar Bhil Corps.

As in Rajputana, so in Central India, the chief problem before the British mission was to compose the feud between Rajput and Maratha. But, whereas in Rajputana it had been found sufficient to recognise sixteen separate sovereignties, in Central India a hundred and forty-three chiefships were rebuilt from the wreckage.

Lord Lake had concluded treaties with Datia, a Rajput State, and the Maratha State of Jhansi in 1805. The Company had in that year acquired the Peshwa's rights over other States in the same neighbourhood, but forbore to claim them after 1805 out of consideration for Sindhia and Holkar. Rewa, most important of Rajput States in Central India, and Orchha, another Rajput State, came into subordinate alliance in 1812. In 1817 Dhar and Dewas, both Maratha States, took the same step. The Moslem State of Bhopal, though reduced to the last extremity, had declined to admit Maratha overlordship. In 1803 the British had refused the Nawab's request for protection. A treaty was offered and accepted in 1817.

The temptation to free the Rajputs from Maratha domination, and to set up a Rajput barrier across Central India, must have been very strong. Still, Maratha overlordship was an historic fact; and the British felt that it must be recognised. But they were not prepared to hand over the Rajputs unconditionally, and a British guarantee was interposed between the Marathas, tributary Rajput States and feudal Thakurs or barons. The States so treated were termed mediatised: the barons guaranteed Thakurs. The main conditions of the arrangement were that tribute and services were fixed, and so long as these were rendered the feudatories were protected against their overlords, and their jurisdiction in their own territories maintained. The whole system was carefully bal-

anced and regulated, and, although in many respects distasteful to the great Maratha chiefs, it restored tranquillity where before devastation and misery had reigned.

Similar principles governed the settlement in the Gujarat States and also influenced the treaty with Kutch. The Gaekwar of Baroda, in addition to extensive territories in Gujarat proper, counted as his tributaries a multitude of small chiefs, mostly Rajput, in the hilly tracts adjoining the Malwa plateau to the east of Baroda and in the peninsula of Kathiawar on the west. The Baroda Durbar made no attempt to administer the country occupied by these tributaries : it was simply concerned to extort forcibly the assessed tribute. Every year at the time of the Dussurah festival in the autumn the Baroda army marched through the country of the tributaries collecting tribute and devastating the countryside. If there was any delay an additional impost, known as *dantghasae* (lit. teeth-grinding), was levied. This military promenade was known as *mulk giri*. It led to frightful oppression and endless disturbances. In 1807 the British interfered and induced the tributaries to give security for their good behaviour and for punctual payment of tribute. The Peshwa at Poona shared the Kathiawar tribute. In 1817 he assigned this to the British, who thereupon in 1820 concluded a fresh agreement with Baroda, by which they made themselves responsible for the collection of the Baroda tribute along with their own. The agree-

ment covered the whole of Kathiawar and the small States already mentioned, in the hill country east of Baroda : also the Moslem State of Palanpur.

The British had succeeded to all the Peshwa's rights in these territories. They did not, however, wish to annex, and at the outset the estates of petty chiefs, over two hundred in number, some containing only a few villages, were treated as independent units. This was soon found to be an impossible system. These tiny States could not exercise full sovereignty in their own limits : nor had they the resources for an adequate administration. They were accordingly organised into groups and placed under British political agents. The dozen or so large States—Bhavnagar, Nawanagar, Porbandar, Morvi, Gondal, Junagadh, etc.—while paying tribute, exercised full internal sovereignty. Some States still pay tribute to three parties—the British, the Gaekwar and the Moslem State of Junagadh. Practically all the States and estates are Rajput.

Kutch at this period presented an interesting problem. Surrounded by sea and marshland, it had been little affected by the chaotic conditions in Kathiawar. Its own internal troubles were, however, serious, owing to the state of war between the ruler and the Jareja Rajput nobility of the Bhayad, or blood relations of the chief. The Company refused a proffered alliance in 1802, but by 1819 found intervention necessary. A subsidiary force was stationed at the capital, Bhuj, and the British Government took on itself the difficult task

of guaranteeing the rights of the Bhayad against the Maharao. Later a separate court was established for the purpose.

The central tenet of British political theory in its relations with the States at this period was that the States should enjoy complete internal autonomy under British protection. They had forfeited their international life : Maratha was not to consult or ally with Maratha, Rajput with Rajput, nor Moslem with Moslem. Shut off from the outside world the Prince was expected to occupy himself with the task of making his subjects happy and prosperous.

The suddenness of the change was a heavy strain on the moral fibre of Indian rulers and their entourage. The system of subsidiary alliances divested the ruler and his Durbar of all responsibility for the military defence of their territory, thereby essentially weakening the stimulus to good government as a means of conciliating both nobles and people. The old correctives against selfish despotism, fear of rebellion and deposition, the danger of attack from outside, had been exorcised. Self-respect in the ruler and his nobility was diminished by the loss of so many of the attributes of sovereignty. The British did nothing to set up a new moral anchorage. And soon many of the chiefs began to feel the presence of the British Resident or political agent at their courts as an irksome restraint on their old freedom of action.

The classical example of misgovernment as a result of divided sovereignty was the Mohammedan



State of Oudh, which ended in its annexation in 1856.

The settlement following the war of 1817-18 shows how difficult it was for the new suzerain power to live up to its policy of non-interference. Almost everywhere, in Rajputana, Baroda, Indore, Gwalior, and Central India generally, the British had been compelled to intervene between the Princes and their barons. In the greatest and most important of all the allied States, Hyderabad, they had soon realised that unchecked absolutism would mean dissolution of the alliance.

The circumstances which led to the creation of what was virtually a new subsidiary force, financed by the Nizam's government, have been outlined in Chapter X. With its help the Hyderabad authorities were enabled to re-establish their rule throughout the country, but when military considerations did not apply, the British Government was ever reluctant to intervene.

There was another case of intervention in 1831. In Mysore as elsewhere the presence of a strong British force had weakened the fibre of the administration. A serious rebellion broke out which necessitated the use of British troops. When Mysore was restored to the Hindu dynasty in 1800 Lord Wellesley, as already noted, had stipulated that in the event of misrule the British Government would intervene and take over the administration. No principle of quasi-international law was therefore involved. The Maharaja was set aside



[By permission of the India Office

### A DURBAR AT UDAIPUR, 1855

On the right of the Maharana are the British Resident and his Staff; on the left, the Thakurs, or nobles, typical Rajput aristocracy, much as they are seen to-day when in ceremonial dress

*From a painting by F. C. Lewis*



and the administration taken over. British rule continued for half a century.

Both London and Calcutta held the view that Indian Princes, so long as they ruled, had the right to govern as they pleased, but a necessary corollary of this view was annexation in cases where misrule was so gross that it could not be countenanced, or when its reaction on adjacent British territory or the territory of another State might threaten the public peace. It was not till the policy of annexation had been definitely abjured that the British began to realise that in guaranteeing a ruler against rebellion they incurred a moral obligation to intervene to prevent gross misrule.

An infusion of feudal theory had worked itself into political practice before the Mutiny. This was especially noticeable in the doctrine of lapse and escheat. The British Government at this period were not prepared to allow adoption on the failure of heirs, a practice of everyday occurrence under Hindu law. The result was the annexation of Satara (1848), Nagpur (1853), Jhansi and (Jaitpur), on the ground of lapse. Oudh was escheated on the ground that the king had failed to adhere to his treaty agreement to govern reasonably.

There can now be no question that this annexationist policy was ill-advised. It created serious alarm among the Princes generally: in many cases it was resented by the people: it was harmful to British prestige. It was a contributory cause of the Mutiny. Of this the Maratha State of Jhansi

affords a striking example. The Maharaja had died without an heir. His Rani besought Lord Dalhousie to allow her to exercise the inalienable right of her house and to adopt a son to succeed her dead husband. The request was refused and the State annexed. Till then a loyal supporter of the British, she became bitterly hostile. Young, handsome and intrepid, she threw in her lot with the mutineers. Her brilliant defence of Jhansi has passed into history. Soon after, wearing cavalry uniform and unrecognised, she was killed in a cavalry charge by British hussars near Gwalior. A British general described her as the best and bravest of the rebel leaders. It is a pity she was not allowed to try her skill as an administrator as regent for a minor son by adoption. The romance and tragedy of this beautiful Amazon have not, however, attracted much sympathy because of the suspicion that rests on her of having been privy to the treacherous massacre of Europeans at Jhansi.

Britain had meanwhile annexed the Punjab from the Sikhs: the Amirs of Sindh had been deprived of their territories. The annexation of the Punjab was perhaps inevitable. There was no representative of the family of Maharaja Ranjit Singh who could hope to rule the Punjab and control the warlike Moslem population of the west and the turbulent tribes of the borderland. Henry Lawrence, it is true, had thought otherwise: but he was too much the idealist. Sikh rule might

have been possible in the eastern Punjab if a prominent chief of adequate capacity could have been found ; British rule direct or indirect was essential in the Afghan borderland.

Sindh was a different matter. It might very well have been placed under a British protectorate. It was almost entirely Moslem in composition and a leading member of the Amir's family could have been placed on the *masnad*. It was no argument in support of annexation that the Mirs were at variance among themselves and that in any case their family had usurped the province from the Afghan kingdom less than a century earlier. The only one of them allowed to retain his principality was the Mir of Khairpur.

There is another question of importance. Why, it may be asked, did the British not follow the example of the Moguls and use the services of the Rajputs in high civil and military posts ? The Rajputs had been a pillar of the Mogul empire ; they were infinitely more loyal to the British. Moreover, in the relations between Rajput and Britain there was an absence of the incompatibility that has always made itself felt between Hinduism and Islam. The Rajputs had breeding ; the instincts and traditions of rule. They were brought up to the profession of arms. Picked young Rajputs carefully trained might have had honourable careers both in the army and Civil Service of India.

The Marathas, the dominant race in India when the British were competing for empire, were in a

different category. The British could hardly expect the same loyalty and co-operation from their late enemies as from the Rajputs whom they had saved from extinction. The Marathas had had to cede the pride of empire to the British. That would not be easily forgotten. Apart from this the Marathas had no strong landed aristocracy. The bulk of them were Sudras ; there was no real Kshatriya or officer class. Officialdom had been mainly Brahmin. There were, however, a few big landed proprietors and Sirdars and great officials, and from these classes and the families of the chiefs it should have been possible to obtain a few suitable recruits for both the army and Civil Service. Confidence usually begets confidence.

The great Moslem nobility of Hyderabad, Oudh and other Moslem States might also have been encouraged to find soldiers and administrators for the empire. Why should not some of the young Hyderabad nobles have been given commissions at least in the Hyderabad Contingent for which the British had compelled the Nizam to pay? Some of the other important States might in a similar manner have been given a direct interest in imperial affairs.

Opportunities of imperial service would have prevented the degeneration of the aristocracy of India which has undoubtedly been a consequence of the military protectorate. Young men of good family, trained in the imperial service, would have exercised a valuable influence on administration in

the States themselves. And equally important, the association of British and Indians in the manner suggested would have helped to break down what so many Indians consider to be the caste exclusiveness of the British, which has been so potent a factor in the political reactions of recent years against British rule.

The British took the line of least resistance and the opportunity of associating with themselves young men of India's finest races in the work of imperial administration was allowed to pass. British officers were not much more expensive than Indian officers recruited from families of good social position would have been : the British officer had proved his efficiency : with the Indian it was a matter for experiment. There were caste and other religious difficulties with the Indian : to bring Rajput, Maratha and Moslem together in the army might have led to unhealthy combinations. Still with a strong Indian element from the upper classes in the army and the services, the claim of the lower middle-class intelligentsia to rule the country would have been easily met, if indeed it had ever been brought forward.

Apart from utilising the greater part of the subsidiary forces and of the Hyderabad Contingent in their various wars, the British have never made any attempt to exploit the military obligations of the Princes in the interests of the Empire. At the Mutiny, however, it has been estimated that the States were providing about 40 per cent. of the



cost of the army in India, a contribution out of proportion to their area and population.

A further encroachment on the internal sovereignty of the States occurred early in the pre-Mutiny period. It regarded jurisdiction over European British subjects, Europeans generally and Americans. The British Government as suzerain power was obviously under an obligation to ensure to its own people and other Europeans a fair trial judged by Western standards, on the analogy of the system of capitulations in Turkey and elsewhere. It could, for example, hardly be expected to recognise as a legal principle the greater value of a Moslem oath as compared with a Christian oath : or the protection of the person of a Brahmin by sanctions not extended to others : or the punishment of the slaughter of a cow as a crime equally heinous with homicide. In any case, the British Government was internationally responsible for seeing that Europeans and Americans not its subjects should not be exposed to the hazard of irregular police methods. The necessary jurisdiction was ceded readily enough in most cases. It was exercised through the Residency, much as it still is, though in most States of any consequence the judicial system has been greatly improved and in some does not fall far behind the best types in British India. The restriction is, however, felt as a slight on their efficiency by the governments of some of the States.

International law, as already observed, had in-

fluenced British diplomacy in India for the first half of the nineteenth century. A strict adherence to its principles as regards the internal affairs of States was frequently almost impossible. The paramount power could not tolerate in the protectorate inhuman practices repugnant to Western civilisation. For example, the ruler of Kutch was induced early in the nineteenth century to abolish female infanticide : later he agreed to abolish the slave trade with Africa. Most States followed the example of British India and prohibited suttee. Some of the more remote hill Rajas bound themselves to abstain from cruel punishments.

A change came with the Mutiny. The British Government were no longer blind to the consequences of the policy of annexation. So long as this menace hung over the heads of the chiefs, confidence and loyal co-operation could hardly be hoped for. Despite the strain, however, most of the chiefs had remained neutral through the Mutiny : many gave their active support, and but for the loyalty of Hyderabad things might have gone hardly for the British in the south. The much-dreaded policy was now abjured once for all. All the chiefs were given *sanads* or letters patent permitting them to adopt on failure of heirs.

But for this, many of the States would, in the next half century or so, have lapsed. The present Gaekwar of Baroda was adopted : so was the father of the Maharaja of Mysore : also the present Maharaja of Jaipur. These are cases under Hindu

law, which confers on the adopted son all the rights of a naturally born son. The position is different under Mohammedan law, which, while recognising adoption, does not confer on the adopted son the right to inherit. Moslem rulers were, however, assured that the kinsman who was the ruler's heir by Mohammedan law would always be recognised as his lawful successor, whether in the direct line or not.

As regards succession, a matter of political practice may be noted. In the earlier period of British relations with the States after the Mutiny the official view was that the previous sanction of the Viceroy was necessary to the succession. The Princes, on their part, while admitting that the recognition of the British Government is necessary, demur to the principle of prior sanction. The tendency now is, it is believed, to relax the strict official view.

The Mutiny brought other innovations. The Crown now assumed from the Company direct responsibility for paramountcy. The treaties were confirmed afresh. The last traces of Mogul rule were finally obliterated. It was at length recognised as a principle of political practice that the Crown of India was entitled to intervene to prevent gross misrule. The prerogative was further emphasised by the condition of loyalty and allegiance attached to the right of adoption. As inherent in the prerogative, the Crown exercises the right, through the Viceroy, to recognise successions, to assume the guardianship of minors, to confer or withdraw titles, decorations and salutes, to sanc-

tion the acceptance of foreign orders, and to grant passports. In 1860 a table of salutes was published.

The principle of subordinate isolation remained as before, and most of the subsequent developments have been closely related to the military requirements of the protectorate. For example, trunk lines of railways must in military interests be under a unified control. The chiefs have been expected to give free of charge the land required for such railways in their territory and to cede jurisdiction on them : the Government of India has claimed a monopoly of telegraphs and telephones and to a limited extent over postal services on similar grounds. The manufacture and sale of arms are prohibited, and till recently it has been the policy to restrict modern armaments in the States to the lowest possible limits. State governments even had considerable difficulty in obtaining revolvers or more or less modern weapons for their armed police, who have often to deal with dacoits much better armed than themselves. His Highness the late Jam of Nawanagar told me a dozen years ago that a short time before, a party of his police, on coming up with some dacoits they were pursuing, fired a volley at the dacoits with devastating effect on themselves, their old muskets bursting and putting half the party out of action, while the dacoits escaped scot-free.

On the whole, the degree of autonomy varies widely from the practically complete independence in internal affairs of States like Hyderabad, Mysore

and Baroda, to the very limited powers of the hundreds of little States of a square mile or so in Kathiawar and on the western edge of the Central India plateau. The territory of these small States is not British India and British law is not in force : but the higher jurisdiction is exercised by British officers on behalf of the chiefs and their people. The position is much the same with regard to the small Rajput States in the Himalayas, some of the smaller Punjab States and the feudatory States of Bihar and Orissa and the Central Provinces. It is not entirely a question of status : some States whose rulers have the title of his Highness and a salute do not enjoy complete internal autonomy. For example, death sentences in some of the States of the Himalayas and Orissa and the Central Provinces require the confirmation of the political agent. The differences are due to historical reasons : in some cases it is a question of the degree of political development, apart from area and population.

States subjects, it should be remembered, are, from the point of view of international law, merely British protected persons. For example, they are only made eligible in each case for appointment to posts under Government in British India by special rules. Under a Federation these disabilities will disappear.

Since the Mutiny there have been several occasions of intervention to prevent gross misrule. The Gaekwar of Baroda was deposed in 1875. Maharajas of Indore have abdicated on two

occasions. Minor Rajas have been summoned to abdicate in expiation of serious crime. There has been intervention to prevent dismemberment or alienation of territory ; for the suppression of rebellion ; in one case to secure religious tolerance. In 1870 the British Government intervened between the Maharaja of Alwar and his Thakurs when matters seemed to be drifting towards civil war. The administration of Kashmir was, for a considerable period, under British control from 1889 onwards. Interference worked up almost to a climax under the Curzon regime and was the cause of discontent and alarm among the Princes generally.

A salutary law was passed by the British Parliament as far back as 1795 to prevent financial adventurers from exploiting the States. State governments are expected to inform the Residency of any arrangements they propose to make with outside financiers. Despite this there have been serious financial scandals, notably in Hyderabad in the forties of last century and quite recently in other States.

The value to the British in building up their empire in India of the co-operation of many of the States has already been sufficiently emphasised ; the advantages of the association have been mutual. Hyderabad is a typical case. Without British help it is practically certain that the Nizam would have been overwhelmed by the Marathas. He had no national support except from a handful of Moslems. The final victory over the Marathas brought him

accessions of territory and the cancellation of a debt of sixty millions of rupees on account of *chaunth*. In Mysore the British restored the Hindu dynasty. They supported the Gaekwar against his overlord, the Peshwa : they freed the State from the grip of its Arab mercenaries. They saved the Rajputs from destruction. Travancore with British help preserved its identity. Cochin was rescued from Tippoo. Maratha States have perhaps less to thank the British for than other States. But they were defeated in fair field and it will be admitted that they were not treated ungenerously.

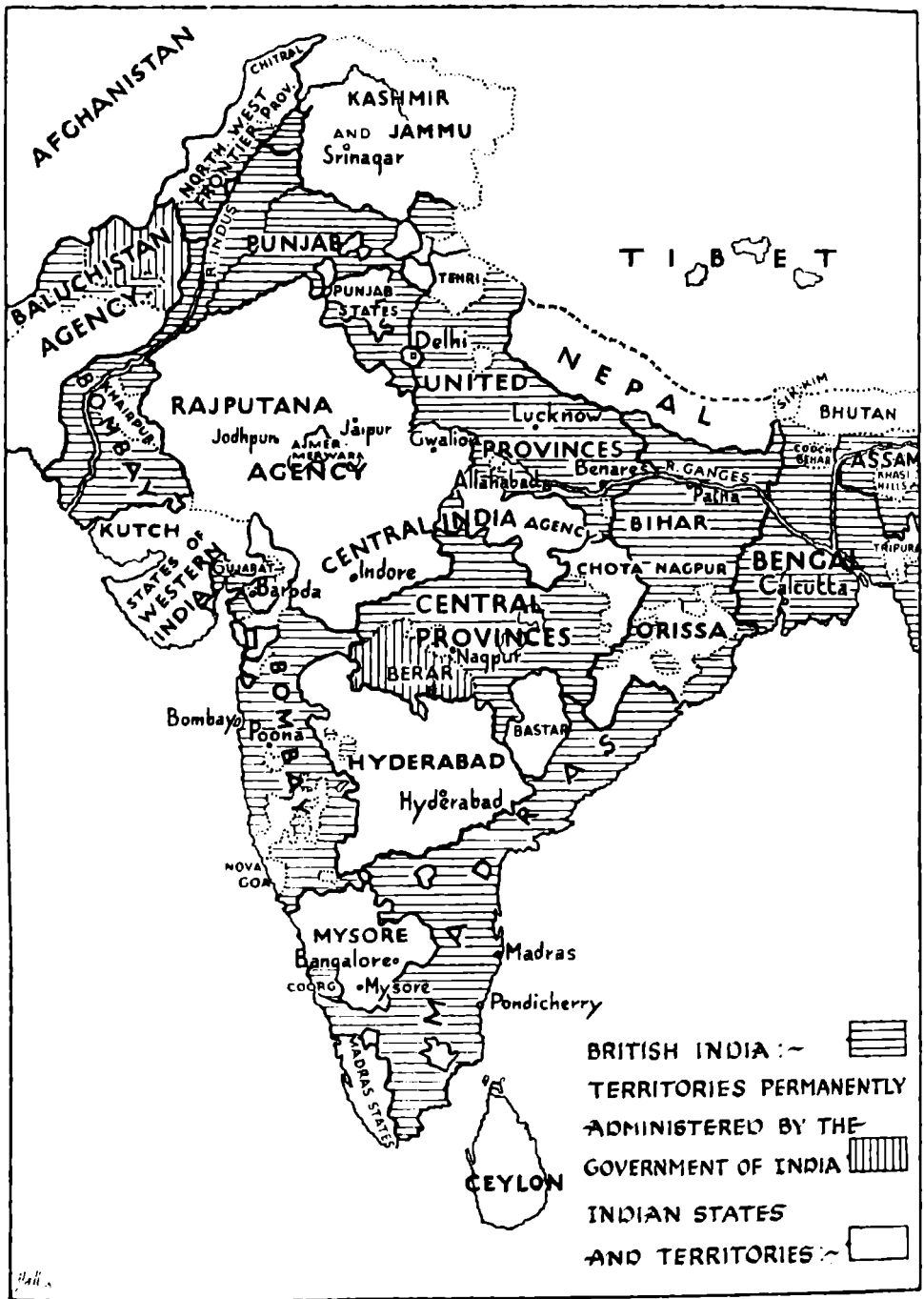
All the chiefs have benefited in the general development of the country. The trunk railways passing through their territories have helped their trade to expand and increased their wealth. And above all this the military and naval strength of the Empire has for nearly a century and a half kept them immune from invasion.

The Great War finally broke down the system of subordinate isolation. The Princes responded nobly to the call to arms. There can be no doubt that their loyalty and consistent support did much towards keeping India loyal. After the conclusion of the War, with great constitutional changes pending in British India, it was obvious that the Princes must be brought into the councils of Empire. That meant sweeping aside the old inhibitions. The Chamber of Princes was constituted and with it the Princes were permitted to sit as a united body. A new era of confidence had begun.

**XIII**

**THE PRINCES AND THE  
POLITICAL DEPARTMENT**





**INDIA : PRESENT DAY**

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE PRINCES AND THE POLITICAL DEPARTMENT

“**T**HE sovereignty of the Crown is everywhere unchallenged : it has itself laid down the limitations of its own prerogative.” In this carefully measured language Lord Curzon defined the position in India of the suzerain power, at the installation ceremonies of the Nawab of Bahawalpur in 1903.

Twenty-three years later Lord Reading reaffirmed his predecessors' theories in equally unambiguous terms in what is known as the “Berars Letter” to the Nizam. “The sovereignty of the British Crown,” he wrote, “is supreme in India and therefore no ruler of an Indian State can justifiably claim to negotiate with the British Government on an equal footing. Its supremacy is not based only on treaties and engagements, but exists independently of them.”

The leading Princes, however, have never formally accepted this definition of their relations with the paramount power. They do not dispute the suzerainty of the British Crown ; their loyalty to the King Emperor is beyond cavil. But they

contend that, constitutionally, their relations with the Crown are primarily based on treaty. As far as the States are concerned, the sole object of the alliance with Britain was to secure military protection. They had unavoidably to cede to the stronger military power the control of their foreign relations, both within and without India. As regards matters affecting their internal administration they were, they argue, on an equal footing with Britain. The outstanding feature of the relationship was the military protectorate. The obligation of Britain ended there. No interference on her part would be justified unless it could be proved to be essential for the purposes of the protectorate.

That is, from the Princes' point of view, the correct legal position. The agents of the Crown, with overwhelming military force behind them, have, they assert, ignored the treaties when it suited them to do so. The consequence has been a series of encroachments on the internal sovereignty of the States, culminating in the pronouncement of Lord Curzon which, pressed to its logical conclusion, would justify interference in the minutest detail of the administration of the States, whether in the interests of internal or external defence or not.

The process of attrition has been aided by the methods and practice of a powerful bureaucracy of diplomats, now known as the Political Department, instituted shortly after the Mutiny to take charge

of the relations between the States and the Government of India. According to one school of thought, the temptation to govern has been almost an obsession with political officers within the last half century. In their anxiety to enhance their own prestige they have forgotten that their responsibility was twofold, and that while their first duty was towards the Indian Government, it was also their duty to watch over the interests of the States to which they were accredited. It was no concern of theirs that the standard of administration in those States fell short of British India standards : despite this, in many cases political officers have acted as if they were responsible for initiating reforms. Their indifference, the argument of the Princes proceeds, to the interests of the States is largely responsible for the continual invasion of the sphere of Indian sovereignty, especially in such matters as opium policy, the salt monopoly, jurisdiction over European British subjects, ports, control of railways, posts and telegraphs, residency and cantonment jurisdiction, coinage, minority administration, forcing unwelcome advice on a particular State, and similar incidents.

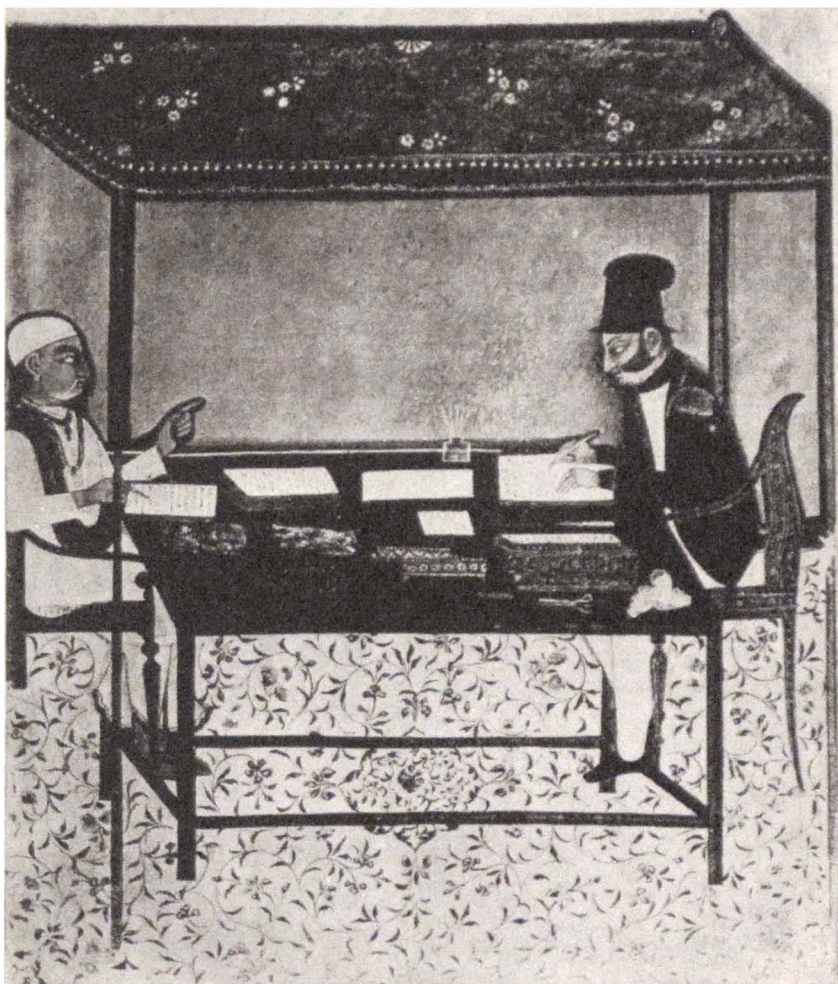
A secret code of political practice based on precedents and policy has, it is asserted, been slowly built up, accessible only to officers of the Political Department, which, it is urged, puts the Princes at a disadvantage.

The policy of isolation imposed on princely India made impossible any combined opposition to diplo-

matic aggression. And so a mass of usage, sufferance and precedent was accumulated and treated as applicable to the States generally. Here, it is suggested, political officers lost sight of the fact that the constitutional position of the States differed greatly and that methods, which might be justified in a small State not invested with sovereign powers, could not fairly be applied to large and important States which had always stood alone. Nevertheless, the general tendency has been to force the States into a procrustean bed of political practice, irrespective of their treaty position.

To justify its policy the Political Department, it is contended, evolved the theory of feudal relations which could not possibly apply in the majority of cases. Admittedly it might be appropriate in some cases, e.g. the feudatory States of Orissa, the Mahi Kantha and Rewa Kantha agencies on the eastern border of Baroda. It could not, the argument runs, be applicable in the Rajput and Maratha States, or Hyderabad.

Sir Lewis Tupper, the High Priest of the Department, compiled what his critics call the sacred mystery of the code of political practice, an elaborate work in several volumes, reputed to contain a precedent for every possible complication that might arise between Durbar and Residency. The same author developed the feudal theory in a book, entitled *Our Indian Protectorate*, published in 1893. He carried it almost to the point of demonstrating that the chiefs were great hereditary



COLONEL TOD AND HIS JAIN PUNDIT

From a sketch by Ghasi. (See p. 250)



officers responsible to the Government of India for the due administration of their territories. There was nothing left of the treaties.

This was too much for public opinion, even in England, and it was thought necessary that these theories should be repudiated by authority. So another great political pundit was commissioned to restate the position in terms that did not imply that the treaties were mere scraps of paper. But Sir William Lee-Warner's book (*The Native States of India*) did not entirely satisfy the advocates of the complete rigidity of treaties, who maintained that the writer, by his defence of the case law accretions round the treaties, came to rest very much in the position occupied by Tupper, and many political officers to-day would agree that Lee-Warner in some respects overstates the case for paramountcy.

Much of the criticism referred to in the preceding paragraphs is directed against the Political Department, and it is not easy to obtain a correct view of the position without some knowledge of the organisation and record of that much-maligned body.

The cadre of the Political Department is included in the combined list of the Foreign and Political Department of the Government of India. Its attractiveness is enhanced by the variety of opportunity. At one time you may be pitting your wits against the subtlety of a Persian official at Duzdap : a month or two later you may find yourself in a petty Indian State watching the culmination of an



elaborate intrigue, or caught up in the Olympian heights of the Simla secretariat.

The Department has, as its chief, the Viceroy, who is assisted in the administration by a secretary. The smaller States are grouped in agencies or residencies, varying with their size and importance.

The personnel of the Department is recruited from the Indian Army and the Indian Civil Service. In the old days influence and nepotism counted heavily in a candidate's favour : even to-day relations or friends in high places are almost essential to ensure appointment.

The training of the recruit lacks thoroughness, having regard to the responsible nature of the work for which he is destined. It is not enough to turn a young military officer loose in a British district to learn administration. No one takes much interest in him in such conditions. A thorough training in political work should be given to officers who are likely to serve in the States.

“ The whisper of the Residency is the thunder of the State ” is an epigram which gives expression to the feelings of the chiefs of lesser calibre towards political officers generally. There was some force in it during the Curzon regime, when interference reached its maximum. It does not reflect the atmosphere of to-day. The present generation of officers have a different outlook. They realise that the peasant under the time-honoured system of the Indian State may be as contented as the “ much administered man ” across the frontier.

There is little of the "watchdog"; much more of the guide, counsellor and friend attitude. And the young political officer does not forget the *mantram* or mystical formula of a *guru* or spiritual adviser of the department of the post-Curzon era. It runs thus: "The young political should remember that often the best work he does is what he leaves undone."

At times in the past the bureaucratic spirit has shown itself in ways that would excite amusement in the present generation. The Resident at Baroda, for instance, who, twenty-five years ago, if a recent book of memoirs is to be trusted, endeavoured to make a major political incident out of the alleged fact that the Maharaja's elephant was kept a foot in advance of that of the Resident in the Dussurah procession through the city, would not attract much sympathy from his colleagues nowadays. Nor would the Political Department think it worth while to issue such decrees as that which prohibited officers of the Bombay Political Department from wearing the royal arms with supporters on the buttons of their full-dress uniform. The famous circular of Lord Curzon prohibiting ruling Princes from visiting Europe without viceregal permission would be unthinkable to-day. It was not, by the way, approved by Whitehall, and provoked a reply from the Maharaja of Baroda which the Political Department did not find easy to answer.

Many of the leading Princes are now utilising the services of political officers or members of the

Indian Civil Service and the Imperial Police, as chief ministers, revenue and financial administrators. Discussing the question of British officers, a prominent ruler was heard to say recently to a brother chief: "Always keep two or three first-class British officers round you; you can then at any time leave your State with the feeling that all will go well in your absence"—an attitude very different from that of the British Indian politician. But perhaps the Indian Civil Service has had its day in the land of the *vakil raj*,<sup>1</sup> where government is now largely in the hands of lawyers and their allies, the high-caste Hindus.

Service in the States as a lent officer affords an insight into Indian ways of doing things and into Indian psychology that can hardly be obtained elsewhere, and leads to experiences which are not only varied, but occasionally startling. In one State, for example, the "lent" officer had reason to think that the Commander-in-Chief of the Army had amassed wealth too quickly: he accordingly announced his intention of auditing the accounts of the commissariat. The same night the War Office was burnt to the ground and all the records destroyed. Another officer, convinced that the local police and civil officer in charge of a remote district were looting the countryside, obtained by an ingenious stratagem the proof he wanted. The suspected officials sent an emissary to offer a heavy

<sup>1</sup> A depreciatory term used by non-political Indians to describe the future India in which the *vakil* (= lawyer; *raj* = rule) would wield political power.

bribe to the officer's personal assistant on condition that he should ward off an enquiry. The officer was concealed behind a screen during the interview and so obtained a first-hand description of the methods adopted by the men he hoped to defeat. Another British administrator in the early days of paramountcy placed in charge of Sawantwadi, a little Maratha State in the Ghauts, terrified his Brahmin officials by abolishing a large allowance paid to the forest king of the hobgoblins. Things are very different nowadays with the present ruler, who was educated at a British public school and later went through the Officers' Cadet Battalion Training School at Cambridge, received a commission in a Maratha battalion and served in Mesopotamia.

The Princes do not always like their officers' efficiency. It is a tradition that one of the prerogatives of the Nizams was to think aloud. On one occasion the British finance officer of the late Nizam went to the palace to take leave of him before going on furlough. The Nizam looked dreamily through him and murmured in his own language: "Thank Heaven for small mercies. At least I shall be rid of this heavy-handed guardian of my treasury for eight months."

States have often been nursed back from bankruptcy to opulence by British officers, and improvements have been effected during minority administrations which have a lasting value, though there is a general criticism from the protagonists of

the States that the opportunity has on occasions been used to encroach on the rights of a State, e.g. the closing of its mints, in the matter of railways, and of posts and telegraphs. In one matter the critics are on firmer ground. During such a minority it frequently happens that huge sums are accumulated as the result of British supervision. The young Prince, on his succession, at perhaps eighteen years of age, is given complete control of all this wealth. The consequence generally is that he spends the money recklessly and acquires habits of extravagance which ultimately lead to his downfall. The danger could be obviated if the money were invested in developing the resources of the State, e.g. road-making, railways, canals, wells, electric installations, etc. And well-meant advice at the right moment might often save otherwise promising young chiefs from ruining themselves by absurd extravagance and irresponsible behaviour generally. It is fair neither to the chief nor to his people that intervention should be withheld till it is too late.

With all this the indictment against the Political Department is undoubtedly overdrawn. Political officers were not responsible for the Curzon policy nor for Lord Canning's pronouncement on the subject of intervention. The policy of "subordinate isolation" was devised before the Political Department came into existence. In most questions affecting British India and the States jointly the decision rests largely with the Viceroy's Execu-

tive Council. The Department has not a separate member to represent it, and the Viceroy as its head is responsible for watching both the interests of the States and those of British India. In fiscal matters, with the whole weight of the Council against the States, it is not surprising that their point of view is frequently overlooked. The policy forced on the States in the matter of salt, seaports, customs, railways, opium, posts and telegraphs may be quoted as examples.

On the other hand, in purely State matters there is no doubt that a powerful bureaucracy, entrenched in precedent and case law, can and does bring strong influence to bear on the Viceroy. The straining after uniformity, and the invention of theories to suit a policy, e.g. the feudal theory, may perhaps not unfairly be laid at the door of the Department. Still, when all is said, the fact remains that the States have maintained their place in the polity of India. And it is beyond doubt that their future is assured whatever scheme of government may be ultimately evolved for the sub-continent, on one condition only—reasonably efficient and impartial administration.

It was not until 1910 that the first breach in the policy of subordinate isolation was made, when Lord Minto summoned several of the Princes into counsel on the question of sedition in India. It was finally swept away in 1921 by the institution of the Chamber of Princes concurrently with the introduction of partially responsible government in British

India. The Chamber consists of 108 rulers of the more important States, who are members in their own right. A dynastic salute of not less than eleven guns, or the exercise of full or practically full internal powers, are the principal qualifications. Twelve additional members are elected by the 127 other States next in order of importance.

As regards its powers, the Chamber is a deliberative and consultative, but not an executive, body. It meets annually in its own Hall of Debate in the Council House at New Delhi. The Viceroy is the President, and the Chancellor and pro-Chancellor are elected from among the members each year. Matters of general interest to the States are discussed, especially in the Standing Committee. These discussions have facilitated a good deal of codification of practice, so that the Princes know where they stand. Above all, the Chamber has given the Princes a common meeting-ground, and the contacts thus established have made it possible for them to take counsel together to protect their interests in the rapidly changing political conditions in British India.<sup>1</sup>

Nothing is more important for the future of the Chamber than a well-planned scheme for the educa-

<sup>1</sup> It is to be feared that the Chamber has lost somewhat of its prestige and authority as a consequence of the recent secession (it is believed in connection with the question of paramountcy, which is discussed later) of six or seven of the more important States, including Kashmir, Travancore, Mysore and Hyderabad. Unless the Chamber represents the full weight of princely India, its value as a working element in the Indian constitution of the future will be seriously discounted, but it is hoped that the withdrawal of these Princes may not be permanent.

tion of the sons of ruling chiefs and of their nobles. A hundred years ago the British protectorate removed the checks on unbridled despotism and it was felt that only education could be an effective substitute. The policy adopted in the case of rulers of the larger States during their minority was to insist on the appointment of British tutors. The Gaekwar of Baroda had such a tutor in the seventies : so had the late Nizam of Hyderabad : also the present Maharaja of Mysore. For the sons of chiefs generally and of their nobles, colleges were established about half a century ago at various centres—Rajkot for Kathiawar, Indore for Central India, Ajmere for Rajputana. Why a great central college or university was not set up for the whole of princely India is not clear. It would perhaps have prejudiced the system of isolation. These colleges are run to some extent on public-school lines ; several of the principals have been men of outstanding personality, and there can be no doubt that the colleges have been an important factor in the development of the standard of conduct in the Princes and their aristocracies. At the same time the practice that prevails in some cases of allowing pupils to live separately and to maintain their own establishments must react unfavourably on their characters. Does this kind of thing account for the fact that one still sometimes sees on the polo ground of an Indian chief the players on both sides holding back when his Highness gets possession of the ball ?



These colleges have undoubtedly had some influence in improving the standard of administration, though sometimes the results are not entirely academic. Thus one of the pupils, asked to write an essay on mountains, expressed his ideas in this way : “ Mountains are desirable things : they are generally covered with forests : forests mean tigers : tigers attract Viceroys : the roads are remade : the chief gets a G.C.I.E. and the State benefits.” Another, asked how he would clear his State from debt, replied : “ I should gain the confidence of my minister, and when I had all the information he could give me, I should imprison him till he disgorged the plunder accumulated during my minority.” These young men should go far !

The results of sending young chiefs to England for education have very frequently been unsatisfactory, and many of the leading Princes are opposed to the practice. The late Maharaja Sindhia, for example, left in his will an inhibition against his son being sent abroad for training. Similarly the Gaekwar of Baroda has had his grandson educated in India.

Lord Curzon took a special interest in the education of the sons of the Princes. He would frequently discuss the three paths that opened out to the young scion of a princely house : firstly, the zenana, which he thought worst of all ; then the English school and college—a perilous adventure ; thirdly the Chiefs’ College, which in his view was best, or least harmful. He never lost an opportunity

of adjuring "his colleagues and partners in the work of government to place before themselves high standards of public duty : to remember that they were the servants as well as the masters of their people : that their *gadis* were not diwans of indulgence but the stern seats of duty."

Comments on the college system by chiefs who have been pupils of one of these institutions are sometimes illuminating. A recent critic, for example, condemns the principle of making education at these colleges more or less compulsory. He stigmatises the scheme of education as unsuited for the training of a future ruler. The Government of India does not like history, and therefore history is rarely taught : no real grounding is given in economics or political organisation, or administration generally. Pupils are expected to become Scouts whether they like it or not : there is nothing more comic, he says, than the spectacle of a number of Indian boys, uncomfortable in their Scout uniform, emitting Scout cries and dancing round an elderly civil servant appearing in the rôle of Chief Scout. The boredom of such a scheme of education, it is asserted, tends to make the young chief drift back to the old life when he leaves college.

Much of this criticism is doubtless inspired by a dislike of paramountcy and its incidents, and to that extent need not be taken seriously. At the same time it would seem clear that the college system needs remodelling in order to bring it more

into touch with modern conditions. Why should not the Princes themselves devise a comprehensive scheme, now more than ever required, and carry it out, if necessary, with the co-operation of the British Government? A few years ago the question was discussed by a committee of the Chamber of Princes. It is believed that so far no radical reforms have been attempted, but the problem is one of pressing urgency.

The recent attitude of the Princes to paramountcy becomes intelligible in view of the political situation of India to-day, and is now one of the key positions in that problem. Their resistance was undoubtedly in large part inspired by the uncertainty of their future position in a new system of government which might place complete responsibility in the hands of an Indian cabinet. The Indian nationalist evidently expected to succeed to the responsibilities of the Crown so far as the States were concerned. If this were to be the case, the only safe course, the Princes thought, was to get back to the treaty position, and some of them may have imagined that the obvious weakening of British prestige was a good opportunity of recovering privileges they had lost. To clear the ground they put forward the request that their relations with the Government of India under the treaties should be investigated by a Commission,<sup>1</sup> which was agreed to,

<sup>1</sup> The Butler Committee of 1928 consisted of Sir Harcourt Butler, a retired Indian governor, the Hon. Sidney Peel and Professor Houldsworth, Vinerian Professor of Law at Oxford University.

but the report was in many respects disappointing to the Princes.

It is true that it laid down the fundamental principle that paramountcy vests in the Crown and not in the Government of India, and that the Princes could not be compelled to transfer their allegiance to a responsible Indian Government. That was an important point gained. As to paramountcy and the treaties, it was held that the treaties "had necessarily been supplemented and illumined by political practice to meet changing conditions in a moving world. Paramountcy must continue to be paramount." One particular expression of opinion created alarm. Discussing the question of popular demands that might be put forward, the Committee observed that if the Princes' position were threatened by political agitation for a change in the system of government, the Paramount Power would be bound to maintain the rights, privileges and dignity of the Prince: but it would also be its duty to suggest such measures as would satisfy the demand without eliminating the Prince. The Princes generally consider that in expressing this view the Committee travelled beyond its sphere. They challenge, too, the right of the Crown to advise a change in the system of government when the administration is reasonably efficient.

There is a good deal to be said for this point of view. If the principle were clearly recognised, it might easily happen that a strong party in the

federal Legislature would bring pressure to bear on the Viceroy to force a Prince to introduce a system of popular government which would inevitably destroy his dynasty or lead to civil war. Suppose, for example, that a strong Hindu majority brought pressure to bear on the Viceroy to compel a Moslem ruler of a State predominantly Hindu to introduce popular reforms. The reactions in Moslem India might be disastrous. The Princes may not unreasonably anticipate that methods such as these might be adopted to ensure the ultimate ascendancy of the majority community, if the principle referred to is to hold good.

At great expense the Princes ran a parallel enquiry to the British Committee, through a leading British lawyer, Sir Leslie Scott, assisted by other jurists of eminence, who generally endorsed the theories the Princes hold as to the treaty position. As regards the sphere of paramountcy, however, they expressed themselves as prepared to enlarge its scope to include any act of intervention which is an essential corollary of the responsibility attaching to the military protectorate ; they would, for example, allow the Crown to intervene to prevent gross misgovernment which might lead to insurrection or internal disorders. They are very emphatic that the Crown has no right to force on the States an economic policy devised in the general interests of India, or to decide, except by mutual agreement, questions affecting the internal sovereignty of the States. Here it may be observed that

the crux of the future relations between the States and the Crown, outside the federal sphere, under the new constitution, will be to devise some scheme for the settlement of disputes that will inspire complete confidence among the Princes. It is hardly fair to make the Viceroy entirely responsible. His dual position as Viceroy and chief of the federal Cabinet would be very difficult, if the Cabinet were interested indirectly in the question at issue with the State concerned.

The attitude of political India towards the States has been anything but consistent during the period of intensive agitation of the last fifteen years. The nationalist politician would have welcomed a close alliance with the Princes with the object of driving the British from India, but of this there has never been the slightest chance. The extremist school of thought, dominated by Gandhi and the Nehrus, father and son, which produced several years ago a scheme of Dominion status, would eliminate the Princes as a blatant anachronism. Other extremists (Hindus, of course) invited the Princes to share with them the heritage of Britain. How the Moslems would have fared under such a convention does not appear. A less advanced school appeal to Indian rulers to attract the affection of their subjects by introducing constitutional government, thereafter joining the Indian Federation. This, it has been pointed out to them, would help them to regain their self-respect, as they would cease to be subordinates of a foreign bureau-

cracy, forced to compromise their dignity before every political officer. Other politicians have appealed to the constitutionally governed States of Travancore and Mysore to ally themselves with British India against the autocrats of the States who preach democracy for British India while denying the elementary principles of liberty to their own people.

Another political group has sought to attract support from the States by airing the Princes' grievances against the British Government, even suggesting that the Political Department should be placed under the influence and criticism of the Indian Legislature in order to put a check on its arbitrary dealings with the Princes. This would be the thin end of the wedge for the Indian States system. So far British relations with the Princes have been excluded from the cognisance of the Legislatures. A recent writer, a member of the Legislative Assembly, in his book entitled *India, Peace or War?*, asserts that if the protecting arm of Britain were once removed "these medieval Maharajas would be overthrown in a week." His remedy is to turn loose the whole British Civil Service from British India into the States, where they would teach the Indian Princes to become constitutional rulers. Even so-called moderate Liberals like the Right Hon. V. S. Sastri will tell you that the guarantees claimed by the Princes are a serious obstacle to dominionhood. The Princes should be ready to place their destiny in the hands of the Indian nationalist.

Such interest in the States, it should be remembered, is displayed mainly by the Hindu politician. The Moslem could normally be counted on to back up Moslem rulers through thick and thin.

The Indian Press reflects the feelings of the politician towards the Princes. Papers of the lower type frequently indulge in blackmail. The Princes' Protection Act passed a few years ago to check the tendency is not altogether effective. The Princes are afraid to use it themselves lest the result should be to publish calumny more widely. There is always the danger that the whole extremist Press might support the threatened journal. The Indian Government in such an emergency could hardly identify itself with absolutism against the almost united Press of India. Here is another rock in the uncharted sea of India's political future.

The Press concerns itself mainly with attacks on the Princes, sneering at their claims to divine right : their inconsistency in supporting a system of democracy for British India while refusing it to their own people : holding up to ridicule their extravagance and love of display. The charge of conspiring with the British to hold India in perpetual slavery is a favourite theme. At one minute a journal will attack the British for allowing misrule ; at another it will denounce intervention as brutal high-handedness. The British Government is always in the wrong.

There are other varieties of trouble in the States fomented by the more extreme group of Congress.



At one time Gwalior was threatened with repercussions from the no-rent and landlord-baiting campaign in the United Provinces. There were disturbances from the same source in several States in Central India. Political penetration in Kolhapur has been referred to elsewhere. The recent disturbances in Kashmir were largely due to outside influence, in this case Moslem. The troubles among the Meos (Moslems) of Alwar attracted sympathy from across the border.

The most recent weapon of offence invented by the politician is the *jatha*, or cohort of unarmed men, who seek to attain their object by organising obstruction to the authorities. This has been used effectively in Kashmir and elsewhere. Here again is a potential source of danger in the future. A provincial government with its police under the control of a Congress minister might find itself in a difficult position, if the minister's political supporters were to organise, and move across the frontier, *jathas* to assist their co-religionists against an obnoxious ruler, e.g. Moslem *jathas* against Kashmir and Marathas against Hyderabad. That the issue is a live one is clear from a recent episode. Some mischiefmonger started a rumour in Delhi that the Maharaja of Patiala had prohibited the reading of the Koran in the mosques in the State. Without waiting to verify the report, a leading Moslem publicist wired to the Maharaja threatening him with a *jatha* of a hundred thousand Moslems from British India unless the embargo were

removed. The Government of India have recently passed legislation to meet the danger. Would a Congress minister use it against his own people?

The general impression from a consideration of the attitude of the British Indian politician towards the Princes is that he has little use for them except as subordinate allies to dominate the British. His political creed is democracy, not because he thinks it divinely inspired, but because he looks on it as the only means of seizing power from the present rulers; he is well aware that the creed does not appeal to the Princes. He ungraciously ignores the debt that Hindu India at least owes to the Princes for their achievement in preserving almost intact the ancient form of Indian sovereignty, the heritage of two thousand years of tradition; there is no appreciation of what they have done to maintain Hindu culture and religion for nearly a thousand years against the encroachments of militant Islam. Nor does the politician recognise the right of the Princes, many of whom represent dynasties that have ruled for over ten centuries, to be consulted as to the political structure of the India of the future. In such conditions one can hardly expect the Indian Princes to sit in their Durbars with folded hands while the lawyers, schoolmasters, moneylenders and industrialists decide the fate of India.



**XIV**

**THE PRINCES AND FEDERATION**



## CHAPTER XIV

### THE PRINCES AND FEDERATION

**T**HE Round Table Conference with its galaxy of Indian Princes and contingents of Indian politicians met in an atmosphere of tension towards the close of 1930. The British Government had placed themselves in a difficult position by their pronouncement regarding Dominion status. No political party in India would, in view of that pronouncement, accept a scheme of reform that did not give responsibility at the centre : the British Government felt that no such scheme would be possible except in an Indian federation, in which the Princes would be a steadying influence. The Princes, therefore, held the key to the position, and their attitude was doubtful. The Indian politicians, on their side, conscious that, since Congress was not represented, they could not speak for politically-minded India, were anything but sure of themselves.

The cloud lifted when the Princes declared their readiness to enter a federation. They prescribed no definite conditions of entry : the terms of their association were left for future determination. But it was made sufficiently clear that their co-operation

with British India involved the maintenance of the connection with the British Commonwealth. They would have nothing to do with those who wished to drag India from her allegiance to the King Emperor. The Congress leader, Jowahir Lal Nehru, with his spiritual home in Moscow, and his dreams of a network of socialist republics over India, including the States, had no appeal to vigorous autocracy.

The opinion was held in some quarters that the Princes had been stampeded into federation as the only safe course, if they wished to avoid submergence under the rising tide of democracy in India. The British Government had already scored out most of their treaties : it might complete the process and hand the States over to political India. Congress had already established a moral superiority : with the British Government in a conciliatory mood the Princes might hope that it would be possible for them, as has been previously suggested, to recover some of the ground lost to paramountcy—a *quid pro quo* for their co-operation in building a new system of government.

It is probable, too, that since most of the States are Hindu, many of the Hindu Princes sympathise subconsciously, if not actually, with Hindu nationalism. This may have been a contributory factor. There were doubts, too, regarding the attitude of the Labour government towards privileged autocracy, and it was not to be wondered at if the Princes felt that the safest course to follow was to fling themselves into the fray and get the best terms possible.

At the outset the British Government made it clear that the relations of the States outside the federal sphere would be with the Crown. Responsibility at the centre would only be partial. The Crown meant to fulfil its treaty obligations, and must be in a position to fulfil them, especially as regards the military protectorate, and nothing short of complete control of the army would suffice for that purpose. Foreign relations would also remain with the Crown.

The Princes were naturally prepared to cede only the minimum sovereignty necessary for the functioning of the federal government. They were emphatic that they would not permit any interference in their internal affairs.

Apart from safeguards, the main question was finance. It was recognised that the principle of uniformity in the contributions to federal resources must be applied to the greatest possible extent. This involved the investigation of a variety of problems. There was, for instance, the question of the contributions already paid by many States towards imperial defence. If all the units were to contribute to federal revenues on an equal footing, credit would have to be given to States which already paid a share of the military expenditure, whether in the form of an annual cash payment or of ceded territories. If no credit were allowed for these subscriptions the States would be paying twice over for military defence.

The Princes not unnaturally wished to make the



best bargain possible, and many of them put forward claims impinging on the salt monopoly and other financial preserves of the Government of India such as railways, the profits of coinage, currency and customs. Any credit that might be conceded would be set against the federal contribution of the State interested.

A committee known as the States (Finance) Committee was accordingly appointed at the end of 1931 to investigate in India itself the question of finance so far as the States were concerned. Meanwhile the Princes had lost some of their earlier enthusiasm for the new policy. They were alarmed at the insistence of the Indian politicians that each State should federate separately on its own account : a feeling grew up that unless they presented a united front they might be swamped in the new legislature. Before he died, the Jam of Nawanagar (the Maharaja Ranjitsinghi) advocated a confederation of the States in the first instance. He had most of the Kathiawar States behind him. Other States followed his lead, and for a time the slogan was Confederation ; but as time went on some of the representatives of the Princes, alarmed by the controversy over what was known as " communalism " and kindred disputes, began to feel doubtful of the safety of the edifice that was being designed.

The Committee reported in July 1932. As regards the financial obligations imposed on the States by the military protectorate they observe that British India is mainly an aggregation of

annexations from, or cessions by, Indian States. The Committee held that the States must be given credit for the lands ceded. They found it difficult to establish a formula for the purpose of valuation, and finally adopted the valuation at cession. One would have imagined that a necessary corollary of this decision was an allowance for the difference in the commodity value of the rupee a century ago and at the present time. Hyderabad was held to be entitled to an enormous credit, but the Nizam's government waived its right on the understanding that the subsidiary force should continue to be stationed at the capital.

The Gaekwar of Baroda had at different times ceded a third of his richest territories to secure military protection. The Committee seem to think that the British took unfair advantage of the Gaekwar's necessities. They comment on the fact that the Baroda ruler was an ally of long standing and that his loss of territory did not follow defeat in the field. They propose an annual credit of 22.98 lakhs of rupees (£160,000) on account of the value of the cessions. They were inclined to suggest that parts of the ceded territory should be restored.

Gwalior advanced claims covering a vast area of territory annexed after the war of 1803. These were overruled on the ground that the annexations were absolute and that the offer of a subsidiary force, to be maintained from the revenues of the territory, was merely an inducement to the Maha-

raja Sindhia to join the system of subordinate alliance. An annual credit of 11.78 lakhs (£80,000) was allowed on account of other cessions. In other cases smaller but similar allowances were suggested.

Tributes or subsidies paid in cash for military protection aggregate 59 lakhs (about £400,000) a year, of which the subsidy ( $24\frac{1}{2}$  lakhs = £175,000) paid by Mysore is the largest item. It is recommended that the whole of these payments should ultimately be remitted, but that in order to ease the strain on federal revenues the remission should be confined, until financial conditions are easier, to the amount by which the annual payment exceeds 5 per cent. of the revenues of the State concerned. In this way Mysore would at once receive 7 lakhs out of its 24. The logic behind this solicitude for federal revenues seems a little weak.

A complication arises in cases where a State assigned to the British Government the tribute due to it from another State in part payment of its subsidy. The Committee feel that in equity such tribute should revert to the assignor. They consider these interstatal tributes as inconsistent with federation and express the pious hope that those who now receive them will forgo them. It is doubtful whether the federal mind will develop to such an extent within a reasonable time.

The salt monopoly is a form of imperial revenue inherited from the Moguls. It amounts at present to  $6\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. of the total central revenues. The monopoly is not, however, complete. Travancore

produces its own salt : so does Kathiawar. The *force majeure* of paramountcy was admittedly used to bring Kathiawar into line and compel it to give up manufacturing for export. Neither Kathiawar nor Travancore pays the salt duty. The total value of immunities of the kind total 46 lakhs (£320,000). It is recommended that Kathiawar, Kutch and other States which possess facilities for manufacturing salt should be allowed to do so and to sell the product in India generally, provided imperial duty is levied on the salt so exported from the States. At present salt is largely imported from Aden and even from Great Britain.

These large immunities will involve difficulties. The States that now enjoy them can hardly be expected to join the new federation if it means a serious change for the worse in their finances.

The question of maritime customs is another obstacle. Customs are the sheet anchor of imperial finance in India. To realise the federal ideal the customs collected at the State ports should go into the federal treasury. There is, however, little hope of the States agreeing to forgo customs on imported goods consumed within their own territories. In one case, Bhavnagar, the State port is by treaty a free port, and the State retains the customs even on goods passed on into British India. Travancore and Cochin share with British India the customs of the new port of Cochin. The States (Finance) Committee recommend that the rights of the two States be bought out and that

the port should become federal property. There may be some difficulty in obtaining the necessary agreement.

The claim of the States to share in the revenue of the Indian Government railways evoked no sympathy from the Committee. Although land was given free the States have benefited greatly from the economic development which followed.

As regards the claim to retrocession of jurisdiction on the trunk lines, it is pointed out that there are twenty-eight changes of jurisdiction between Bombay and Delhi and that railways could hardly be operated if each State controlled the line within its territories. All this is reasonable enough. On the other hand, it must be remembered that the traffic brought to the railways by the States has contributed largely to railway revenue.

Profits from coinage and currency must, it is held, be as far as possible reserved for federal revenues. In only seven States is there minting of any importance, and Hyderabad alone makes a considerable profit. This is derived from the note issue. The annual return is seventeen lakhs, as compared with the federal estimate of three hundred and eighty lakhs for India generally. The Committee consider these profits of Hyderabad to amount to an immunity. Doubtless it would be set against the credit on account of ceded territories to which Hyderabad would be entitled if the Nizam's government had not waived its claim.

It will be seen that it is not possible in every

respect to establish a perfectly symmetrical system of federal finance if the States join the federation.

Every effort will probably be made to meet the Princes half-way. It is not unreasonable that the British Indian politicians should make the path to federation as easy as possible for them. They speak for eighty millions of people : they are ready to place and maintain in the field an army of over forty thousand highly trained troops in the defence of India. And it should not be forgotten that British Indian politicians do not speak with a united voice. For one thing there is a great gulf between Hindu and Moslem : between caste Hindu and the outcast. All this weakens the position of political India with the Princes. In fact, the Princes' adherence to a federation is largely a matter of favour to the impatient idealist in India and should be regarded in that light. They will gain only indirectly from the political progress of India as a whole : the risks they take are heavy.

The Princes are unquestionably the strongest party in all the political manœuvring that has been going on, and it may be said that the key still lies in their hands. What is their attitude towards the White Paper ? Confederation has for the moment faded out of the picture as the result of the death of the Jam of Nawanagar : several of the leading Princes are prepared to join the federation though they are not greatly interested in it : others will join if the financial position is satisfactory to themselves, and if they are assured of the adequacy of

the safeguards, especially as regards the maintenance of the British connection.

Apart from all this, the obvious weakness of the States in a federation without some sort of unity among themselves is causing anxiety among the rulers, several of whose leaders arranged an informal conference in May 1934 to consider the possibility of forming a scheme of co-operation among the States as a body, of examining the report of the Joint Parliamentary Committee when it is ready, and of formulating recommendations.

At the same time the question of the reorganisation of the Princes' Chamber was discussed. Many of the Princes are dissatisfied with the working and diminishing importance of that institution. There is a general desire among them that the Chamber should be strengthened and its constitution improved with the idea of utilising it as a rallying point for the Princes and as a means of ensuring joint action. It was further proposed at the Conference to set up a council of fifteen ministers of whom ten would be nominated by the five 21-gun States and the five 19-gun States : the other five would go to the remaining hundred States entitled to gun salutes. This council would consider all matters affecting the States in the federation, with a view to ensuring unity of policy. This is a move in the right direction. A small body of picked men representing the different groups is essential, if the States are to keep abreast of the kaleidoscopic movements of Indian politics.



THE CHAMBER OF PRINCES

In the Council House at New Delhi





There seems, in point of fact, to be a reaction towards the position taken up by the late Jam Sahib as the only safe course to follow. Without cohesion the value of the States as a steady influence in Indian politics might easily be lost. A concordat would help to bring together the three historic groups in the States—Rajputs, Marathas and Moslems—and neutralise the two-centuries-old feud between the first two. Without co-operation in some form the strongest party in British India, which will almost certainly be the caste Hindus, might, by allying themselves, for example, with the Marathas against the Moslems and the rest, slowly undermine the position of the States and in the end absorb them. The danger would be minimised by a working agreement between the States.

There are other strategic points in the proposed federation to which the Princes should direct their attention. By securing the establishment of a railway board and of the reserve bank, the British Government have to a great extent removed those essential elements in the economic organism of the country from political influence. Complete elimination is, however, almost impossible and the States should make sure that their interests are fully represented on the boards of both institutions. Efficient finance and railway administration are essential elements in military defence.

Another matter of outstanding importance to the Princes is the efficient working of the Department of

Criminal Investigation. Communist and terrorist activities will have to be faced under a federation ; and it is more than likely that subversive movements against some of the States will be organised in British India as was recently the case in Alwar and Kashmir. Dacoities on the borders of some of the Central India and Rajput States have increased of late, and a weakening of the All-India Criminal Investigation Department might have disastrous results. Strict impartiality is essential ; with the department in the hands of a federal minister, possibly biased in favour of a particular community, this would not be achieved. An influential section of the Princes sees the difficulty and proposes to avoid it by placing the Criminal Investigation Department in the hands of the Viceroy.

At the same time, with the provincial police in charge of a minister, it might at times be difficult for the agents of the All-India Department to secure the necessary co-operation of the local police in dealing with crime covering several provinces and States. It has been suggested that the difficulty might be met by establishing an All-India Police Force, but this would not be an easy matter.

Above all the Princes desire stability. With this end in view some of their leading ministers have suggested that there should be a second chamber in every province, as in the United States. This would help to steady politics in the provinces. Most important of all, the electoral system should be so elaborated as to ensure that the peasantry and

landowning classes are represented by their own people and not by the town-bred lawyer. The Princes do not wish to go through an era of perpetual unrest with a Congress ministry, concerned not to govern but to break the British connection.

The question of the representation of the Princes in the federal legislature is still unsettled. There is a clash of interests between the smaller and the larger States : the latter demand that population should be the basis ; the smaller States claim that other considerations should be given weight. It seems impossible that the Princes should settle the matter among themselves, and in the end the Imperial Government will probably have to intervene.

The design of the mosaic of Indian federation is now almost complete. The component parts present a curious diversity. The States are for the most part purely autocratic : in a few, like Travancore, Cochin and Mysore, the system of rule is more or less constitutional. Some States pay tribute : others enjoy immunities : some have ceded territories to pay for British military protection : there are some to which none of these conditions applies. In the provinces themselves there is anything but homogeneity.

The federal experiment itself reverses the ordinary process. It is constructed from the top downwards very much as has been the case with political reform in India. Thus the Central Government, now in enjoyment of supreme authority, renounces

in favour of the provinces the powers necessary to give them responsibility, retaining for itself adequate powers in the federal sphere. Ordinarily the constituent units diminish their own sovereignty in favour of the federal government. This is really what the States are doing in a restricted sphere. The federal government over this portion of the political field will have very limited authority. And finally the relations of the States and of the provinces to the common Sovereign are of a very different character. The magnitude and complexity of the problems are startling. Nothing but goodwill and harmony of purpose can solve them, and having solved them turn the solution to the lasting benefit of the two Indias.

XV

THE FUTURE



## CHAPTER XV

### THE FUTURE

**T**HE White Paper can hardly be said to have evoked enthusiasm in any quarter. The Moderates, whose very name is a euphemism, have no love for it : they object to almost everything in the nature of safeguards : they demand a time-limit for the Indianisation of the army : they are grasping, perhaps not unnaturally, at supreme power. A member of their group recently described the Paper as treasonable : what he meant was that it involved a partial surrender on the question of safeguards when the battle against the alien autocrats had been won. The Congress treats the portentous document with contempt. The Princes and their advisers have a good deal of criticism in reserve.

The outlook is thus not altogether promising. Let us, however, assume that the White Paper is adopted more or less in its present form by Parliament and that the Princes join the federation in the proportion stipulated by the British Government, i.e. 50 per cent. of the rulers represented in the Chamber, as a condition precedent to its introduction. How is the new federation likely



to work in the early stages? The question depends to a great extent on the policy of Congress. If the various groups comprising that body stand solidly together, determined to carry on the fight to a finish in order to oust what it calls alien rule, then there will be a trial of strength between the new constitution and the forces of disorder. It will depend largely on the Princes whether the constitution stands the stress or breaks down.

Congress will have a choice of alternatives. They might elect to work the federal scheme for a time in alliance with the Moderates, with a view to establishing a dominant influence and using it to further their own ends. Or they might capture the ministries in the provinces and utilise the position of vantage thus obtained to encourage a campaign of non-co-operation and boycott all over India, contingents of Congressmen being allowed to move across into the States to incite rebellion. With the control of the police in their hands, they could allow the movement to develop until a state of complete chaos was produced from one end of the country to the other. The Viceroy would be on the horns of a dilemma. If he intervened at an early stage it would mean the breakdown of the constitution: if he allowed the movement to develop it would be almost impossible to regain control and he would probably have to capitulate unless the British Government were prepared to send out large reinforcements of British troops.

Another alternative would be for Congress to

boycott the new assemblies and from outside them to carry on a movement similar to that already described, confident that no government of Moderates would be strong enough to cope with them, and that the results would be the same in the end. A *jatha* attack on Hyderabad might be organised with a view to forcing the hand of the Viceroy. This would almost certainly lead to Moslem retaliation in Kashmir. As a result of the subtle manœuvres of Congress the British Government might find itself shooting its own friends. This would weaken its position while adding to Congress prestige.

All this, it will be retorted, is mere conjecture. The obvious sincerity of the British Government in offering to India a scheme of constitutional reform which, if received with goodwill and a readiness to co-operate, would be, in essence, home rule, should attract support from all parties and create an atmosphere uncongenial to extremism. There may be ground for optimism, but it is hardly inspired by the attitude of the political parties towards the British offer. Political unrest in India has its origin in economic troubles. A poverty-stricken intelligentsia brought into existence by a system of higher education out of proportion to economic needs is inevitably a disturbing element. And year by year its numbers increase. *Swaraj* means for them a new heaven and a new earth. Sooner or later they will find their dream a chimera, but while it lasts the extremist will have

crowds of disappointed students as his shock troops. A strong administration able to ensure peace and order, and with sufficient imagination to frame a policy of rapid economic development, is the only safeguard against chaos in India.

British statesmen who sponsor the White Paper are influenced by a great and generous hope that the charter of liberty it confers will bring peace, happiness and prosperity to India, uniting her more firmly than before to the British commonwealth by the ties of friendship and goodwill. It is a hope that is shared by thousands of progressive Englishmen, who have no desire to dominate an unwilling India.

Most of the Princes associate themselves with these feelings. But if the ideal is to be realised they must face the dangers that threaten to destroy it. Many people feel that the danger is greatest in the economic field. There can be no doubt that if the question of the economic rehabilitation of the countryside is neglected, no matter what the new government may be, India will drift into anarchy. The chief problem is to lighten the burden of rural debt, which is paralysing the life of the peasantry. It is difficult to see how it can be solved, except in co-operation with Britain. But political India clings to a protectionist policy, which must in the end paralyse British trade, and so weaken British influence to an extent that will make it impossible for Britain to fulfil her responsibility to defend India by land and sea, to which she is pledged by treaty with the States.

Since the Round Table Conference broke up, divisions in the Congress Camp have weakened its position. A divergence of opinion on the communal award by Mr. Ramsay MacDonald is mainly responsible. This may induce some of the Princes to refrain from pressing for a decision on questions affecting their interests, in the hope that the balance of parties will incline to conservatism when the federation starts working. Such an attitude might be dangerous. It might easily happen that practically the whole of political India would unite and array themselves against the Princes if they felt the Princes were disposed to support the British Government. The Princes should make sure that the safeguards they feel to be necessary are built into the structure at the outset. Above all there must be unity, a point that cannot be over-emphasised. Without it princely India will forfeit its position. The British people are only too anxious to preserve a living political institution, such as most of the States are, but this is impossible unless the Princes work together in harmony and justify their existence in the eyes of the Indian people.

A government of the quality that is essential is possible only if power lies in the hands of the conservative elements in the country. Now in India conservatism in the ordinary sense of the term is strongest in the States and in the countryside. If the States send their best men to represent them at the imperial capital, their representatives

should, with a due proportion of representatives of the large and small landholders of British India, and of the less extreme urban elements, constitute a *bloc* strong enough to control policy, especially if they have the support of the Moslems, who are, as a whole, disinclined to adopt extremist tactics.

The States' representatives might exercise, in such a combination, an influence of inestimable value to India and the Empire. But in order that they should have their full weight as a stable element in a federation there are essential conditions to be fulfilled. The great majority of the States must accede : if only the prescribed minimum mentioned do so their influence would be inadequate. The terms of entry should, of course, for reasons given elsewhere be made as elastic as possible. Most important of all, there should be a unity of purpose among all the States to give full support to a strong and stable government.

There is little doubt that if the Princes adopt the rôle outlined above the result would be a steadying influence in Indian politics generally. Extremists are not entirely immune to argument. If they feel that the Princes are determined to support one policy only—a policy of natural evolution to full self-government in concert with Britain—and that they will permit no weakening of the military position, there might be some hope that extremism in its worst manifestations would slowly disappear.

To exercise their full weight in the new order of

things the Princes must have their people behind them, which is not always the case to-day. Absolute autocracy and responsible government can hardly exist indefinitely side by side. Many of the Princes recognise this, and a self-denying ordinance has been outlined by a leading group which would be an answer to critics on the other side of the frontiers. The requisites of good government as prescribed are : a reasonable Civil List : representative assemblies as advisory or consultative bodies and for passing legislation : a system of law based on modern principles : an impartial judiciary : a strong and efficient Civil Service with security of tenure. The army should be well paid and officers should be recruited from families with some military traditions behind them. Finally, it is suggested that the executive should be subject to the jurisdiction of the Law Courts, excepting only the sovereign ruler himself. A system of the kind should inspire confidence. Under such a regime Indian rulers, with the opportunities they have for establishing touch with their people, should be able to attract and retain their loyalty. Where such harmony exists the phantom of subversive influence from across the border should disappear. No longer should there be cases in which competent observers can describe princely rule as an undiluted despotism tempered by fear of the Residency.

Elsewhere in this book a description has been given of the most ancient of Indian political institutions, the Rajput State. It will be remembered

that the patriarchal system imposed checks on autocracy, at the same time providing for the due representation in the council of the rulers of the various groups in the State. The British military protectorate has had the natural consequence of weakening the cohesion between the groups. Now that India is to have a new political unity under a regime inspired largely with democratic ideals, it is perhaps not unreasonable to hope that Rajput chiefs might think it worth while to try to reconstruct the political synthesis of olden times, thereby associating with themselves their Thakurs or feudal landowners, priests, village *panchayats* and guilds, in the policy of government.

The policy of the Maharaja Gaekwar of Baroda, of revivifying the old village *panchayat* and building up from it as a foundation through the district and local boards to the Legislative Council, is an experiment of considerable interest, and might furnish a precedent for other States' governments, if not for British India.

On the whole the States' governments have avoided creating for themselves the difficult problem of an intelligentsia in excess of available employment. The demand for higher education may grow more insistent as democracy develops in India. A liberal system of vocational education would probably meet it half-way.

Let us come to the conclusion of the whole matter. India is at the parting of the ways. Will she choose the road to chaos, or an ordered develop-

ment as a self-governing unit within the British Commonwealth? If the Princes throw their full weight into the scale the path of peace and progress will be chosen. Will they prove equal to this almost overwhelming responsibility? They were a strong breakwater during the Mutiny: their unwavering support helped to keep India loyal in the Great War: it lies in their hands to put up in the present crisis an equally strong barrier to anarchy.

All stand for maintaining British military power. They do not forget that behind the armed forces of India is ranged the whole strength of the British Empire to protect their country from invasion by land or sea. They may rely on the British Crown to ensure their interests in India. Will they in return for what Britain has given and is giving them, afford to the Viceroy and the British Crown the moral support essential to secure peaceful development? Their prestige, their wealth, their practical experience of administration, the qualities of leadership and statesmanship which many of them possess—all this will give them a great position not only in the federal Government but in India generally. But in order to exercise their influence to the full for the benefit of India and their States, they must give to their own people, with or without an injection of democracy, as good and perhaps in many cases a better government than in an India that will no longer be called British.





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