



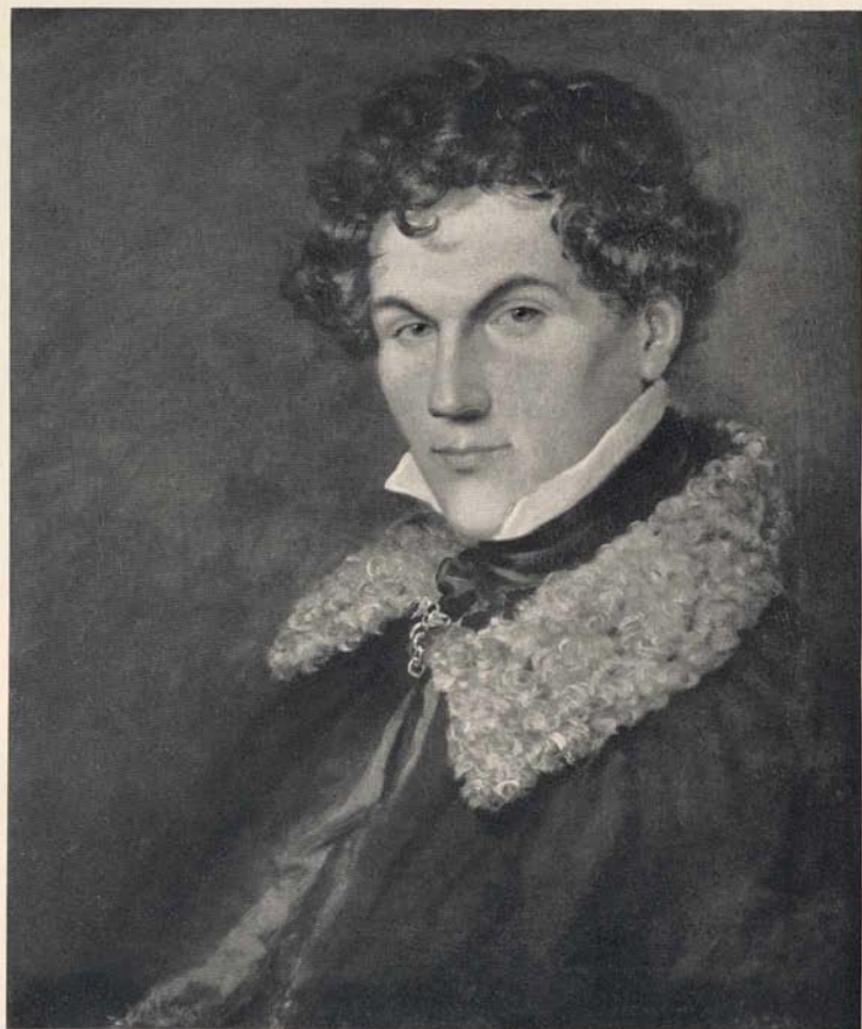
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K.K. Venugopal

LAWRENCE OF LUCKNOW

“ Take him all in all, his moral as well as his intellectual qualities, no Englishman who has been in India has ever influenced other men so much for good ; nobody has ever done so much towards bridging over the gulf which separates race from race, colour from colour, and creed from creed ; nobody has ever been so beloved, nobody has ever deserved to be so beloved, as Sir Henry Lawrence.”

(Bosworth Smith : Life of Lord Lawrence)



Henry Lawrence in youth
From a portrait painted during his first furlough

LAWRENCE OF LUCKNOW

1806 – 1857

being the Life of Sir Henry Lawrence
retold from his private and
public papers

by

J. L. MORISON

D.LITT.

LONDON

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To the Memory of
Henry and Honoria Lawrence

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PREFACE

THIS book is not an academic exercise; it is an attempt, by one who has always counted Sir Henry Lawrence among his heroes, to understand the man, and to help others to understand him. It is based on as complete as possible a study of his private and public papers. I am under very many obligations to those who helped me in the work. Sir Henry Lawrence's grandson, Sir Alexander Lawrence, has allowed me, through four years, to have all his grandfather's papers in my possession. His contribution to the book, which includes also permission to reproduce the family portraits, is therefore altogether more important than that of any other person. Without it the biography could not have been written. Principal Garrett, in the Panjab Government Record Office at Anarkali, placed all the important materials under his charge at my disposal, and I learned much, not only from him but from his university lecturers, Mr. Sita Ram Kohli, and Mr. K. G. Khanna. I shall not readily forget the courtesy of all members of the Record Office staff at Lahore. In my efforts to see at least part of the country in which Sir Henry worked, I was greatly helped by Colonel Sir Cusack Walton, at that time agent of the North-Western Railway; Mr. C. C. Garbett, then Deputy Commissioner at Rawalpindi, Mr. Tennant Sloan, I.C.S. at Lucknow, the Bishop of Lahore, then head of the Lawrence Asylum at Sanawar, and the missionaries of the Church Missionary Society on the frontier. I was permitted to read important family papers by Sir George Barnes, Mr. Robert Cust, and the late Bishop Montgomery; and Mr. W. S. Ferguson of Foyle College greatly helped me in learning more of Sir Henry Lawrence's old school.

I have to thank Mr. Kenneth Bell of Balliol for impelling me to begin the work: the Rhodes Trust for financial assistance; Armstrong College, and more especially its former head, Sir Theodore Morison, for a multitude of kindnesses, and for freeing me in 1929-30 so that I could visit India. Finally, I could not have understood the full meaning of Sir Henry Lawrence's affection for, and devotion to, his wife, all little children, and the poor and weak, if my wife had not taught me that humanity, love, and duty, are the only things that matter.

I have tried to interpose as little pedantry as possible between my hero and those who may wish to read about him. For the names of men and places, while I have, with a few obvious exceptions, followed the guidance of authorities such as the *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, and Sir Lepel Griffin's *Panjab Chiefs*, I have omitted all diacritical marks because they are confusing to the general reader. Apart from incidental references, I have left those who may wish to study the subject more fully, to undertake the useful exercise of making their own bibliographies.

I hope soon to publish a detailed account of the very important papers, etc., which ought to be called *The Papers and Correspondence of Sir Henry Montgomery Lawrence, K.C.B.*

J. L. MORISON

Dilston Crossing,
Corbridge, Northumberland.
October 6th 1933.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

THE adventures of the little group who, early in Queen Victoria's reign, reshaped North-Western India, created the frontier, and saved India from the chaos of the Mutiny, make one of the finest stories in the world. Some of their names are still familiar: the three Lawrences, George, Henry, and John, Herbert Edwardes, John Nicholson, Robert Napier, and, youngest of all, Frederick Roberts. Most of the others, good men and true – Neville Chamberlain, Harry Lumsden, Reynell Taylor, James Abbott, Arthur Cocks, and half a dozen others – live only in the memories of their families and services, and in the Government records of what they did. They were pioneers, with the reshaping of India in front of them, and they always cared more for the work in hand than for the reputation it brought. When promotion came their way, it cheered them because it gave them more responsibility; and their powerful and insubordinate sense of individuality was conquered, mainly by the discipline which unending work brings, and by their sense of the greatness of the tasks they laboured at.

This book will deal with the man whom all of them counted their master, save perhaps John Lawrence, who nevertheless knew in his heart that his brother Henry was the better man. But it is not an easy task, even with affection assisting, to describe Sir Henry Lawrence. There is only one way in which to write his life – that which Wordsworth once prescribed for poetry, 'to choose incidents and situations from common life, and to relate or describe them as far as possible in a selection of language really used by men.' To avoid the solemn plausibilities of biography, and to write

simply about realities, is what my hero would have wished, but it demands much from an unskilled pen. The heart of the difficulty, however, lies here: that Henry Lawrence, who in 1857 was the first man in India to those who really knew India, had come to that position by a much more strenuous route than is usually followed by men who achieve greatness. What he had become was inextricably connected with all the immaturities, errors, and struggles, involved in the process of becoming. To make him comprehensible at the end, one dare shirk none of the preliminary phases: for these are part of the heroism and elevation of the end. Now while our moral copy-books declare that they cannot praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue, unexercised and unbreathed, the average man who quotes them really prefers smooth and finished characters, even when the smoothness is superficial and the finish a clear proof of something second-rate. It was as easy for a Governor-General like the Marquis of Dalhousie to step ashore at Calcutta, and, without hesitation, assume supreme control in a land of which he, as yet, knew nothing at first hand, as it was natural and profitable, but hard, for Henry Lawrence to bring to each new expansion of his authority all the knowledge he had bought in India at a high price in disappointments, errors, adverse judgments, and unrelenting labour. Some who read these pages will be disappointed to learn that Henry Lawrence had to grow up, and took his own time in doing so. Others will blame an author who seems now and then to belittle his hero, by admitting his imperfections.

But no life of the man is complete which does not reveal two sharply contrasted pictures of him, or show how completely the things about him which his critics noted were part and parcel of the greatness in which he finished his service. Henry Lawrence was always disconcerting to conventional respectabilities. He started on his career, a raw Ulster lad with little to help him but some notable family virtues, and the grace of God. Except in resolution and

thoughtfulness, he did not impress his fellow juniors as a great man in the making. It took him years to discipline himself, especially in such matters as temper and attention to ordinary external conventions; he was always liable to errors of judgment in minor matters, and the 'old Adam' was strong in him almost to the end. Although he stands as one of the noblest types of Irish evangelicism, he never acquired unction, or that facility of religious expression which marks the professional religionist. He so failed to make his unique qualities understood by Lord Dalhousie that, at the very time when in the Panjab he was concentrating all his energies on the work of reconciliation and restoration, which some years later was literally to save India from the consequences of Dalhousie's errors, the Governor-General confessed that he made him head of the Panjab Board only because he preferred *that* 'to the greater evil of a sole authority vested in Sir Henry Lawrence.'¹ Indeed, Henry Lawrence always found it difficult, outside the circle of his friends, to induce officials to take for granted the glorious qualities which are now so obvious to us.

All this seems strange to one who has studied him and his group at close quarters. His character bound all who knew him intimately to lasting affection for him. He had more fresh and sound ideas about India than any of his Indian contemporaries. His benevolent statesmanship has still to find an equal in the East, whether one turns to the schools through which he saved thousands of young lives and characters from ruin, or the jails where he proved himself an Indian 'Howard,' or the imaginative sympathy with Indian motive and character which did something, in 1857, to diminish the impact of the great revolt. He not only re-established the Panjab on a sounder foundation than Ranjit Singh had ever dreamed of, but, to quote a friendly yet impartial critic of his work, 'he showed the deepest feelings of compassion and tenderness towards the nobles and

¹ *Private Letters of the Marquess of Dalhousie*, p. 378.

chiefs who, having fought for their country, had lost it. . . . He had the faculty of imbuing all around him, and those who served with him, with the same spirit of benevolence. . . . Who can tell what his philanthropy did in turning the tide of the Panjabis in our favour in 1857? I believe that his spirit and the spirit he inculcated did much towards their loyalty and devotion to us.¹ The same witness, writing with full knowledge of Oudh and Lucknow after the Mutiny, held that it was 'Henry Lawrence's foresight, humanly speaking, that saved *every one of the garrison*. But for him I do not believe that one would have escaped.'²

Among those who formed his group, confessions of what they owed their friend came most emphatically from the very ablest; Nicholson, near the end of his life and at the height of his influence, 'endeavouring to follow his example,'³ and Edwardes dedicating the story of his own great adventure in 1848-9 to him, because 'if I have been able to serve Government to any purpose, I owe it to your teaching and example.'⁴ It is perhaps easier to reconcile the two contrasting sides in argument than it is in narrative; but the fact is that Henry Lawrence never could have been the unique personality whom wise and good men revered, if he had not found himself through the way of struggle. His life, within as well as without, was one long adventure, with no short cuts to easy virtue or success in it. He was the most living force in his own India, as he still is to some of us, because he never took anything difficult for granted, and reached through his own diminishing imperfections towards an end unapproachable by conventional and 'classic' types of character. He was Milton's true wayfaring Christian, and his strength came from the service of a Master who could Himself be touched with the feeling of our infirmities.

¹ Sir R. Montgomery to Sir J. W. Kaye, undated.

² The italics are Sir Robert Montgomery's.

³ John Nicholson to Herbert Edwardes, 1 September, 1857.

⁴ Dedication to *A Year on the Punjab Frontier*.

CHAPTER II

ALEXANDER LAWRENCE

THERE is no chapter of British history more interesting than that which tells of the expansion of the population of Northern Ireland overseas. From the beginning of the eighteenth century that stout-hearted and hard-headed people, English and Scottish colonists in Ireland to begin with, were, with the Scottish Highlanders, pioneers in emigration. Troubled by political and religious grievances, loosened from their hold on the land by the avarice of landlords, and shaken, especially for some years after 1771, with industrial and agricultural depression, they overflowed into the empty spaces and the dangerous occupations left at their disposal by the more luxurious and less strenuous of their neighbours. They passed in thousands to the American colonies, where they gave George Washington some of his best lieutenants and troops. They furnished Nova Scotia, and, later, Canada with a most virile foundation for the future dominion. They overran 'the Services,' and, as we shall see, provided India with leaders who, for some years from 1846 to 1859, did much to increase, organise, and save the Anglo-Indian dominion. In all this there was something more than mere mechanical expansion. The typical Ulster leader was a man bred of sound stock, reared in austere surroundings, given, especially if he were Presbyterian, a religion and principles which made few concessions to human weakness. Endurance, resolution, simplicity of life, and keenness of understanding, were the qualities by virtue of which the Northern Irishman claimed to play his part in governing the British Empire, and ruling the United States. Among the families who distinguished themselves in the work of pioneering and

reorganisation it is no exaggeration to say that the Lawrences hold unchallenged the first place.

It is not necessary to go far back for the real founder of the family. Records are scanty, and it is only too easy to profess more knowledge than can with certainty be established. It is likely that the Lawrences of Ulster were of East Anglian origin, and that the first settlers of the name came over in the time of William III. So far as the general record goes, the Irish Lawrences, whether of our or of other branches, were merchants, farmers, emigrants, ultimately connecting themselves with Army, Navy, and Imperial Services, but, unlike the Knoxes, from among whom Henry Lawrence's father chose his wife, or the Marshalls, to whom Honoria, Henry's wife belonged, they had little to do with the Church. It is uncertain whether the grandfather of our hero was named Alexander or William, and whether or no his dwelling was near Portrush, or at Magherafelt, or Desertlyn, villages to the north-west of Lough Neagh. But this we do know, that when the head of this particular family died – Alexander or William – somewhere about 1776, three of the sons vanished into the Ulster emigration which was peopling the American frontier in those days. A fourth, William, after taking his diploma at the College of Surgeons on December 7th, 1780, joined the Royal Navy as surgeon's mate on March 12th, 1781, and was transferred on July 24th, 1781, to the cutter *Nimble*. On board that vessel he was joined by his youngest brother, Alexander, as a volunteer for a bounty of £5. Alexander served there till the war with America had ended, and received his discharge by Admiralty orders on March 3rd, 1783.

With Alexander we reach the real founder of the Lawrence family, and no more appropriate father of a line of heroes could be found. In the few papers he left behind, and in the oral traditions which Sir Herbert Edwardes collected, he stands out, a solitary, indomitable, and pugnacious figure, owing nothing whatever to good fortune, battered by the

unkindly blows of a world which seemed to keep its favours for more adroit courtiers, but plainly that kind of suppressed hero whose undeveloped qualities so often blossom out in the succeeding generations.¹

It was characteristic of Alexander Lawrence's whole career that, the day after his discharge from the Navy, he embarked, off Cowes, on H.E.I.C.S. *Stormont* as a volunteer in the 36th Herefordshire Regiment, and, at the age of sixteen, sailed with them to Madras, where his unit disembarked on July 27th, 1783. 'It used to be the recognised custom,' writes one of his great-grandsons, to whom much of this information is due, 'in the Navy and Army, in those years, to take on, as volunteers, young fellows of good family who had not the means to buy their commissions. They were treated in all respects as officers, and when a vacancy occurred among the regular ensigns, they were promoted as acting ensigns by the commander-in-chief in the field, and, if approved of at home by the War Office, they were confirmed in the rank in due course, and became full-fledged ensigns.'²

Alexander Lawrence's troubles in India were only exceeded by the services which ought to have won him quicker promotion. He was engaged mainly in South India against Mysore, the Dutch in Cochin, and the Dutch in Ceylon, from the time of his arrival until March 11th, 1808, when he, his wife, and five children embarked on the *Lord Hawkesbury* at Colombo for home. He has himself told his story in two petitions, one to the Duke of York as commander-in-chief in 1809, the other to the Court of Directors of the East India Company in 1820. He was appointed, soon after the start of his service, an ensign in the 101st Regiment, also serving in India, but, although he fought through a long and arduous campaign under Colonel Fullarton, he found that his promotion was not approved because 'some clerk

¹ The late Lieutenant-Colonel G. H. Lawrence paid appropriate tribute to his great-grandfather in an admirable little *Life of Lieutenant-Colonel Alexander Lawrence*: 1932. Only one who has attempted to cover the same ground can understand the accuracy and precision of his narrative.

² Letter to the author from Lieutenant-Colonel G. H. Lawrence.

had not stated how the vacancy had occurred.’¹ Bearing up under the disappointment, he had a second and more keenly felt check when a fresh recommendation was rejected, and the vacancy given to a half-pay officer at home. Alexander Lawrence was not actually gazetted, until he purchased his commission and was approved, as from September 25th, 1787, ensign in the 52nd Foot. Thereafter he was present at the fall of Cannanore in 1790, Cochin in 1795, and Colombo in 1796; and he served with distinction in the glorious campaign against Tipu Sultan in 1799. He must be permitted to tell of two characteristic exploits in his own formal memorialist’s style – vivid recollection here and there breaking through the restraint of the petitioner. Of the final assault on Seringapatam he writes: ‘On the 4th of May he was the senior subaltern of four who volunteered the command of the covering parties for the Forlorn Hopes. The other three officers were killed. He received a severe wound in the right hand. Just at that moment his party was brought up on the top of the glacis where Sergeant Graham’s storming party had formed and commenced a fire (instead of carrying on). He ran from right to left hurrahing to them to move on, but at last was obliged to run through the files to the front, calling out “Now is the time for the breach.” This had the desired effect. At the foot of the breach he received a ball in his left arm where it still remains. He did not then give it up, until he saw the few remaining men gain the breach, then fainting from the loss of blood he was removed to a less exposed place.’ The second episode closely follows on the first – a voyage in open boats to Cochin at a time when his wounds were still not quite healed: ‘The equinoctial gales came on while at sea, and after suffering every possible hardship for many days, they were wrecked near Cannanore. He did not leave the beach until he saw every man safe on shore, and he had the satisfaction of knowing that by his exertions his men were saved,

¹ *Life of Lieutenant-Colonel A. Lawrence.*

though by it he lost the use of his limbs for many months.'

In 1798 he married Letitia Catherine Knox, the sister of an Irish officer, Captain George Knox, who was at that time Commandant of Cochin. It is usual to connect Alexander's wife, and Henry's mother, with the Scottish reformer, John Knox, but there was really no relationship. The Knoxes of Prehen were descendants of a Renfrewshire family, of Ranfurly, and Alexander's children owed none of their notable moral qualities to the less elevated family which produced Queen Mary's great antagonist.¹ Of the twelve children with whom Alexander and Letitia Lawrence were blessed, six were born in the East: George Tomkins, who died in Ceylon in 1802, Letitia, Alexander, George, Henry, and Honoria.

The remainder of his career, struggling as it always remained, ran now on quieter lines, but, whether in peace or war, there was no change in Alexander Lawrence's firmness of principle or resolution. He became Major in the 19th Foot, recruiting for the regiment, with Richmond in Yorkshire as depot; Lieutenant-Colonel of the 4th Garrison Battalion in 1812, serving first in Guernsey and then at Ostend. In the latter place he was commander of the garrison during the Waterloo campaign, and he volunteered to serve in the field. The Duke's courteous reply was that he remembered Colonel Lawrence well, and that he was too good a soldier to wish to be anywhere except where he was put.² In the year after Waterloo he barely missed death through the bursting of an abscess in his liver, as he sailed through a gale to Ireland with his battalion; and retiring in that year, 1816, his final promotion was to the sinecure governorship of Upnor Castle in Kent. Broken in body, and limited in means, the gallant old man (old in service rather than in years) still held to the Londonderry motto, 'No surrender.' When he petitioned for the financial recognition which was his due,

¹ *Works of John Knox* (ed. Laing), Vol. VI., p. xiv.

² Family tradition derived from two separate sources.

whether from the East India Company or the Army, he ended with the words, 'To whom can he apply, having no interest, and nothing to produce but wounds and loss of health. His left arm is considerably wasted away by a ball being in it since the siege of Seringapatam, it often giving him excessive pain; his right hand dreadfully mangled; his health so bad as to be always in the doctor's hands.' The means at his disposal for bringing up a family of eleven were composite and inadequate. There was first of all what he called in his petition 'a small patrimony that was held sacred as a scanty resource when it pleased the Almighty to call him.' On that apparently he had been forced to draw. He obtained £3,500 by the sale of his commission; £100 a year as a pension for wounds; first £80 as pension and then, in 1820, an additional £50 from the East India Company for his services; from his governorship he had £150 a year; and, in 1822, with a strictness of accountancy which Governments then seldom observed towards their more favoured servants, the War Office, with Palmerston signing the grant, decided that 'your pension shall be increased to Two Hundred and Twenty Pounds per annum, being, with the pension allowed you by the East India Company, the rate assigned to the rank you hold.'¹

So 'Mr. Valiant' came at last to rest, first in Cheltenham and then in Clifton, with his marks and scars, as well as his courage and skill, prepared to train the next generation to succeed where he had failed. As much as any of his sons, he leaves a marked and deep impression on all who study the few relics of his life; and, as the characters especially of Henry and John grow firmer, it is no illusion to see something of the father in them. They too had Alexander Lawrence's irascibility, although with Henry the growth of years, and the depth of sympathy in him, modified that trait. Father and sons hated injustice, whether inflicted on others

¹ Palmerston (War Office) to Lieutenant-Colonel A. Lawrence, 22 October, 1822.

or on themselves; they were all intolerant of that authority which failed to justify itself by wisdom; and, careful as all of them were to see that in money matters they received their rights, it is clear that none of them cared at all for money, and used it with a generosity such as only those who have fought against straitened circumstances can display. From him also the two great brothers inherited the strength and energy of physique, which led them to do things of which most of their fellow-workers in India were incapable, and, like their father, knowing nothing of economy in service, they continually gave to their work more than even their iron strength could spare. It would seem almost an insult to speak of courage, but that incapacity for any sort of timid counsel which was so characteristic of Alexander Lawrence, when he led his forlorn hope at Seringapatam, or refused assistance when as a seemingly dying man he was put ashore at Dartmouth in 1816, reappeared in more striking circumstances, especially when John guided the English dominion into safety in 1857-8, and Henry inspired the garrison at Lucknow to succeed in their incredible defence.

Whatever there was of gentleness and sympathy in all of them came mainly through the love of their mother, Letitia Knox, whose letters to her sons in India forty years later reveal, in their simple affection and deep piety, some of the reasons why it was difficult for a Lawrence 'to go wrong.'

At the outset of Henry Lawrence's life, then, it is well to remember that what many public characters have found and find in their schools or their college sets, the Lawrences learned from deep family loyalty. All of them were bound to each other with a love which the sacrifices they had to make for each other rendered unbreakable, even when, like John and Henry, they disagreed in public; and something of the secret of Henry Lawrence's hold over the younger men who served him, lay in the fact that he treated them, Lawrence-like, not in conventional fashion, but as an elder brother would the youngsters of the family.

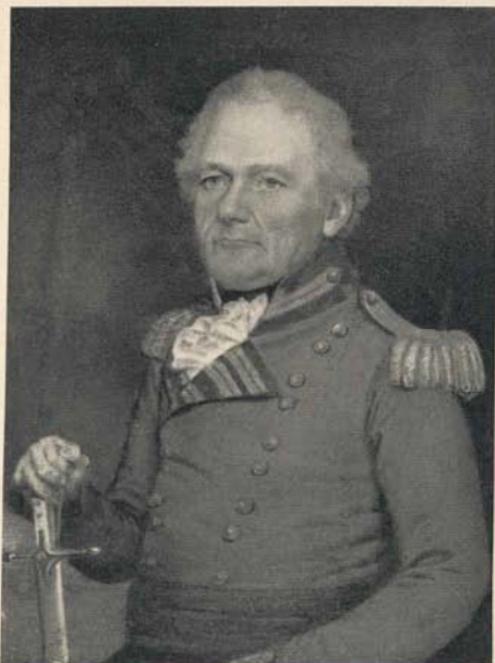
CHAPTER III

THE EDUCATION OF HENRY LAWRENCE

(I) SCHOOLDAYS AND FIRST EXPERIENCES IN THE ARMY, 1806-1827

A. *Schooldays and Addiscombe.*

HENRY LAWRENCE, who was born at Matura in Ceylon, on June 28th, 1806, made his first public appearance at the age of two, when in 1808 the Lawrence family sailed for home in the *Lord Hawkesbury*. Thereafter, until he went to school in Londonderry, his must have been an unsettled, difficult childhood, with the home changing from Richmond to Hull, and from Hull to Guernsey, until the final settlement came at Cheltenham and Clifton. By 1817 there was a family of eleven, a very inadequate income, and a constant struggle to make ends meet. Knit together by the strongest family feelings, the Lawrence children can have seen nothing of luxury, perhaps not much of comfort, in their early years. From the first, life presented itself as a thing of bare essentials with few ornamental fringes; but, together with religious principles, family loyalty was at the heart of their early training. The father was no longer a perfectly hale man, and a sense of grievance is not a happy companion for a man to carry with him through life, but Henry, whose filial piety was one of his most notable qualities, was able to say that he could hardly remember a cross word from his father, except when he himself was at fault, and in Burma he records with a glow of pride how the Brigadier had spoken of his father as a fine old soldier. In the early years, with a constantly increasing family, and a multitude of household cares, the mother could have had little spare time to devote



Lieutenant-Colonel Alexander Lawrence
and his wife

to the elder children, but the deep affection felt towards her by her sons, and the simple love which is expressed in all her letters which still remain, show that, however comfortless and bare the life was, all the young Lawrences learned from their mother to think of home as the place where she was. Two other family influences told very strongly on young Henry. His mother's sister, Angel Knox, spent much time at her sister's house, besides having much to do with the boys' religious education when they went to school in Londonderry. Her nephew has left, in the form of a story for his son, a touching picture of this little woman, neither pretty, says Henry, nor clever, nor rich.¹ She had a complete selflessness, a generosity such as only women of limited means can show, a love of religion, and a whole-hearted devotion to her nephews and nieces, which they did not always appreciate at the time but which affected them through life. From her, Henry learned how much more blessed it was to give than to receive; from her, also, he learned to think of religion, not as abnormal, but as the natural atmosphere in which a man should live.

The most directly influential factor in Henry's early life was undoubtedly his sister Letitia. One cannot help thinking of her as taking on her own shoulders, as far as health and youth permitted, such cares of the family as her mother had not time to undertake. Spirited, capable, and unselfish, Letitia Lawrence, by sheer goodness and strength of character, proved the chief directing power in the youth of her brothers, and more especially of Henry. With her, Henry shared the few new books which came his way as a boy; to her he wrote his most intimate letters; from her he sought advice, and in later days it was she, more than any other, who helped her brother to meet, and to remove the difficulties in his way of marrying, her friend, Honoria Marshall.

¹ Edwardes and Merivale, *Life of Sir Henry Lawrence*, pp. 154-6. Where this book is mentioned, reference is to the one-volume edition. The earlier part, by Sir Herbert Edwardes, is as valuable as the later part is the reverse.

The first great event in the history of the children came when at the beginning of 1815 Alexander, George, and Henry went together to their uncle's school in Londonderry.¹ Neither Henry, nor John Lawrence who entered the school in 1823, believed that they learned much in their schooldays, and Henry himself says that he was not happy there. Yet it is impossible to regard the four years spent at Foyle College as unimportant. The school was a part of the history of Ulster. Mathias Springham, a member of the Merchant Taylors Company in London, and a person of importance in Northern Ireland, had built a Free Grammar School at Londonderry in 1617, 'with a court of lime and stone'; and in subsequent years it became closely connected with the city, the county, and the diocese. In the famous siege it was used as a mill for grinding corn, and was damaged by the fire of the enemy. From time to time it produced notable men: George Farquhar, the seventeenth-century dramatist; Samuel Kyle, Provost of Trinity College, Dublin, and later Bishop of Cork²; John Jebb, Bishop of Limerick, Ardfert, and Aghadoe³; and other eminent Irish churchmen, lawyers, and scholars. In 1808 Sir Arthur Wellesley had indicated it as a place for education 'in the principles of the Church and Constitution of England, as a counterpoise to the democratical establishment proposed at Belfast.'⁴ It began a new lease of life in 1814, when it was moved outside the old city into the country further down the Foyle, and became the New Free Grammar School of Londonderry, or the Derry Diocesan School, and ultimately Foyle College. It is to-day one of the proudest memories of the school that between 1815 and 1825 its register contains the names of four Lawrence brothers, Alexander, George, Henry, and John, and of their later friend and colleague, Robert Montgomery; but, besides these, no less than seventeen other

¹ Foyle College register. The date has hitherto been wrongly given as 1813.

² Provost, 1820; bishop, 1831.

³ Bishop, 1823.

⁴ In letter to author from Mr. W. S. Ferguson, master in Foyle College.

pupils went from the little school to India between 1814 and 1834.¹ The headmaster for forty years from 1794 was Mrs. Lawrence's brother, the Reverend James Knox, under whom, according to a contemporary account, 'the learned and modern languages, with other branches of education necessary for the mercantile pursuits,' were taught to pupils who numbered in 1818 a hundred and ten (half of them boarders). There seems to have been an adequate staff, the reputation of the school was good in the countryside, and the fees were moderate, for an existing bill for 1823 shows the cost of board and tuition for six months as £18 4s., with 30s. in addition for 'pen, ink, paper, and repairs.'

Here George and Henry Lawrence lived, without revisiting their home, between 1815 and 1819, Alexander leaving a year earlier than his brothers. Whatever they did or did not learn in Londonderry, Foyle College definitely fixed their Irish nationality for them. Sons of an Irish father and an Irish mother, but homeless so far as locality was concerned, these years in Ulster elicited the latent Irish qualities in them, and confirmed them. Henceforward Ulster was their national home, and, whether at Addiscombe or Haileybury, 'Pat' became a natural, transferable nickname for successive members of the family.²

As far as one can gather, the school was no special home of learning, but all the stories about it at this time suggest vigour, hardiness, and perhaps more than a touch of roughness. 'Vigorous training' was the phrase which Sir Robert Montgomery used of the place when in 1865 the citizens of Derry honoured him at a banquet. The clearest view of Henry at school comes from the reminiscences of a fellow-pupil who, like the Lawrences, had to spend a vacation there, and found, as they doubtless did, that the winter hours were

¹ For these, and most of the other details about the school, I am under very deep obligations to Mr. W. S. Ferguson, whose knowledge of his school is only equalled by his affection for it.

² An incorrect term, 'Scotch-Irish,' is often used to describe families like the Lawrences. Whatever in them was not Irish was certainly as much English as it was Scottish.

long and wearisome, and the empty schoolrooms and playgrounds melancholy. 'One of our vacation resources, after having wearied ourselves in various other ways, was to get up something like a play. This was a kind of amusement that Henry seemed fully to participate in. It must be understood that we wrote or imagined these plays ourselves, though how, considering our nearly total ignorance of everything pertaining to theatricals, the amusement could have been suggested, I am at a loss to conceive. However, whatever was wanting in poetry and dramatic skill was made up with burnt cork and abundance of paint. Our school desks, forms, and boxes completed the scenery.'¹ His picture of Henry is that of a boy not in any way distinguished except by a rather notable quietness, reserve, and kindliness. He seems to have taken little part in violent games, to have been given to solitary walks and an unboyish turn for reflectiveness, and certainly his aunt Angel's whole influence was directed towards interesting him in religion. Herbert Edwardes, his first and best biographer, has given a characteristic incident showing Henry's aloofness from the others, the shy awkwardness which long continued to mark him, and that devotion to truth which seems to have been in him from the first. The boys, with a certain cubbishness about their sports, had been breaking windows with stones, Henry Lawrence abstaining. At last they made him aim at another mark, shrewdly calculating that his lack of skill would make him hit an adjacent window. 'Without a remark,' says his biographer, 'he left the playground, knocked at the awful library door, and, presenting himself before his uncle, said, "I have come to say, Sir, that I have broken a window."'

Foyle College did nothing to hamper the natural growth of Henry's qualities, beyond failing to furnish sunshine enough to make the growth more speedy. Its long spaces of solitude drove him in on himself, and made him thoughtful

¹ MS. recollections of Mr. T. Brooke.

and self-reliant – an individualist in method even when his ends were social. It did nothing to give him or his brothers ‘accomplishments,’ but most certainly it helped to make them men. In the East India Company’s Military College at Addiscombe, which he entered in 1820, after a year in College Green School at Bristol, he could not be counted a distinguished pupil, although in independence of character he left a very definite impression on all his fellow-cadets. He had none of the attractive physical gifts, especially in games, which are the indispensable qualifications for young military heroes in fiction. His temper was unquestionably hot; his frankness had more than a touch of awkwardness; but his generous honesty, simplicity, and directness, and his refusal to accept defeat, did not suggest a limited or unoriginal nature. In a very well-known description of him, written by his friend Major R. G. Macgregor, there are two characteristic exhibitions of his quality. Boylike, for he was only fourteen or fifteen at the time, he had been chaffing his junior about a patriarchal blue swallow-tailed coat with brass buttons, in which young Macgregor was going to church, and the crude humour threatened to pass into a serious fight. But, after the interval of reflection furnished by the church service, Henry Lawrence, with the unrestrained honesty which never failed him in life, came up and said, ‘I was wrong and rude and in fault. Let us be friends.’ In the same impulsive way, when the same junior a little later saved him from drowning, ‘Pat’ Lawrence as he overtook his rescuer on the way back to Addiscombe, and almost before he had recovered breath, blurted out with his peculiar explosive sincerity ‘that he should not forget this, and that it had been all over with him but for me.’¹

There are many different ways, and rates of progress, by which great military commanders make themselves, but it

¹ Recollections of Major R. G. Macgregor, printed in part in Edwardes and Merivale.

was not Henry Lawrence's destiny to be another Marlborough or Wellington. His ultimate call was to be a very great governor of alien peoples, and the qualities required for such work, and the experience without which nothing can be done, come late, and come only from intimate contact with the people who are to be governed. What one can expect in youth are such things as these: power of honest and unconventional reflection, deep sympathy with the feelings of others, an unending industry in getting at the truth in practice as well as in thought, and complete fearlessness. It is impossible to say that a cadet possessed of all these qualities will necessarily come to the front; it is certain that without them he can attain nothing. It is because the memories of Henry Lawrence, which another fellow-student, later Lieutenant-Colonel J. H. Macdonald, set down, seem to reveal these very traits, that they may be given as the best sample of Henry Lawrence's life at Addiscombe:

'On joining Addiscombe as a cadet on the 2nd of February 1821, I found Henry Lawrence there, and in the third class, having joined the College in the previous term. I was of course in the fourth or junior class, and therefore not in the same study with him at first. In the course of the term, however, Mr. Andrews, the principal of the College, promoted the first six of the fourth class into the third; and as I was one of the number I found myself in the same study with Lawrence. He was well up in his class at the time, being about the third or fourth from the top, and, though evincing no marked talents, yet he was quick, intelligent, and, on the whole, industrious at his studies. At the end of the term the senior or first class was examined and sent out to India, so that, on our assembling after the vacation, we found ourselves the second class at the College, the second of the previous term having become the first. Several of the cadets of this class had left College, thus leaving it weak in numbers. Dr. Andrews determined therefore to complete it to the full number, as officers were so much wanted for Artillery and Engineers. He accordingly selected the first eight in the second class for examination. Among these eight was Henry Lawrence, who must therefore have stood near the head of the class at the

time, and his general conduct must have been good, for this was an indispensable with the Doctor. The cadets of the class we now entered had been at the College a whole term before Lawrence, and therefore had advanced considerably in mathematics, Hindustani, fortification, military drawing especially. Therefore it was not to be wondered at that Lawrence never rose higher than the middle of the class. Even to do this was highly creditable to him, and showed either great application or considerable ability. It was during this term that he acquired a knowledge of military surveying, and no one more thoroughly enjoyed the excursions over the country in carrying on his surveys. I was constantly told of Lawrence's "spouting Scott," as the boys called it, at such length as almost to weary his companions. He had just had lent him *The Lady of the Lake*, and so charmed was he with it that he possessed himself of whole cantos, and would recite page after page with the utmost enthusiasm. . . . He was a quiet and thoughtful youth, preferring walking with some companion to joining in the games of cricket, football, hockey, etc., but all of us knew there was no lack of spirit in Pat Lawrence. . . . He was no doubt very passionate, and anything mean or shabby always roused his ire, and then the curl of his lip and the look of scorn he could put on were the most bitter and intense that I ever witnessed. His heart, too, was very warm, and he was always ready to take the part of the weak, and sometimes got into trouble by doing so. His attachment to his family was remarkable, and thoughtless as boys generally are to any great display of this kind, yet Pat Lawrence was known to us all as a devoted son and brother. His course at Addiscombe was one of steady application and good conduct. I do not remember his ever being sent to the black hole, or getting into any serious scrape. He seemed even then to have organised a course for himself, and was neither to be coaxed nor driven out of it. I can speak of his being a most generous rival. We stood next each other in the class for several months, our numbers being so nearly equal that one month's report would put him before me, and the next below me, in the class. As rank in India depends upon the place held by the cadet in the class in the last month's report before leaving the college, many were anxious, when we knew that the report was prepared, to see how they stood, and who was to be senior. One of the cadets volunteered to get into the window of the Masters' Room where the report book was

kept, and we thus ascertained before it was legitimately made known. I was told that Lawrence was above me. When I told him this, he said, with one of his pleasing smiles, "I am sorry you are disappointed, and would just as soon you had been first." He passed a creditable examination, but, not standing very high in either mathematics or fortification, he was not called upon to do much at the public examination.'

So ended the first part of Henry Lawrence's education, in May 1822 – nothing to blush for, no special reasons for exultation, but, beneath the surface, the foundation laid of a noble, self-reliant, and exceptional character. His own brusque comment, long after, to his brother John was, 'Do you think we were clever as lads? I don't think we were.' To which one must add John's modifying opinion: 'It was not altogether that we were dull. We had very few advantages – had not had very good education – and were consequently backward and deficient. We were both bad in languages and always continued so; and were not good in anything that required a technical memory. But we were good in anything that required thought and judgment. We were good, for instance, in history. And so far from Henry being *dull*, I can remember that I myself always considered him a fellow of power and mark; and I observed that others thought so.'

The family circumstances, apart from military requirements, did not encourage the idea of any interval between qualification and departure to India. Henry seems to have had the chance of following Alexander and George into the cavalry, but his Ulster pride made him choose a branch more open to competition on level terms with others. He became a gunner, 'lest it should be supposed that no Lawrence could pass for the artillery.' There was one difficulty, however, before he sailed: the provision of his equipment, and it was here that his aunt Angel Knox became, as was her wont, an aid to the distressed. Henry Lawrence must

¹ Edwardes and Merivale, p. 20, reporting a conversation with John Lawrence.

tell his own story: 'When I left home, as my father had no money, if it had not been for Aunt Angel's £200 – more than a whole year's income – I might have been unable to come to India, or have been obliged to borrow money, and, perhaps, have been still in debt.'¹

So he sailed for India in September 1822, there, in Bengal and Burma, to complete another stage of his education.

B. *Bengal and Burma.*

There are some men, and they are always among the best, whose education cannot be regarded as properly begun, nor their true characters revealed, until they are plunged, through contact with the world, into what Thomas Carlyle meant by *work*. Of few has this been truer than of Henry Lawrence. The friends of his boyhood and youth did not detect the signs of coming eminence, because such signs could not have revealed themselves in the world of books and classrooms. In India a fresh and important chapter began for him.

It seems preferable to postpone for the moment an examination of the Indian world into which he now entered. But it is well to remember that, in 1823, when the departing Governor-General, the Marquis of Hastings, handed over his office to Lord Amherst, the position of England in India had gained enormously in prestige and strength. Although the war in Nepal had begun badly, a settlement satisfactory to both sides, and, in actual fact, lasting, had been arrived at; while in the great campaigns against the Marathas and Pindaris, in which sometimes as many as 100,000 men were employed, Hastings had set the British dominion in what looked like an impregnable position. The peace of the Panjab had been stabilised by our treaty with Ranjit Singh in 1809, and there was probably then less suspicion about Russian projects against India than existed either earlier or later. Whatever faults the keen eye of the young artillery

¹ Edwardes and Merivale, p. 155.

lieutenant was to discern later, in 1823 he could not but feel that, in the Bengal Army, he had ample justification for pride in his service and ambitious hopes for the future. To his sister he revealed the natural symptoms of a young man suddenly plunged into a strange new world: not so much homesickness, as a longing to have his own folk, and more particularly Letitia, near to talk to; doubt whether after all he had been wise in rejecting his friend Mr. Hudleston's offer of a commission in the cavalry; a notable caution in committing himself too far, especially in spending money, at such a seductive centre as Calcutta.¹ He proved at once that those who saw nothing notable in him at home were wrong; for from the first the strong, simple, independent, reflective character which had marked him at Addiscombe found new ways of asserting itself. His brother Alexander had led the way, and now Henry gallantly followed his example, in preparing a safe and comfortable future for his mother and the younger children. In one sense the virtue of spending his money wisely was never difficult to him, for the 'Lawrence fund' for his people dominated his mind from the start, and saved him from the preliminary indebtedness which embarrassed so many of his comrades. Besides this, his aloofness from ordinary amusements, and his hunger for books, set him at once apart from the main body of cheerful, thoughtless young officers around him. In the camp at Dum-Dum near Calcutta, where his service began, 'he was much the same quiet steady character as at Addiscombe. He abstained from everything leading to extravagance. He did not join the Regimental Hunt then existing, nor did he frequent the billiards-room or the Regimental theatre.'² His passion for reading received fresh impetus from his solitude, and he must have been unique among his younger colleagues in his devotion to books like Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*, and the *Universal History* 'in 20 or

¹ Letters to Letitia Lawrence, in 1823.

² MS. recollections of Lieutenant-Colonel Macdonald.

21 volumes.' Beyond everything else he had strength of will to remember others before himself, and originality sufficient to go his own way.

All this was rendered easier for him by his association with a group of men, serious, like-minded, but perhaps more emotionally religious than himself. He had come out with John Edwards, a young fellow-officer of pure and high character, and, when ill health drove his friend from India, he ultimately settled down with a group of evangelical officers in a large house which they called Fairy Hall. At the centre of the group was a notable *padre*, George Craufurd, who devoted these years not merely to his duties as assistant chaplain of the Old Church in Calcutta, but to personal work among the younger officers, and, had regulations given him more freedom, among such of the sipahis as felt disposed to inquire into the Gospel which he taught. The others at Fairy Hall were young lieutenants of about Henry Lawrence's own standing, Fenning, Lewin, Cookson, and D'Arcy Todd, later of fame for his knowledge of Persia and Herat. Todd's description of how he entered Fairy Hall may be taken as typical of all: 'When I arrived at Dum-Dum, I met an old friend of the name of Cookson, whom I formerly knew at Addiscombe. He asked me to his home, where I met a clergyman of the name of Craufurd, who taught me that the paths of sin are unhappiness and misery, and that the paths of righteousness are happiness.'¹ To men like Lewin and Fenning, the Christian religion demanded a certain definite experience, conversion, or 'finding Christ,' and their conduct and language conformed to what were then called 'methodistical' standards. That Henry Lawrence had no repugnance to such things in others is clear, for speaking of Lewin, for whom he had a high regard, he told Letitia, 'Lewin has turned an excellent religious young fellow; indeed I am quite surprised at the change; his whole care seems to be what good he can do. Of course he is designated

¹ Kaye, *Lives of Indian Officers*, Vol. III., pp. 4-5.

a "Methodist," but I wish we had a few more such *Methodists*.¹ But in that sense of the term Henry Lawrence himself was never methodistical. Apart from faults of temper and singularity, which plainly exercised poor Lewin's mind, Lawrence and he represented quite different types of Christian character. To the latter, religion was obviously an intensely emotional thing, linked to a view of the world which shut out many indifferent and even beautiful things. It was less an explanation of the world, than an intimate personal relationship with Christ. It is true that, influenced by his wife, Henry Lawrence later approached, in his private thoughts and letters, more closely to this intensely devotional attitude to his Master; but his natural mood was something different. From Colonel Fenning's reminiscences and Lewin's diary it is clear that both men desired their friend's conversion, but 'doubted whether religion had yet reached his heart.' Their doubts arose not only from his outbursts of temper - 'sulky and violent,' Lewin writes on one occasion, 'impatient of friendly rebuke and counsel'² - but from what they counted some defect in his spiritual experience. As Lewin put it, 'Lawrence does not seem to comprehend the doctrine of original sin.'³ The truth is that it was easier for Lawrence to understand and sympathise with Lewin, than for Lewin to understand Lawrence. From father and mother, aunt and sister, he had learned to think of religion as a general way of looking at life and the world, and of Christianity as its perfect expression. His outlook was much more that of a Scottish Calvinist of the more enlightened sort than of a Methodist. In secular things, he slowly grew into mastery as his experience of life expanded; so also his Christianity, always broadening and deepening, kept exact pace with his growing knowledge and love of his fellow-men. His experience taught him more austere and spiritual lessons than suited many of the men outside his circle,

¹ H. M. L. to Letitia Lawrence, 8 October, 1823.

² Lewin's diary, 2 October, 1824.

³ *Ibid.*, 26 March, 1826.

but he made no other exclusions from the Church than were made by men for themselves, through their own cowardice, lust, blindness, or passion. Throughout life he impressed men more by his moral sincerity, and the growing sense which his moods revealed of the eternal world, than by such prayers and exhortations as his good friends, *padre* Craufurd, Fenning, and Lewin, found the natural way of expressing Christianity. He gives crude but vivid expression to the truth as he continued to see and hold it when he told Mr. Craufurd, 'What I want to be assured of is that this Book is God's: because when I know that, I have nothing left but to obey it.'¹

However one views this youthful outlook on religion, it is clear that at Dum-Dum, in these first months of Indian service, Henry Lawrence started on his career most fortunately. He had made no compromises with the lighter distracting world; his love of thought and of books prevented any lapse in his education; his horse, out of doors, and the chess-board indoors, kept him interested and exercised; and his undiminished love for his mother and Letitia helped to soften a character which might have narrowed and hardened without that solvent.

Then his first chance came in the Burmese War of 1824-6. The origin of that war lay in the growth of Burmese power in Arakan, and towards the north-eastern frontier of Bengal. It was provoked by the perfect ignorance of the King at Ava as to the relative strengths of his kingdom and that of the East India Company. As the Burmese empire advanced in Arakan, there was a headlong emigration of the Mhags who inhabited that region, and who feared the barbarity of Burmese tyranny. At the same time the emigrants were guilty of counter-attacks and raids on their Burmese enemies, delivered from the security of the British territory round Chittagong. Year after year, the cause of friction remained, and although the British policy remained peaceful - 'a firm

¹ Edwardes and Merivale, p. 32.

but always temperate assertion of national dignity both in language and measures¹ – Burmese pretensions were continually foiling the best intentions. Attempts were made, through pretended missions, to stir up trouble in India. In 1818 the Burmese claimed that ‘the countries of Chittagong and Dacca, Murshidabad and Kasimbazar, do not belong to India’²; and, as a last straw, in 1823, not only did Burma occupy a British island Shahpuri, south of Chittagong, but a double advance in the north was made upon Anglo-Indian territory. There was nothing left for Amherst, who was now Governor-General, but to declare war, on February 24th, 1824, and to try to bring the Burmese monarch to his senses. With the main campaign on and beyond Rangoon, under Sir Archibald Campbell, we have here nothing to do – Rangoon itself was occupied on May 11th, 1824. Henry Lawrence’s first campaign was under General Morrison, in his advance along the coast south to the capital of Arakan, the ultimate end being a speculative effort to cross the hills, after taking Arakan, to help Campbell on the Irrawaddy. It was an unfortunate venture, not so much because of Burmese resistance, as because nature interposed some fatal obstacles – difficult country, a trying climate, and deadly assaults of diseases like malaria and dysentery. Nor were the British preparations fortunate. Two sentences written later by Henry Lawrence may suggest the faults in organisation: ‘We were six months preparing to move a force of 10,000 men, most of our cattle [for transport] having been procured from the banks of the Narbada in Central India, at least 1,000 miles from Chittagong’; and, a verdict looking back from Crimean times in 1855 to 1825, ‘As a boy, during the first Burma war, having seen 10,000 men reduced to 800 effectives, I can quite understand the cause of much that has occurred in the Crimea.’³

For him, the war started with a rush. An Anglo-Indian

¹ Lord Minto to the Court of Directors, 25 May, 1812.

² Sir J. Malcolm, *Political History of India*, Vol. I., p. 574.

³ H. M. L. to Lord Dalhousie, 19 April, 1855.

force at Ramu near the coast south of Chittagong had collapsed on May 13th, 1824, and retreated on Chittagong. Then rumours spread 'that the Burmahs had taken Chittagong and were pushing up to Calcutta in their war boats.' The young lieutenant found himself in that most typical of war situations, hustled into action by hasty orders which were almost at once thwarted by inefficient organisation. On May 24th he was under orders for Chittagong, taking 'Fenning, 6 sergeants, 6 corporals, and 60 European privates: 1 havildar, 1 naik, and 18 gun lascars: and for guns, 4 six-pounders, and 2 five-and-a-half-inch howitzers.' Then came the inevitable countermanding order, and they were not moved until the night of June 4th. With zeal that was prophetic of much in the future, he set himself to embark his guns and ammunition. But once more defective organisation pulled him up: 'I was only able to get 2 six-pounders on board the *Aseergurh* that night. The next morning [June 5th] I got the howitzers on board my own ship, the *Meriton*, and the other two six-pounders in the *Planet*. The commanders declared that they could not possibly take the tumbrils and ammunition on board.'¹ The consequence was a wild rush to the Quartermaster-General at Calcutta, the conveyance of the great man in a buggy to the commodore, and the quick solution of the problem. How all these rushes end in the same desolating inaction, war operations being so often the incalculable directed by the incompetent! Seven months after this first gallant effort the advance began, down the coast, with the town of Arakan as chief objective. It would be wearisome to give the march in detail - 250 miles accomplished in two months and a half. But room must be found for the start: 'When the bugle sounded to strike the tents the scene was really amusing. We were just going to our mess, so we hastily crammed something down our throats, and returned to our tents to get our troops off

¹ Throughout, the authority is a brown and faded little journal, with gaps, and the end missing. Still it is priceless in value as a junior's account of Morrison's campaign.

the ground. The whole encampment was now one continual blaze; for the servants, as soon as the order is given to march, set fire to all the straw to warm themselves, as well as to serve for a light while packing up. Stray bullocks, frightened by the flames and noise, rushing up and down the camp; soldiers and camp-followers rushing here and there about their several duties, and our own servants yelling to each other, formed a scene I was quite unaccustomed to, and worthy of a more practised pen.' Already it is apparent, whatever later critics, including his wife, might say, that Henry Lawrence had a distinct gift for writing vigorous English.

The advance on Arakan was, first, a resolute fight with nature, lasting more than two months, and then a rapid finish at Arakan itself. The march was through country more attractive to the eyes than to the legs, with the sea never far from the pathway of the column. The chief difficulty lay in getting the guns across the streams and creeks which everywhere intersected their way, and which sometimes reduced the day's march to insignificant figures – for example nine miles covered in seven hours, or eight in six hours, or eleven in four hours and a half. No resistance was offered at first, and the chief danger came from bivouacs on damp ground, and long exposure to the sun. The campaign was ultimately wrecked through disease, and there can be no doubt that these natural hardships on the way prepared for the final collapse in health. The young campaigner shirked none of his duties, and was always at hand to assist in difficulties. Once, for example, strolling forward to see preparations made for crossing a nullah, he found an officer preparing a bridge of boats. Henry Lawrence thought that he did not know what he was about, and, to the irritation of the man in charge, suggested throwing fascines in the mud for the guns to pass over at low tide. The next time he passed, he found that his advice had been taken. His Brigadier, Grant, who had known old Colonel Lawrence,

was friendly, and had a shrewd notion of the value of his subaltern; so that, in a cheerful letter home, Henry Lawrence was able to report his Commanding Officer's opinion of his zeal and readiness, and that, in a case of difficulty, he had exclaimed, 'Ah, if Mr. Lawrence was there, he would soon get the ammunition over.'

Towards the end of February the detachment joined General Morrison's main body, and spent some weary days in waiting for boats to take them over the Mayu river and on to the banks of the Arakan. One emphatic entry in the journal describes the voyage: '[March 5th, 1824] Very tired, having been so crowded for 2 days, without clean clothes, 11 of us besides the 3 shippies being stowed in a cabin about 12 feet square, either roasted out in the sun, or stewed in the cabin; and at night stowed almost on top of each other.' After this crossing the force now began to approach its objective, Arakan, a decayed town up a difficult river, with hills all round it, the approach rendered difficult once more by nullahs and creeks, which delayed the progress of the guns. About March 25th the enemy began to make himself felt, and at last they found him, 9,000 strong, entrenched on a succession of hills round Arakan, and supported by artillery. On the 27th, Henry Lawrence's guns were in action, and one of his men wounded. Prisoners began to come in, from whom they learned that but for the hills they 'might drive a buggy to Arakan.' In the actual stroke through which the hills were carried and Arakan taken, our hero had little part, although he displayed now, as always, a strong inclination to push forward into action, and he helped to rescue four guns which had been temporarily abandoned after a preliminary attack and repulse. But he has left on record his feelings, as he prepared his guns for the fire which was to support the main attack: '30th March: The place was reconnoitred and intelligence received of a path which led round to the rear of No. 1 hill. During the night a battery was raised near where our rear guns had

been on 29th, and before daylight of 31st we had two 24-pounders under Fenning, two heavy 5½-inch howitzers under Medlicote, and three 12-pounders under Lawrence ready to open on them, the whole being under the direction of Craufurd. I think I felt more anxious (I will not say afraid) while we were placing the guns in battery than when the heaviest fire was on us. There was a certain *stillness*, a momentary expectation of something unpleasant, which prevented me feeling at ease. Though we moved down in the utmost silence, it was evident, by their repeated shouting, yelling, and ringing of bells, that they knew we were about something. Indeed I expected a volley, every instant, but not a shot was fired.' Next night the position was carried, and as, in the morning, he watched the troops go forward in beautiful style, he broke into a recollection of Scott's romantic verse:

Oh ! 'twere worth ten years of peaceful life,
One glance at their array.

So Arakan fell, and, when Henry Lawrence entered it on April 2nd, he saw only 'a picture of desolation, every house completely ransacked and here and there a dead man, goat, dog.'

Unfortunately for General Morrison the retention of the town, and the attempt to cross to the main river region of Burma, proved infinitely more costly than the first attack. The effort to cross to the Irrawaddy melted away through disease. During that summer in Arakan, between May and September, 259 Europeans out of 1,500 died of disease, and 900 out of 8,000 Indians. In the latter month, 400 Europeans and 3,600 Indians were in hospital; and to make the tragedy complete General Morrison himself was invalided home, and died on the way.¹ Not even Henry Lawrence's iron strength could resist the onset of fever, and in November he was sent off to recruit on a voyage to Calcutta. But the

¹ Fortescue, *History of the British Army*, Vol. XI., pp. 313-15.

rest was unavailing. Returning to Arakan in March 1826, after the declaration of peace,¹ he officiated there, at Akyab on the coast, as Deputy-Assistant Commissary of Ordnance. Arakan fever or, to give it in modern form, malaria, had not, however, done with him then, or indeed throughout his life; and he returned in April to Calcutta where his good friend *padre* Craufurd cared for him, until orders came for sick leave home, via China, whither he sailed on August 2nd, 1826.

The last faded pages of the little journal, on which this narrative has been based, tell of the earlier stages of the voyage, giving the shrewd sharp judgments of a young man of twenty flung into the midst of an uncongenial company. His ship was the *Macqueen*, whose captain, Walker, he liked, and whose doctor had an intelligence, and a little library, which helped to cheer him. But the passengers, most of them with a strong dash of colour, did not take his fancy. He was bored with the conversation in the cuddy – ‘betelnut, cotton, opium, and scandal’ – so that, with the excellent excuse of illness, he spent his time mainly in his own cabin, walking a little in the evenings but easily tired. At Penang, Singapore, and Macao, he met either members of his Regiment, or old comrades from Addiscombe; and among the recollections of his lifelong friend E. A. Reade, of the Indian Civil Service, was their meeting at Canton. He must already have been planning his future for, says Reade, ‘I have the impression that as we had access to the factory library, he used to engage himself with works on survey, and especially some report of operations of the Survey in the North-West of Ireland.’ From that point the sea mists swallow up his vessel and himself. But, some time before June 1827, his mother noted in her diary – ‘Returned from Arakan, after the Burmese war, my dearest beloved Henry Montgomery, not twenty-one years old, but reduced by sickness and suffering to more than double that age.’

¹ Treaty at Yandabo, 24 February, 1826.

CHAPTER IV

THE ENGLISH COMMUNITY IN INDIA BEFORE THE FIRST AFGHAN WAR¹

HENRY LAWRENCE'S long absence, on sick leave, from India, from August 1826 till February 1830, affords an opportunity for trying to describe, under peace conditions, the community in India of which he was to become so indispensable a member, and whose characteristics and habits in quieter times had much to do with the shaping of events in the troubled times between the First Afghan War and the Indian Mutiny.² For such a survey there is happily material in superabundance.

The commanding position of England in India, especially after the suppression of the Mutiny, seems so extraordinary that it is only too easy to explain what seems miraculous by exaggerating the qualities and powers of those Englishmen through whose work it had been created. The truth is that the miracle lay much more in the circumstances of the Indian country and people; in the divisions and powerlessness of Indian governing classes, and in the singular freedom enjoyed by the English people after Waterloo in which to develop a dominion, to which there was little or no effective challenge throughout India. The men who were used as instruments in the work were not, on the average, inferior to governing classes at the time in England or elsewhere – but the impression created by reading their contemporary

¹ Apart from reference to the many books written in and about India at this time, much use has been made of the matter contained in the *Minutes of Evidence taken before the Select Committee of the House of Commons on the Affairs of the East India Company, February 14th to July 27th, 1832* (short title for reference, *Minutes of Evidence*). These bulky volumes contain by far the most valuable evidence on the period now available.

² To permit of the inclusion of facts taken from the assembling of forces before the march on Kabul, 1839 has been taken as the terminal date.

records has nothing abnormal or astonishing about it. They were usually very typical of their race, in their limitations as much as in their virtues. They actually created a government whose only parallel in history is that of the Roman Empire; but it is possible to hold that this is because no rival Power appeared with even the minimum of those qualities demanded by the state of affairs in India. The miracle lay much more in the work accomplished than in the men who did the work or the methods they employed.

About 1830 the purely British population in India amounted to rather over 40,000. Of these, the great bulk was military. Taking all military services, His Majesty's regiments and the British element in the native army, there were over 37,000, of whom about 6,000 were officers of one kind or another. These constituted about one-sixth of the whole Indian Army.¹ The Civil Service provided rather over another 1,000 and the total numbers of those not in the public service were estimated to be about 2,000 in Bengal and 500 each in Madras and Bombay.² If to these are added the twenty to thirty thousand Anglo-Indians who had a status neither quite European nor quite Asiatic, the entire white, or partly white community, military, civil, and commercial, was well under 100,000 and the effective part not half that number.

In 1830, the right to enter British India still lay entirely under the control of the East India Company, and although there were, as in the case of the Serampore missionaries, numerous cases of unlicensed immigrants, all of them were still under the eye of the authorities, liable at any time to be called on for an explanation of their presence, and to be deported should the explanation prove unsatisfactory.

The most respectable members of the governing class deprecated free immigration, and Bishop Heber, himself one of the most charitable of men, supported the right of

¹ Figures based on *Minutes of Evidence*, Vol. V., Appendix A.

² *Ibid.*, Vol. I., p. 84; Malcolm, *Political History of India* (1826), Vol. II., p. 246.

deportation, as the only control which the Company possessed over classes whose presence in India seemed of doubtful advantage.¹ There was an especially strong prejudice at headquarters against the indigo planters of Bengal. Although they were few in number – 119 European proprietors and about 354 assistants – they were supposed to be troublesome out of all proportion to their numbers. Indigo planters, both Indian and English, were accustomed to maintain large bodies of armed men, ready to defend, or assume possession of, lands and crops and to engage in ‘regular pitched battles.’ Bishop Heber spoke of them as always quarrelling with or oppressing the natives, and doing much to damage the English character in native eyes, and all confessed that their relation to such law as existed was extremely unsatisfactory.² Nor was this merely prejudice, for, in the days after the Mutiny, Lord Elgin had to resist with all his authority the attempt made by these exploiters of native labour to turn breach of contract into a serious crime, and to deal with the offenders as though they were thieves or smugglers. The Company officials had always to keep strict watch on predatory adventurers whose sole object was to fleece the Indian peoples as rapidly and thoroughly as possible. With regard to the tenure of land, happily, the regulations were adamant. Down to 1830 there was but one estate, granted in the days of Warren Hastings, held strictly in his own name by a European, and it consisted of only 800 acres.³ But commerce and moneylending afforded more subtle forms of plunder, and Sir Charles Metcalfe probably forfeited his chance of becoming Governor-General, and temporarily lost favour in high quarters, by his fight to defend the Nizam’s dominions against the projects of Sir William Rumbold, a friend of the Marquis of Hastings, who came out ‘to make a large and rapid fortune in the

¹ Heber, *Narrative of a Journey through the Upper Provinces of India, 1824-5*, Vol. III., p. 280.

² *Ibid.*, Vol. III., p. 334; *Minutes of Evidence*, Vol. I., pp. 262, 302-3.

³ *Minutes of Evidence*, Vol. I., app., p. 80.

style of the old times, by other means than his own personal labour.'¹

Naturally, where Army and Civil Service reigned supreme, the other members of English society held no very exalted position, and trade, as in England, placed a man outside the recognised castes. It was an immense relief not only to young Meadows Taylor, but even more to his well-wishers in Bombay, when, from being 'Baxter's boy' in a Bombay shop, he was elevated to become Lieutenant Meadows Taylor in H.H. the Nizam's service.² Henry Lawrence was no respecter of official persons, yet the same feeling is obvious in the comments he made on some fellow-passengers on his first journey home, where an unfortunate Calcutta chemist and his wife fell under his displeasure: 'a forward, vulgar, ignorant, malicious and pertinaciously obstinate fellow. She was much of a muchness . . . of course they were in no society in Calcutta.'³

Needless to say, in the Deccan, and some of the recently conquered and ceded regions, there were practically no English outsiders, although, as will appear later, the fame of Ranjit Singh's army and state attracted a peculiar class of European and English adventurer. Outside the limits of the strictly English community lay the unrecognised but growing group of Eurasians or Anglo-Indians, 'European in the eyes of Society, native in the eye of the Law.'⁴ Some of them were children of men of position in Army and Civil Service like Henry van Cortlandt of the Sikh Service, whose father was an officer in the 19th Dragoons, or Martindale of Skinner's Horse, whose father was a general. In earlier days officers in the Company's service had often taken to themselves women 'chiefly Muhammadans of respectable families but in reduced circumstances,' and men of a later and stricter school admitted that such offenders at least

¹ Kaye, *Life of Metcalfe*, Vol. II., pp. 45-6.

² Meadows Taylor, *Story of My Life*, p. 22.

³ *Journal of Henry Lawrence*.

⁴ *Minutes of Evidence*, Vol. I., app., p. 56. The phrase is Elphinstone's.

'knew far more of the people of the country than we do.'¹ But naturally the majority of the half-castes were children of soldiers, or of Englishmen of no standing in the community, and their social position, education, and ultimate fate were detrimentally affected by that fact.

Down to 1791 the Company services seem to have been at least not forbidden to them, and in the distinguished list of them, named to the House of Commons in 1832, were 'General Jones, who commanded the Bombay army in 1803-5; Col. Stevenson, the present Quartermaster-General; Major Harsey, Capt. Rutledge, Lt. Mullens, Major Deare in the King's army; and Col. Skinner in the Irregular service.'² Later these openings were closed to them, and while the exceptional cases of Mr. Kyd, a large shipbuilder in Calcutta, and Colonel Skinner could be quoted, the Anglo-Indians turned more naturally to minor mercantile and clerky work. They practically monopolised the positions of clerks and accountants both in Government and in private offices. From them came some indigo planters, schoolmasters, printers, and undertakers. For them a salary of £600 was as much as all but their leaders could expect; there were many Christians; and they provided perhaps the one section of Indian society whose interests and sympathies were closely bound up with those of the English governing classes.³

The official centre of the community was the Civil Service, with the Governor-General, his household, and his council at the head. Army men, at heart, had no doubt that as compared with civilians, in rank and the all-important allowances and emoluments, they were 'infinitely inferior in every respect,'⁴ and Henry Lawrence's advice to John was that the Civil Service was 'the greater field for ability,

¹ MS. diary of an officer.

² *Minutes of Evidence*, Vol. I., app., p. 77.

³ *Minutes of Evidence*, Vol. I., app., pp. 54-6.

⁴ *Ibid.*, Vol. V., p. 215 - evidence of Captain Macon.

for vigour and for usefulness.¹ Trained at Haileybury, as the Army cadets were at Addiscombe, and appointed by patronage of the Company, these lads came out to complete their education for the services at the three presidency centres. It was all-important that they should know the main language of their districts, and that they should be imbued with some sense of duty in entering on their terribly responsible positions. But long before the college which Lord Wellesley had erected at Fort William was abolished, the defects revealed in the conduct of the lads trained there had become a subject of anxious thought. Debt and dissipation were the natural dangers for young men not too strenuously employed in Calcutta; nor were the fruits of education in Oriental languages very notable. Bentinck himself, in 1828, pointed out that, while in Bengal about one-third of the students in training qualified for the public service by passing tests in two languages in less than a year, in Madras only 5 out of 42 did so, and in Bombay out of 96 students in 8 years, only 13 had qualified themselves in the necessary Maratha and Gujarati languages.² A minute of Metcalfe's states the case for the critic in some detail: 'The idle neglect their studies, are eventually sent away from college into the interior, and years sometimes pass before they are reported fit to enter on the public service. The better-disposed study one language until they pass the requisite examination, and are reported qualified in that language; then they neglect that language and study another until reported qualified . . . then they enter on the public service, and find that what they have been learning at College is not exactly what qualifies them for the public service; and they have to learn to qualify themselves anew. In the meantime the students have generally with few exceptions incurred debt in consequence of the expensive habits acquired at the College, which debt

¹ Bosworth Smith, *Life of Lord Lawrence*, Vol. I., p. 25.

² Minute of the Governor-General, 27 December, 1828, in *Minutes of Evidence*, Vol. I., app., pp. 549-56.

remains a burden to them for many years, and perhaps for ever.'¹

Once launched out, the ordinary men followed fairly regular lines of promotion. They started as assistants to the Commissioners of Revenue and Circuit, working alternate days in each department. Those who headed towards law became, first, assistants, then joint magistrates, ending with full magistracy on a salary from 1,200 to 1,600 rupees a month; or, with luck or ability, there were judgeships and commissioners' places after eighteen or twenty years' service. If the career was to be in revenue, then a similar development took place, to a collectorship, with Commissionerships of Revenue & Circuit at the end, after eighteen or twenty years.² The case of men either unusually gifted or strongly supported by influence is best illustrated from the careers of the two greatest Civil Servants of the period, Charles Metcalfe and James Thomason. Leaving out occasional missions, Metcalfe began at headquarters; became, first, Assistant and then Resident at Delhi; Resident at the Court of the Nizam in Hyderabad; Resident Civil Commissioner at Delhi, member of the Supreme Council, acting Governor-General, and finally Lieutenant-Governor of the North-West Provinces. Thomason who headed first towards judicial work was, in succession, Secretary to the Government, Magistrate and Collector at Azamgarh, Secretary to the Governor of the North-West Provinces, Foreign Secretary, and finally Lieutenant-Governor of the North-West Provinces, this last position after twenty years' service, at the age of thirty-nine. From the actual work done by these two men, and the admirable records and minutes which both, and more especially Metcalfe, have left, one would say that they combined the qualities expected in Britain of a Secretary of State and of his chief permanent under-secretary, and that, in the period of Whig reform to

¹ Minute by Sir C. Metcalfe, 28 December, 1828, in *Minutes of Evidence*, Vol. I., app., pp. 556-8.

² *Ibid.*, Vol. IV., pp. 103-4 - evidence of R. N. C. Hamilton.

which they belonged, it would be difficult to find any department in London which did better work under Ministers and permanent officials than did these men unassisted. It is probable that the type of Civil Servant whom Thackeray has immortalised in Joseph Sedley, the Collector of Boggley Wollah, still persisted, and that there was bound to be much dull uninspired routine administration in a country where the absence of society, and the steady inroads made by the climate on spirits and health, told on efficiency. But the great names, Adam, Metcalfe, Elphinstone, and Thomason, must not be taken as isolated instances of public spirit. The amazing thing was that so much good work was done with materials so average, and among surroundings so uninspiring. The faults and errors natural to the position are self-evident. There was the attitude of superiority, and the lack of sympathy, which young men of the governing class are always likely to display among an alien people before experience has taught them common sense. This arrogance and aloofness was reinforced by the language difficulty. Only the better men succeeded in learning sufficient of the language, the manners, and the moral standards of those whom they governed, to be able 'to appreciate and judge their motives'; and Colonel Sleeman complained of what he called 'the philosophical indifference as to the language in which they [the Civil Service] attempt to convey their ideas.' 'I have heard,' he writes, 'some of our highest diplomatic characters talking, without the slightest feeling of shame or embarrassment, to Indian Princes on the most ordinary subject of everyday interest in a language which no human being but themselves could understand.'¹ This linguistic indolence, so characteristic of Englishmen, frequently led to another evil; for it placed the average official too much at the mercy of any head clerk or native assistant who had learned English, and who might easily turn his position of interpreter and adviser to his own possibly

¹ Sir W. Sleeman, *Rambles and Recollections*, Vol. I., pp. 410-11.

corrupt advantage. The best men, too, confessed the disadvantages flowing from far too frequent changes or temporary substitutions in the service. 'I could cite the case of an individual,' writes Tucker, 'who had been employed at four different stations in the course of about two years, and he himself had the candour to acknowledge that, in consequence of this stupid transition, his services could not have been of any real utility at any of these stations.'¹

Between Army and Civil Service there existed a no-man's-land, the cause of much contemporary and later discussion, the region in which military men officiated as administrators, and civilians, with some soldiers, claimed the right, as political agents, to interfere with operations in the field. The case of the soldier-administrators presented less difficulty than the other. As the area for which Britain was responsible increased, and the arrangements made by Wellesley and his school with independent provinces grew in complexity, many administrative or diplomatic positions came into existence, in which educated soldiers seemed more appropriate officials than civilians. It was stated, for example, in the evidence laid before the House of Lords Committee in 1830, that almost all the collectors in the Deccan were military officers, and that they performed their duties very satisfactorily.² In the immediately preceding generation, two of the most illustrious names, Malcolm and Munro, were those of great soldier statesmen, and neither Metcalfe nor Thomason could have written with more enthusiasm of his administration than did Munro of the district in which he had first proved his worth. Colonel Tod, too, although his duties in Rajputana partook more of a diplomatic than of an administrative character, is another notable example of this class. His *Rajasthan* is a monument to his deep sympathy with, and intimate understanding of the courts at which he was political agent, and his prayer that 'neither the love of

¹ H. Tucker, *Memorials of Indian Government*, p. 423. He had been connected, one way or another, with India for more than fifty years.

² *Minutes of Evidence*, Vol. I., app., p. 61.

conquest nor false views of policy may tempt us to subvert the independence of these states, some of which have braved the storms of more than ten centuries,' is a typical utterance of the noblest school of Indian statesmen – one to which Henry Lawrence himself emphatically belonged.

But the diplomacy of the North-West, more especially after Lord Auckland had surrendered to imprudent counsels, tended to develop another kind of political agent, usually skilled in languages and deeply interested in Russian and West-Central Asiatic problems. In positions remote from that of the Central Government, such as that of Macnaghten in Kabul, or where one or two Englishmen were in control of a wild mountain tract and tribe, it is obvious that the man on the spot must be entrusted with emergency powers. Where there was some military force in the vicinity, and the need for its employment urgent, the exact sphere of the political agent was bound to be undefined, and the relations between him, and the commander of the local force, likely to be strained. Later in this narrative it will become clear that some of the most necessary, and the most successful, work done in pioneer administration in India, was that of the young political agents whom Henry Lawrence appointed as his Wardens of the Marches – Nicholson, Edwardes, James Abbott, Reynell Taylor, and half a dozen others. Their assumption of responsibility, and their gift of unconventional action, were of the greatest service to the Government, although Dalhousie, with a perfectly sound sense of discipline, never felt quite sure of Henry Lawrence and his young men. The whole question will be raised when the relations between Dalhousie and Henry Lawrence are discussed. But there is a letter from that Governor-General which must stand as the *locus classicus* in criticism of the ways of the political agent. Sir Henry Lawrence had mentioned with disapproval the rather high-handed and independent action of almost the ablest of his young men, Herbert Edwardes, and the Governor-General used the opportunity to give the

whole Panjab group a lesson: 'From the tone of your letter I perceive it is not necessary to say that you should pull up Major Edwardes – at once. But I further wish to repeat what I said before, that there are more than Major Edwardes in the Residency who appear to consider themselves now-a-days as Governor-General at least. The sooner you set about disenchanting their minds of this illusion, the better for your comfort and their own. I don't doubt you will find bit and martingale for them speedily. For I repeat, I will not stand it in quieter times for half an hour, and will come down unmistakably upon any of them who may try it on, from Major Edwardes, C.B., down to the latest enlisted General-Ensign-Plenipotentiary in the establishment.'¹

The system revealed all its worst characteristics through Lord Auckland's weakness, and the undue credit attached to the knowledge and wisdom of Macnaghten and Burnes; it culminated in the disorders and lack of discipline of the Afghan campaign, and if at a later date the word 'political' stank in the nostrils of all who cared for discipline, it was due to that appalling lapse from every quality of sense, and courage, and discipline, in which soldiers failed to shoulder their proper responsibility, because their authority had been weakened by the agents, and the agents, some of them officers in the Army, displayed a presumptuous folly for which the appropriate remedy was a court-martial.

But it is time to turn to the Army, for however honours and precedence might go elsewhere, no one then doubted that, in India, the Army was England, and that, apart from the power and prestige of the soldiery, the English dominion could not last a single day. 'Our whole real strength,' wrote Metcalfe in one of his ablest minutes, 'consists in the few European regiments, speaking comparatively, that are scattered singly over the vast space of subjugated India. That is the only portion of our soldiery whose hearts are with us, and whose constancy can be relied on in the hour of

¹ Dalhousie to Sir Henry Lawrence, 20 February, 1849.

trial.¹ It is impossible, then, to over-estimate the importance of the British forces to our dominion in India, but the shameful events of the Afghan campaign forbid any too flattering picture of their quality, or of the wisdom with which they were directed. 'Everything,' writes the historian of the Army, 'in this wretched campaign was of a piece, and from beginning to end it brought nothing but disgrace.' Before 1838 the British position in India was more than creditable, it was astonishing; but a study of the instruments of our supremacy reveals nothing very wonderful.

The rank and file who were enlisted for an indefinite period – in actual fact twenty-one years was the natural term of service – were rather better paid than in His Majesty's Forces, and, if they lived, received a reasonable pension. But it cannot be pretended that their lot was enviable. In certain ways, discipline was very strict, and although sipahis were exempt from flogging, white soldiers were not, and little mercy was shown in sentences of from 500 to 1,000 strokes. The leisure of the men was ample, but few means were contrived for enabling them to use it rationally. Drunkenness was an all-prevailing vice which the routine rum rations of the Army did nothing to counteract.² When the men were married, no attempt was made to assist and protect the family life; and as soldiers' wives often attempted to add to their wretched means of living by illicit trade in liquor, they were, when discovered, sentenced to deportation, which proved a most effective kind of divorce.³ No attempt was made to control soldiers' connections with native women; indeed it seems probable that when some permanent relationship with an Indian woman was established, the man was better off, and where there were children, perhaps better morally than had his wife been English.⁴ The

¹ Lord Metcalfe's *Papers and Correspondence*, p. 162.

² *Minutes of Evidence*, Vol. V., p. 111, and in other places.

³ *Ibid.*, Vol. V., app., p. 311.

⁴ *Ibid.*, Vol. V., app., p. 311 – memo. from Lieutenant-Colonel Hopkinson (artillery).

most tragic feature was the fate of the children, especially those of unmixed British stock. A competent witness, Lieutenant-Colonel Hopkinson, of the Madras Horse Artillery, declared that, when in his subaltern days he used to go round the places where Europeans lived, he saw children in great numbers of pure European blood, but that he could not recollect one instance where these children attained maturity.¹

It was Henry Lawrence's overpowering sense of the need of some reform in this direction which led to his scheme for hill schools for these wretched victims of military mismanagement. It is too easy to see the British soldier only in action, and occupied with tasks which conceal the routine circumstances of the greater part of his Indian service. To correct the picture one must think of the squalid and inadequate barracks; the absence of every modern alleviation of Indian discomforts; the hot, ill-lit places of rest; the drink, the dissipation, the diseases of the camp, and the onsets of epidemics as terrible in their unexpectedness as in their rapidity of execution.

For an officer it was a different story, although even here there is little to suggest a breeding-ground of heroes. At Addiscombe the cadets were received as young as fourteen, but the usual age for going out was about seventeen. Like the civilians, the young men who headed for Bengal found Calcutta a natural centre for dissipation and debt. It was difficult to avoid illegitimate expenditure, and yet debt meant the postponement of furlough, and often the inability to marry. For the average young man his first years, if peace prevailed, might prove trivial and useless. He was likely to find himself disinclined to labour too strenuously at languages. If he were socially inclined, the greater stations offered unfortunate opportunity for wasting time. He had his gallop before sunrise, and could spend the morning after breakfast in 'visiting, scandal and the usual routine of a large

¹ *Minutes of Evidence*, Vol. V., p. 125.

English society.¹ He rested in the afternoon until it was time for riding or driving, and month passed into month with no real gain in experience or military skill, until orders came for active service, and found the majority of officers gallant, spirited, but untrained. The disadvantage of life at the greater stations was that the circumstances of ordinary social life excluded real knowledge by the officer of his Indian subordinates and men, and Colonel Sleeman described the indifference and alienation as so extreme that officers would 'betray signs of the greatest impatience while they listened to the necessary reports of their native officers as they came on or went off duty.'² The Afghan War revealed most of the weaknesses of the officers' training. There was a most unsoldierly call for baggage trains and servants. When the Bengal army moved from Ferozpur in 1838, a force of 9,500 combatants required 38,000 camp followers,³ and one of the Commander-in-Chief's *aides* was accompanied by an elephant, four horses, eight camels, and twenty domestics.⁴ Henry Lawrence made all allowances for Indian conditions, but he held that officers had set a bad example, and instanced a lieutenant-colonel who took with him to Kandahar three elephants, and double-sided tents and glass doors.⁵ Tied to this system of excessive baggage, the staff had obviously learnt nothing of scientific methods in commissariat and transport, and the failure in this department was even more shameful on the road from the Indus to Kabul than was that in discipline and military science.

There was some excuse in the absence of any incentive through quick promotion. In the Indian Army, apart from a greater mortality, there were far fewer chances of one's seniors dropping out, and the calculation was that, with a youngster joining about seventeen, the rules of seniority

¹ H. E. Fane, *Five Years in India*, gives a point of view of a young officer, who was both nephew and A.D.C. to the Commander-in-Chief.

² Sleeman, *op. cit.*, Vol. II., p. 321.

³ Kaye, *History of the War in Afghanistan*, Vol. I., p. 404.

⁴ Fane, *op. cit.*, Vol. I., p. 54.

⁵ Sir Henry Lawrence, *Essays*, p. 441.

would see him a lieutenant at twenty-one, a captain at twenty-nine, a major at forty-four, and with luck a lieutenant-colonel at fifty-four.¹ The consequence was, as Henry Lawrence put it, that when the crisis came, the army would be commanded by 'gallant veterans who, during health and strength, were never trusted with command, and whose only guarantee of efficiency was old age – whose very existence was often a token of their never having earned command.' There were boys on magisterial benches, he said, and hoary age commanding Light Horse. Lest this seem too drastic a criticism of the average, a terrible note from Roberts' *Forty-one Years in India*, may be quoted:

'It is curious to note how nearly every military officer who held a command or high position on the staff in Bengal when the Mutiny broke out, disappeared from the scene in the first few weeks, and was never heard of officially again. Some were killed, some died of disease, but the great majority failed completely to fulfil the duties of the positions they held, and were consequently considered unfit for further employment. Two Generals of Divisions were removed from their command, seven Brigadiers were found wanting in the hour of need, and out of the 73 regiments of Cavalry and Infantry which mutinied, only four commanding officers were given other commands, younger officers being selected to train and command the new regiments.'²

If it be questioned how such a force managed to retain its reputation and control, it can only be answered that there was nothing comparable to it in the rest of India; and that the futility, cowardice, and incapacity of Indian military power may be gauged by the siege of the Lucknow Residency in 1857, when a garrison of 1,700 men held for months a position which ought to have been carried within the first six hours.

It was but natural, then, that men of any ambition like the Lawrences, their friends, and their subordinates, should

¹ Calculations from Lawrence, *Essays*, pp. 457-8.

² Earl Roberts, *Forty-one Years in India* (popular edition), n., p. 244.

seek to escape from so deadly a system of routine, and political agencies and the like were natural ways of exit. When all has been said against the men who served, after the Afghan War, as 'politicals,' the fact remains that they were the very men who faced the perplexities of the Sikh wars and the Mutiny, with clear heads as well as brave hearts, and that the prestige of the Indian Army up to 1859 depended on the deeds of men like John Nicholson, Herbert Edwardes, Robert Napier, and Henry Lawrence himself, all of whom owed their power to save England in India in part to what they had learned away from their own units.

In the years of Ranjit Singh's control of the Panjab, there sprang up a most interesting, if irregular, sub-section of English military population in India.¹ It is true that all his chief European officers came from the continent of Europe: Allard and Court from France, Avitabile from Naples, others from Germany and Spain. But there was a British fringe of instructors, commanders of smaller units, adventurers prepared to do anything except to return to England or respect the Ten Commandments. A few of these 'buccaneers' were probably officers broken for some misconduct, and seeking shelter and maintenance away from their old habitations. Others, like Van Cortlandt, Jacob Thomas, or Martindale, were Eurasians seeking in foreign service opportunities denied under the Company's rule. But the greater number were deserters from the Army and Navy – men who had either committed some military offence, the penalties for which they escaped by flight, or who had grown tired of the tedium of barrack life. By majority they seem to have been Irish, although some of them camouflaged the land of their origin by calling themselves Americans – Alexander Gardiner, for example, traced his origin to a father who had settled 'on the shores of Lake Superior *just where the Mississippi breaks out of it.*'² They were

¹ Grey and Garrett, *European Adventurers of Northern India*, give the latest version of this subject, based on the Panjab records.

² Grey and Garrett, *op. cit.*, p. 268.

mostly drunkards, or at least given to spasms of violent intoxication; they accepted native standards with regard to women; the one thing they never told was the truth; and their lives, as grotesquely varied as the scenes in an Elizabethan play, were at least monotonous in their uniformly tragic ends. Among the few who were not dragged down into the degradation of the rest were Colonel John Holmes, whom Reynell Taylor found 'an active and intelligent assistant' in his frontier work, and whom, after his murder, Henry Lawrence called 'a most respectable old officer'; Van Cortlandt, who assisted Edwardes in his war with Multan and finished his course as a British Commissioner; and Colonel 'Kanara,' as the Sikhs called him, whose gallant end James Abbott described in his diary and commemorated in an epitaph: 'To the memory of Colonel Kanara, who fell nobly in the performance of his duty, being summoned by the rebel Sikh army to surrender his guns, and being basely deserted by his men, he seized a linstock and fell, singly combating a host, July 6th, 1848.'¹

In a community of this description, with work and pleasure continuing their exacting demands through most of the waking hours, and with many of its members scattered in ones, twos, and threes throughout India, it would have been unnatural if intellectual and literary things had had much appeal. After the civilian or the soldier had finished all his studies in the vernacular, life and mere indolence excluded books as an ordinary leisure pursuit. No doubt Macaulay found a few select souls to listen to his conversation at Calcutta, but the famous incident of his having converted vice-regal society during the wet season in the Nilgiris to admiration of *Clarissa Harlowe* is evidence, not so much that Macaulay's companions wanted to read, as that they resorted to reading in desperation, and Macaulay's biographer

¹ *Lahore Political Diaries, 1847-1849*, Vol. IV., pp. 224-5; Grey and Garrett, p. 298.

specifically says that there were no books in the place. Out of the necessity of providing some kind of educational policy, members of the Government found themselves enlisted in the cause of the ancient languages of the East. After 1813, when a lakh of rupees was placed at the disposal of education each year, the pundits of Calcutta duplicated the Sanscrit College already existing at Benares, and, besides its Indian students, it became a centre where a few great Orientalists like H. H. Wilson and Colebrook defended the claims of Oriental classics, until Macaulay drove them headlong in defeat with his famous minute of 1835. Besides this a Hindu College had been growing up in Calcutta to promote the study of the English language and European science, and the heads of English society in Bengal gave it their countenance; at Serampore, Carey, Marshman, and Ward had made their press famous, especially for translations of the Scriptures into a score of Indian languages, and, among the mountains of Nepal, Brian Hodgson laid the foundation of his great erudition.

But when all has been said, the English community in India had few of the features which distinguish an 'intelligentsia,' and took their literature in the form of letters from home, and the local papers. By 1831 there existed (I do not say flourished) in Calcutta, besides five native newspapers, three English dailies, two tri-weeklies, four papers which came out twice a week, and four monthly publications, while Madras supported three English papers and Bombay two.¹ Their total circulation amounted to some 3,000, and when exciting issues such as that of the 'Half Batta' order arose, there was no local convention forbidding Civil Servants or even military men from joining in the fray with their pens. As we shall see, men like Henry Lawrence and Herbert Edwardes, to whom writing was really one of their natural forms of nervous energy, wrote freely to the more reputable organs,

¹ *Minutes of Evidence*, Vol. I., pp. 166-82. The evidence of James Sutherland, editor of the *Bengal Hurkaru*, is a most important document in the literary history of the English in India at this time.

and Sir John Fortescue has found it difficult to excuse the old Indian Army for its *cacoethes scribendi*. Under Lord William Bentinck the more vexatious forms of censorship had disappeared; the deportation of Buckingham – the editor of the *Calcutta Journal* – was ancient history, and Sir Charles Metcalfe was on the point of clearing away the last unreasonable obstructions. He did so with the reluctant consent of men who knew India as well as he himself did. Sir John Malcolm, who opposed the extension of such British principles to India, did so with a prophetic insight into the use that not Englishmen but Indians would make of this new weapon; for, said he, ‘My attention has been, during the last twenty-five years, directed to the dangerous species of secret war against our authority which is always carrying on, by numerous though unseen hands. . . . When the time appears favourable, from the occurrence of misfortune to our arms, from rebellion in our provinces, or from mutiny in our troops, circular letters and proclamations are dispersed over the country with a celerity that is incredible. Such documents are read with avidity.’¹

With these warning words, we pass from the ordinary peaceful existence of Bentinck’s, and part of Auckland’s, days, towards stormier times. I see that old scattered society, eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, just before the twenty stormy years 1838–58 broke on them. Civilians, conning their vexatious grammars in youth, and then, if they were but average men, passing the rest of life in humdrum, useful, indeed sometimes strenuous pursuits, seeing their subjects through a glass darkly; still infinitely juster and more intelligent than their Indian predecessors: soldiers, all but the best recoiling from the hardship of resuming the dictionaries which they had left – for good they had thought – behind them at Addiscombe; hunting, riding, flirting, and dancing, and, like most English soldiers in those days, very

¹ Sir John Malcolm: speech at a General Court of Proprietors, 9 July, 1824, in his *Political History of India*, Vol. II., p. ccxlii.

little interested in the science of their profession, but desperately interested in allowances, the possibilities of furlough, and the impossibilities of immediate marriage. Emily Eden and her letters have left a perfect picture of this surface society which her brother did more than any other individual, except Macnaghten, to shatter by his errors.

But some thoughtful men were beginning to ask questions, two of them of ultimate importance. The first was: 'What of the relation between Englishmen and Indians, individually?'; the second: 'Towards what end is Anglo-Indian dominion tending?'

The later life of Henry Lawrence was much concerned with both these questions; it will therefore be appropriate to inquire what English society in India thought in the years between 1830 and 1838.

Although there were notable exceptions, it cannot be said that the existing relations between the races were at all ideal. In high quarters, of course, where Governors-General had to deal with equal or only just inferior native powers, it was a question of glorious pageants and assemblies; all the circumstance which outsiders mistake for the essential East; presents and counter-presents, until Auckland and Ranjit Singh, or Metcalfe and the Nizam, began to assume something of the glory of Henry VIII and Francis I at the Field of the Cloth of Gold.¹ Actually the best diplomatic work was done, especially by soldier-statesmen, in earlier days, like Tod, Malcolm, and Munro, later like the Lawrences, Nicholson, and their group. Tod's great book is a tribute as much to the soundness of his relations with the Rajput peoples from prince to cultivator as to the extent of his knowledge. Heber, on his travels, found the Rajput saying that 'the country had never known quiet until he came among them; and everybody whether rich or poor, except thieves and Pindarees, loved him.'² It is fair to them to say

¹ Seen to advantage in books like Emily Eden's *Up the Country*.

² Heber, *op. cit.*, Vol. II., p. 456.

that under these heaven-sent English governors the common folk lived more happily than ever before, and than they ever will again.

But in less exalted circles, and once more outside the regions dominated by a great administrator like Thomason, there can be little doubt that, with all their honesty and industry, average Englishmen tended to seem to be more than a trifle aloof and arrogant. Heber, after commenting on a certain ease and naturalness in some French inhabitants of India, went on to blame his countrymen because they made themselves a separate caste, disliking and disliked by all their neighbours. 'We are not guilty,' he says, 'of injustice or wilful oppression, but we shut out the native from our society, and a bullying and insolent manner is continually assumed in speaking to them.'¹ It has already been seen that there was a tendency in the Army to make the racial division more abrupt through indolence and frivolity. The same was true in such civil occupations as the judicial service, where it was noticed that little attempt was made to encourage the good work of Indian subordinates, but censure was freely showered on those who failed. Apologists will speak of 'English reserve,' and 'differences in social custom,' but the truth is that, at the bottom of it all, there was a lack of moral sensitiveness in the average Englishman, and that hardening in which government of alien subject peoples always ends. It was significant of more than mere thoughtlessness and pleasure, when Sleeman and Emily Eden found themselves forced to condemn the use of the Taj Mahal and its once sacred surrounding buildings for quadrille and tiffin parties, at which the guests ate ham and drank champagne,² and the reason given by Miss Eden for the attachment of their servants to Government House was that 'it was one of the few houses in Calcutta where they were not beaten.'³ It was still the same world (with the Mutiny raging) which

¹ Heber, Vol. II., pp. 343-4.

² Sleeman, *op. cit.*, Vol. I., p. 145; Eden, *Up the Country*, Vol. II., p. 214.

³ Eden, *Letters from India*, Vol. I., p. 337.

Lord Elgin saw in 1857, and on which his comment was, 'I have seldom, from man or woman since I came to the East, heard a sentence which was reconcilable with the hypothesis that Christianity had ever come into the world.'¹ But by that time arrogance had passed into panic, and racial superiority into a desire for revenge.

By 1830 the missionaries and home churches had still further developed their attempt to relate the races more closely through religion, with results in part doubtful. Carey and the Baptists had long been working at Serampore and in Bengal; there were Americans in Burma and the west; and in 1830 Duff began his great career as a missionary educator in Calcutta. With those who could be induced to consider conversion, or who felt interested in speculating on the Christian doctrines, or who welcomed the new opportunities for education, the relations with the English and Scottish missionaries were as close and ideal as they could be. If they could look ahead, as some of them certainly did, they would see, in the new attempts to Christianise political methods and social life, the beginnings of a peaceful revolution, Christ manifest not so much in individual souls saved as in a purified society. But it was hard for most average men about 1830 to accept this new chance of bettering racial relations. It goes without saying that, to faithful Hindus and Mussulmans, it was a fresh menace to their faiths. As for the English, the eighteenth-century tradition had been one of neutrality, based partly on a desire to 'play fair' by the Hindus and Muhammadans, partly on a dislike of Christian enthusiasm. That tradition found its full expression in what was called the 'Brahmanised Englishman,' and in 1830 he had still legitimate descendants. After the mutiny at Vellore in 1806, although the trouble had been caused mainly by the incredible folly of a military order, it was common talk that missionary efforts would create mutiny in the Army and disloyalty among the populace.

¹ Earl of Elgin, letter to his wife from Calcutta, 21 August, 1857.

Sir T. Munro, who was never petty, had sternly checked the efforts of one of his collectors in 1822. 'The best way for a collector to instruct the natives,' he said, 'is to set them an example in his own conduct.'¹ The problem was always recurring, and it must never be forgotten that, however noble the aspirations of the evangelist and however despicable the religious prejudices of the average Englishman and Indian, there was something ideal in the desire of the Government to offend no creed, to give no advantage to its own official religion, and to hold the balance equal. Henry Lawrence's friend Craufurd raised the question at Allahabad in 1830 when, as chaplain, in all good faith, he was willing to meet sipahis who came to him uninvited, and with whom he discussed Christian doctrine. In spite of Herbert Edwardes's condemnation, there is something to be said for the consequent order to all chaplains 'that they were not to speak at all to the native soldiery on the subject of religion.'² It is nevertheless unspeakably melancholy to reflect that the one Western influence which, could it have been deprived of the note of propaganda, was calculated to cure the worst evils of race prejudice in those days, was excluded, partly because of Hindu and Muslim feeling, partly by the Government's sense of fair play, but also by the dull hatred of enthusiasms and things spiritual which afflicts all second- and third-rate minds. For one must remember that very many of those who in argument stood up for the rights of others in religion, in their daily lives ignored the existence of their own national creed. It took the nobler generation of the Lawrences, Edwardes, Montgomery, and the best of the Mutiny heroes, to rectify the error, and prove that, apart from proselytising, Englishmen were not ashamed to practise their religion in public, or to let definitely Christian precepts affect their routine behaviour.

¹ J. Bradshaw, *Life of Sir Thomas Munro*, pp. 183-4.

² Edwardes, *Life of Sir Henry Lawrence*, appendix to chap. ii.

Religion then promised only a feeble help in bringing more sympathy and understanding into the relations of the average Englishman with those whom he governed, or with whom he traded. It was not unnatural, then, for almost the greatest authority on India at that time, Metcalfe, to take the most pessimistic view of the feelings of the Indian peoples towards their governors: 'All India is at all times looking out for our downfall. The people everywhere would rejoice, or fancy they would rejoice, at our destruction. And numbers are not wanting who would promote it by all means in their power.'¹

Metcalfe's words raise the ultimate issue which, even before 1838, thoughtful Englishmen were asking as they governed or fought in India. Towards what end was it all tending?

Metcalfe – and he was not singular in his views, and spoke without a touch of panic – seems always to have been prepared for a sudden collapse of the whole wonderful fabric of British rule. He quoted Sir John Malcolm's dictum that in an Empire like India we were always in danger, and that it was impossible to conjecture the form in which it might approach.² In language that a great orator or historian might have envied, he expounded what he held the precariousness of our sway: 'We are to appearances more powerful in India now than we ever were. Nevertheless our downfall may be short work. When it commences it will probably be rapid, and the world will wonder more at the suddenness with which our immense Indian Empire may vanish, than it has done at the surprising conquest that we have achieved.' And again: 'Empires grow old, die and perish. Ours in India can hardly be called old, but seems destined to be short-lived. We appear to have passed the brilliancy and vigour of our youth, and it may be that we have reached a premature old age. We have ceased to be

¹ Metcalfe, *Papers and Correspondence*, p. 116.

² *Ibid.*, p. 196 : a minute of 16 May, 1835.

the wonder that we were to the natives; the charm which once accompanied us has been dissolved, and our subjects have had time to enquire why they have been subdued.¹ To such a man safety and continued existence must depend on the sword, and it would be well to see that, in the Indian Army, British sabres, bayonets, and guns were in due proportion.

Less pessimistically inclined were some of the statesmen of the early nineteenth century, who, like Henry Lawrence half a generation later, felt that the whole affair was a matter of careful balance and readjustment; Englishmen securing just those strategic points which kept the whole situation stable; maintaining just that control over the protected States which would prevent violent abuses, without undermining the credit of the Governments over which we had assumed general supervision; maintaining also, by justice and economical and peaceful government, the goodwill of the masses which might prove useful in a time of storm. Such men professed no gifts of prophecy, but, feeling themselves in close contact with the present, and knowing that they were unchallenged masters, they saw no reason why the *status quo* should not continue for a long time.

Malcolm was prepared to talk of the permanence of British rule, but Mountstuart Elphinstone, learning from Sir T. Munro, named at least one condition of continuance. He held that the introduction of Indians into a share in their own government was not only inevitable, but a necessary condition of the English dominion. 'It may be half a century before we are obliged to do so,' he wrote in 1822, 'but the system of government and of education which we have already established must, some time or other, work such a change on the people of this country, that it will be impossible to confine them to subordinates' employment; and if we have not previously opened vents for their ambition and ability, we may expect an explosion which will overturn our

¹ Metcalfe, *Papers and Correspondence*, pp. 162-3.

government.’¹ It was characteristic of Henry Lawrence, who represented with some differences the same school of active statesmanship in his own generation, that he advanced beyond his teachers, saying openly that ‘We cannot expect to hold India for ever,’ but, less pessimistic than Metcalfe, he thought it possible, with wisdom, that England might retain India as ‘a noble ally, enlightened and brought into the scale of nations under our guidance and fostering care.’²

There was a third school, already given a lead by Wellesley, although without any distinguished representative in the years of peace – the pure imperialists. These men – and their two greatest representatives, Wellesley and Dalhousie were, in the nature of things, Governors-General, and neither of them expert in Indian detail – accepted the British Empire as more or less in the nature of things; their minds did not lead them in morbid speculation towards ultimate issues; but, as they or their fathers had faced and defeated Napoleon, it seemed absurd to speculate on England thrust out of India. Dalhousie, for example, had no illusion about an Indian millennium; ‘No prudent man,’ he said, ‘will venture to give you assurance of continued peace.’ But war must have but one end. ‘To fear God and to have no other fear is a maxim of religion, but the truth of it, and the wisdom of it are proved day by day in politics.’ Whether or not he helped to precipitate the Mutiny, there can be no doubt either of the spirit in which he would have faced it, or the success with which he would have repressed it. Men like Munro, or Elphinstone, or, later, Lawrence, might know their India better, understand more fully the individual Indian, and propose so wisely modifiable a *status quo* that crises would be met before they occurred. But the world has always preferred the man of dogmatic certainties, who accepts facts and persons as materials which it is his business to force into conformity with his own clear

¹ Elphinstone’s carefully considered opinion may be found in *Minutes of Evidence*, Vol. I., app., pp. 43-5.

² Sir H. Lawrence, *Essays*, pp. 59-60.

ideas; and who usually creates, or compels, the force which is essential to his methods. As has been said, the period of comparative peace between the rule of the Marquis of Hastings and the Afghan War saw few men of this temper, and none at all of them of the first importance. It is possible that, had either Wellesley or Dalhousie governed between 1822 and 1838, there would have been neither an Afghan War nor a Sikh War; it is also possible that, with weak successors, they would have precipitated a mutiny at an earlier date. But that they represented the conquering English people more fully than any of the others is indubitable. When philosophers are kings, aggressive and compelling statesmanship may lose its vogue; but, things being what they are, it is clear that the popular voice will always acclaim the men who, like our greater proconsuls, show neither doubt nor fear; are not content to conform to circumstances, but compel the world to reshape itself to suit their policy.

CHAPTER V

THE LATER EDUCATION OF HENRY LAWRENCE¹

A. *Finding his Feet.*

FOR unusual men there is this advantage in an imperfect education, that it binds them less strictly to accepted conventions, and extends the period through which further growth and variation are still possible. Henry Lawrence had already learned much through his Burmese experiences. Between 1830 and 1838 two new factors in his life were to do more than anything else to complete his training for responsible office – his work in the Indian Survey Department, and his marriage to Honoria Marshall.

Two years and a half of furlough contributed their share. He arrived, shattered in health by Arakan fever, and all through the stay at home one must think of him as suffering from attacks, which happily diminished in severity as the time went on. He had no sooner reached home than, with

¹ The following summary of the record of Henry Lawrence, between 1822 and 1842, may help to clarify a rather involved period in his career:—

March 1823. Posted to 5th Company, 2nd Battalion, Foot Artillery, Bengal Army.

June 1824. To Chittagong.

August 1825. Adjutant to Artillery force in Arakan.

November 1825. *Promoted to rank of First Lieutenant.* Sick leave to Calcutta.

March 1826. Officiating D.A. Commissary of Ordnance, Akyab.

August 1826–September 1829. Voyage via China, and at home.

February 1830. Arrived in India after leave.

September 1831. Transferred to Horse Artillery.

February 1833, and for 5½ years thereafter. Assistant Surveyor, then Surveyor, in the Survey Department.

September 1838. Replaced at the disposal of the Commander-in-Chief for employment in the field.

January 1839. Officiating as assistant to the Political Agent at Ludhiana.

March 1840–December 1842. *Promoted to rank of Captain.* Assistant to the Governor-General's Agent for the North-West Frontier: at Ferozpur till

November 1841, thereafter at Peshawar and in Afghanistan.

the restless activity of a returned exile, he hurried off to meet Letitia at Liverpool, whither she was returning from a visit to her friends, the Heaths, at Fahan by Lough Swilly. Then he turned to assume the responsibilities of the acting head of the family. He induced the household to introduce family worship, *padre* Craufurd's influence still working strongly within him; he set himself to assist the education of his younger sisters; and he proved himself of great advantage to his brother John, the next candidate from the family for office in India. John, who had all the instincts of a soldier, was reluctant to accept the writership in the East India Company which their good friend, Mr. Hudleston, secured for him; but Henry and Letitia were strong for civil work, and Henry not only went with his brother to the entrance examination at Haileybury, but, as John said later, 'stimulated him to energy while he was there.' The friendship between Henry and Letitia grew stronger with their developing characters, and religion, whether in the home, or through the preaching of the great Baptist divine, Robert Hall, in Bristol, added to its depth.

But one can trace the first beginnings of a new relationship. At Fahan, where Letitia had been visiting Angel Heath, there lived, as a child adopted by old Admiral Heath, a girl now barely twenty. Honoria Marshall¹ was the twelfth out of a family of sixteen born to the Reverend George Marshall and his wife Elizabeth Willson; and, since Mrs. Lawrence's father George Knox was brother to Honoria Marshall's grandmother Angel, there was something closer than mere Highland cousinship between the Lawrence and the Marshall families. Her father spent his last forty-three years in the little village of Carndonagh, set in the very heart of Inishowen, the peninsula which divides Lough Foyle from Lough Swilly; but all Honoria's memories gathered round Fahan, with its exquisite hills and loughside, and the

¹ There is a useful note on her in Major-General Marshall's *Marshall of Manor Cunningham* (privately printed).

gleams of light and shadow which to the end stood between her and all the glories of the East. What she was to become, this story will reveal; in 1827 it is no rash guess to say that Letitia found in her such qualities as she wished to see in the woman to whom she could hope to see her brother married. At any rate, Honoria was a guest in the Lawrences' house at Clifton in August 1827; and it was hardly accidental that, next month, Henry contrived to revisit Londonderry. He renewed relations with the Knoxes and Foyle College, paid his first visit to the Giant's Causeway, and, incidentally, called at Fahan to deliver some presents for Mrs. Heath.¹ The most vivid glimpse of Henry Lawrence, as well as of Honoria Marshall, at this time, comes from some old letters which Honoria described in her journal as she re-read them, prior to their destruction, on her way, in 1837, to India to be married. The date of one was April 29th, 1828, when she had been on a visit to Josiah Heath, the son of the Admiral, in London: 'At 2 o'clock,' she had written to Angel Heath, 'Letitia and Henry came from Chelsea, and I was glad to avail myself of Henry's services to escort me to a shoe mart. Having made my purchase in Holborn, I proposed to go a little further, to look at Newgate, and when there I recollected that I had never yet seen Father Thames. As Henry said it was not far, I thought I would go to one of the bridges. I have discovered that, in London, *not far* implies any space from 3 yards to 3 miles. But I did get through the very heart of the city . . . till we came to St. Paul's, and I cannot tell you how disappointed I was in the appearance of it. It is, to be sure, wretchedly situated, but it conveys to my mind very little idea of grandeur, and has nothing to elevate or surprise. Well, we walked round it, and gazed up at it, till we nearly assembled a crowd round us; and seeing that it was 5 o'clock, we went briskly on through such alleys, and lanes, and courts, as I can hardly imagine human beings to exist in, for an hour, till we got

¹ Edwardes and Merivale, p. 63.

between Waterloo and Southwark bridges. Henry knows about as much of the geography of London as I do – namely that the Thames was to our left, Holborn to our right, and Tottenham Court Road before us. So with these indefinite ideas we made rather a circuitous route till we came once more to Holborn, where I was so excessively tired that we got a coach to go home in, having excited no small surprise by our long absence.’ The weariness must have passed quickly away, for, next day, as another of the old letters tells, ‘Henry came, and he and I went to the Museum. We were there for about 2 hours’; and as the diarist innocently adds, ‘your name, somehow, comes in more frequently in my letters.’ It would be interesting to know whether Henry Lawrence’s determination to get permission to join the Trigonometrical Survey in the north of Ireland preceded or followed these London adventures. In any case there is a close connection in the origin of the two things which did most, in the future, to ‘make’ him – surveying, and marriage. But, dour conscientious Ulsterman that he was, he had no intention of allowing any affection of his to limit what he was giving to ‘the Lawrence fund’ for his mother, and he also knew that marriage for a Lieutenant in the Bengal Artillery would simply be cruelty to the wife. He must wait, and wait he did in silence for five years. Nevertheless so started a relationship, destined as nothing else in his life was, to shape and raise his whole character.

As events shaped themselves, his fortunate decision to gain surveying experience in the Irish survey was to prove of the most vital importance to him within five years.

There is not much more to add about this one prolonged visit to England – if he had known it, he was to spend only one more short spell of eight months at home in the rest of his life. He visited Paris, walked with John in Wales, and, when it was decided that he and John should travel to India together, along with their sister Honoria, he said good-bye to the family, and to Honoria Marshall, who was

once more in London, and sailed for India in the *Thalia* on September 2nd, 1829.

Henry Lawrence's arrival in India in February 1830 presented him with a perplexing problem. He was fired with an entirely legitimate ambition to find work which would occupy all his fierce energy; and, besides that, he was waiting in silence to secure a standing sufficient to justify him in asking Honoria Marshall to be his wife. Yet, as a Lieutenant in the Foot Artillery, he had to face the prospect of waiting for his majority until he was well over forty, and he would be fortunate if he became Lieutenant-Colonel by fifty-four. Meantime, if India remained as it was, more or less peaceful, he would be engaged in work very uncongenial to a man of his temperament. It is not fair to say that his impatience as a young gunner proves that he had not patience to become a finished soldier. He had done what he had to do in Burma with conspicuous efficiency, and he continued to fulfil his duties adequately. But these duties occupied only a trifling part of his time and wits; and he was too fiery, honest, and ambitious, to acquiesce in waiting until fate gave him, an aged and infirm officer, command for which his years and infirmities would have already unfitted him. At the same time it is a mistake to think of him as the kind of expert and finished soldier that Moore or Abercrombie had been. He was made to be a ruler, not a great soldier. With some assistance from fortune, but much more from his brother George, he set himself, between 1830 and 1839, to clear his way to work which he counted worthy of his efforts. He already saw clearly that a knowledge of native languages was essential for promotion of any kind; and, throughout the five months of his voyage, he and John, neither of them natural linguists, worked hard at their grammars and dictionaries. On arriving, he had the good luck to be posted to a company of Foot Artillery at Karnal, where his brother George of the 2nd Cavalry Regiment was stationed. This opened up two avenues of advance. He

used the cavalry regimental munshi to help him with the languages, and, trusting something to George's influence, he hoped for a transfer to the Horse Artillery, and practised riding in the cavalry school. That he was by no means indifferent to matters which concerned his own Foot Artillery is clear from the admirable letter which he wrote to the Military Secretary of the Governor-General on December 8th, 1830, in which he argued strongly against the abolition of horse draft for his corps, and the substitution of bullock draft. His Burmese experience had taught him the cost, in both pace and labour, which bullock draft was bound to involve. But his abounding energy was carrying him away from the parade ground. Apart from his studies, he spent a holiday in the hills, visiting Simla, Kotgarh, and Fagu, and at the end of January 1831 he planned to spend the next month with a friend Cautley, who was superintending the renovation of the Doab Canal which ran from above Saharanpur to Delhi; and, while with Cautley, he assisted both in the office and out of doors. Indeed, so much was he engrossed in canal-making that, although he hurried back to be present when the Commander-in-Chief inspected the troops at Karnal, as soon as the review was over he obtained leave to return at once to Saharanpur. One object of his ambition at least came to him soon; for he was gazetted to the Horse Artillery on September 27th, and, between then and joining his troop at Cawnpore on February 15th, 1832, he trained in the riding school at Meerut, and continued the grind at languages. Characteristically enough, with his heart at Fahan, and his restless ambitions making indolence more and more unnatural to him, he found 'the rattle and gaiety of Meerut' little to his taste. Of his life with the Horse Artillery at Cawnpore there is a clear and critical account from one of his juniors, later Colonel William Anderson, which shows how little one who was ignorant of his plans for the future, or the unrelenting impulse which drove him silently to prepare for the future,

could guess at the quality of the man. 'He certainly then,' wrote Colonel Anderson in recollection, 'gave no signs indicative of the grand career he was destined to accomplish. He lived retiredly, was understood to be studying the languages, and surveying; joined in none of our vices, or amusements as they may be designated. We had, if I remember rightly, no mess at Cawnpore in those days, so that except on duty, as after parade in stables, little would be seen of one inclined to retired life. Henry Lawrence was, of course, steady to his duty, and regular to his time; but I don't think that he evinced any enthusiasm in the performance of his work. Parade over, he retired to his own house. Our great mania in those days may have been dress and horses. In dress he was extremely slovenly, his ill-made clothes hanging loosely on his spare body. His horses were perhaps the only thing that could by extreme fancy be said to have thrown a coming shadow of the future; they were thin, long-tailed Sikh-looking animals. I almost see him in my mind's eye, slowly walking home after parade, followed by a brown bay of this description, or again, towards evening, taking a severe gallop over the country, far from the haunts of beauty and fashion. He walked up and down the stables, musing I now suppose, and little noticing the various horses which he was supposed to watch over.

'Still, though not sociable with us, we all entertained a high opinion of his honour, and judgment. In case of a row or dispute, I am inclined to think all of us young officers would have deferred to his decision.'¹

This friendly critic could obviously remember all the important unessentials and externals, to which Henry Lawrence never cared to, perhaps never could, attend. He had none of the gifts of the dashing or attractive cavalier. But there is ample evidence that already he was a marked man. Working eight or ten hours a day he passed his language examination in Urdu, Hindi, and Persian, so

¹ MS. recollections of Colonel W. Anderson, dated 8 March, 1860.

successfully that his examiners begged 'to recommend him particularly to the notice of His Excellency, the Commander-in-Chief.' One of them, E. A. Reade, whom he had already met at Canton in 1826, gives an amusing account of the ordeal: 'My associate, Captain Thomas Napleton of the 60th Regiment, was apt to diversify the grave proceedings of the examination with what he called a spice of jocularly, and the last question on the colloquial test put by him to Lawrence was "Translate 'Go it, ye cripples, Newgate's on fire.'" Not in the least discomfited he instantly responded with, "Chal chalai langra, Naya phatak jalta." Years afterwards that used to be our, to us amusing, and to all others amazing, exclamation addressed to lazy boys, languid officers, and unwilling steeds.'¹

Just before this victory, Cawnpore headquarters inquired about the candidate's fitness for quartermaster's work, and his Brigadier, Lieutenant-Colonel Whish, in his answer, showed that he, at least, had no doubt as to his junior's qualities: 'As only 2 out of the 10 Brigades or Battalions of Artillery have interpreters as yet, I beg leave to add my conviction that Lieutenant Lawrence's qualifications and studious habits fit him for other departments of the public service.'² Not long afterwards, as his troop was sailing down the river from Cawnpore on the way to Dum-Dum, Henry Lawrence gave a fresh example of what he could do. A terrific river storm struck the boats, and Lieutenant Lawrence's name, along with those of two others, was reported, and they won not only commendation 'for their very zealous exertions to preserve the lives of those who were placed under their charge; exertions which were made with a soldier-like disregard of their own personal property when so many lives were at stake,'³ but liberal compensation for their losses.

Here was a soldier, adequate indeed judged by a very

¹ MS. recollections of E. A. Reade, I.C.S.

² Lieutenant-Colonel Whish to the A.A.G., Cawnpore, 21 July, 1832.

³ From the A.G., 7 November, 1832.

high standard, but without those public social qualities, and that attention to externals, which mean so much in military life. Very few of his fellows would have joined with him in talking of 'the perfect emptiness of the pleasures of this life'; as few would have confessed, after an evening's entertainment, that 'dinner at nearly 9 o'clock has no charms for me, and the dessert of music less.'¹ It may be that he bought strength of character at some cost of narrowness.

But already the way was being cleared to the work which was to test all his powers, and which actually proved the first decisive step towards a great career. While at Dum-Dum, he had found that the nearness to Calcutta made it possible for him to take and pass the examination in languages at the College of Fort William, and, a month later, on January 13th, 1833, he was appointed interpreter to a battery, after quixotic efforts to secure the position for a junior whom he counted better fitted for the work than he. But something better was in store. George Lawrence, who secured the next promotion for him, has told the story of his application. Having approached the Governor-General at Simla, Lord William Bentinck asked him, 'Well, what have you come for?' 'Nothing for myself,' was the answer. 'What then? I can tell you, you're the first man I have met in India who wanted nothing.' George then asked point blank for work on the Revenue Survey for his brother, and the brusque reply, 'Well, go and tell Benson; and although I make no promises, I will see what can be done,' led to the appointment of Henry on February 22nd, 1833, as an assistant Revenue Surveyor in the North-West Provinces. One of the first results of the new appointment was a letter to Letitia about Honoria Marshall; 'I really think I shall be mad enough to tell her my story, and try to make her believe that I have loved for five years and said nothing of my love.'²

¹ Both Henry and John Lawrence were 'tone-deaf.'

² 23 July, 1833.

B. Surveying in the North-West Provinces.

It is the happiest moment in a man's life, although those who can take full advantage of it are few, when he finds work in which he can completely lose himself, and on which he can spend all his strength. That moment came to Henry Lawrence, when he joined the great survey of the North-West Provinces under Robert Merttins Bird. As the Indian Government is technically the owner of all the land of its subjects, as these subjects then even more than now were countrymen, not townsmen, and as the land-tax, which may be thought of either as rent for the land, or a tax on its produce, was the chief item in the Indian budget, the settlement of that tax was one of the chief responsibilities of the Government. In one way or other a settlement went to the very roots of the native life, raising innumerable questions of ownership; it concerned itself with the most intimate details of every remote village in the land; and the prosperity of the community depended on the justice and accuracy of whatever survey was used as a basis for taxation. We are not now concerned with what was happening in Bengal proper; the important thing was that definite reform was needed in the territories shortly to be grouped together as the North-West Provinces. Here the temporary settlements had been imperfect, and there was not in the hands of Government sufficient information about the rights and wrongs of individual claims.¹ Surveys and land revenue settlements had after a fashion been proceeding, but, as one who knew the ground said, 'The work would not have been completed throughout, under a century.'² It was the object of Robert Bird to make a comprehensive, accurate, and speedy survey and revenue settlement; but the scope of the work may be gauged from these facts—that it would affect 70,000 square miles and 20 millions of a population, and the revenue ultimately secured was four millions

¹ R. Temple, *James Thomason*, p. 85.

² MS. recollections of E. A. Reade.

sterling. What the survey meant in concrete detail may best be given in a description written by Honoria Lawrence, not long after she had joined her husband in 1837: 'Henry is the head of a survey establishment, to which belong two or three assistants, about a dozen clerks, and hundreds of natives. There is a separate establishment for the settlement of boundaries. When these have been marked off, each field is separately measured with a chain, and a map of the village made with the eye, accompanied by a statement of the extent, soil, and crop of every field. This is called the Kusrah work, and is carried on entirely by natives, who are paid according to the extent they measure. The surveyor takes by instruments a scientific map of each village, and the professional total is compared with the Kusrah total, the correctness of which it proves. - A separate map is then made of every village, accompanied by a statement of its extent, quality of cultivation, and arable land, means of irrigation, number of houses and inhabitants, the castes to which they belong, and all such details. A certain number of maps form a volume, which with the Kusrahs is sent to the Collector, for his guidance, duplicate copies being deposited in the Surveyor-General's office. There are also maps of each pergunnah or county, on a reduced scale, showing the relative position of villages, their boundaries and geographical features.'¹

In directing the working of the new survey and settlement, which was made under Government Regulation IX. of 1833, Bird followed lines which must often have recurred to his assistant's mind when, later, he found himself with similar work to do. He seems to have preferred young men of talent, since they were freer from conventions than their seniors, and presumably better fitted for the hard physical work they had to face. Having chosen them, and given them a lead, he left them to work out their own salvation - no one, however, doubting that this admirable freedom from

¹ MS. diary of Honoria Lawrence, 1837.

restraint must be justified by unbounded industry. Henry Lawrence, who was one of the earliest recruits in Bird's surveying army, found himself, for the first time in his life, with exactly the kind of work he cared for, and the responsibilities which never would have been entrusted to him in the Army. It was definitely at this time that all the notable characteristics of his later career made their appearance – absorption in his duties, a fund of information about the Indian cultivator, in which sympathy went hand in hand with an intimate knowledge of native faults, knowledge and sympathy producing in him that kind of leadership over Indians, in which, between 1846 and 1857, he had no real rival in India. It was now for the first time that his contemporaries from Addiscombe and the Artillery began to see how notable a man he was. 'I became aware for the first time of Lawrence's superior mind,' wrote one of them at the end of the surveying period. 'I had seen nothing before, either at Dum-Dum or at Addiscombe, to lead me to suppose he was above mediocrity. I now discovered the vast powers he possessed.'¹

As we shall see, during the first years of his surveying work, Henry Lawrence believed that there was no chance of marriage with Honoria Marshall, and something of the ferocity of hard work which marked these years came from his desire to counteract his anxieties by some good objective pursuit – something that would make him forget himself. How hard he worked, the praise of his superiors, the remonstrances of his friends, and the grumbles of his more sluggish colleagues, testify. One friend bade him remember that he was mortgaging the future by his present excess of labour; a second – the kind of critic always roused by another's good work – growled about 'Lawrence's confounded zeal.' But what he really cared about was that his chief, Robert Bird, realised what he was fit for, even setting him to stimulate the admirable but slightly languid work of James Thomason,

¹ MS. recollections of Colonel J. H. Macdonald.

one of the model civilians of the time in India, and a fellow-worker with him on the great survey; still more that the Sadr Board of Revenue, the supreme authority on the subject, thought him 'one of the most experienced and zealous of the officers on the survey' and that he had entered more entirely than any other into the Board's view.¹

But the only way in which to see the man himself is to pass from generalities to the routine work which he carried on, for five and a half years, at Moradabad, Fatehgarh, Gorakhpur, and finally south of the Jumna near Allahabad. All the descriptions left of him are full of the rough originality which was the most notable thing about him at this time. One of his juniors, joining him in the field, found him living in an ordinary subaltern's marching tent, with a native bed in one corner, a stove in another, and every available place covered with plans and maps. He never acquired what office-men counted method, but, trusting to his memory, he arranged his papers with reference to certain patterns on the carpet – not always with complete success and, to the outsider, with a suggestion of chaos. He had (for by this time, after 1835, he was a full surveyor) to watch his natives, for the Survey opened to them endless small chances of corruption. In one case the complaint from the countryside was that the native surveyor had taken a bribe to report the soil as bad, but that, to the chagrin of the complaining and bribing proprietor, he had recorded it as of the best quality. In another he found that the man with the theodolite pretended that his instrument would not act until the zemindars placed a rupee or two on it. He learned, through experiences as often amusing as disconcerting, how to discipline and restrain his men. He most successfully terrorised a native subordinate into honesty by seating him on a tree, over his tent, for some hours, but one unfortunate consequence of the experiment was 'that the men got into so great a panic that he could get none to enlist at a particular

¹ Edwardes and Merivale, p. 85.

time, when he was in the greatest need of them.’¹ In those days of unrestrained bachelordom he was as quaintly characteristic in his office, when the climate made out-of-doors work impossible, as he was in the field. His friend E. A. Reade, who was with him in the years at Gorakhpur, in the extreme north of the Provinces, laughed over the forgetfulness of everything except his work which made him careless of meals, even when, as often happened, he had asked guests to share them. ‘We used to rectify the omission by diverting the procession from my kitchen to his house instead of mine. My inestimable major domo had wonderful resource and an especial regard for Lawrence, who was in his estimation an Ameer Kubeer.’

The same witness reveals another notable development in the Henry Lawrence of those days. He and Lawrence had each guided a young man, freed from the ranks of the Army, into service more fitted for their education, in the Survey: and they found, in the English school established at Gorakhpur, lads whom Henry Lawrence especially, unconsciously prophetic of the great work he was to accomplish through his asylums and schools, used for their good and his convenience in the Survey. ‘He gathered all the boys of poor Christian parents to be found in the cantonment and station, and from thence, with some of the more intelligent lads from the city, transplanted them to the Survey office. Some of the former were little fellows, so little indeed that Mr. Bird used to call them “Lawrence’s offsets,” but his care of them was as kind as his teaching was successful.’

All these are authentic ‘Lawrence touches.’ At last he had a chance of showing what had been in him from the start, and there are few things which made him notable in later days which cannot be found in embryo at this stage.

Meantime, in another quarter, events were happening which as deeply affected his character and career. At home, Honoria Marshall, naturally misunderstanding his silence,

¹ MS. reminiscences of S. A. Abbott.

had become for a brief time engaged to a Mr. Briggs, and, apparently a little later, she had left home to work as a governess, to the displeasure of her friends who, to use her own words, 'thought I was rather disgracing myself and them by exerting myself to be useful and independent, instead of occupying the pleasant part of living among my friends.'¹ In 1834 Letitia Lawrence seems to have told her brother how the land lay, for he assumed that his marriage project was checked - 'if any one is to blame I am the culprit as I am the sufferer,' he wrote - and he flung himself with abandon into his work, bidding his sister always to tell him where Honoria was, and to keep in touch with her. His apparent reverse was all the more galling because, in June 1835, he received promotion as full surveyor, and he was now well able to face both the cost of his share of the Lawrence fund, and the financial consequences of marriage. A year later, on June 21st, 1836, the sky suddenly cleared, Letitia once more acting as his good angel, and he wrote to Honoria Marshall that he would gladly meet her where she liked, either at Madras or Calcutta.² It will be best to follow this chapter of their romance to its end, with its very human mixture of clouds and sunshine. In India, the hot weather of 1837 drove Henry Lawrence to the hills, a sick man, and he seems to have had no expectation of Honoria's arrival before October. To make assurance doubly sure, however, he asked James Thomason, at this time district officer at Azamgarh, with whom he was associated in the Survey, whether his brother-in-law, Major Hutchinson of the Bengal Engineers, could receive Miss Marshall, in case he were himself detained, and Thomason made the necessary arrangements, expressing 'great curiosity to behold the lady who is to rule your rugged destiny.'³ At home Honoria pushed on her preparations with impetuous haste, secured a passage

¹ *Marshall of Manor Cunningham*, p. 71.

² H. M. L. to Letitia Lawrence, 21 June, 1836.

³ James Thomason to H. M. L., 23 June, 1837.

on the *Reliance* (Captain Warner), and embarked at Gravesend on April 3rd, 1837. The time-table was further upset to the disadvantage of the swain by the record voyage of the ship, for the *Reliance* made the passage to Madras in 81 days 8 hours. The consequence was that, when Honoria arrived at Calcutta on July 8th, she found no one waiting for her, and she spent her first night in India in an hotel. Henry's brother Dick was in Calcutta at the time, 'rather a broken reed in an emergency,' and things began to come straight only when Major Hutchinson arrived, and took her to await, under his wife's care, the bridegroom's arrival from the hills. Even then poor Honoria had more than another month to wait, for it was not until August 17th that he came, and the marriage took place on Monday, August 21st, 1837.¹

Honoria Lawrence, as she must now be called, had not long to wait before she experienced what it meant to be the bride of a man in one of the Indian services. Although she had her first attack of fever on August 30th, and he was anything but fit, they set off on September 5th for the centre of his surveying work at Gorakhpur, and the new bride had her first experience of life in India in a surveying camp. If ever there had been any doubts as to Honoria's resolution and fitness to be the wife of a pioneer, her adventures recorded in the journal of the first months dispelled them. By November she had measured exactly what her duties were, and she accepted them not reluctantly but gladly: 'A lady who has nerves, who shrinks from driving over rough and smooth, or riding through a jungle, has no business in the mofussil – one who cares for visiting and parties had better stay at the presidency; one who minds dining on fowls and mutton seven days in the week had better not marry a surveyor. In short, in our life we learn how many supposed indispensables we can do without. But, this lesson once learned, a woman who is happily married and has tolerable

¹ All this is told in great detail in Honoria Marshall's diary of her journey to India.

health, may here find what my good old German friend Mr. Hagboldt used to call "de hefen of de world." She and her husband are all in all to each other. She may learn enough of his work to take an interest in what goes on, and even to assist him. There is perfect freedom. The servants and people around you don't understand your language, so you may say what you please, without fear of having it repeated and distorted. We escape all scandal, all censure, all the deteriorating small talk which, while it is sickening to hear, yet one is tempted to join in. There is the fullest enjoyment of nature, perpetual change of air and scene, opportunity for study, and a freedom from care more like the birds of the air than anything else.¹ The neatly written brown pages of the journal give, not only the reflections and experiences of the wife, but a faithful record of the husband's work. For while Honoria Lawrence's mind expressed itself usually in reflection and sentiment, she had a shrewd wit, and on occasion a real gift for vivid description. At any rate she has left some admirable sketches of life in a surveyor's camp. It is a caravan-like gathering, consisting not only of the Europeans, half-castes, and natives on the staff, but of the grain merchants who made the market for the travelling population, the elephants which carried the tents, and sheep, poultry, and goats to provide mutton, fowls, and milk. In the centre is the sahib's tent, with the great man 'sitting with his legs over the arm of the chair without jacket, waist-coat, or cravat,' at one time chatting with solemn village authorities, at another listening to villagers' complaints, or receiving reports. His native assistants are at hand, and Honoria's woman's wit is best represented by her sketch of 'the little baboo coming to show what he has written. He is very old and thin, his skin shrivelled up and looking altogether like a burnt rag that you could blow away. He wears the usual turban and vest, but adds a pair of spectacles. He talks a little English, and is a complete copying machine,

¹ Journal for November 1837.

writing out the official letters and working the multiplication. He calls Henry his "sucking father," and is very irate if his work is found fault with. "One, two thing I do: no mistake. Multiply, sine and co-sine." ¹

In many ways the first few months after marriage were among the more purely happy in these two lives. They were together in leisure and often in work; responsibilities were still limited, and freedom unlimited; the cares of a family had still to come, and, to the end of 1837, Honoria was in better health than she had been for years. They were up early, sometimes at three or four, and had their ride through country beautiful, if wild, at dawn, and then again, after a day of hard work, before dinner. Saunders Abbott has left an unforgettable picture of the two, when the work lay in a rough region at the foot of the Nepal hills, where fires were constantly lighted to keep off the tigers and wild elephants, and the fog was long in clearing in the mornings. The survey parties, scattered to begin with, were connecting up. 'When we met, to my surprise I found Mrs. Lawrence with her husband. She was seated on the bank of a nullah, her feet overhanging the den of some wild animal, while she with a portfolio in her lap was writing overland letters, and her husband at no great distance laying his theodolite.'² Neither then, nor later, had she any interest in ordinary society apart from the abounding hospitality which both of them always offered to all, and the intimacies which from now onwards bound them both to some of the ablest and purest of the younger men in all the Indian Services.

The surveyor's life was a wandering one, and, early in January, the Lawrences left Gorakhpur for work south of the Jumna, in the neighbourhood of Allahabad; in that city meeting Robert Bird and Robert Montgomery, a fellow-pupil at Foyle College with John Lawrence, and a true blue Ulster man, with whom Henry Lawrence was to have much

¹ Journal for December 1837.

² MS. recollections of S. A. Abbott.

to do. As 1838 passed, Honoria's health declined – depression of spirit, faintness, dysentery, and sleeplessness were what she complained of; but a child was expected in the autumn; and, on September 6th, 1838, Alexander, commonly called Tim, was born, his father filling in the entry in the journal which Honoria could not make herself. And now the biographer of Henry Lawrence has to pass judgment on his hero for two characteristic but thoughtless acts, which deeply affected Honoria before and after the birth of Tim, and one of which might easily have cost the tiny infant his life – the dispute with Captain Macnaghten, and his headlong rush back to his Artillery Brigade at the news of the coming Afghan War.

Henry Lawrence had always a love of composition, as had many others of his comrades, and from June 1837 he became involved in a controversy begun in a foolishly eulogistic article which one of these 'writing officers,' Captain Macnaghten of a native regiment, had written on a now forgotten Indian soldier, General Sir John Adams. The controversy grew embittered, Macnaghten brushing aside the pseudonym, 'Hamil,' under which his adversary wrote, referring to him contemptuously as 'one Lieutenant Lawrence,' and using terms suggesting moral defects, like 'calumny' and 'untruth.' According to the conventions of the age, there was ground for a challenge in his foolish bitterness; but, accepting the prevailing code of honour, a duel fought over a newspaper correspondence was a miserable thing at best; and, even if military discipline was lax enough to permit much indiscriminate writing, it certainly ought to have visited with the severest reprimand the conduct of two officers, who chose to quarrel over their only half legitimate occupation of journalism. It is quite clear, from what men of honour like Lawrence's friends Captain Macgregor and Major Campbell said, that the other side was wholly in the wrong; but the dignified course would have been to end the miserable business by a public letter, framed as his friends

advised, saying that 'he could not resist the language which Captain Macnaghten chose to employ, and that he was therefore compelled to decline any further discussion with him in these pages.'¹ But Henry Lawrence, probably through the mere thoughtlessness of a man who knew little of what a wife endured, in weakness and suffering, before childbirth, and, as it seems to his biographer, roughly regardless of her condition after the child was born, really dealt his wife the hardest of blows. Honoria had known of the dispute, but it was only by chance that she discovered how far her husband meant to push his quarrel, and her discovery extorted from her one of the most pathetic and yet noble letters she ever wrote, giving her views on duelling with a justice and point which ought to have convinced her husband, even if she had not spoken of 'those bursts of agitation that injure myself and our baby.' 'Nay, dearest,' she wrote, 'but when I see you do, not only what I think wrong, but what *your own* mind condemns, can I help speaking? To any other fault you may be hurried, but there is deliberate sin, not only in giving or accepting a challenge, but in *intending* to do so.'²

The challenge was never sent, and the whole matter descended into the obscurity from which it should never have risen; but it seems proper, in tracing the growth in grace, as well as greatness, of the man, to mention this as the most unpardonable thing that Henry Lawrence ever did; because, on an issue of real triviality, he seemed prepared to set his own hurt pride before the welfare of his wife and child. Or if that phrase seems too hard, at least he displayed an insensibility, and an ignorance of what childbirth means to a woman, singularly different from the profound sympathies of his later years.

It was in the same mood, either of inexperience in the ways of women, or of insensitiveness, that he now dealt a second

¹ Drafted or approved by H. M. L.'s friends, Brind, Macgregor, and Campbell.

² Honoria Lawrence to her husband, 26 September, 1838.

blow at poor Honoria's peace of mind. He was, of course, still attached to an Artillery Brigade, and when the news of operations in Afghanistan began to spread, he was, as a good soldier, naturally on the alert to be in the first of the fray. Here, it seems fair to say, duty required of him an instant readiness to join his unit; but when actual regulations made a quick return to his brigade contrary to discipline, and when he broke through that discipline and determined to rejoin, at the very time when Honoria's position was most precarious, once more the judgment must be passed that, at best, there were apparently some things, and not all of them admirable things, which Lieutenant Lawrence preferred to the most ordinary attentions to a wife at a critical time in her early married life.

The facts of his once more becoming a gunner are these. On August 9th, 1838, there was dispatched to him the usual formal announcement that his troop in the Second Brigade of Horse Artillery was to be prepared for active service in the field; for the plans had now been made for replacing Shah Shuja on the Kabul throne. His first reception of the news was extraordinarily characteristic. He applied at once, to the officer commanding his brigade, to be allowed to accompany his troop, and to the Government for staff employment in the field. Not content with that, he drew up a most admirable scheme for a Corps of Guides, such as, later, he was able to create. His unrestrained imagination carried him on beyond Kabul: 'If the passes of the Hindu Kush are to be fortified, they will need to be surveyed, and such work will require men who have been accustomed to think lightly of hardship, and to make the most of materials.' His vision of the new instrument was so vivid that he even provided a list of names for the officering of the corps, to the amusement of his official correspondent.¹ 'I wish,' wrote the Quartermaster-General to George Lawrence, 'he had confined himself to the plan, but when it was followed with the

¹ H. M. L. to the Q.M.G., 11 August, 1838.

recommendation of three officers for the subordinate duties, one of whom he had never seen, I saw the thing would never do. When Sir Henry [Fane] has so little patronage, giving away three appointments in a separate and distinct Department, besides making your brother head of his own scheme, is rather more than could be expected in these times.¹

In face of the plain reply that he was not yet at the disposal of H.E. the Commander-in-Chief, Henry Lawrence wrote at once to the Adjutant-General, begging for the order of release, and to his own Adjutant, telling him that he did not deem an order necessary, and would at once proceed to join his troop. Fortunately for him the regime was lax, and in time of war forward-looking men are not turned back. In his impetuous way, he hurried off with his wife and child, three weeks after Tim's birth, to his brigade. His Addiscombe friend Macdonald's recollection of the first stage in the journey was that he (Macdonald) 'received a note from Lawrence to say that he was about to start for Ferozpur to join his troop, with his wife and child, purposed reaching Cawnpore on Saturday, and would stay Sunday with us, but no longer, as he was anxious to join. His boy Alexander was only three weeks old at the time, and he brought mother and child at such a pace in a palkeegarry that they were both seriously ill on arriving, and instead of remaining the Sunday only, had to stay upwards of a week before they were sufficiently restored to continue the journey.' Warlike ardour is an admirable thing, but it is none the worse of being tempered with good sense, and consideration for others.

The punishment for all this was ideally fitted to teach him to follow glory with more discretion; for after sharing in the unaccustomed, and now irksome, routine of regular artillery service till the end of November 1838, he found himself then scribbling an agitated note in pencil to Honoria:

¹ Q.M.G. to George Lawrence, 11 September, 1838.

'We of the 3rd troop do not go, but what is to be done I hardly know.' Her comment was very different: 'My sorrow is turned into joy. Our troops reached Ferozpur on the 30th November, and orders were then issued for half to remain there, as an Army of Observation. . . . My Henry is among those who remain, and I am setting off to join him. The journey is long and rather formidable, and there will be abundance of discomforts in living in a tent fourteen feet square, pitched on a sandy plain; but the prospect of being once more together counterbalances all grievances.'¹

¹ Honoria Lawrence to Mrs. Cameron, 11 December, 1838.

CHAPTER VI

FIROZPUR AND THE SIKHS, 1839-1841

THERE was something incongruous in the situation in which Henry Lawrence found himself at the end of 1838. In his troop and mess he was now a senior lieutenant, thirty-two years of age, flung back among his juniors and rather out of touch with their ways. Unless he were prepared to fall into the routine which helped to kill the minds and spirits of so many Indian officers, he must quickly find a way of escape into some more ambitious career; and what was true before orders came for his troop to stand fast at Ferozpur became ten times more obvious thereafter. He has left a faithful record of this winter of his discontent in the letters in which he told Honoria what marches he was making, who constituted the mess, and generally about the infinite littlenesses which make up the active life of a unit on the move and in camp. To quote from these would merely serve to reproduce in the reader's mind the tedium in which they were originally written. But here at least is a pencil note recording the writer's first interview with a Governor-General; it possesses the additional interest of passing judgment on one of the most amusing letter-writers in the nineteenth century, Emily Eden: 'Currie and I strolled about camp and saw the two ornamented howitzers that are to be presented to Ranjit Singh. We also saw Lord Auckland and Miss Eden (junior) sitting in front of their tent, and a band of music on four elephants practising preparatory to something of the kind to be at Ferozpur. I forget whether I said I had an invitation to dinner: at half-past six I went prepared to scrutinise her who is said to resemble my love, and so far she does so that she has a long fair face, but she is loud and

vulgar, and talks only rot. Lord Auckland is a quiet frost-bitten chap: he asked me if I liked the Survey, and if I was not out from November till March, and if I had any natives under me. I sat beside him at dinner, but his conversation was soon expended, though not his appetite. He tucked in, in great style, though if I had not dined already at Codrington's I should have had a chance of starving. I talked to him a little, but he was heavy in hand, none of his aides-de-camp or five or six guests talked, but Miss Eden and the Military Secretary, Captain Osborne, kept up a regular clack. *He* seems to be the wit of the party, and, on the strength of his being their nephew, talks and acts the free and easy.¹

A return to the Survey might have been possible, but Henry Lawrence seems already to have been aiming at more exciting political work, and, at an opportune moment, the increasing importance of frontier affairs made it necessary for George Clerk, the very able Agent to the Governor-General for the Panjab and North-West Frontier, to have another assistant. The little town of Firozpur, with its few miles of depressing territory, had assumed a new importance, when the Government adopted an aggressive policy in Afghanistan, and a closer agreement with the Maharaja Ranjit Singh. It was close to the Sutlej, only forty miles from Lahore, and on the direct route from Delhi to the Khaibar Pass, a military and political post of the first importance. Thanks to the influence of Frederic Currie, who had known Lawrence well at Gorakhpur, and who was now travelling as Secretary with the Governor-General, Lord Auckland was willing to appoint him, and George Clerk willing to accept Currie's recommendation. Early in January 1839 he was given officiating rank as assistant to the Governor-General's Agent for the affairs of the Panjab and North-West Frontier, and his position involved him in the civil charge of Firozpur. His appointment was confirmed in March 1840, and he remained at Firozpur until the end of

¹ To his wife, from Dharmkot, 24 November, 1838.

1841. An early effort to secure better terms than the 700 rupees per mensem which his new position brought him met with a check, for Lord Auckland plainly said that 'there was a great deal of difference between knocking about with a theodolite all the hot weather, and living in tents nine months out of the twelve, *and sitting with one's heels on the table playing civilian.*'¹ Auckland little knew his man, for although Henry Lawrence spent two years at Ferozpur, his heels were very little on the table.

Through the information gathered in these years at Ferozpur he established the beginnings of his reputation, and of that absorption in Panjab affairs, and affectionate interest in the frontier peoples, which continued to the end. It is therefore essential to understand how things stood at Lahore in the years immediately before and after Ranjit Singh's death.

The history of the rapid rise of the Sikh kingdom under Ranjit Singh, and its sudden fall after his death, reads like a chapter from some melodramatic romance. The Sikhs, a community based not on race but on religion, came into existence in response to the teaching of Nanak, a great religious reformer in the fifteenth century. They learned from the last of their gurus, Govind, to blend their creed with notions of military and political aggrandisement; and, before 1800, they had found in Ranjit Singh of the Sukarchakia misl or confederacy a leader of remarkable genius. Beginning as the head of one out of many fighting confederacies, he had quickly brought them all into subjection to himself. It is useless to judge of what he was and did by the accepted Western conventions, for his political genius was as free as that of Napoleon himself from moral scruple. He built up his supremacy in accordance with the laws of the struggle for existence. He owed little of his power to mere external display. Of short stature and mean appearance, blind in one eye and pock-marked, and always

¹ F. Currie to H. M. L., 28 January, 1839.

dressed with conspicuous simplicity, he impressed none of the visitors to his Court as remarkable, until they discovered the power of mind and will behind the mean exterior, or watched him transform himself into a natural leader of armed men as he mounted his horse. In all the qualities which go to make the Oriental potentate he stood alone among the Indian leaders of his day. He was too shrewdly intelligent to believe in the courage of brute strength, but no one who did not possess the highest kind of suppressed audacity could have aspired, and succeeded in his aspirations, as the Maharaja did throughout his long reign. He was always master, because he alone in the Panjab was able to combine cool resolution, carefully calculated ambition, a judgment which taught him exactly what he could achieve, and an eye for character which made him choose suitable instruments for his work. He was not, as princes then went, unusually cruel, but he was frankly and coldly selfish and relentless. Being a statesman, he showed a toleration not always appreciated by his fellow-Sikhs, in choosing, without religious prejudice, Sikh or Hindu or Muslim, according as men suited his political or military purposes. For more than forty years he dominated the Sikhs, and through them the entire north-west of India, without ever losing his grasp, and shaped that battleground of races and religions into a great kingdom. All this he did as an unconscious but distinguished disciple of Machiavelli. His instrument of government was neither efficient administration nor steady justice, but the exertion of a masterful personality directed without relenting towards personal advantage. In his relations with his poorer subjects, his method was 'the simple process of squeezing out of the unhappy peasant every rupee that he could be made to disgorge; the limit of oppression being only marked by the fear of his revolt, or abandonment of the land through discouragement and despair.'¹ What the master did, his

¹ Sir L. Griffin, *Ranjit Singh*, p. 144.

ministers and agents imitated or exaggerated. Herbert Edwardes, who took over a Sikh border district just before the regime collapsed, found that government from Lahore had meant long neglect, varied at intervals by armed incursions for the collection of revenue; and that justice in Bannu was only the resultant of capricious violence responded to by angry resistance. When the end came, Henry Lawrence and his brother John found it necessary to reconstruct the entire financial and judicial machinery of the province. Yet, in old India, this did not necessarily mean incompetence in governing. Through extortion, injustice, and disregard for philanthropic maxims, there never ceased to appear Ranjit Singh's will to rule, even when, after his second stroke of paralysis in 1838, he seemed a man only half alive.

Apart from this masterfulness, the heart of his strength lay in his army. He had begun with a military force of the older Indian type, consisting mainly of cavalry; but his sound judgment had taught him the strength of such a well-trained infantry as the East India Company possessed. That, and a constantly increasing body of artillery, buttressed of course by Sikh horsemen, reorganised under Western officers, and by the fanatic zeal of his Sikh diehards, the Akalis, gave him, after the fall of the Marathas, the most formidable military organisation in native India. It is the clearest proof of his superiority over every other Sikh leader that no one after him was able to restrain the force which he had created. After his death, when the army became in serious earnest the ruler of the land, its numbers mounted, by 1845, to over 70,000, with 381 guns, or even higher on the eve of war with the British; but Ranjit Singh had been content with 30,000 of all arms, and about 200 guns. Something has already been said of the European adventurers, the best of them French and Italian, whom he used to train his troops, and certainly Ventura and Court, Allard and Avitabile, played a part second only to the chief sardars

in the shaping and use of this formidable engine. As for the materials from which it was recruited, it must not be thought that the army, or the kingdom which it made possible, consisted strictly of Sikhs. After all, Ranjit Singh did not rule over more than about two million followers of his own religion. Nevertheless the chief strength of the army and the realm lay in the Jat peasantry, who have always constituted the very core of Sikh power – in the words of one of their friends, who had a right to speak, ‘from every point of view, their military worth, their excellence as agriculturists, their industry, honesty, and tractability, the most important and valuable of the Panjab races.’¹

With this army, steadily growing in numbers and discipline, Ranjit Singh built up his kingdom through conquest. Beginning with Lahore and Amritsar, not without checks and even serious defeats, he added Multan in the south, and Kashmir in the north. The treaty which he made with the British in 1809, and to which he remained consistently faithful, forced him to accept the Sutlej as the limit of his dominion to the south-east, but by 1823 the Afghan territory across the Indus began to fall into his hands – in that year Peshawar became tributary to him. It is true that, taking the long belt of tribal territory which lies between the western mountains and the Indus, from Peshawar to the Derajat, he never really secured permanent control, and held just so much for just so long as his armies could in their occasional invasions secure. Still, before his death, his had become the one great independent state in India, and what is now the North-West Frontier was, nominally at least, in his hands.

About the time when Henry Lawrence went to Firozpur there were signs that this imposing structure might not prove very durable. In 1838, when the Maharaja suffered his second stroke of paralysis, the end seemed near, and the competitors for ascendancy stood waiting for his death.

¹ Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

His marriages, regular and irregular, and his less sanctioned relations with women, had done little to establish the permanence of his dynasty, which lacked indubitable legality, or average capacity, or both. Eight so-called sons could be named, but of these only one, Kharak Singh, was actually his own child, and he was incompetent to the verge of imbecility.¹ But Kharak Singh was not to vex the Panjab long, for in 1840, the year after his father died, he was quietly removed – rumour said by poison, and added that his son Nao Nihal Singh, an ill-conditioned youth, had joined in the conspiracy to remove him. Nor was vengeance long in clearing this last legitimate successor from the way; for as Nao Nihal Singh was returning from his father's funeral, an accident, so startling and unnatural that design must be suspected, ended his life. None of the other princes were Ranjit Singh's children, his wives planning to increase or retain their influence with the Maharaja by reporting themselves pregnant, and presenting him, on his return from his campaigns, with children imported into the zenana. The last and best known of this curious family, the ill-fated Dalip Singh, had not even the distinction of becoming a member of the royal family through simple fraud. His mother, Jindan Kaur, who was never, formally or informally, married to Ranjit Singh, although later honoured with the title of Maharani, and who was perhaps the worst woman in Panjab history, bore him as the fruit of an intrigue with a water-carrier. Of the eight princes, one died in infancy, one was an imbecile, four were killed in the 'bad times' which followed Ranjit Singh's death, and Dalip Singh reaped the consequences of his mother's, and his professed supporters', plots, by losing his kingdom after the second Sikh War.

The bearing of all this domestic scandal and tragedy on the story is that Ranjit Singh's domestic irregularities ended, in a few years after his death, all that his political genius

¹ Griffin, *Panjab Chiefs*, Vol. II., pp. 389-90.

had constructed throughout forty years. For if the princes were negligible, or served only as tools for conspirators, there were many in the Panjab ready to play their own selfish, reckless, and sanguinary game. To some of these it is now necessary to turn. Two of the ablest of Ranjit's Ministers may be absolved from participation in the more criminal episodes of the interregnum, 1839-45. The subtlest and ablest of them was the Fakir Azizuddin, who conducted all the Maharaja's foreign affairs - a scholar, a statesman, clear-headed, tolerant, and one who protested against the headstrong folly of those who called for war with the British. Henry Lawrence, in his *Adventures of an Officer in the Service of Runjeet Singh*, has drawn his portrait with more than a touch of admiration. Whether fortunately or unfortunately for himself, he died just before the first war ended as he knew it must end. His brother Nuruddin was one of the Sikh Council of Regency who co-operated with the British Resident after 1846. Less admirable, but still removed from the more tragic issues of the times, was the Raja Dina Nath, the Finance Minister, and, in his own fashion, competent in that position. He was the subtlest of intriguers, with a remarkable gift of evading the ruin in which others involved themselves; but the British conquerors found him useful as an interpreter of the mysteries of Panjab finance, and Henry Lawrence as Resident admired the courage and independence with which he defended an almost certainly guilty colleague, when to do so might well involve him in his protégé's downfall.

But there were many, and very aggressive, competitors for supreme power in Lahore. To gain this, it was not necessary to overturn the ruling puppet, but it was necessary to secure the Wazarat or working headship of the government; and it became equally important to propitiate the army. Between 1839 and 1845, at least four groups may be discerned, struggling towards supremacy. First, in point of time, there was Raja Dhyani Singh and his son Hira

Singh, of Jammu, in the foothills on the way to Kashmir. Dhyan Singh, whose unscrupulous ambition had long been evident, managed after 1840 to dominate the Government through the successor to the murdered princes, the Maharaja Sher Singh. But, opposed and intrigued against by a second group, the great Sindhanwalia family, who were represented especially by the brothers Atar Singh and Lahna Singh, with their nephew Ajit Singh, Maharaja and Wazir fell in the beginning of a succession of horrible crimes in 1843. The Sindhanwalias slaughtered the Maharaja Sher Singh, and his son, together with his Wazir Dhyan Singh, only to pay for their crimes in a terrible counter-stroke at the hands of Hira Singh, son of the murdered Wazir, and through the army which he had bribed. Then Hira Singh fell, to make way for the third set of competitors, the so-called Maharani Jindan Kaur, her worthless brother, and her lover and acting Wazir, Lal Singh.

Meanwhile behind all these slaves of ambition stood the real controller of the destinies of the Sikh realm, the army, steadily growing in numbers, bribed with ever-increasing pay as faction after faction bid for its favour, organised into a kind of military democracy through its committees or panches, and, as time went on, determined to try its strength and gain new riches, in a war with the British and the spoliation of Hindustan. At the end, the only resource left to the embarrassed intriguers who thought that they were governing the Panjab was to let the army have its way, and to trust to the incalculable chances of war.

Three other names are of importance in the narrative. The Sardars Chatar Singh and Sher Singh belonged to the Attariwalas, perhaps the proudest of Sikh families who lived north of the Sutlej. The Sardar Sham Singh, head of the senior branch, and one of the noblest figures in Sikh history, had shown reluctance to allow his daughter to marry the grandson of Ranjit Singh; while, of the junior branch, Chatar Singh betrothed his daughter to the boy Maharajah Dalip

Singh, and his son Sher Singh had not only a great reputation as a soldier, but seemed preparing to take the lead at Lahore, and, as events developed, aimed at succeeding Lal Singh, not only in his position as Wazir, but in the favours of Jindan Kaur. The Attariwala chiefs did not, however, assume the foremost place in Sikh politics until they both, with or without premeditation, helped to precipitate the second Sikh War.

The last prominent agent in Sikh affairs, and in many ways the only man fit to be compared with Ranjit Singh, was the elder brother of Dhyan Singh, the Jammu Raja Gulab Singh. The blunt Western mind finds it impossible to track the concealed designs, or judge the motives of this extraordinary man. From the start of the troubles in the Panjab he was not so much the power behind the throne, as a competent and ironic fate judging the errors of immature conspirators, and planning what seemed most advantageous to himself as a proper end to all the wild confusions. Actually far more competent than his brother Dhyan Singh, although not a whit less criminally ambitious, he never fully committed himself to make an open bid for transient ascendancy at Lahore. Like Ranjit Singh, although with less perfect good faith, he always took the British-Indian factor seriously into his calculations. So far as his designs in 1840-1 and, later, throughout the first Sikh War, can be discerned, his object seems to have been to develop, from Jammu as a base, a great northern kingdom, whose southern frontier, and general position in India, would depend on things beyond his control – more especially the fate of the Lahore Government, and the plans of the British. With a characteristic combination of audacity and caution, he involved himself in the most risky projects, with 'Safety first' as his guiding maxim. Of Gulab Singh, as will be seen later, Henry Lawrence's view was always more favourable than that of most of his colleagues; but so good a judge of irregular character as Hodson, later of Hodson's Horse, after seeing

him at close quarters wrote of him, 'To all appearance the gentlest of the gentle, and the most sincere and truthful character in the world – and in his habits he is certainly exemplary; but he is the cleverest hypocrite in the world; as sharp and acute as possible, devoured by avarice and ambition, and, when roused, horribly cruel.'¹ As the mist clears from his projects it becomes evident that Gulab Singh's northern dominion and the fate of the Panjab were inseparably inter-connected; and that, especially after the death of the Fakir Azizuddin, Gulab Singh was the only man in the north-west who had restraint enough to defer temporary satisfaction of doubtful desires to more rational, although not necessarily more moral, objects of ambition. He had also a wonderful gift of evading assassination and violent death.

In 1839, then, and at Ferozpur, a man who cared for native politics on the largest scale had before his eyes an absorbing and perplexing subject for contemplation – nothing less than the transformation, or possible dissolution, of a great military kingdom. There was the additional excitement that what happened at Lahore was unlikely to leave the British frontier untroubled.

It savours of anticlimax to return from the affairs of a great kingdom to the doings of an assistant political officer in a dilapidated little frontier town. But, after all, Ferozpur did figure in the relations between British and Sikhs, especially at the great ceremony in 1838, when Lord Auckland exhibited his army to the critical gaze of Ranjit Singh and the Sikh leaders; and throughout the changes of the Afghan adventure, from 1838 to 1842, it remained an important point on one of the lines of British communications. Besides this, it was the place in which Henry Lawrence, soon to be one of the chief authorities on the Panjab, learned his first lessons in Sikh politics. He came there a novice, and yet within two years he was selected, as one trusted at Lahore,

¹ Hodson, *Twelve Years of a Soldier's Life in India*, p. 35.

to be liaison officer between the two powers in their joint operations at Peshawar, and through the Khaibar Pass to Kabul.

The liveliest description of it may be found in Henry and Honoria Lawrence's novel *The Adventures of an Officer in the Service of Runjeet Singh*. Looking from the roof of the highest house in Firozpur, the hero of the romance 'had a good view of the surrounding country, of its desolation, of its endless bare plain, varied only by few and single trees, and by fewer and wretched village sites, which at large intervals covered rather than ornamented the country.' The nominal extent of its territory 'was a hundred square miles, but not one-tenth of that land was in the undisputed possession of Lachmi Kaur (the old Rani from whom the British inherited it). Indeed the townlands alone could be called hers, and were cultivated by families living within the town, and crowded even into the ditch of the fort. The town therefore, though of great antiquity, was little more than an assemblage of Zamindars' huts, mixed up with a few Baniyas' shops, and overhung by an old crumbling fortress, crammed to the throat with dogs, filth, and old women.'¹ To all this may be added that the population had, as its most stirring section, Dogurs, who pursued a livelihood half pastoral, half cattle-lifting, and that, since some nine small territories met about that point, frontier disputes with a heavy annual loss of life were normal incidents. The creation of a large cantonment, and the passage to and fro of considerable bodies of troops, may have brought more money into circulation, but raised the level of crime through the camp followers of the army, and the badmashes who accompanied them.

The duties of the assistant political officer were many and ill-assorted. It was a real pleasure to him to reconstruct the town, so far as that was possible. Sometimes despairing of creating an effective centre of defence in the fort, he was still able to clear its ditch, strengthen its towers, find other

¹ H. M. L.'s *Adventures of an Officer*, etc., chap. xviii.

housing for its former inhabitants, and construct a courthouse, a reformed jail, and an adequate scheme of protection. By establishing some of the town dwellers in the neighbouring country, where their occupations lay, and pulling down the dilapidated huts which encumbered the streets and polluted the air, he was able to make broader and more regular passages, and establish something which might be called a system of drainage. With 15,000 rupees, and the appropriation of local duties, he was prepared to transform the old town into an adequate frontier station.

The needs of the new cantonment, and the ordinary routine of a position on the British lines of communication with Afghanistan and the west, kept him fretfully busy. He had dealings with the commissariat over camels, not without loss of temper and floods of correspondence on both sides. Then there were orders about boats for passage down the river to the southern line of approach to Afghanistan, and the treasury, which under the strain of the campaign threatened to develop into an active banking business, involved him in transactions, vexatious because finance was never his strongest point. Worst of all, so far as the limits of his time and temper went, there was an extemporised post office; and it may be doubted whether Henry and Honoria Lawrence ever occupied a quainter or less appropriate position than as postmaster and mistress to the British army at Ferozpur, on no additional salary, and with an entirely inadequate staff. Before passing on to the indispensable work which he did as adjudicator in boundary disputes, it is worth while to give his own description of the work, written, with an eye to a reformed and increased establishment, to James Thomason at Agra: 'Ferozpur is, you know, a speck containing 110 square miles and reverted to us only 4 years ago. It was a den of Khosahs, and its few remaining lands were occupied by cattle-stealers; the boundary all round was disputed, but was well and clearly settled and defined by Lieutenant Mackeson in 1835. . . . The police duties are of

two kinds, those caused by affrays and robberies on the Faridkot and Bahawalpur boundary, and those of our own territory and cantonment. The constant passage of troops, and the building of a large cantonment, brought money and bad characters among us. Workmen have come from every quarter; lines for the infantry, cavalry, and artillery have been built and are building. Shops in the town have been built, the old fort pulled down, and half rebuilt. Owing to the expectation of troops being sent to Sukkur, a large fleet of boats has been kept up under me. I have also had camels, and have been very much of a commissariat agent – I could have more easily been one than acting in concert with the commissariat officer here.

‘But the Treasury and Post Office have been my worst troubles, not so much in themselves, but as having had no establishment: when I took charge of the P.O. the letters for all unknown persons in India came here, and there were no writers. Mrs. Lawrence and I have been 6, 8, and 10 hours in the Post Office in the day, or rather during the night. The Treasury is not merely so, but it is a large Pay office, making advances, and paying arrears to all comers and goers, which have to be adjusted with paymasters all over the country, it frequently happening that I have to write to 2 or 3 paymasters to receive one advance. For all my writing, except the Post Office, I have two writers, one at 60 and another at 20.

‘My position is anomalous. The Government planted me here in an acknowledged difficult position, surrounded by the dependents of a jealous state; and yet in no way have I been even treated with consideration, nor have I been even kept acquainted with what was necessary I should know to perform my duty efficiently. I therefore look upon it as a perfect wonder that I have avoided committing myself, and that, without having in any point given in to the Lahore people, I am rather a favourite with them, or rather their Government – at least if I may judge by their states wishing

me to settle their disputes, and their Government pressing on me instead of Colonel Wade to communicate with them.'

James Thomason, who was the father confessor in this as in many other of Henry Lawrence's troubles, knew his man too well not to recognise in these groans symptoms of growth and readjustment, and there was the immense advantage at Ferozpur of having to act under that very first-rate 'political' George Clerk, whom Henry Lawrence's sorrows did not prevent him from recognising as 'a most gentlemanlike, straightforward fellow.'¹

The most notable work done by him in these years was undoubtedly the settlement of the innumerable boundary disputes of the district, especially for the neighbouring dependent state of Faridkot. All the years of training in the Survey now began to tell; and, apart from the technicalities of settlement, the intimate knowledge of Indian nature, and the masterful skill in dealing with smaller Indian problems, which he had learned at Gorakhpur and elsewhere, were of immense use, not merely in settling local questions but in proving to the Lahore representatives, who had many interests in the region, that they had to deal with a first-rate man. There still remains a detailed description of how Henry Lawrence settled the border affairs of Faridkot, which used to cost the countryside 500 lives a year, its frontier being 'fiercely and ferociously disputed by eight different states.'² What distinguishes the document from others of its kind is that the writer left papers, offices, and the routine of the formalist, flung himself into the middle of the quarrelling agents, rode over all the ground, and displayed a common sense and independence of judgment, which reconciled to him even those against whom he was deciding, and which guaranteed that the settlement once accepted would be peacefully maintained. When one remembers that each little state in the Ferozpur and Faridkot

¹ H. M. L. to James Thomason, some time in 1840.

² H. M. L. to Letitia Lawrence, 22 December, 1839.

area had its own violent claims; that these claims normally meant bloodshed every year; and that behind many of them was the imposing authority of the Lahore Government, the satisfaction of the closing paragraphs of the report seems more than justified: 'The Faridkot minister, whom I had always regarded as the chief opposer of the settlement, declared, while riding by my side, his unmixed satisfaction, and said that though I had not believed it, he always wished for a decision. He and the other agents of Faridkot rode home with me, and came again to my tent that night and the following morning, to express their satisfaction, promising in all points to respect the decision. . . . The chiefs of Khye and Mamdot afterwards asked me to settle their own immediate boundaries, and have since urged me to do so; from neither Zira nor Mudki have I had a word of dissent, and the razineama of the Lahore wakil is also attached. Indeed, while I am writing this letter I have received a petition from the latter to your address, requesting that I might be appointed to settle the boundary of his own jaghir.'¹

Whatever complaints the assistant at Firozpur might make about imperfect consideration and inadequate staff, it is clear that leisure and time for reflection were not lacking. The letters of these two years reflect Henry Lawrence's speculations on the future of Ranjit Singh's kingdom – whether his descendants would maintain their control of dignity, if not of power; if not, who were the likely candidates for supremacy; and whether the Sikh army would be likely to try conclusions with the British. Some of his forecasts were falsified by later events, but the view he stated to James Thomason in 1840 was substantially correct: that the Sikhs 'are far too well occupied at home and their leading men have too just an estimate of our strength, for their government ever to dream of aggressive policy towards us, as long

¹ H. M. L. to George Clerk – report on the settlement of the Faridkot Boundary, 1840.

as we respect the treaty, and meet with no signal reverse in other quarters.¹ Mind, I say the Government, for during such a *bouleversement* as in the present state of affairs may at any time occur, there is no calculating on events, though, as there could not but be more than one party in their separation and distraction, they would of course be less formidable than at present.' He thought that, making all allowances for defects, the Sikh army, if used defensively, might make campaigning in the Panjab a serious affair. But, with a flash of true insight, he thought that their overweening confidence would abhor defence, and that then, 'if we are prepared for war, we could desire nothing better than that they should have such an opinion of themselves. But are we so prepared, and does not our supineness and unguardedness tempt aggression?'²

The most interesting expression of his views on the Panjab is, however, given in the romance, already referred to, *The Adventures of an Officer in the Service of Runjeet Singh*, which he and his wife wrote at this time in serial chapters for the *Delhi Gazette*. There is no doubt that, in a rather undefined sort of fashion, Henry Lawrence had real historical and literary gifts, which his marriage to a woman of literary sensibility and great fluency of pen helped to stimulate. In its later form, this faculty expressed itself in long essays which would have done credit to any *Edinburgh* or *Quarterly* reviewer, and sometimes revealed unique powers of constructive statesmanship. His literary faculty was still, in 1839, untrained, and turned rather to journalism than literature. It was, therefore, very natural for him, when Stocqueler, the editor of the *Delhi Bulletin*, tried to persuade him to send his paper regular contributions from the front for '100 rupees a month or £100 a year, I forget which,'³ to close with the offer. His agreement reflected the active spirit of benevolence which had already become one of his chief characteristics:

¹ Written, of course, long before the Kabul disaster.

² H. M. L. to James Thomason, April 1840.

³ H. M. L. to his wife, 31 October, 1838.

'If you think my notes worth 100 rupees a month, they are at your service on the following terms: 100 rupees monthly to be paid for the first three months to Mrs. Wilson of the Orphan Asylum, Calcutta; and for the next three months to the editor of *The Friend of India* for the Benevolent Institution, after which time I will send you another name, my object being neither personal advantage nor ostentatious charity. I particularly desire silence on your part as the first and main point of our compact.'¹ The orders which kept him at Ferozpur had checked that project, but he and Honoria, in a co-operation which worked out better in practice than it should, committed themselves to the more ambitious project of writing an Eastern romance based on real knowledge of the scene of action and the actors of their Panjab story. The backbone of the *Adventures* is the mass of fresh, and then little-known, information which the husband contributed on the country of the Five Rivers, and the strange tribes and communities who lived on the frontier, and its highly original and striking sketches of character, more especially of Ranjit Singh himself, the Fakir Azizuddin, and Raja Dhyani Singh. So shrewd and telling are these latter, that even so high an expert as Sir Lepel Griffin can be detected as borrowing from this earlier authority in his admirable life of Ranjit Singh. It is no exaggeration to say that, down to 1841, no one had contributed more enlightening comments on the Sikh leaders than did this anonymous contributor to the *Delhi Gazette*. Honoria Lawrence added the love passages, the air of romance, and the graceful poems, which gave the sterner or more vigorous realities the conventional form which lovers of the romantic school then looked for in their favourite authors. Without at all depreciating the literary qualities of the wife, which made her a diarist of great sensibility, and a very skilful imitator of the best current fiction and popular verse, one's judgment is that the romance is no longer read as a romance

¹ H. M. L. to J. Stocqueler, 7 November, 1838.

because of these feminine additions; and that, had Henry Lawrence chosen to fling his observations into some more serious form, they would have remained a permanent contribution to the history of the decline and fall of the Sikh kingdom. For into whatever crudities of form he might stumble, the living strength of his work lay then as always in fresh facts coupled with sound judgments. The work was presented anonymously, and the authors took no little pleasure in their secret; the story and its critics form a frequent subject in their letters. Occasionally, at mess tables, the question of authorship was discussed, for the story was widely read, and one of the authors at least found it difficult to combine secrecy with truthfulness. The camp comments seem to have been favourable: 'Parsons said it was beautifully written,' wrote Henry in 1841 to Sabathu, whither his wife had gone for her health; 'and Spens said it was a capital thing, and "You'll see it will be a standard work."' In like manner Graham and other artillery gents at Karnal said it was very good, and contained such a deal of information. Graham commenced wondering if it was Harlan,¹ but that people said he could not write it. I asked him next day if he had any guess, and told him. "You surprise me," said he, "and how did you concoct the love story?"' The good brigadier was a better critic than he knew, for whatever ventures Henry Lawrence had already made in sentiment or verse, his essential qualities, bad and more especially good, rendered him incapable of the gentle but unoriginal lyrics of the *Adventures*. There was one critic, however, who approached the subject from another and more serious standpoint, and whose judgments, in accordance with later military and political usage, raised questions which the writers had too lightly ignored. It is a sound convention that public men, dealing with men and things in responsible positions, should not lightly use what

¹ One of the adventurers in the Sikh army, apparently the one genuine American in the group.

they have learned officially for public information, still less for public entertainment. A letter from Henry Lawrence's official superior, George Clerk, written in the most admirable spirit, and with due appreciation of the romance, put the official point of view unanswerably: 'Had you first referred to me,' he wrote to the unconscious offender, 'I should have been averse to your publishing it now. There is, to my mind, something unseemly in anyone, attaining the exact knowledge belonging to confidential employment by his government near a court, contributing to newspaper craving and curiosity the details of characters and intrigues there. All of truth relating thereto which may be novel should pass from a political officer's pen direct to his employers – to be published or not at the discretion of his government; and whatever materials you might discover at a court for interesting fiction should, if you desired to publish, be reserved till a later period might leave you free to do so, as respecting such court and your own confidential situation. This you may deem an old-fashioned idea on such matters, and many will agree with you. Nevertheless here is another notion which you may also think antiquated. In respect to "leisure," the mind of no author but a fool is devoid of care and anxiety when publishing. I consider that district *and* political officers (that is the Jacks-of-all-trades) who are generally governing, and surrounded by, a people and nations new to us, have properly more on their hands and more constant official occupation than any other class of Company's servants. Were such a one only unoccupied for 5 hours in the 24, he might still find duties relating to the public affairs, the people, and the country entrusted to his keeping, calling for the employment of every hour of the remainder. Hence light authorship by a district officer seems to me much on a par with his possession of a private farm at Dehra – both objectionable as infallibly distracting his mind too constantly from the Company's mill-wheel.'¹

¹ George Clerk to H. M. L., 20 October, 1840.

Austere doctrine, but unanswerable as Clerk put it; and all the more so since the critic ended his letter in the most perfect good humour, and altered not one whit his increasing admiration for the offender's notable qualities. But the spirit of authorship was too strong in Henry Lawrence to permit him to promise total abstinence in the future. 'When I next write a scrap about our friends beyond the water,' he wrote in reply, 'it shall be under your patronage, or at least with your full cognizance.'¹

It was in the midst of these pursuits, serious and literary, that Honoria and Henry Lawrence experienced their first great family sorrow. Historians of the British rule in India are sometimes too absorbed in external glories, and excitements, to appreciate the heart-breaking family griefs which are part of the price of empire. Their boy Tim had been passing, not without anxious moments, through the trials of childhood in India. At the beginning of 1841, in the faithful journal which Honoria kept of her children's development, her husband interpolated a note telling how 'Tim begins to understand right and wrong; he can, after his mama, nearly repeat some little verses, and can, either in English or Hindustani, understand what is said to him and explain himself. . . . He is fond of accompanying me anywhere and has been for hours in Cutcherry with me and never gave trouble, sitting down, asking questions, and making remarks, running in and out.' Now there was a little sister to keep him company, for on November 16th, 1840, Letitia Catherine was born, and her father had christened her, himself, by his wife's bedside. But while little Moonia, as they called her, flourished greatly in her first months, her mother remained for long prostrate. From October 1840 until, in her weakness, Henry had to begin for her a new volume of the journal in the following January, she had been unable to do anything, having but little power in her limbs. It was only gradually that she recovered strength. There is no better

¹ H. M. L. to George Clerk, 3 November, 1840.

evidence of what Honoria Lawrence was than the little volumes of the diary, in which she gives her reflections, describes the events of her own and her husband's day-to-day life, and records the natural history of her children's growth. These were written, partly that her husband might learn what was passing through her mind, but she meant them also to be read in later years by her children, and on the margin here and there are Henry Lawrence's notes of the passages which he sent for Tim to read after his mother's death in 1853. It is the record of a very brave, honest, and noble spirit. She had now to face one of the hardest trials of her life. At the end of July 1841 she was among the hills at Sabathu, within sight of the hill-top near Kasauli where, a little later, her husband was to place the first Lawrence school. Both children became seriously ill, Tim with dysentery, and her husband, who had been with her, had reluctantly to leave her on duty. At first it was Tim's condition which caused anxiety, but soon it was clear that Moonia was dangerously ill. The poor mother's record best tells how she lost one child and nearly lost the other. 'She lay in my lap, as I sat on the couch, one hand holding her, the other holding our boy who, flushed and fevered and labouring for breath, was entreating, "Mamma, give sister to Dhai, and take me in your lap." "I will, very soon, my boy," I said. Soon after 8, just at the hour she had been born, my treasure left me.' They buried her at Sabathu, consoled only by their confident hope of a glorious resurrection and reunion.¹

¹ The inscription at Sabathu reads: 'Here rests the dust of Letitia Catherine, daughter of Henry Montgomery and Honoria Lawrence. She was born on the 16th November, 1840, and fell asleep on the 1st August, 1841. "It is not the will of our Father in Heaven, that one of these little ones should perish."'

CHAPTER VII

PESHAWAR AND AFGHANISTAN: THE TRAINING OF A 'POLITICAL,' 1842

THROUGHOUT the whole of Henry Lawrence's residence at Ferozpur the Afghan troubles hung like a thundercloud over the north-western mountains, and affected all India with gloom. Happily our story connects itself with them either only at second-hand, or in the happier end; the briefest of surveys will suffice to explain what otherwise might be obscure in the narrative.

Between 1837 and 1841 England was suffering, not perhaps without reason, from one of her periodic fits of panic over Russian designs in the Near and Middle East. From Constantinople, through Egypt and Persia to Herat and Kabul, Russian plans were supposed to be preparing disasters for Britain in the East, and Palmerston, who was then Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, was in his most pugnacious mood. Curiously enough, the Eastern question in its most extensive form introduced him, and Melbourne's Ministry, to their greatest triumph, the treaties about Egypt in 1840 and 1841, and their most crushing defeat, in Afghanistan.

With regard to India, the East India Company consistently opposed a spirited policy and war in Afghanistan,¹ but the Parliamentary Board of Control had ridden rough-shod over their scruples; Lord Auckland, the feeblest and most unfortunate of all the Governors-General in India, was an unresisting agent of the Government plans, and added his own contribution of incompetence to the misadventure. What Auckland and his advisers did was this. They chose,

¹ Kaye, *History of the War in Afghanistan*, Vol. I., pp. 377-80.

from fear of Russia, to challenge the right of one of the ablest of Afghan Amirs, Dost Muhammad, to rule at Kabul, and proposed to support by arms the cause of Shah Shuja, whose past record and present futility might have been sufficient warning to them. Auckland's Tripartite treaty of 1838, with the claimant and Ranjit Singh, enlisted in this dismal crusade the help of the Sikhs, who had had their own troubles with Kabul; but the treaty, more especially after Ranjit Singh was gone, reinforced all the fears of Lahore that Britain was thinking of the Panjab as the scene of their next adventure, and turned the Sikh sardars and army into sulky and almost hostile allies. The long march through the Bolan Pass, Kandahar, and Ghazni, to Kabul, revealed obvious defects in the Indian military machine; a brief period at Kabul made it plain that the British candidate at Kabul, Shah Shuja, would rule no longer than British superiority in arms kept him on the throne. Hopelessly involved in a reluctant occupation of Afghanistan, which was costing the Government of India annually much more than a million pounds, Auckland had not resolution enough to choose between a decisive and effective control of the country or an immediate withdrawal. Whether at Simla or Kabul, things went from bad to worse. By 1841 the Afghan chiefs, disappointed in their hopes of gain, were deep in conspiracy, and although Dost Muhammad was now safe in India, there were sufficient of his family, the Barakzais, left to make serious trouble. On November 2nd, 1841, Sir Alexander Burnes, who was about to take over from Sir William Macnaghten the position of Envoy at Kabul, was murdered; revolt broke loose; the British general, Elphinstone, whose ailments and senility were his best excuse, handled the Anglo-Indian force at Kabul with a pusillanimity happily seldom equalled elsewhere in our military history, and the night of disaster and real disgrace fell on the scene. Sir William Macnaghten, still Envoy, and one of the few courageous leaders on the scene, was shot down while negotiating with

Muhammad Akbar Khan, the son of the displaced Amir; the British force was shepherded and shut in like sheep; the most shameful capitulation in Indian history was concluded with the successful insurgents, and on January 6th, 1842, the army of occupation began to stumble in retreat towards India and its doom. On January 13th, Dr. Brydon arrived at Jalalabad, whither Sale and a detached force had already gone, to report that the army no longer existed, except for a few terrified fugitives, and some English officers and their wives, who were now in the hands of the Afghan leaders. Amongst these latter was George Lawrence. When one remembers that 1,700 men held the Residency at Lucknow from July till the end of September 1857, and that the force which began the siege of Delhi in that year was not so much greater than Elphinstone's 4,000 effective men,¹ it is difficult to pardon either the commander or his immediate subordinates – Byng had been shot for a fault in leadership much less grave, in 1757.

The consequences of the disgrace, which continued to infect India for the next fifteen years, were commensurate in importance with the disaster.

By a remarkable coincidence, in June of the fatal year 1841, Henry Lawrence, whose journalistic energies still worked unchecked, and who had chosen the anticipatory history of India as his new theme, contributed what might almost be called a prophecy of Elphinstone's disaster to the *Delhi Gazette*. His Afghan revolt he dated in 1845. 'Never having looked for defeat,' runs the most remarkable of his paragraphs, 'and being in no way prepared for such a contingency, the British troops suffered most severely; few officers indeed recrossed the Attock, and the harassed and almost skeleton battalions that did return to Hindustan told frightful tales of misery, and talked in a strain long unknown in British India, of the superior prowess of the Afghans, and

¹ Even as late as July 3rd, 1857, the besieging force at Delhi was only 6,600 men of all arms (Roberts, *Forty-One Years in India*, p. 98).

of the valour of that long-trampled race, again striking for independence.¹

There was this difference between the imaginary and the actual situation in Afghanistan that, even after the massacre of January, General Sale was established at Jalalabad in a position far more defensible than is generally supposed; and that at Kandahar one of the really competent generals of the Indian Army, Nott, lay awaiting further orders. The gravest danger threatened, not from Kabul, but from indecision and incompetence at Simla and Calcutta.

At Ferozpur, from the time when the order to stand fast had reached his troop, Henry Lawrence's mind, with all its other preoccupations, never ceased to brood over Afghanistan, and the possibilities of service there. In 1839, he was pushing hard through his brother for a transfer to Kabul, although George warned him, through Honoria, that he would do nothing to further any adventure that would take husband and wife across the frontier, since 'this country is hopeless for European females, let alone ladies, nor is it likely to become sufficiently settled for them to be in safety for years.'² Again, early in 1840 he was still struggling for a more active career, this time in the position of political assistant and auditor vacated by his brother George. There is something whimsically naïve in the unreserved statement of mixed motives which he dispatched to the Governor-General's Private Secretary: 'I have now, for twenty months, held an appointment of great labour and responsibility, on a consolidated salary of 700 Rs. per month, an allowance much within that of other officers holding political offices involving vastly less toil, expense, or pecuniary responsibility; and indeed affording me less remuneration in a busy and anxious office than, as a Regimental Captain, I should probably be receiving with my Regiment. To my immediate superior, Mr. Clerk, two months ago I officially applied,

¹ H. M. L.'s *Anticipatory Chapters of Indian History*. In his narrative the hero, Darby Connor, bears a notable resemblance to his creator.

² G. Lawrence to Honoria Lawrence, 24 November, 1839.

requesting him to mention my case to Government, with a view to obtaining an increase of salary and the advantage of a confirmed, not a merely acting appointment.

‘My motive for now troubling you is somewhat different; for though I should like to carry on the work I have begun here, if my salary were more answerable to my expense, yet, in the shattered state of my health, climate is the first consideration. I am therefore desirous of obtaining employment in Kabul.’¹ Henry Lawrence as auditor, even with such respectable and well-paid writers as he proposed to take with him, does not impress the imagination. No doubt his taste for action might have eliminated the strictly financial duties from his time-table. Fate was kind, in that as also in other things, when Mr. Colvin sent a civil answer, pointing out that the auditorship had been a temporary office, and that in any case the number of officers in Afghanistan would render it difficult to introduce a new claimant in that quarter.

From the beginning of 1841 he had begun to suspect that the British position at Kabul was insecure. In March he sent his chief, George Clerk, unfavourable reports, and Darby Connor’s gloomy forecast was written in June. According to Sir Herbert Edwardes,² he was the first on the frontier to hear that troubles had begun. Learning, while out in pursuit of dacoits, of the Kabul rising, he at once communicated with Clerk, and urged Colonel Wild, the officer commanding at Ferozpur, to prepare for action. On December 1st he received instructions from Clerk to proceed to Peshawar, ‘to give all the assistance in your power to Captain Mackeson, and generally to the British troops, in the requisitions made by the Brigadier commanding upon the Sikh government. The insisting on the due equipment and supply of the Sikh auxiliaries co-operating with the

¹ H. M. L., to the Private Secretary to the Governor-General, 9 July, 1840.

² Edwardes and Merivale, p. 186. The date, accepted by Edwardes, and given in Kaye’s *History of the War*, was 14 November, 1841, on which day he wrote to Clerk.

British troops will be an essential part of your duty.'¹ Clerk gave his reason for choosing him, in a most friendly letter written a few days later: 'It is because, while expecting Mackeson's hands will be full of affairs on ahead, I feel much confidence in your knowledge of the Sikh authorities, in their reliance on your fair dealing, in your experience as a district officer and a people's protector, and in your activity and decision to meet emergencies of every shape, that I have selected you to proceed for the present to Peshawar.'² That letter was the first frank acknowledgment by an official, not only of Henry Lawrence's capacity, but of the peculiar qualities which constituted that capacity. So Henry Lawrence became, in real earnest, one of that most elusive body, the politicals of the North-West.

From these Afghan days originated the dispute, not yet entirely dead, as to the powers of, and the need for, political agents like Macnaghten and Burnes, who seemed to act as a combination of Governor-General and Commander-in-Chief *in partibus*. Strict soldiers like Nott had challenged the authority of their political colleagues on the spot. 'I have no right to interfere with the affairs of the government of this country, and never do,' wrote Nott in July 1842 to his 'political,' Major Rawlinson, 'but in reference to that part of your note where you speak of political influence, I shall candidly tell you that these are not times for mere ceremony and that, under present circumstances and at a distance of 2,000 miles from the seat of the Supreme Government, I throw responsibility to the winds and tell you that, in my opinion, you have not had for some time past, nor have you at present, one particle of political influence in this country.'³ The Duke of Wellington, when he discussed with Ellenborough the causes of disaster, named as one of them 'the great military powers which it has been the practice of all the governments in India to extend to Political

¹ Instructions from George Clerk, 1 December, 1841.

² G. Clerk to H. M. L., 5 December, 1841.

³ Kaye, *History of the War in Afghanistan*, Vol. III., pp. 136-7.

Residents with the several native Powers, and with what are called the Agents of the Governor-General, whether resident within the British territories or beyond the frontier.' This authority, Wellington very correctly judged, took from the soldiers their sense of responsibility and power of initiative, and led them to do nothing 'except to obey the orders which the Political Agent or his deputies think proper to give them.'¹

It must be admitted that, in Afghan affairs from 1838 to 1842, the semi-independent political agents of the Governor-General sometimes made the most reckless and imprudent use of their powers; but, as the career of Henry Lawrence proved, the political officer, especially when he was a soldier, was the natural creation of sheer political necessity, and, before events made his vocation obsolete, he had rendered services to the British dominion of a unique character. Indeed, at the moment when his powers became most necessary, in the Mutiny, he, and no other, saved the Empire. The expansion of British activities, responsibilities, and territory, between 1838 and 1856, imposed an intolerable strain on the administration and military machinery of the Government. Governors-General like Auckland and Ellenborough, Commanders-in-Chief like Fane and Nicholls, were frankly incapable of coping with their new duties. Yet the diplomacy of the North-West, the absorption of great new territories like the Panjab, the creation of a strong frontier, and the instant answer to acute crises far from the centre, were the most vitally important occasions presented for settlement to the Indian Government. The political officer was the agent, improvised in these years, to meet the situation. Even when Dalhousie's dæmonic energy and indomitable will began to re-establish central control, there were still times when no one but some resolute political in the North-West, like the Lawrences or Nicholson, could do that which must be done. Doubtless they habitually

¹ *The Indian Administration of Lord Ellenborough*, pp. 240-3.

over-stepped the limits of their legitimate authority; organising forces, carrying out negotiations, committing the military and civil Government in the most important affairs. Until Dalhousie checked them, they regarded the Indian Army as theirs to draw upon, even when the Commander-in-Chief knew nothing of their requisitions. But it was a pioneering world in which adventurers must have their way. Routine entered early enough, and with routine the pioneer faded out of existence. Whatever his excesses, or his misjudgments, he had done something which had to be done, and which no one but he could do in the right way. His rewards were uncertain and his life tended to be short. Others entered into his labours, remembering his errors, and forgetting how completely the whole modern situation, especially towards the north, was founded on the work of the adventurers. Taking this point of view, then, it will be unnecessary to defend or apologise for the actions and moral qualities which made up the larger part of Henry Lawrence's being — he was the ideal example of the great 'political.'

Clerk had given Lawrence a very large discretion, and trusted him to 'anticipate all I would wish you to do on occasions which after all must be dealt with by you at Peshawar as they arise.' But Henry Lawrence naturally interpreted such discretionary powers even more generously than his chief intended. Clerk had made it plain that his assistant was to help Captain Mackeson 'in whatever he may devolve upon you,' and that while there was to be no prohibition to his going forward, it must depend on what Mackeson wanted. As the sequel will reveal, it was difficult to keep Henry Lawrence, armed with discretionary powers, from securing the lion's share of all the activities within his reach.

Having left Ferozpur on December 17th, 1841, Henry Lawrence entered on the scene of his new adventures at Peshawar on December 28th. He found that aspect of his duties which involved liaison work with the Sikh contingent,

sent by the Darbar to co-operate with the British at Peshawar, vexing and even dangerous. The regiments, mainly Muhammadan, which made up the contingent were in a mutinous condition, and even Avitabile, the most masterful of all the European commanders in Sikh service, could do little or nothing with them. As events were to prove, only unusual tact and unending patience could solve the difficulty – qualities not quite natural at first to the new liaison officer, who confessed later on, in June, that he ‘had ate more dirt than I’ll get out of my mouth for the next seven years.’ Nor were the British Indian troops at Peshawar in a satisfactory state. Thanks to George Clerk’s energy, one brigade had already arrived at Peshawar, and another was hastening on its track. But Colonel Wild’s force had been improvised for the service, ‘a body of four sipahi battalions, with an haphazard Brigadier and Brigade Major taken from their own ranks, without a single staff officer, without carriages, commissariat, guns, or cavalry.’ The Commander-in-Chief’s opinion on the subject of guns was, ‘I have yet to learn the use of guns in a pass.’¹ As for the military objective of the expedition, it soon became clear, in January, that the Afghan rising had ended in a general massacre of the British force in Kabul; that the few surviving Europeans were prisoners in a most precarious position; and that General Sale at Jalalabad, near the western end of the Khaibar Pass, was sitting down in a somewhat helpless fashion, waiting to be relieved from dangers with which his best subordinates, and especially George Broadfoot and Henry Havelock, would have grappled in a much more spirited fashion. The problem for the force at Peshawar now was, whether Wild should attempt, by himself, with Sikh support, to push on at once to Sale at Jalalabad, or should wait for reinforcements, and especially for the arrival of General Pollock; for the Government had entrusted that officer with full military and political power to deal with the whole Afghan situation.

¹ Judgments collected from H. M. L.’s letters during January, 1842.

The first efforts at Peshawar to clear the situation up ended in humiliating failure. The key to the Peshawar side of the Khaibar Pass, Ali Masjid, had been garrisoned by a detachment of local levies under a cousin of Captain Mackeson's, and it was of the utmost importance, whether an advance was to be immediate or not, to secure it against attacks by the surrounding Afridi tribesmen. But apart from the absence of British artillery – Wild had only four guns, borrowed from the Sikhs¹ – or any proper commissariat arrangements, the Sikh troops, who were in a state of almost open revolt against co-operation with their allies, were playing on the fears of the sipahis, asking them 'if they ever expected to return from the darkness of those passes.' On the evening of January 10th the first untoward event happened. A young engineer officer, J. R. Becher, has left an unforgettable picture of this, and of Lawrence's part in settling it: 'One evening when he was sitting with us, the Adjutant of the 64th N.I. came in. He said that his regiment had all day evinced a mutinous spirit – it was pay day, and they refused to accept their pay – they required increased allowances – it was cold in Kabul – they said they required fur coats and gloves – they grew more presumptuous – they had gone in a body to their arms – they were now in open mutiny. Just then we heard the bugles sounding a general assembly. . . . It was almost dark; Lawrence surprised at this announcement immediately went off to find Colonel Wild. We fell in our men, the gunners got ready the Sikh cannon which they had borrowed, and we marched off, Sappers and Artillery. It was so dark we could hardly distinguish one another; there was a general hum and whisper; we stood there in a great surprise; no orders came for the port-fires to be lighted. We could just see Lawrence on horseback, dark and prominent against the sky, vehemently urging and riding here and there. At length we were ordered back. Lawrence had shown the madness of firing

¹ H. M. L. to George Clerk, 12 August, 1842.

on the regiment at such an hour, when we could not discern the different regiments, and of exposing to the Sikh army our internal discords. The following day, the matter was arranged under Lawrence's counsel, and the sipahis accepted their pay. I have often heard Sir Henry dwell on the dangers of that night, and the difficulty he had to prevent Colonel Wild from the suicidal measure of ordering the other sipahi regiments to compel the 64th.¹

In so confused a situation nothing but the clearest thinking, followed up by equally decisive action, could prove effective. But the central authority was very far away, and the local commander, Colonel Wild, was in no way competent to undertake military and political direction. Under these circumstances, the two political officers on the spot, Lawrence and Mackeson, offered advice, and co-operated in actions, which it is not unfair to call injudicious. Lawrence's first impulse was the wisest. On January 8th he wrote to his wife: 'I doubt much whether a move will be made for some time, and if we are sure of the safety of Jalalabad, it would be well to await General Pollock's arrival.' It was not merely 'well,' but the obvious duty of Wild, Mackeson, and Lawrence, no doubt, to retrieve the local situation, but to do nothing which would embarrass the new commander by committing him to a decided line of action before he arrived. Mackeson, however, urged the dispatch of two regiments to Ali Masjid, and his junior colleague consented, doubtless because he always favoured an active policy. Neither of them seems to have envisaged clearly what exactly the ultimate end of the move was to be – merely the relief and retention of Ali Masjid, or an advance by Wild's whole force to Jalalabad. In any case, other factors in their calculations entirely failed them. On January 15th Ali Masjid was relieved, but the relieving force discovered, on its arrival, that, in place of 300 supply bullocks, there were less than 70, and that therefore another effort was at once required to secure

¹ MS. notes by J. R. Becher.

provisions for them, or to support them if they decided to retreat.

But equally serious with this was the complete failure of their Sikh allies to render any assistance. On this point Henry Lawrence must be allowed to tell his own story: 'About the 10th of January, the Sikh and Musalman officers met Captain Mackeson and myself at General Avitabile's and made fair promises of co-operation, Captain Mackeson agreeing to advance one lakh of rupees to enable General Avitabile to settle the claims of the troops. The money was advanced, and it was agreed that the Najib and Musalman battalions should advance with the British detachment; but when, on the night of January 15th, Colonel Moseley with two regiments moved on Ali Masjid, not a man of the Lahore troops accompanied him, although urgently called on to do so, that afternoon and night, by Captain Mackeson.

'On January 16th I was promised that the above-named contingent would accompany Brigadier Wild on the 18th, but, on the 17th, General Avitabile begged for a day's delay, assuring me that everything would be ready for his troops to accompany us on the 19th. On the 18th, I was told that the contingent was quite ready, but at 10 o'clock that night a mutiny broke out in their camp; the officers were driven out, and I then learned that no co-operation could be expected.

'I went to General Avitabile, and told him that Colonel Moseley must be relieved, and that Brigadier Wild would advance to Ali Masjid, whether supported or not; but that I looked to him at least to make a diversion by the Jaboki Pass¹ with General Mahtab Singh's Brigade. General Avitabile held up his hands in despair, and told me there was no hope. He was ill at the time, and appeared to me to be under some apprehension of the intentions of the mutineers.'² What actually happened, when Wild went forward to help the garrison at Ali Masjid, was that the Sikh

¹ An alternative route of march to Ali Masjid.

² H. M. L. to the Agent to the Governor-General, N.W.F., 12 August, 1842.

battalions detailed for duty marched back, first to Peshawar, and then to the Indus, while the remaining half of Wild's brigade staggered forward, in ill order and worse spirits, to the mouth of the pass, and were there repulsed, more by their own craven hearts than by the enemy. Henry Lawrence, who flung all his energies into the operation, found one of the small guns left with the rearguard, *spiked before it had ever come near the scene of action*. 'I've witnessed a shameful sight to-day,' he scribbled on a scrap of paper to his wife, 'our troops behaving ill before a handful of savages.'¹ Later, after a period of shameful confusion, the Peshawar force, assisted by some Sikh troops, was able to afford the Ali Masjid garrison support as it withdrew a few days later.

All that Henry Lawrence could say of the combatants in this inglorious succession of errors may be taken as justified; that 'with few exceptions there was not a man with a head or a heart in the force,' that it was a 'focus of imbecility,' and that, in consequence, he had himself to act as general, artilleryman, pioneer, and cavalryman; in every case, it may be owned, with inimitable dash and coolness.² But the one thing needed at Peshawar in 1842 was a commander with courage to admit *the things he could not do*, as Pollock did when he arrived. Mackeson and Lawrence must be blamed, not simply for interpreting their advisory powers too generously, but for committing Wild to a line of action which, things being as they were, could only end in serious failure. A letter to the political agent at Jalalabad sums up the situation at the end of January with singular force: 'I grieve to say you can have no assistance from us for at least a month. Yesterday we were beaten back from the pass, our guns breaking down at the first discharge, and the sipahis of the 60th behaving ill. The Sikhs marched back to Peshawar and we entered the Pass; so all hope of them is over. If you can make a push for Lalpura, and there hold out till Pollock

¹ H. M. L. to Honoria Lawrence, 19 January, 1842.

² These details are from the very frank and unrestrained comments which Henry Lawrence permitted to himself in his letters to his wife.

reaches us, please God we will help you. But it is best to say the truth, that, until then, there is no shadow of chance, for we cannot even relieve Mackeson in Ali Masjid, that is, we cannot take him supplies, and to go without them would only do harm. . . . I do not hesitate to say that nothing can be done. Reckon, therefore, on nothing from us for a month. I say it with real grief.¹

At this point, happily both for Henry Lawrence and the British reputation, there arrived, in the person of General Pollock, that kind of solid, imperturbable, and adequate man who could go slow, smother excitement in common sense, and provide a solid background for the more restless genius of his young political assistants. February and March at Peshawar were months of waiting, but the delay was calculated and Pollock knew exactly what he wanted. Lawrence, who had been forced to follow his wandering Sikh allies back to Attock, gave his wife a picture of the new commander, refreshingly quiet and wholesome, after the fret and futile excitement of the earlier weeks: 'I like Pollock well. He is active and stirring and, on the whole, as good a man as they could have sent. Yesterday I helped to get the guns over, and now at 10 o'clock, as it rained a good deal in the evening of yesterday, the troops are getting under weigh. Raja Gulab Singh and his mutineers went on yesterday. The Raja stopped for half an hour at the bridge looking at us pulling out the guns. "You Sahiblog work hard," he said; he was surprised to find us all top-khanas,² old Pollock, young Pollock, and self.'³

The most exciting adventure in the weeks of waiting was the great earthquake, which, as those who know the story of the siege of Jalalabad will recollect, at this time shook the frontier and ruined the new fortifications at which Sale's men were so energetically working. It certainly startled Henry Lawrence, who had just gone to his quarters in

¹ H. M. L. to Captain Macgregor at Jalalabad, 20 January, 1842.

² Gunners.

³ H. M. L. to his wife, from Attock, 4 February, 1842.

Peshawar for a jacket: 'I had scarcely put on my jacket when I felt the house shaking, and, looking over a balustrade into the central hall, I saw the others running out, and followed their example; but I had to run round a passage, and down a very narrow dark staircase, cornices and plaster falling around, and the whole dwelling shaking like a ship in a heavy sea. I don't recollect ever before feeling an earthquake, but this was a terrible one. Even when outside the house, the earth and all around so shook that I really thought we should be swallowed up.'¹

For the next four months Henry Lawrence lived in a state of very imperfectly restrained impatience. He was dissatisfied with the policy, military and political, of the Indian Government, and Ellenborough, the new Governor-General, did not seem to be much of an improvement on Auckland. He was restless because of the halt in operations, but found it difficult to suggest any better plan than Pollock's; and it often seemed as though Simla were quite careless about the men, women, and children now in the hands of Afghan factions, which at any moment might decide that a massacre was the simplest way of settling their fate. He found the prejudice against 'politicals' growing, and with it the restraint placed on his initiative. And behind everything else, for him there were the extraordinary difficulties raised by the Sikh alliance. The Sikh troops were, and continued to be, in a state of almost open insubordination, and their European commanders, Avitabile and Court for example, were in so precarious a position that they seemed mainly intent on planning their own escape. Even after Clerk's patient and admirable work at Amritsar and Lahore had secured co-operation for Pollock's advance up the Khaibar Pass in April, the Sikh regiments remained sullen and hostile, and in May left their position on the lines of communication at Ali Masjid, and retreated out of the Pass, flinging the loads off British supply animals and using them for their

¹ Same to same, 19 February, 1842.

own baggage.¹ After all, it was Lawrence's main business to second Clerk in his attempts to make the military alliance with Lahore effective, and that could be secured only by endless patience, and what the irritated political called 'eating dirt.' His reward came later, when he really had begun to establish a kind of moral ascendancy over the soldiers themselves. Before the end of July he was able to write from the Sikh camp on the far side of the Pass: 'I have my 20 horsemen and 10 burkundauzes, but my guard are 50 of one of Avitabile's battalions who always threatened him, and who behaved so ill in January in refusing to advance with us, and who a month ago burnt General Gulab Singh's tent, and drove him out of camp. They are very civil to me, and all the Sikh troops are twenty times more so than when at Peshawar. Indeed, here they are very civil, there they were very rude. Here, their guards and sentries turn out and present arms, and when I meet their men they salute and turn. They are a rum set, and so are we.'

It was, however, thoroughly characteristic of the man that, apart from the frets of his official task, he was longing for a kind of initiative and free hand which his subordinate position made it difficult for him to secure. He was not only assistant to Clerk; he was more or less subordinate to Mackeson, and, when Pollock advanced, the two Peshawar politicals had an honourable but acute controversy over the honour of accompanying the relieving force to Jalalabad. In March, Pollock had decided that Lawrence was not to go on; but when the actual start was made, Henry Lawrence interpreted his Peshawar duties in a very extended fashion. Becher has left a good description of his conduct at the outset of the march: 'Sir George Pollock has related to me that, an hour before the appointed time of attack (on the Khaibar), he repaired to Lawrence's tent to consult with him, and found him sitting up, vomiting – deadly sick – and unable to

¹ H. M. L. to his wife, 9 May, 1842.

do anything. Sir George left him under the impression that he had been attacked by cholera, and assuredly unfit to take any share in the day's work. Yet to his great surprise, when he reached the position in front of the Pass, there was Henry Lawrence, busy aiding the guns and securing the commanding points.¹ On April 7th, he was to be found at Ali Masjid in the middle of 10,000 Sikh troops, and the Khaibar became a kind of beaten track for his activities. He managed to break through to Dakka; a little later he warned his wife that he would go to Jalalabad for a few days.

The dispute with Mackeson is not without its humorous side. For an Irishman, Henry Lawrence had an unexpected habit of losing his sense of the ridiculous, and of the case for the other side, in controversy. He told Pollock that he felt aggrieved at being fixed at Peshawar, and that the plain rational view of the case was that Mackeson 'should remain where he has personal influence, and where he is acquainted with the persons who can help us and can hinder us.'² Mackeson, who had now a chance of learning what it was to stand in the way of a Lawrence, put his side of the case with whimsical frankness. He had been grilled long enough at Peshawar, he said, and was entitled to a share of the good things going, whereas Lawrence 'had been enjoying himself in civilised society.' But a letter of April 27th gives pretty clear indication what the final settlement would be: 'I write this in Mackeson's tent, surrounded by Afridis. Mackeson says in answer to my proposal, that we should change places, that he will not go back unless he gets a positive order from the General. *I shall at any rate go on to Landi Khana with the troops to-morrow, as, go or stay, it will be an advantage to me to have seen the whole road.*' Mackeson had clearly a good case, but was in the way of losing. The same letter gives a glimpse of what 'masterly inactivity' meant for

¹ MS. notes of J. R. Becher.

² H. M. L. to General Pollock, 20 April, 1842.

any of the Lawrences, and suggests that such restrictions as Simla might impose on frontier politicals worked rather imperfectly on the spot: 'Yesterday by getting 100 irregulares on the steep ascent, and pulling myself at the drag ropes, the rear-guard was in camp by 10 o'clock, although we had 12 lakhs in tumbrils. What was then my disgust, when at 10 o'clock I entered camp, to be accosted with, "Before these officers I tell you, Captain Lawrence, we'll be starved in two days if this continues," or some such speech, continued in the same style for some minutes.' By way of heaping coals of fire on his remonstrant's head, Lawrence wandered round at night, and, finding not a single sentry placed on the hills surrounding the camp, he saved the situation by posting Sikhs on one side and irregulares on the other.

At last the situation cleared. Towards the end of May he was abusing the world in general – the Government 'a beastly blackguard Government,' Lord Ellenborough 'an ass,' the Commander-in-Chief 'ought to be shot.' By the middle of June, sunshine began to break in on him, and a little scrap of paper prepared his wife for his advance into Afghanistan: 'The General, having received the Government sanction [Pollock was then at Jalalabad], will hold on till October, and seems stirred to act. Another victory at Kandahar – 1,200 of ours beat 10,000, and our sipahis quite dispersed the enemy. I shall go on to Jalalabad for a few days, so don't be anxious if you don't hear regularly.' From Jalalabad he wrote: 'This seems a very nice place, healthy and cool, and I am glad that I am to come back on the 1st July, and to remain with the General as Sikh Commissioner until the troops retire in October. In many respects this will be pleasant. I shall have a better climate, little to do, and no Treasury.' Then, on July 3rd, he reported to Clerk, 'I have made over charge of the Treasury and local duties at Peshawar to Captain Mackeson on the 1st instant, and am now in progress to Jalalabad to join

General Pollock's camp, in conformity with instructions received from that officer.'

It was a crisis not only for Henry Lawrence, but for all the British forces in Afghanistan, and the inglorious four years of campaigning there were now to hasten forward to a really decisive and creditable conclusion. Pollock and Sale at Jalalabad, Nott at Kandahar, had been doing their best to prevent the Indian Government from issuing orders which would only plunge the frontier in fresh confusion. At last, on July 4th, Ellenborough decided, not so much to act himself, as to leave the responsibility of decisive action to two men, Pollock and Nott, better fitted than he was to do the right thing. Pollock was told that, whatever happened, the army was to be withdrawn 'at the earliest moment consistent with the health and efficiency of the troops,' and Nott's instructions bade him withdraw from Afghanistan but choose his own time of withdrawal.¹ Whatever the Governor-General hoped or meant, the two men of action shaped their own policy. On August 20th, Pollock moved from Jalalabad, Nott having already evacuated Kandahar on his way north. By the middle of September, not only had the Afghan force been crushed at Jagdalak and Tezin by Pollock, but Nott had re-occupied Ghazni and was pushing on to join Pollock at Kabul. On September 18th, Pollock's force was encamped on the Kabul racecourse, and next day it had established secure communication with the Kandahar army. Four days later, all the British prisoners save one came in from Bamian, and Bygrave, the missing man, turned up on September 27th. Nothing now remained but a few punitive expeditions, the destruction of the Great Bazaar, and a quiet retirement to India.

In these exciting events Henry Lawrence shared as fully as his heart could desire, and the soldier in him, as well as the political, was grateful; for he took part in Pollock's

¹ Kaye, *op. cit.*, Vol. III., pp. 287-8.

advance, at the head of a small Sikh force of 200 horse and 400 foot, and Pollock acknowledged in his dispatch of September 14th that 'the Lahore contingent under the able direction of Captain Lawrence has invariably given the most cheerful assistance, dragging the guns, occupying the heights, and covering the rear-guard.'

There are few more vivid glimpses of this glorious termination to a bad business than those to be had from the shreds and scraps of paper on which Henry Lawrence kept his wife, and George Clerk, informed of what was being done. They reflect the moods of the moment, and the unforeseen changes which were constantly upsetting his plans, and reveal the man himself with singular accuracy. One of them, scribbled on July 18th, gives not only his mood and views, but the melancholy details of how James Marshall, Honoria Lawrence's brother, died in the great disaster: 'There seems to be no doubt that the army of reserve is but a demonstration (and a very silly one too), and that we are to return as soon as possible, most likely in October. This seems to be the intention of Lord Ellenborough, at all hazards, and in spite of all that can be said against his measures; indeed he seems to be vindictively violent against all who think or urge otherwise. He has the oddest notions I have yet met with, and as concerns politicals especially. He gave Clerk not long since a severe lecture for mentioning to Mackeson that it was contemplated to give Jalalabad to the Sikhs, although the rumour was at the time in every man's mouth; and yesterday the General, who is easily frightened, got a tart letter, asking him who informed Mackeson that the Bala Hissar had fallen, I having written to Clerk, and he having passed on to Government my letter saying that I had heard privately from M. that Col. Wymer had retired from Kelat-i-Ghilzai, which had encouraged a fresh attack on the Bala Hissar, one having failed the day before. Just fancy the implication that Mackeson and I should not be told such intelligence; it makes me

open my eyes and ask what I am here for; not much certainly, for between Lord E.'s absurdities, Shakespeare's jealousies, and the General's nervousness as to being accused of being in the hands of the politicals, I am not troubled in any way.

'The dust here is very bad, but the Sikhs, who are just across the river, are much better off: I think of going to them for a few days and getting a shady place. I went to Havelock's chapel in the town yesterday. He had about forty soldiers and ten or twelve officers; he prayed extemporarily, read a few verses, sang two hymns and read a sermon on faith, hope, and charity. We assembled under two united tents, where I fancy, all during the siege, he had thus collected a small congregation. It was blowing a dust storm all the evening and night, but I went home with him to his tent, and sat a couple of hours. He is a strange person, but is acknowledged to be as good a soldier as a man, the best of both perhaps in the camp.

'For the first time I heard the other day something of the particulars of poor James's end¹: the troops halted at Jagdalak and the enemy took possession of the heights above, and annoyed them much. At this time there were few or none of the native troops remaining, and the Europeans were almost a rabble. A party of them, however, volunteered to go up and dislodge the enemy, and James offered to lead them. They went and drove off the enemy, but James was shot from behind the shoulder, the ball going into his breast; he was spitting blood. Though the wound was probably mortal, Brydon says that, the same night, when the troops again moved on the retreat he (Brydon) led the horse on which James rode for two miles, until near the barrier that had been raised across the Jagdalak Pass, the enemy rushed in among them. Brydon was knocked down, and when he rose, missed James and saw him no more. At this time and place many were killed,

¹ Captain James Marshall, his brother-in-law.

and most likely, nay almost certainly, your poor brother. He had, after he was wounded, given his watch and a locket of your hair to young Bird, a nephew of Mr. Bird's of Allahabad, to bring to me, but Bird was killed not many miles from this place. I have heard many speak of James in high terms, as a good and gallant soldier. What an amount of misery this Kabul business has caused, and yet how little symptom we see of improving by our experience; the same dotage in every department. We are in the hands of a higher and wiser One than ourselves. If it is well that our Government in the East should survive, it will do so; but assuredly it will not be by our own mightiness, by our wisdom, or by our valour.¹

The fate of the prisoners, and more especially of his brother George, kept him restless and pre-occupied, and the mission of George from Muhammad Akbar Khan to the British General, at the beginning of August, gave him an opportunity for one of those pieces of quixotry which go far to explain the affection and devotion which bound all who knew him intimately so closely to him. 'We return to-morrow Kabulwards,' wrote George Lawrence to Honoria, on August 5th, 'Henry as usual volunteering to go for me; but this I could not allow, for what would Tim, the illustrious Tim, do without his papa; and Darby Connor has no right to study the convenience of others at his own personal risk.' Henry's version is, for him, very restrained and seems hardly to speak of his offer as being – what it really was – a definite proposition. 'Here I am on the melancholy errand of seeing George off. We are at a fort called Oosman Khan's, as belonging to a Barakzai of that name. It is about 14 miles from Jalalabad. They go on to-night, and I will remain here with Broadfoot for a day or two, as the place is cool, and looks nice and shady. There is much to hope for, but in such hands there is always much to fear. We may believe that, having been spared through

¹ H. M. L. to Honoria Lawrence, 18 July, 1842.

so many perils, he will still be saved for us. As it is, though I almost wished he had been taken ill, that I might have gone back in his place, he said, "What would Honoria say?" I replied, "That I was right."¹ And Honoria's answer was worthy of both of them: 'You have more than my acquiescence in your changing places with George.'²

Happily the day for fresh tragedies was over. At the beginning of September, Henry was among his Sikhs, making arrangements for the advance on Kabul, and choosing picked men for his detachment, 'all *razi* to go on.' He shared in the fighting at Tezin, and on the Haft Kotal, his contingent surprising all beholders by their good conduct; and on September 16th he saw 'the blue flag on the Bala Hissar and looked at Fateh Jang seating himself – for a season – on his throne.'³ A few days more, and he had the joy of meeting George and the returning prisoners. All that remained was to register the anger and shame of the Army at the events of December 1841. As he looked at the old cantonment, his comment to George Clerk was: 'It is a sad memorial of . . . what shall I say? You may fill in the blank.' In this relief and exultation, he did not forget the Sikh detachment which he had led with spirit, and whose gallantry had attracted special notice. To Clerk he wrote, 'I hope that some mark of favour will be given by the Darbar to Commandant Mir Jang Ali, and indeed to all the troops with me. Gulab Singh⁴ is also deserving of credit, if doing what General Pollock and I ask him to do is praiseworthy, when he did it in opposition to the Peshawar orders. I hope you will get the butter bowl freely used for the old general and his people.'

Now the end was in sight. For ten months Honoria Lawrence had been busy in the hills, consoling a lonely heart by caring for Tim, talking to him of his father, and

¹ H. M. L. to his wife, 6 August, 1842.

² Honoria Lawrence's letters, 17–20 August, are full of the subject. Had Henry gone, it would have been with her entire approval.

³ H. M. L. to his wife, from Kabul, 16 September, 1842.

⁴ A Sikh general, not the Jammu Raja.

writing to Henry sometimes every other day. Husband and wife had exchanged views, mostly extreme, on the conduct of Indian affairs; they planned fresh literary ventures, and both of them found refuge and comfort in religious faith. It was a happy ending when Honoria was able to send on news that, although their hopes for a temporary resting-place at Simla had failed, Clerk had not forgotten his assistant, and that on his return the wanderer was to settle down in the Dehra Dun. After telling of disappointment over a Simla appointment for his assistant, Clerk consoled Honoria with better news: 'The appointment selected for Lawrence, therefore, is the joint Magistracy in the Dehra Dun, the residence being, I believe, in the hills, with a Sudder Ameen at Dehra, the salary, 1000 Rs. I came to the knowledge by accident six months ago, that Lawrence, on account of his health, desired to be here or hereabouts, but this you perceive is unattainable, at least just now; so I know the Dehra appointment will not be unacceptable to you, for it commands as good a climate for him, and leaves him more to yourself. Lawrence, wherever he is, in any hills, will greatly develop their resources and improve them, so that though there he has no longer any political duties, he will by no means be in an inactive position, though I confess I would rather have kept him on the frontier. Our lately stirring emergency, however, is probably about to settle down into a stupid enough sort of routine of peace. It is to be hoped so, nor do I despair of getting Lawrence back, some time or other.'¹

On October 11th, Henry was able to send word that 'We march to-morrow for India.' Three weeks later, he reported to Clerk that he had just reached Jamrud with his Sikh contingent - 'We bowled through the Khaibar as if it had been the road between Hammersmith and London.'² Then, 'like a bright particular star', he shot past the army at

¹ George Clerk to Honoria Lawrence, 17 October, 1842.

² H. M. L. to George Clerk, 1 November, 1842.

Peshawar, and was on the point of heading for Lahore when he heard that Honoria had arrived at Firozpur. 'So turning my horse's head this way, I rode straight in, and happily found her at the ferry, all well.'¹

NOTE.— In 1843 Henry Lawrence composed a defence of Macnaghten's conduct in Kabul, remarkable not only as a sample of his literary style, but much more for its prophetic picture, in 1843, of much that happened at the start of the Mutiny in 1857. An extract has been printed in the Appendix.

¹H. M. L. to Letitia, now Mrs. Hayes, 11 December, 1842.

CHAPTER VIII

NEPAL, 1843-1845¹

WITH 1843, the career of Henry Lawrence reached an important turning-point. The next two years, of what he called idleness among the hills, were to fit him for the great work in the Panjab which will always remain the chief memorial of his genius. It has too rarely been the lot of great men of action to escape from the turmoil of active life, and to be able quietly and honestly to look back and forward, to judge their own earlier errors, and reflect on their principles of life. In a fragmentary personal journal, which he began and ended in 1845, he notes with that whimsical humility which, with all his self-assertive ways, had from the first been one of the chief springs of his moral life: 'I'll try to look after myself as to

Anger,
Tidiness,
Procrastination,

Regularity; to do as far as possible any Nepal work before breakfast, and to devote Saturday to bringing up all arrears of Nepal work, and letter-writing. Sunday to be kept holy as the day of rest and preparation for heaven. No newspapers to be opened on Sunday. I pray God's blessing on my weak endeavours as to the above, and also to enable me to set an example to my children, that they may love me, and have reason for doing so.'

In the same mood of self-examination he wrote: 'On the

¹ This chapter, apart from references to Hunter's *Life of Brian Hodgson*, and the few works written by Englishmen who have lived in Nepal, is based on the journals and letters of Henry and Honoria Lawrence. It is strange, but true, that our sole first-hand knowledge of the history of Nepal between 1843 and 1845 comes from these letters and journals.

28th of June I was 39 years of age; and more aged in constitution and experience. And yet I often feel very young in all respects, ignorant of much I ought to know, frivolous, unsettled, and uncertain. . . . I have seldom been idle, but always desultory, and distracting my attention from any continued course of study or action. I can hardly say I had any education, that I learned anything as a boy except a very little history and cyphering . . . I read discursively as a young man. I had great difficulty in learning languages, but by very hard labour I have learned to read Persian, Hindustani, and Hindi. But I am not a good Oriental scholar, and do not even talk well. I catch people's meaning in a general way, but I by no means understand all they say, nor do I find it easy to make myself intelligible though by dint of repetition and gesture I carry on business with the Gurkhas, as I did with the Sikhs, in Hindustani.'

But the early months of 1843 showed few signs of the coming period of rest, reflection, and self-discipline. His superiors, and especially Lord Ellenborough and George Clerk, understood and sympathised with their man, but chance seemed at first about to overturn their well-intentioned efforts at recognition. Henry Lawrence had no sooner hastened to his new post at Dehra Dun, and traversed the district than he was recalled to work at Ambala, not dissimilar to that which he had done before the march to Kabul. By regulation, Dehra Dun was earmarked for a civilian, and to a civilian it had to go, and neither Clerk's sympathy, nor even the Governor-General's suggestion that 'he would make a very good Governor of Sukkur'¹ (in Sind), quite soothed his hurt feelings; and, through another ill chance, a slip of Ellenborough's pen, addressing him as C. B., recalled to his sore mind what he thought the failure of Government to recognise his services. 'I suppose I must fag away here for another year,' he wrote to his old commander Pollock, 'on the same pay as when

¹ G. Clerk to H. M. L., 20 January, 1843.

I went to Peshawar, being less than if I was with the Regiment.' In this mood he found his wisest friend, as always, in James Thomason, who besought him not to fling up his hopes by going home - 'methinks you can ill afford it' - and told him, with the manly frankness which characterised Thomason and all his school, to put a bridle on his words. 'Tell your grievances to your wife,' he said, 'but to no one else. Do not call yourself, nor affect to consider yourself, an aggrieved person.'¹

It was fortunate that, at this time, the territory of Kaithal, which adjoined Ambala, lapsed to the British Government in the midst of some disorder. By the end of April, Clerk had decided to make his impetuous assistant 'sole Malik of Kaithal,'² so, in the interval before his departure for Nepal, Lawrence had his love of honest hard work fully satisfied in the task of making a settlement of the district. Indeed the last thoughts he had to spare before travelling northwards in November were occupied with a preliminary statement of Kaithal affairs. Here, as at other times, it is but fair to our hero to recollect that the frets and discontents of his words and letters were becoming less and less real manifestations of his character, and that, if he did long to gain promotion, it was because his impatience could only be cured by the intense joy of finding work in abundance, and rather over than under his capacity for doing it. The Kaithal settlement is interesting as an imperfect miniature of what he was later to accomplish in the Panjab. First came the intimate inspection of the region, in April, May, and June, regardless of climatic conditions, with very special attention given to the ruin or neglect of the countryside. Then the suggested remedies: adequate policing and disarmament, irrigation, road-making, planting, and above all else a just settlement of the payments to be made, and the remissions to be allowed. As always, he worked at high speed, in this

¹ J. Thomason to H. M. L., 1 May, 1843.

² G. Clerk to H. M. L., 25 April, 1843.

case accelerated after news came that he had been appointed to Nepal, for he counted it important to get something definite done for the district before he was removed. In Kaithal too, as later at Lahore, he was full of consideration for old families, giving those of them who had been driven away by earlier oppression the chance to return and recover their possessions. Nor was his autocratic benevolence too seriously checked when an agent of the 'Bhais of Arnauli,' anxious to push the interests of his lords, made an attempt to bribe him, saying 'that it was only proper that a present should be given to my son.'¹

Then, through the offer of the Residency at Katmandu, came the chance not merely to recover his ailing health, but – as important – to sit down to quiet thoughts and serious consideration of the faults and crudities whose continuance might have spoiled his later work. With a singular graciousness Lord Ellenborough wrote to him on September 10th, 'I hope your health will be re-established in the Hills of Nepal to which we have to-day sent you'; and Thomason, who at the moment was Ellenborough's Foreign Secretary, used the occasion for gentle reproof of the new Resident's criticism of the Governor-General: 'I hope you like your appointment in Nepal. I happen to know that Lord E. selected you for it, in great measure because he hoped the climate would agree with you, and enable you to stay in the country. If all the speeches you and he have made regarding each other during the last year were noted down, whose would read best?'²

It is useless to pretend that discretion and a quiet mind came naturally to Henry Lawrence. Friends like George Clerk knew that, if his hankerings after the North-West had been successful, he could not have stood another year of India, and Honoria wrote emphatically urging acceptance – 'I am enchanted at the *izzat* to my own husband. . . . Then

¹ Henry Lawrence's report on Kaithal in MS., dated 10 November, 1843.

² Thomason to H. M. L., 3 October, 1843.

3,500 Rs. is not bad.’¹ But his curiously deep-rooted desire, and even affection, for the North-West made him accept with reluctance, and cast many backward glances even after he had started. ‘My appointment,’ he confessed to himself in 1845, ‘was most unexpected, and not so welcome as it ought to have been.’ The longer Henry Lawrence’s letters are studied, the more impressive becomes the depth of interest he felt in the North-West Frontier; once known, the love of it never left him; on it he lavished the best of himself and of the friends he cared most for, and his final separation from it was the most real tragedy in his life.

He came to see how essential it was for him, his wife, his child, and his fortunes, that he should go to the hills. ‘We were preparing for England without the means of paying our passage home,’ he told one of his friends, in April 1844, ‘when we were sent here – quiet, ease, health, competence in lieu of toil, discomfort, and sickness, and for years having habitually no home. All this we have exchanged for a paradise.’ Yet, in spite of all this, he was still willing, if destiny in the form of Government had not forbidden, to arrange an exchange with Colonel Richmond, who had taken over the duties of Agent to the Governor-General on the North-West Frontier.² This conflict between his common sense and his irrational longings comes out most clearly in a letter which he wrote to congratulate George Broadfoot, when that officer came in 1844 from Burma to take over Richmond’s work: ‘I must give you a line to congratulate you, which I do heartily, on the honourable post you have obtained. It is one which, if offered to me, I should have been proud to have accepted. As it has not, I am very glad you have got it, as I am sure you will do it full justice; and a noble field it is for an energetic man. . . . This is a delightful place, as far as climate, *idleness*, salary, etc., goes. Indeed, if I could be content to do nothing, it would be preferable

¹ Honoria to H. M. L., 27 September, 1843.

² Correspondence with Colonel Richmond, September 1843.

to anything in India. It came very opportunely, for my health was such that I must have gone home. I am now much better. If I can at any time give you a hint as to pensions and things in your quarter, command me.' No matter what plain sense and routine duty said, the land and people of the Five Rivers remained, through 1844 and 1845, more intimately in his thoughts and calculations than the hills and the hillmen about him in his Residency at Katmandu.

His hesitation in accepting the Nepal Residency might well be increased by the circumstances in which his predecessor was retiring. The little court at Katmandu had been, and seemed likely to remain, a whirlpool of conflicting ambitions and political massacres. Shut off from the rest of the world by the material belt of the Tarai on the south, and the great hills on the north, the Gurkha Darbar played out a sanguinary drama of little interest to history, but possibly of some importance to the Indian Government. In the earlier nineteenth century a great Prime Minister, Bhim Sen, had done much to create the kind of government which now has been established as the rule in Nepal: executive power in the hands of a chief of one of the clans – the Thappas – while the ruling family enjoyed the glories of monarchy without any of the power or responsibility. The fall of Bhim Sen in 1837, followed by his death in 1839, left the executive power to be won by a miserable struggle for existence. The Maharaja Rajendra, a man not without gleams of understanding, but tainted with moral and mental imbecility, and quite incompetent to dominate affairs, found his attempts to rule challenged by several rivals. The most formidable of these, his senior queen, had happily disappeared by exile and death before Lawrence arrived, although her sons remained to challenge their father's authority. But the second queen, with two stripling princes to provide for, and unfitted for steady power by her violent passions and inability to consider anything apart from personal interests, hates, and ambitions, claimed her

share of authority, and the retiring Resident, Brian Hodgson, had connived with her (*aut regina, aut ruina*, he said) in bringing back from Simla a nephew of Bhim Sen, one Matabar Singh, through whom and the queen the affairs of Nepal were to be directed. The Heir Apparent too, a vicious, brutal, half-insane boy in his early teens, demanded his share of power, and threatened to attempt all that a degenerate lad of feeble mind and unchecked passions could do to oust his father, murder his opponents, and dictate to the people, and, if necessary, to the Resident. Among the aristocrats of the Nepal clans, Thappas, Pandis black and white, Chauntrias, and a Brahmin group, one figure stands out clearly - Matabar Singh Thappa. He had come back from the security of Simla, where he enjoyed a pension from the Indian Government, to share in the struggle, apparently on the side of the surviving queen, but really with the intention of taking up such a dominant position as his uncle had once held. He was a man with few scruples about sweeping away his enemies in wholesale proscriptions; for him neither Maharaja, nor Rani, nor Heir Apparent was more than a pawn in an ambitious game. But he had courage, energy, a kind of genuine if misdirected capacity for rule. Both Henry and Honoria Lawrence counted him the one man at Court fit to lead; and the irresponsible observer, as he reads the records, sometimes feels that it would have been best for Nepal if the new Resident had boldly taken his side, and assisted him to create such a dictatorship as Bhim Sen had held before, and Jang Bahadur, of the same house, established later, with a *roi fainéant* safely in seclusion to create the illusion of national monarchy. But that course, whether desirable or not, was now impossible.

Brian Hodgson had followed a line of policy which suited his own genius, and, perhaps, the time he lived in. He was a man who had spent all his life in the hills, and especially in Nepal. He was a great scholar in half a dozen directions,

and he knew Nepal better than any other living Englishman. During his term of office the Government of India had shackled its own hands by the policy which led, first to the occupation of, and then to the retreat from Afghanistan. The Court of Nepal, remembering English failures in the old war with them, fully aware how precarious the military situation was, and quite ignorant of the infinite reserves of English strength, might at any time precipitate a new war by some mad inroad into Oudh, or in the direction of Patna. Hodgson's policy was to intervene in local politics, support the more peaceful party, and temporise until the time of strain was over. But he had none of the commanding power which a similar interventionist, Stratford Canning, had exhibited in his wider sphere at Constantinople. In his successor's phrase, he was one day master, the next day slave. He had to face insults and threatened violence, and while he understood, and in part was understood by, the Court, he had allowed English prestige to decline there, even if he helped to avert hostilities. Lord Ellenborough's arrival in India had brought his regime to a rude end. The new Governor-General had resented, in a characteristic dispatch, the insults which the Court had inflicted on Hodgson, and Hodgson had withheld the viceregal message intended for the Court, in the interests of peace. This act of disobedience the Governor-General never forgave, although private messages to the Resident seemed to condone his sin. In any case the Government of India under Ellenborough determined to end the period of truckling to the whims of Nepal politics, and to establish a more dignified policy of strict non-intervention, and steady maintenance of the Resident's position, as that of an ambassador immune from barbaric insults.¹

Henry Lawrence was therefore being appointed to a post from which there had been recalled, with every appearance

¹ Based on Hunter's *Life of Brian Hodgson*, and comments in H. M. L.'s letters and journals. The latter are undoubtedly too censorious.

of disgrace, the one man in India who really knew Nepal. It is but just to Hodgson to say that, while the new policy was infinitely worthier of England than the old, it was possible to do in 1844 what might have proved disastrous in 1842, and that Henry Lawrence's judgment on his predecessor did not err on the side of charity.

There is a wealth of scorn in the first references to what he held Hodgson's unmanly concessions and Oriental subtleties. 'They made such a fool of Mr. H., that they are puzzled about me,' he wrote to Honoria three weeks after his arrival.¹ 'Mr. H. mixed up in their intrigues, and with outstretched hands *in my presence* called himself the Raja's servant; so you can fancy the system that has prevailed.' He thought that Hodgson had not tried to undeceive the Raja, when people told him that the new Resident was the advance guard of an army²; and had lowered the honour of his Government. On the political side, Henry Lawrence's two years in Nepal are concerned mainly with the story of Matabar Singh. But whatever sympathies Matabar's fortunes may excite, it must be remembered that the new Resident had been sent to Katmandu to act, in his own phrase, 'as the Elchee of a great government'; to observe events, while refusing to take a part in them; and to maintain the honour of the Governor-General in Council, chiefly by refusing to act. It was hard for him to do nothing, but his instructions left him no loophole. When the Maharaja and the Heir attempted to win his support in their childish disputes, the order came that he should abstain from all connection whatever with party intrigues.³ When the Minister talked confidentially of projects threatening the reigning dynasty, the Resident was rebuked for even listening to his complaints. 'You cannot suffer any subject of His Highness, and least of all his Minister, to hold in your presence language implying the existence of designs against the

¹ H. M. L. to Honoria, 8 December, 1843.

² H. M. L. to Dr. Login, 11 December, 1843.

³ The Secretary to the Government of India to H. M. L., 4 January, 1844.

Maharaja's authority.'¹ Even a rather vigorous tone of remonstrance was checked: 'When you have to bring the expectations of the British Government, on any subject, to the notice of the Darbar, it should be done in a manner so conciliatory that it may not be felt as an intrusion on the independence of the Maharaja.' When the very dastardly circumstances, under which the Raja had had his Minister assassinated, were made known, the Resident was warned that 'if the Maharaja or an accredited agent of H.H. should seek the opinion of the Government of India, the Governor-General in Council will not fail to express strongly his abhorrence of such acts, as repugnant to our principles, but His Excellency in Council does not think the Government called upon to volunteer an opinion stigmatising, however justly, the conduct of the Maharaja on this occasion.'²

It was, in many ways, a most useful discipline to Henry Lawrence to be compelled, in this fashion, to do nothing, or, if anything had to be done, to plan his words and actions with a caution not very natural to him. In Katmandu he learned to watch and judge without surrendering to the impulse to act; and the enforced leisure of a policy of non-intervention imposed on his uneasy spirit perhaps the only lazy period in his life. But the natural consequence of all this was that Nepal never entered into the active imagination and memory of the man. While the Gurkha puppets danced, fought, and fell, before his eyes, his living interest lay elsewhere, on the banks of the Sutlej and in Lahore. It was impossible for him to remain entirely quiescent in mind, and a letter to George Clerk in 1845 reveals some of the ideas that local politics bred in his mind, but the conclusion shows how definitely he regarded all such imaginations as otiose and unpractical:

'Hodgson always told Government that we had everything to lose and nothing to gain by quarrelling with Nepal. I differ in

¹ The Secretary to the Government of India to H. M. L., 8 February, 1844.

² *Ibid.*, 6 June, 1845.

opinion on every point. I am sure we could seize the country in three months, perhaps in one, with 30,000 men, and that it would be more valuable to us than the Panjab, giving us the snowy range for our eastern boundary, and Sanataria all along the Oudh, etc., border. Once in possession of the country an extra brigade with a portion of the Cawnpore, Dinapore, and Benares divisions advanced would suffice to keep it, after we had drafted a few thousand of the Gurkha troops into our local and line regiments throughout India. I can thus see the advantages of the country to us, but I think the fair and honest way of dealing with the Gurkhas is to let them distinctly know our power, so that they may not commit themselves, for hitherto their vanity has been so flattered that they are up to any absurdity.¹

Before describing the private pursuits and family life, for which this retreat among the hills gave almost the only opportunity in his life, it may be well to complete the story of affairs at Katmandu down to his departure.

For three months after his arrival he did little more than read the documents and printed papers in his archives. He found Matabar Singh desperately keen to win his open approval, and the cub of an Heir Apparent was constantly at him, through intermediaries, to obtain recognition of his equality in authority with the Raja. It was an incredible world, of rulers riding on the backs of chiefs, Raja and Heir Apparent disputing and correcting each other in public, such petulant outbursts and silly schemes as bad boys love constituting the public life of the government of Nepal, although happily not that of the people; and the one able and courageous spirit pretending, like Achilles, to sulk out of office till the time should come for a great *coup d'état*. Writing after ten months of observation, Henry Lawrence recorded in his journal for October an impression of the tragi-comedy:

'Matabar Singh's efforts have been unceasing to induce me to declare myself his partizan. At first during December (1843) and

¹ H. M. L. to Clerk, 15 January, 1845.

January (1844) he tried threats of violence from the Prince and troops, but when he found they were only laughed at, he has endeavoured to melt me by tales of his own danger. Throughout, he has cut off all communication with the Residency, except through himself and his creatures. Bearing the name of Minister until the appointment of another, I have often been at a loss how to refer to him. During the last eight months there has been, according to the Darbar's own message in May, no Minister, and yet the Raja has evidently not liked my addressing him but has gone on neglecting to answer references, more like a spoilt child than the ruler of a country.¹

Then came the third, and quickly after it the final, act of this preposterous but terrible drama. In the mad confusion of motives and events which prevailed at the Court of Nepal during the end of 1844 and the earlier part of 1845, Henry Lawrence's own account must be taken as the one authoritative history of what happened. It is to be found most clearly in a letter to George Clerk of January 15th, 1845, and another to Lord Auckland in May:

'You will doubtless have heard of our *revolution* as the papers call it, the first occasion, by the bye, on which, I am glad to say, Nepal has figured in the papers since I have been here. You know, I fancy, that the Heir Apparent has been aspiring to the Gaddi during the last three years, and I think I told you that Matabar Singh since his return has been secretly supporting him; and that Hodgson encouraged the disaffection, writing to Matabar Singh (through Reade at Gorakhpur) before his arrival, "to avoid the Maharaja if he valued his life"; "the Rani is the hope of Nepal," etc., etc., etc., etc. During all last year I was persecuted to interfere, and would not. A month ago, Matabar Singh told me that the Prince declared, if he was not forthwith raised to the Gaddi, he would go to Benares, and take the army with him. I told him that if the boy tried any such nonsense he would be stopped, and it would not be good either for him or his advisers. A few days after, they started, Matabar Singh, though the instigator of the proceeding, protesting that he did all he could to prevent it. He assured me that none of the

¹ H. M. L.'s journal, 1-15 October, 1844.

troops should cross the low range of hills. I wrote to the Raja, remonstrating strongly against the army going to our frontier, and told him that it was usual in Europe, when one state obliged another to arm, that the offender is usually, as the least punishment, obliged to pay the expenses so incurred. He sent a deputation of chiefs to assure me of his not going down to do us any injury. I told him *I* had no fears, but that the poor people in the open villages would be alarmed, and that Government would be much displeased. The Raja tried to prevent the move, but finding the troops all followed his son, he fell into the train. At Etaunda, just on this side of the Churia Ghati, or low range, there was a halt, the Raja trying to restrain the boy, but the latter insisting on advancing, and declaring that he would cut off the noses of all who did not follow him. He pushed up to the low range. Some few of the body-guards cried out "Let him go. He is one chick of the brood; three others remain." Matabar Singh interfered and declared that a thousand men threatened his life, and that one bayonet grazed his breast, but that at length he persuaded all to follow the Prince with the view of bringing him back. They overtook the boy just beyond the crest of the hill, where a sort of drum-head court martial was assembled, and 16 of those who had been against Matabar Singh and the Prince, were on the spot decapitated. They were all jemadars, adjutants, or old havildars in the interest of the Rani, step-mother of the Prince. The chiefs and troops there all swore allegiance to the boy and all returned to Nepal, bringing the Raja with them. The Raja has since given the boy a paper, calling him Maharaja and saying that though he, the father, retains the Gaddi and its authority, his son will receive his orders and issue them to the Minister. I have since had a scene at Darbar, the boy putting his hand in the Raja's face, and telling him to hold his tongue, and not speak to me.'

The final act in the tragedy – for it has some dramatic qualities – may be fitly given in the letter to Lord Auckland:

'In December, Matabar again took up the turban, and for four months was in great feather, daily receiving some mark of favour, khil'ats, letters, and solemn pledges of safety. . . . All went quietly and probably might have continued so for some time, had Matabar Singh acted prudently and temperately. As far as I

consistently could, I warned Matabar that it was impossible the Raja really could be satisfied; but in his vanity he believed that he had effectively frightened all whom he had not gained. The chiefs were certainly meek enough in words, and the troops were found so obedient, that he got them to pull down their old barracks, and carry the materials a mile to build them up again near his own house.

'I hinted to him the danger of so employing the soldiers, but he would take no advice. The Raja, however, was not slow to take advantage of the discontent now caused. He sent for him at midnight on urgent business, and had him assassinated in his own presence; some say in that also of the Rani. She was at any rate in the plot, and her principal attendant one of the executioners. Before daylight of the 18th, the corpse was sent off to the temple of Paspatnath to be burned. The sons of the late minister have effected their escape to Sagauli; two or three of the family have been seized, and, twelve hours after the murder, not a word was to be heard in favour of the man who, the day before, had been everything.'¹

It is no part of this book to describe the bloodshed and disorders through which, a little later, the true maker of modern Nepal, Jang Bahadur, struggled into his long monopoly of power. But, lest Henry Lawrence's word picture of Court intrigues and murders be taken as the sole impression the Gurkhas left on his mind after two years in Katmandu, the concluding sentences of his letter to Lord Auckland must be added: 'It is only justice to the Gurkhas to say that, bad as is their foreign and their Darbar policy, they are the best masters I have seen in India. Neither in the Tarai, nor in the hills, have I witnessed or heard of a single act of oppression since I arrived a year and a half ago; and a happier peasantry I have nowhere seen.'²

For the other side of the Resident's life, in his family, and in intercourse with his own spirit, there are happily many available materials, letters and journals, both his own and written by his wife. To prevent the pictures from seeming

¹ H. M. L. to Lord Auckland, 25 May, 1845.

² *Ibid.*

too tranquil for so restless a creature, it must be qualified by the fact that Henry Lawrence's relations with his small staff were not so happy as they might have been. Bygone disputes and misunderstandings may be left, in their detail, under the dust of ninety years, but the fact is that, in singular contrast to the happiness of the friendships he was about to make, and the devotion which his young men lavished on him in the Panjab, he found it difficult to co-operate either with his Residency doctor, or with either of the assistants who, in succession, served him. In case mere hero-worship may seem to have contrived too favourable a verdict for him, it may be well to quote the judgment in that diary which Honoria kept, with a conscience purified by the thought that her boys would read it when she had gone: 'We sorely feel the want of some society. . . . I do confess that, in the two who form our sole society, I find no one such point. Inanity, prejudice, apathy, selfishness, and falsehood are all I discover - yet this is the stuff that "respectable, worthy, excellent people" are made of.' The truth is that it was always difficult for second- or third-rate men and women to get on with Henry Lawrence, or he with them. What Meredith once said of Carlyle is largely true of him: 'the harsh judgment he passed on his contemporaries, came from a very accurate perception of them, as *they were perused by the intense light of the man's personal sincerity.*' Be that as it may, it was a jarring note in the midst of very genuine domestic harmony; and it did him little good at headquarters, for John wrote, in his bluff way, from the plains that 'these rumpuses [*sic*] can't be pleasant for either party,' and 'that the impression on Sir Henry Hardinge's mind was that you had not got on as well as you might with your subordinates.'¹

Whatever might be lacking in the small society in the Residency was more than made up by the immense domestic happiness of these months of rest. It was not that there were

¹ John Lawrence to H. M. L., 16 and 27 November, 1845.

no bad times. His wife was ill early in 1844, and then, after July, she became for a long time an invalid. There still remains a little diary of Honoria's commenced on August 4th, 1844; then, after a year's intermission, recommenced in these pathetic sentences: 'I feel as if I had been buried for twelve months. Just after I had begun this journal, last August, I was obliged to confine myself to the couch to which with little intermission I was a prisoner till last month. Many times, especially during 1831 and 1832, I have been unable to walk, but never did I feel such continued mental prostration as during the last year.'

On January 25th, 1845, Henry Waldemar, *alias* Moggy, was born, but later in 1845 she was very ill, and indeed although recovery came, it was clear that she and Tim must, sooner rather than later, go home. Yet the sufferings and anxiety were relieved by the intense mutual affection of husband and wife, now happily united in peace among beautiful surroundings, and in their devotion to the children Tim and Moggy, and a little protégé, Lawrie Pemberton. It was good for Henry Lawrence to be able to concentrate on the mere details of a home and family life. One of his first cares on arrival was to get the Residency in order. 'I'm cleaning out the rooms, and clearing them for you,' he wrote on December 8th. 'Your dreams of the filth hardly realised the reality; and the cook-house - oh ! its condition beat Ferozpur by chalks. I've almost collected all the books into one room for a library.'¹ A little later, he went down to meet her, and so the household came together for a quiet two years. With non-intervention imposed as a duty, there was plenty of leisure to think of Tim's education, to read indiscriminately, and to attend to Honoria when attention could relieve her pain. One of the chief joys of the Resident's lot came from the little house fourteen miles off, and 1,800 feet up, at Koulia, to which expeditions into complete freedom and seclusion could be made.

¹ H. M. L. to Honoria, 8 December, 1843.

After Honoria grew strong, she too shared in these adventures, and the most vivid pictures of their life come from her pen: 'a world of mingled mists, rains, and the most glorious clear sunshine, with flowers, in their season beyond count,' and, round their highland home, the sound of streams tumbling from the hills. Here are some fragments from the diary, which, once her health had been restored, she kept for her boys to read when they grew up. It was August 1845, and they were going for a family holiday to Koulia: 'We were up at 4 a.m., took a cup of tea, and brought with us a bottle of milk, ditto tea, some cold meat, biscuits and toast, two metal mugs, and a few napkins. We then set off, a long array: I in my Simla jampan with eight Nepal men, Dhai in a little dholi with Moggy. You on the Kabuli horse, Tim on a Tartar pony, Lawrie on a Panjabi mule, Ayah in one dandi, Lachman in another - altogether 22 carriers, besides a kitmutgar, and the Dhai's husband, 3 syces, 2 bearers, and a chobdar, and 2 of the Maharaja's soldiers running alongside. Altogether a party of 35 attendants and three quadrupeds to transport you, me, and three children, a distance of fourteen miles, which we accomplished in ten hours. Besides, fully as many more people despatched the day before - coolies carrying clothes, food, bedding - everything, in short, except air, fire, earth, and water; three kitmutgars, two cows, a cow-keeper, sundry fowls, a side of mutton, a bhisti, a tailor, a sweeper. This patriarchal caravan makes me feel strongly our entire separation from civilised life.'

Then, after some days at their ramshackle house, in the midst of rain and mist, Honoria Lawrence recorded her first impressions of the valley beneath them and the hills to the north, when the clouds broke: 'To-day I rose soon after 5 o'clock, just as the sun began to give a silver ring to the highest snowy peaks lying north-west of us. There was nothing like the rose-light of evening on the snow, but another and very lovely aspect. The sky behind was of a pale

blue, or rather French grey; against it were clearly defined, in deep neutral tint, the broken ridges and pinnacles of the snowy range, except where the salient points opposite the rising sun were turned to silver. The deep valley of Nyakot was filled with mist of deep violet tint, and, just where this lake of vapour appeared to touch the foot of the clear distant ranges, there was a well-defined horizontal bar of white cloud, just like the white margin of foam where a tranquil sea meets the strand. As the sun rose higher, angle after angle of the snow became illuminated with dazzling silvery whiteness, the mist in the valley melted away, and discovered the face of the opposite hill, cleft into ravines, and terminating in a wide green level bottom, through which the River Trisul winds its way.' Whether because she was always given to reflection, or from some inherent 'Irishness,' she was not content to be absorbed in the glories of the views from Koulia. 'This is a scene of perfect unmolestedness,' she continues, a little later. 'That is the only word I can think of, for seclusion and solitude convey different ideas. Here all is open, spacious, boundless, but so strangely uninhabited. But for the paths we have made round the house, there would be no trace of human existence, the bungalow might have dropped from the clouds. . . . While I live, I shall always be thankful that I have seen such beauties. Perfect, but for the lack of water; that one deficiency breaks the spell. Were there a grand river or lake - much more, could we catch a view of the wide sea - the view would be too enchanting. But as it is, I still think Lough Swilly, Malin Head, or Magilligan, more satisfying. The blue Atlantic - I would rather see it than the Himalayas!' And once again, with her own dear Innishowen vivid in her mind, 'Save and except the snowy range, I have seen nothing that gives me an impression of greater grandeur and beauty than our Innishowen mountains, nothing half so lovely as Lough Swilly with the setting sun, nothing so grand as Magilligan Head.' One can think of them after

stormy days, catching the many drips of rain in dishes placed through the rooms, or watching the children play at gardens near by, or, when the scene is changed to Katmandu, receiving their Sunday sick and poor with the simplest charity, or listening while the doctor expounds his plans for daily life – ‘arguing in favour of tiffin at 2 o’clock and dinner at 7, as a splendid way of getting through the day, leaving no evening on one’s hands.’

During these years of comparative inaction Henry Lawrence devoted much time to reading, and the foundation by J. W. Kaye of the *Calcutta Review* redirected his mind towards authorship, his wife’s influence making strongly in the same direction. Kaye, who henceforward became a close friend of his contributor, has paid a notable and discriminating tribute to Henry Lawrence’s assistance: ‘That the *Review* did succeed is, in no small measure, attributable to the strenuous support of Henry Lawrence. It was precisely the organ for which he had long been wishing, as a vehicle for the expression of his thoughts.’ Then, with perfect accuracy, he passes judgment on his distinguished contributor: ‘His fertility, indeed, was marvellous. I have a letter before me in which he undertook to supply to one number four articles, comprising a hundred and ten pages. His contributions were gravid with matter of the best kind – important facts accompanied by weighty opinions and wise suggestions. But he was always deploring, and not without reason, his want of literary skill.’¹ It might have been more correct to call it his lack of technical finish, for in the essentials of good writing, reality, simplicity, force, and clear imagination, Henry Lawrence was the superior of both his friendly critics, his wife and his editor. He has himself left a record of what he wrote in this quiet season: ‘I studied Masson, Burnes, Moorcroft, and other travellers in the Panjab, and wrote three articles in the *Calcutta Review*, Nos. 2, 3, 4. I also wrote *Military Defence of British India* in

¹ J. W. Kaye, *Lives of Indian Officers*, Vol. III., pp. 113-16.

No. 3, and we, between us, wrote *Romance and Reality* in No. 4, the best portions of it being my dear wife's, tho' to please me she wrote in pain and suffering, the extent of which I little guessed at the time. . . . She examined and collected all the above papers. Besides, voluminous sheets in vindication of Sir William Macnaghten, printed not published, and used as material by Mr. Marshman in an article in No. 3. . . . Lately I wrote an article on Oudh for No. 6, and now am finishing one on the Marathas. I have read and *studied* a good deal for these articles, but altogether I do not feel as if I had made a proper use of the last year and a half.'

It is interesting to know that in Kaye's judgment the Panjab articles served, among other things, as a means of introducing him to Sir Henry Hardinge; for the Governor-General 'read them with great interest and attention, and saw at once that the writer possessed that practical knowledge of men and things that, in the conjuncture then approaching, would render him an invaluable auxiliary, and he longed for an opportunity to call Lawrence to his presence.¹ His reading was not, however, always directed towards composition, or even intellectual curiosity. It gave him a means of alleviating his wife's physical sufferings. 'I read my dear wife to sleep at night,' he writes on July 3rd, 1845, 'as lately she has been whole nights without sleeping. Last night she was awake till past twelve. I got up, read for three-quarters of an hour Taylor's *Liberty of Prophesying*, and when she was asleep, I sat up and glanced over *all* Gibbon's miscellaneous works.' His simple frankness made him add, concerning Gibbon, 'His feeling and animus was against Christianity, but I don't yet believe he wilfully perverted.'

If only they could have known what storms lay ahead, what partings and disappointments, they might well have prayed for a little more rest apart from the world of affairs for which Henry's turbulent spirit was longing. But both

¹ Kaye, *op. cit.*, Vol. III., pp. 117-18.

in their little world, and in the broad field of Indian politics, events which were to break their quiet were already happening. Honoria expected to be confined early in the next year, and, as Tim was still ailing, it seemed best to expedite their departure. Nor was it probable that, after seeing them safely off, Henry would return for long to Nepal. The shadows of the first Sikh War had already fallen over their path. 'Public changes seem at hand in which we shall probably be involved,' Honoria notes on August 21st, 1845. 'To-day's Delhi paper says that Mr. Clerk is on his way out, overland, to meet the Governor-General at Agra. Captain Mills writes to say Major Broadfoot is ill, and may be obliged to leave India; advises you to write and apply for the N.W. Frontier Agency. You have replied that you would like it, especially if your family go home, but that, as Government know your feelings, you will make no direct application. John, Dick, all our correspondents in the Upper Provinces, write of the positive assembly of our Army on the frontier, next cold weather; and as Major Smith and everybody else winds up, "How can they do without Lawrence?"'

An application for leave, from November 15th to February 18th, to take Honoria and Tim to Calcutta, had been interfered with by the plans of his assistant, Ottley. Still, he was able to arrange to accompany them to Dinapore. It was on this journey of separation that he heard the news which revolutionised his career. The party had left Nepal on December 11th, and had just reached British territory when the news came that the Sikhs had crossed the frontier. On the very day before husband and wife were to separate, he heading back to Nepal, an urgent letter arrived from Mr. Currie, the Governor-General's Secretary, telling of the first battles with the Sikhs, and of Broadfoot's death, and ending, 'Lose no time in coming; you are a long way off.' Leaving Honoria to wait at Sagauli till his papers should arrive from Nepal, and then to pass on to Calcutta, he obeyed his summons with characteristic impetuosity. His last

record of these quiet and happy days is as characteristic of him as anything he ever penned:

'7th January, 1846. Last evening on my return from Motihari, I found a letter from Government, calling me to the N.W. I wished for many reasons to delay a week, but I *ought* to go at once. I therefore wrote off three letters to lay bearers, and in half an hour I start after my palankeen which went off two hours ago.

'We have had two most happy years here, and amidst *some* discomforts have had many blessings, and have enjoyed, and I hope have not envied others. We have gained some experience and I trust will both be the better for our seclusion. My wife, my darling wife, will support herself, and believe that He who brought us together has kept us amidst many dangers and many partings. May we both trust in our Saviour and endeavour to show our trust by our conduct. (Sagauli, 2½ p.m., 7th January, 1846.)'

CHAPTER IX

AGENT AND RESIDENT AT LAHORE, 1846-1847

THE sudden summons by Currie to the North-West Frontier flung Henry Lawrence into the heart of the work which will always be identified with his name, whether as Agent,¹ Resident, or President of the Panjab Board. On that work he spent all that he had to give, and the change in 1853 by which he was transferred from Lahore to Rajputana took more than half his life from him. It is useless to try his work between 1846 and 1852 by the conventional tests which might apply to his brother John or Dalhousie. Phrases like 'personality' and 'moral influence' carry with them too much an air of smugness and self-conscious vanity. It seems best to say that the peculiar genius which he had for human relationships and decided action found full expression in his government of the Panjab; and that, like some just and humane Oriental king, he conducted government between the Sutlej and the Khaibar Pass on lines perfectly suited to his subjects. He is commonly supposed to have ended his Lahore career in failure; but it seems plain, to one who follows his actions carefully, that he attained more success, out of a difficult situation, than any other Englishman in India could have done; that the second Sikh War might have been averted had his health remained robust; and that his brother's reputation, and Dalhousie's

¹ 'Agent' is to be understood, not in the indefinite British sense of the word, but as denoting a definite rank in the hierarchy of the Government of India. George Clerk, as Agent, exercised not merely the powers usually possessed by an ambassador in Europe, but plenary and discretionary powers which enabled him to make decisions and effect military dispositions in a fashion which would have startled any representative of Britain in Europe save Stratford Canning himself.

success in the north-west, both owed much to the foundation laid by Henry Lawrence.

He was unusually fortunate in his earlier years. The people among whom he worked were known to him as individuals, understood and cared for by him as governors seldom care for those they govern. The Governor-General during his first years of office, Lord Hardinge, trusted, admired, and accepted him as friend – it was an intimacy steadily on the increase, and of incredible value to one who was very sensitive to sympathetic treatment. It is well to remember that Hardinge, in India and afterwards, thought him 'the ablest officer in India.' His helpers, from John Lawrence down to the youngest of his lieutenants, were, as he acknowledged time and again, unequalled in quality, unless one turns for comparison to Nelson's captains – good men, simple and faithful friends, and none of them without a touch of the heroic.

The turmoil into which Frederic Currie's orders hurried him had arisen with the rapidity of a tropical storm – the prevailing conditions having threatened serious trouble, but the actual occasion arising very unexpectedly. As has already been seen, the anarchy prevailing in the Sikh kingdom had produced one temporary leader after another, the army always predominant and affording the only foundation on which authority could found itself. That army was bent on war across the Sutlej, and, by the end of 1845, no one in Lahore dared to oppose the project. The Maharani Jindan had passion, intrigue, and mere recklessness as guides to action; her lover and Wazir, Lal Singh, was really a puppet under the control of the army councils; the titular Commander-in-Chief, Tej Singh, son of an old favourite of Ranjit Singh, hated the idea of war, had no intention of exerting any of his mediocre powers to secure sudden victory against the British, but was borne along unresistingly on the wave of military enthusiasm for the adventure. The real leaders in the great gamble of war were the army panches

or councils.¹ The Maharani and the Darbar calculated that either a sudden success might postpone the hour of reckoning with their own army, or a defeat would remove the danger altogether at the cost of submission to British victors. Either course seemed better than the prevailing anarchy. So they all, except Gulab Singh, who remained studiously aloof, let the army have its way; the crossing of the Sutlej began on December 13th, 1845, and soon more than 60,000 Sikh regulars and irregulars, with 153 guns, were challenging the British frontier forces.² Innumerable wild statements were made then, and are still made, about discreditable understandings between Sikh sardars and the British Government; but the real truth is that as the Sikh leaders had committed themselves to a tremendous gamble, they found it wise to prepare for possible defeat, and this they did, as Lord Hardinge put it, 'by being as little obnoxious as possible to the English.'³

It was fortunate that the Governor-General of the day was an experienced soldier. Sir Henry, later Lord, Hardinge, who had succeeded Ellenborough as Governor-General, had been one of Wellington's most trusted lieutenants. Like his comrade-in-arms, Sir John Colborne,⁴ who served his country usefully and notably in Canada, he represented the English military character at its very best. Without a touch of genius, both men were moderate, wise, shrewd judges of a military situation, absolutely devoid of the subtleties of the adroit politician, and quick to recognise merit in their subordinates. Hardinge had no desire for war, but his view of the dangers threatening from Lahore had made him, earlier in 1845, quietly strengthen the frontier defences, increasing the force at Ferozpur from 4,500 to 10,000 with

¹ MS. memoranda by Lord Hardinge, with comments on them by Herbert Edwardes. These memoranda have been drawn on for the pages which follow. It may be that they have made the narrative too favourable to Hardinge. Sir John Fortescue, in Vol. XII. of his *History of the British Army*, says all that legitimately may be said for Gough's generalship in this, and the second Sikh War.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Later Lord Seaton.

24 guns, and the strength between Ambala and Ferozpur to 32,479 with 68 guns. He also brought up the boats which Ellenborough had ordered at Bombay, and they were now ready if the situation called for a crossing of the Sutlej. But for these preparations, as Hardinge justly claimed, a great disaster must have happened. As it was, the British forces under both Commander-in-Chief and Governor-General held, and no more than held, their opponents in the hard-fought battles of Mudki and Ferozshahr, on December 18th and 21st, 1845. No fair comparison can be made between the first and the second Sikh Wars. In the latter there was a perfectly adequate British force, part of it in possession of the Sikh capital; by treaty the Sikhs had lost most of their guns, and all their effective organisation; and, as will be seen, if the first threatenings of trouble had been correctly countered, there might have been no serious campaign at all. Nothing really delayed the final victory but errors in decision by the Government, and failures in organisation by the military authorities. But, in December 1845, a fully prepared Sikh army had without any real warning precipitated itself against the British frontier. Whatever credit may be attributed to the Commander-in-Chief, Lord Gough, it was really Hardinge's work which met and held the first onrush, and it was Hardinge's orders, assisted by John Lawrence's administrative skill at Delhi in collecting transport, which brought up heavy artillery between the battles of Ferozshahr and Sobraon. The admirable dispositions, in the pursuit of the Sikhs after the crowning mercy of Sobraon, February 10th, 1846, for which the Governor-General claimed some credit, brought the campaign to a quick end in sixty days. It was also the sober judgment of Hardinge which decided that it was impossible to annex the Panjab, and which, in the issue of a non-annexation proclamation after the battle, decided the Maharani and her councillors to close the gates of Lahore against their own army, and so to end the war. A great military danger had

been averted, no doubt with heavy loss, but very successfully; and the gamblers at Lahore, who had allowed their army to attack, now found it to their interest to re-establish some kind of authority for the little Maharaja, and his vixen mother, under protection of the victors of the war.¹

It is more than time to turn once more to Henry Lawrence, in his headlong rush over more than 700 miles from the Nepal frontier to the Sutlej, to take up the Agency vacated by Broadfoot's death at Firozshahr. Some hasty instructions to his substitute at Katmandu, Captain Wheler, bade him not to interfere with domestic politics, and warned him that 'the most fruitful sources of trouble were women and cows.'² He had little time for preparations for his journey. Robert Cust, who had been Broadfoot's assistant, has recorded the characteristic unceremoniousness of his arrival in camp: 'He had not much personal luggage with him, as he had ridden on a camel from Karnal. He wore leather breeches which did not fit him, and he explained that he had stayed with his brother John on his road up, who had insisted on his having his leather garments for the long ride.'³ There was never much room in the lives of any of the Lawrences for prim decorum; and the same witness records another amusing example of the new Agent's casual ways at this exciting time. It was just after the British force had come to Lahore, and Henry Lawrence, at the very centre of things, had begun to show his form. 'He had a dinner,' wrote his punctilious critic, 'but had asked every man whom he met, so we were crowded. We had no candlesticks, so he produced several pounds of dips, ordered a bottle of beer to be opened, and stuck one candle alight in the empty bottle. This went on the whole dinner-time till we were a blaze of light.'⁴

¹ In accepting Lord Hardinge's judgments on the war, one seems justified by the entire confidence in his perfect truthfulness and sound military sense which a study of his correspondence creates.

² Memorandum for Captain Wheler, 7 January, 1846.

³ R. N. Cust, *Another Chapter in the History of the Conquest of the Panjab*.

⁴ Pencil note in R. N. Cust's private diary.

It was not in Henry Lawrence's constitution to stay out of fighting, even when his official position carried with it no military responsibilities. Before Harry Smith's victory at Aliwal, he carried orders from the Governor-General to the Commander. At Sobraon he was in the very heart of the action, characteristically enough seeing to the guns. 'At Sobraon,' he reminded Hardinge in 1850, 'you sent Cunningham to bring up the Horse Artillery. A few minutes afterwards you sent Mills; and then, in your anxiety to get up the light guns, you sent me too. And fortunate it was that you did not trust to Cunningham alone, for I met him returning without the guns, which he said he could not find. . . . I found Mills getting *one* troop ready to move; I ordered the two others to join it, and told Mills to bring all. I then pushed back to join you, and found you opposite a high battery of the enemy near their left centre, where they were making a stand, after our troops had entered their lines at other points. By your desire I told Horsford to unlimber and open his battery of 9-pounders on them. We were then about 200 or 250 yards from the point which they held, and the lines on our right were in our possession. . . . Your lordship must have remained some time in that direction, for I next remember being sent by you to the bank of the river, on the enemy's original left, to tell Alexander, who was with the Horse Artillery guns (which must in the interim have been brought up by Mills), to withdraw, if he suffered much from the enemy's fire from the opposite side of the river.'¹ In the steadily growing friendship between the Governor-General and his Agent no doubt the initial comradeship under fire helped to remove preliminary difficulties. Once Sobraon had been won, he told his chief that the war was over, and that, in his opinion, neither Amritsar nor Lahore would stand a siege. So they entered Lahore in peace.

Whatever the extent to which Henry Lawrence influenced the terms of the treaty, the main features of the

¹ H. M. L. to Lord Hardinge, 20 March, 1850.

settlement were after his own heart. Two of these especially were of the very essence of the policy with which he now and for the future identified himself. In the first place, not only was the Panjab not annexed, but the British Government did not propose to interfere in internal administration, beyond advice and good offices. The private instructions for the Governor-General's Agent suggested to him 'such friendly counsels as those which passed between the two Governments in the time of Ranjit Singh.' There had, however, been no army of occupation in Lahore in Ranjit Singh's days.

The other feature was the settlement of Raja Gulab Singh in Kashmir and its dependencies.¹ That astute politician had shown the most admirable caution during the war. On January 27th, 1846, he had come from his hills to Lahore, protected by five of his own regiments, and he had publicly declared that he was in no way implicated in the war. He had few or no friends in the Lahore Darbar, and although the negotiations for peace fell ultimately into his hands, he accepted no responsibility for Sikh policy. A glance at the map of India reveals the great political and strategic importance of the hill country, from Gulab Singh's own state of Jammu up to the Kashmir mountains. If annexation of the Panjab were decided on, it was of vital importance to have an ally there; for it was certain that the Indian Government could not hope to find garrisons for Kashmir, in addition to the Panjab. If there was still to be an independent principality at Lahore, Kashmir and Jammu were of even greater importance. As early as February 3rd, 1846, Lord Hardinge pointed out that it might be politic and proper 'to weaken the territorial power of the Lahore Government by rendering the Rajputs of the hills independent of the plains.'² After Sobraon, and in the peace negotiations, the Sikh Darbar took the initiative over the Kashmir problem. They

¹ Careless readers are reminded that in Chapter VI. an account of this man and his ambitions has already been given.

² MS. memoranda of Lord Hardinge.

found it impossible to pay the war indemnity exacted, of £1,500,000; they therefore offered to cede Kashmir in lieu of £1,000,000; and for reasons of state, perfectly creditable to the Raja, who was the only ruler competent to govern Kashmir, and to the British authorities, who had no desire to annex it, the kingdom of the hills passed to Gulab Singh, in exchange for the £1,000,000 still owing to the British. That sum was ultimately reduced to £750,000, since the British Government wished to rectify their frontier by the addition of some of the hill country. In that fashion, the modern state of Kashmir came into existence. To Henry Lawrence this meant the establishment of a native principality under such reasonable conditions as he always favoured. The new Maharaja was free to carry on his administration without any other interference than occasional advice, directed against any obvious forms of misgovernment. Now began that friendly relationship between the British Agent and Resident at Lahore and the Maharaja at Srinagar, which lasted throughout Gulab Singh's life. Almost alone among his colleagues or superiors, Henry Lawrence continued to defend the new ruler, although his defence was not without certain qualifying clauses, for his protégé was, from first to last, somewhat of an 'artful dodger.' As early as March 30th, 1846, he wrote to Currie: 'If any native of India has the ability and the means of establishing a strong and beneficial government in the Northern Hills, Gulab Singh is the man. He has hitherto been a hard master but scarcely more so than the other Lahore deputies. General Avitabile almost openly committed acts at Peshawar equal in atrocity to those rumoured of Gulab Singh. Necessity and the character of the people they had to govern were the plea of both.'

The situation of the Agent to the Governor-General, after the terms had been settled, and the British leaders had gone, was much more extraordinary than that, say, of Lord Cromer in his earlier days in Cairo. In the times of disorder

which followed Ranjit Singh's death, one after another of his actual or reputed sons had fallen. With them had fallen also many of the claimants for the place of first Minister or Wazir. The army, doubled in numbers, was, as has been seen, the actual master, making and unmaking nominal governors, at the dictates of greed or pride. Now the army was beaten, but still in being and largely unpaid. The line of Ranjit Singh was represented by a little boy quite certainly not his son, and, equally certainly, the power of which he was the symbol would be used by the Maharani Jindan – a woman who substituted the energy of mere passion and love of power, for that of reason, and who would never rest until she dominated Lahore, as she did her lover Lal Singh. That lover, now that Gulab Singh had found satisfaction further north, seemed the obvious Minister of State, although his claims were likely to be challenged by any of the other six who signed with him the peace settlement. As for the country, it had known little government since the great Maharaja died, and was likely to accept the rule of anyone who could keep himself alive, and make himself obeyed at Lahore.

The Agent's initial impressions were these: that among the members of the Darbar there was nothing of greatness or firmness, and little earnestness except in [the Rani's lover, Raja Lal Singh, or the Commander-in-Chief, Tej Singh. Later on he had something to say for the Diwan Dina Nath, and the younger soldier Sher Singh of Attari. He had not cherished the fear that most others did of the army, holding that 'no very strong ties bind them. While actually in arms they hold together from that strong feeling of fidelity to their salt, and to each other, which so generally prevails from one end of India to the other. But once subdued and broken up, the materials are too incongruous to be easily brought together again.'¹ He had no illusions about the countryside, the officials, high and low, accepting office for what might

¹ H. M. L. to F. Currie, 7 April, 1846.

be obtained through it; no semblance of justice in the land, and the poor 'settling their affairs in their own way by village arbitration, by the sabre, or the cudgel.' Taking a wider range, his eye travelled round the north and west frontier, from Jammu and Punch through Hazara to Peshawar, and thence by Kohat to the Derajat. In the territories now under Gulab Singh some kind of solution had apparently been found, although the new ruler had still to enter Srinagar and pacify Hazara; but what of the other regions fretted with futile control from Lahore, forced by mere need to live marauding lives, peopled by natural fighters, whose religion gave additional energy to their pugnacity when occasion offered? Strange as it may seem, Henry Lawrence found less to trouble him in these wild regions than in his Darbar, and, through his lieutenants, was to win there some of his most notable triumphs.

Down to the end of 1846, Henry Lawrence's activities as Agent were strictly limited by the terms of the treaty.¹ In the first instance he seemed merely the channel of communication between the Sikh Darbar and the Governor-General. But the position was hardly as simple as that. By special agreement a British force had been left at Lahore to protect the person of Dalip Singh and the inhabitants of Lahore, while the Sikh army was being reduced and re-organised; and although Sir John Littler, the Commander, might be regarded as the prime factor there, really the preservation of the peace of Lahore lay in the hands of the Agent – it was a diplomatic rather than a military question. The reduction and re-organisation of the Sikh troops, and more especially the supervision of the payment of arrears to them, was his first important duty. He had to administer the transfer of the northern territories to Gulab Singh; and, in all the scattered frontier regions where Sikh authority had claimed some kind of rule, it was his business to see pacification,

¹ Articles of Agreement concluded between the British Government and the Lahore Darbar, 11 March, 1846.

military re-organisation, and the re-establishment of government. The most important duties were, however, more complicated and difficult to define. The rule of the Darbar had actually collapsed, as had also the usurped authority of the army. Whatever the treaty might say, all eyes turned to the British representative for guidance in the task of reconstruction. The new Ministers depended on him; the various classes counted him the ultimate court of appeal against injustice; even the soldiery felt that his care alone could secure their proper pay to them. In the conflicts, secret or avowed, between the various leaders, Lal Singh, Tej Singh, Dina Nath, and the others, and the incalculable and unreasoning manœuvres of the Maharani, his must be the pacifying and stabilising will. What was required was not an office man, or even a master of administrative detail, but a dominating personal influence, a sympathetic understanding of minds and purposes characteristically Oriental, a faculty for sudden decision, and an unconventional energy which would not wait for appropriate agents, but act, on the spur of the moment, without reference to proprieties or conventions.

Reserving the whole field of frontier activity outside Kashmir, and the story of his wardens of the marches, for a later chapter, our business is, first of all, to study the Treaty of Settlement from the angle of Lahore.

There is one vivid picture of the Agent and his assistant at work, in the answer that Henry Lawrence wrote to Currie, justifying his employment of Herbert Edwardes at Lahore: 'The native letters alone which are addressed to me, require several hours' daily attention . . . nine men out of ten who come to me need not, or ought not to come; but, until all have been patiently heard, I have no means of ascertaining who should, or who should not, have come. . . . At present Lieut. Edwardes's chief duties are hearing complaints and talking to complainants; gaining and condensing intelligence and translating papers; but there are a hundred little matters

that can hardly be detailed, but which may be easily understood when I say that from early dawn till 7 p.m. – being fourteen hours, he is, with scarcely more than an hour's exception for breakfast, more or less employed in public duty. We ride together every morning for two or three hours, but it is not for pleasure, but invariably to see places and persons connected with business. We are then seated at our table till dark.¹

Although the general misgivings about the conduct of the Sikh soldiery proved baseless, there were all the possibilities of trouble furnished by the presence of the British contingent, and on April 21st the folly and brutality of a European artilleryman caused a flare-up. From the first the Darbar had indicated that Hindu and Sikh religious scruples about cows might cause difficulties in a beef-eating British camp. In this case the offender, enraged by the obstruction caused by a wandering herd, took to vicious cutting and wounding of the beasts. The news instantly spread, the town shops were closed, and a crowd of 'Brahmins and Khutrees' gathered for action. Some years before, the Agent had quelled trouble at Ambala by kind words spoken from their midst to the crowd. Now he, along with his assistants, Edwardes and Macgregor, and attended by a dozen sowars, went into the centre of trouble to explain and soothe. But the mob had leaders inspired with strong religious and anti-British feeling, and grew violent. From the roofs of the adjoining houses descended showers of brickbats and other missiles; and scarcely a man or a horse escaped untouched. There was no thought of violent repression in Henry Lawrence's mind. He believed that there had been no premeditation, and that the Sikhs themselves had taken no part in the riot, nor did he mean to let anger affect his conduct. But he and his force were there to keep peace for the sake of Lahore. So he induced the Darbar to pull down the houses from which the assault had come; two of the most

¹ H. M. L. to F. Currie, April, 1846.

active delinquents were sent into confinement across the Sutlej, and the chief rioter, Dutt Brahmin, was executed by order of the Darbar.¹

But already fresh troubles were calling him from Lahore. John Lawrence had warned him that the garrison of Kangra, a strong fort in the north-east of his territory, between the Ravi and Beas, was likely to cause trouble.² Curiously enough, Kangra was the fort which, in his romance, *The Adventures of an Officer*, had been entrusted by Ranjit Singh to his hero Bellasis. In the story Bellasis had found its situation formidable: 'It stands upon a hill, and on three sides it is surrounded by the Ganges, a river at all times breast deep; on the fourth side it is separated from another projecting hill, Jainti Mata, by a deep dell, half a kos wide'; and what his hero there saw of the possibilities of guns on Jainti Mata afforded now the natural point from which to coerce the garrison. Strangely enough, too, the excuse given in the story for the exclusion of the new governor, was that now offered to the Agent when he demanded surrender: 'When Maharaja Ranjit Singh showed his own face, it would be time enough for them to open the gates of Kangra.'³ Whatever hints may have come from Lahore, it was Khalsa pride, and not ignoble pride either, which inspired the rebels.

The situation was peculiarly delicate. The Sikh Darbar, whatever its secret desires, had been invoked to prevent hostilities, and so long as the Diwan Dina Nath, who came now on the scene of operations, was negotiating with the mutineers, it was difficult for the British authorities to step in and modify the terms which he was offering. It was extremely undesirable, in spite of the offensive assumed by the garrison, to bestow on them the glory of a gallant defence; and even more so to bring the tired British forces into action during the hot season. Yet, on the other hand, the

¹ H. M. L. to the Secretary to the Government, 21 April, 1846.

² J. Lawrence to H. M. L., 16 April, 1846.

³ H. M. L. to the Secretary to the Government, 7 May, 1846.

garrison had fired on a force, accompanied by the representative of the Governor-General, and had positively refused to surrender. So far as it was important not to concede honours of war to the garrison, it was fortunate that they would not listen to the Diwan's very generous terms. In the meanwhile the Agent, with John Lawrence and Harry Lumsden, had now obtained military assistance, and Wheler with his heavy guns was on his way to apply force. In the spirit of his instructions from headquarters it was Henry Lawrence's chief ambition to receive a peaceful delivery, to grant some kind of terms to the garrison, and to settle the question without leaving sore memories. Happily the imminent threat of bombardment secured all that he desired. The guns had just arrived and were about to be dragged up into position. At the same time, envoys had come from the garrison to negotiate. 'I suggested,' wrote John Lawrence in a most vivid description of the event, 'that they should stay and see the guns at break of day ascend the hill. . . . At four a.m. they were awakened by vociferous cheering. They started from their rough beds and rushed out, believing that it was a sally from the garrison. They were soon undeceived; for a few minutes later there appeared a couple of large elephants; slowly and majestically pulling our eighteen-pounder tandem-wise, with a third pushing behind. In this manner, gun after gun wound its way along the narrow pathway, and by the help of hundreds of sipahis, safely rounded the steep corner which seemed to make further progress impossible. The Sikh elders looked on with amazement but said not a word. When the last gun had reached the plateau, they took their leave and returned to the fort. In an hour the white flag was raised.'¹

At this point, too, the diplomacy of the Agent entered. It was his business to avoid extremities with the beaten garrison. He had warned them that 'when the batteries were opened they need expect no mercy, as rebels and as

¹ Bosworth Smith, *Life of Lord Lawrence*, Vol. I., p. 202.

robbers'¹; but now, on a technical point, he was able to arrange a settlement which left no bitterness: 'I have the honour to report that the fort of Kangra surrendered this day, the Garrison marching out at 3 p.m. and piling their arms outside the main gate. I desired them to proceed to Diwan Dina Nath's quarters, the men to be there disposed of as he deemed fit, and the officers to await the orders of Government. I have promised nothing but life to the offenders, but told Diwan Dina Nath that I would recommend them to the mercy of Government, which I now do in the hope that they may be placed at the disposal of their own Darbar, and *as the guns had not been placed in Battery, I have acted on the orders of Government authorising me to grant terms, and trust that my conduct will be approved.*'²

The Kangra trouble had hardly been settled when much greater difficulties developed in Kashmir and Gulab Singh's hill territory. Earlier chroniclers have dwelt too little on the importance of this affair, and in consequence have failed to credit Henry Lawrence with his really astonishing achievement in ending a serious revolt in the most peaceful fashion. A little later, a situation not dissimilar at Multan, handled with imperfect imagination and too great caution, developed into the second Sikh War. Kashmir affords the clearest evidence that if Henry Lawrence's health had not forced him to leave for England, the same quick perception of what was necessary, the same inimitable faculty for dealing with individuals, and his love of precipitate and bold action, might well have kept peace in 1848 not only at Multan, but throughout the Panjab.

Politically and strategically, the sale of the Kashmir territories to Gulab Singh was a fundamental part of the Lahore Treaty, and failure to fulfil one of its major conditions would encourage all who had anything to gain from British failure, in secret projects which might develop into open resistance.

¹ The Agent's proclamation to the Garrison, 19 May, 1846.

² To the Secretary to the Government of India, 28 May, 1846.

It now became apparent that the Governor in Kashmir, Shaikh Imamuddin, was reluctant to hand over his authority to the representatives of Gulab Singh; and, as the summer of 1846 advanced, reluctance passed into open resistance. The Maharaja's troops were utterly defeated by Imamuddin and his hill allies, and he himself seemed incapable of making headway on his own resources. The action of the Lahore Darbar was indecisive and evasive; so that at last the Government of India had to take the strongest action, informing their Agent that 'the British Government would give every possible support to Maharaja Gulab Singh in compelling the servant of the Darbar, Shaikh Imamuddin, to evacuate Kashmir, holding the Darbar responsible for the acts of their officer, in this gross violation of the Treaty.'¹

The truth was that in the Maharaja's new territories a very awkward situation had developed. Many of the small hill Chiefs were in violent opposition to Gulab Singh; all the Hazara country to the west was unsettled; and it gradually became apparent that, at Lahore, there were secret endeavours, Lal Singh's and the Maharani's names connected with them, to encourage Shaikh Imamuddin to resist the authority of the new Maharaja. Two British officers, Captain Broome and – a name soon to be familiar – Lieutenant John Nicholson, were already with Gulab Singh in Jammu, and had entered Srinagar itself in August, where their position caused the Agent some anxious moments. 'They have little or nothing to do, and are kept quite as much prisoners as are the Residency establishment at Nepal.'² Their situation rapidly grew worse. 'We had not been many days in the City,' wrote Nicholson, 'before we learned that the Governor had made up his mind to drive Gulab Singh's small force out of the [Kashmir] Valley, and seize us'; and Nicholson's biographers have failed to mention the critical moment when, an accidental shot having just

¹ Secretary to the Government of India to the Agent, North-West Frontier, 25 September, 1846.

² H. M. L. to the Secretary to the Government, 21 July, 1846.

missed the Shaikh, the British officers had to dispel suspicion by accompanying him into his fort, and sitting, at the peril of their lives, in his Darbar for a short time. It was something to the rebelling Governor's credit that his own coolness did much to check the excitement of his followers!¹ Luckily both Broome and Nicholson managed to make their escape. Raja Lal Singh's name was already mentioned as that of the power behind the outbreak, and the Raja was merely the agent of the Maharani. Henry Lawrence, first at Simla and then at Lahore, acted with the utmost force and rapidity. A British force was dispatched to sustain Gulab Singh's prestige by holding his southernmost territory. Sher Singh was ordered to march with one Sikh force through Punch, while Tej Singh co-operated with the Jammu army from the south. Edwardes early in September had gone to keep Gulab Singh's mind fixed on a forcible and direct assertion of his authority; and, with the Agent's whole energy devoted to the move, Sher Singh and Tej Singh's Sikh regiments pushed on with remarkable rapidity. One little incident creditable to Sikh ingenuity must be recorded. 'When they [Tej Singh] reached Bhimber they had not a single truck for putting their guns on, but during a single halt, the wood was procured, the trucks made, and the guns on elephants accompanied the column.'²

But what really settled the balance on the side of a peaceful settlement was that Henry Lawrence accompanied Sardar Tej Singh's force, flinging himself into the region where the crisis was most acute, as heroes of mediæval warfare won battles by their personal prowess. John Lawrence wrote to his sister of 'Hal and four young officers going off with 30,000 ragamuffins to bring the rebels to their senses,' and it must be remembered that these were Sikh, not British-Indian troops, and that in October 1846 it was only eight months since they had been fighting the British on the

¹ H. M. L. to F. Currie, 10 September, 1846.

² H. M. L. to F. Currie, 19 October, 1846.

Sutlej. It was not certain which side the Sikh officers, in their hearts, really preferred; and it was quite certain that, somewhere in Lahore, support was being given to the revolt. As the absence of the true leader was, a year later, to bring disaster at Multan, so now his presence settled the business out of hand. With the Agent went a young officer, soon to be better known as Hodson of the Guides and Hodson's Horse, and he has left a vivid glimpse or two, as he and his chief campaigned with the 'mingled hosts of Lahore and Jammu.' 'I am writing at sunrise,' he wrote to his father on November 6th from Shupyen in Kashmir, 'and in spite of two coats and waistcoats, I am nearly "friz." We crossed the Pir Panjal Pass on the 4th, 12,000 ft. above the sea, with snow all around us, and slept on this side in an old serai. I say *slept*, because we went to bed, but sleeping was out of the question, from the cold and the uproar of all our followers and their horses, crowded into a courtyard 30 feet square, horses and men quarrelling and yelling all night long. . . . I am the luckiest dog unhung to have actually got into Kashmir.'¹

The sudden concentration of impressive bodies of troops, the actual presence of a masterful but sympathetic leader, and the unexpected rapidity with which everything was done, ended the trouble. 'You came very quick, sir,' said a deferential native agent, this time with justifiable flattery. Shaikh Imamuddin, now convinced that he was dealing, not with an office, but with a man, after some frightened flutterings pushed on to the allied force through a snow-storm, and arrived in Henry Lawrence's presence on November 1st. The whole incident has been minimised because it terminated quietly; but it is more than possible that, with less resolute handling, it might have flared up into a new Sikh and mountain war. In the days which followed, the importance was not in the Agent's visit to Srinagar, but in the Shaikh's disquieting disclosure that he

¹ Hodson, *Twelve Years of a Soldier's Life in India*, pp. 36-8.

had in his possession three documents, directly involving the Raja Lal Singh, Wazir of the Sikh Darbar, in the rebellion. 'I have before represented,' he said, 'that I have had orders from Raja Lal Singh to oppose the Maharaja in Kashmir; and I have his letters in my possession, but I will not produce them unless assured that it will do no injury to Maharaja Dalip Singh and the independence of the Lahore State.' These letters were dated late in July, and one of them was an order to the officers and men of the force in Kashmir, to stand by the Shaikh whatever he did. It was impossible, in face of the new crisis, to spend any time in visiting and pacifying Hazara; so, pledging Gulab Singh to observe in his government justice and toleration, and to prohibit sati and infanticide, Henry Lawrence returned as speedily as he had come to Lahore, rumours of the disclosures running before him - 'The Raja,' in John Lawrence's brusque slang, being now 'in a devil of a funk.'¹

The return from Kashmir was followed by another dramatic and important affair. The charges of Shaikh Imamuddin against Raja Lal Singh were too explicit, and the general expectation of some decisive action too universal, to permit any delay in coming to a firm settlement. On December 1st, Currie arrived to represent the Government of India, and impress upon the Darbar the necessity of an investigation into the truth or falsehood of what the Shaikh had said. At that Court of Inquiry, of which the members were Mr. Currie, Sir John Littler, the two Lawrences, and Lieutenant-Colonel Goldie, and which was attended by all the leading Sikh statesmen, the case against Lal Singh was conclusively established; he was deposed from his Wazarat and exiled from the Panjab.² His conduct while in power had alienated almost all his colleagues, and had rendered him personally odious to the Sikh people. His mistress, the Rani, might with difficulty conceal her feelings of resentful regret at his

¹ For this aspect of the affair, see Punjab Government Record Office publications, *The Trial of Lal Singh*, edited by R. R. Sethi.

² *Ibid.*

fall, but of the others, only the Diwan Dina Nath had cared to defend him. It was characteristic of Henry Lawrence that in a later interview with the Diwan, he told him 'in all sincerity that we rather admired than disapproved of his boldness, and that if he only acted for the good of the state and the welfare of the Maharaja, as he promised to do,' he would find the British Government his friend.

But the fall of the Minister naturally precipitated an acute crisis in Lahore politics. Who would take his place? And, if the British Government persisted in the plan to withdraw its troops in the New Year, was there any hope of stability? The Agent had already been warned by the Sikh Government that there was no such hope, and now even the Maharani declared that when the British force withdrew she would go with them. In the interregnum an acting council of four – Sardars Tej Singh and Sher Singh, the Diwan Dina Nath, and the Fakir Nuruddin – managed affairs. Their most important duty was to lay before the Lahore Darbar a carefully framed statement from the Governor-General. 'It was repeated to them' – so runs Lawrence's official report – 'that his Lordship would be best pleased, could they assure him of their ability to carry on the government alone, unsupported except by the sincere friendship of the British. But if they thought this was impossible, and called on the Governor-General to interfere and actively assist them, they must understand that his interference would be complete, i.e., he would occupy Lahore or any other part of the Panjab with what force he thought advisable; a stipulated sum of money being paid monthly into the British treasury for the expenses of the same; and further, that the whole civil and military administration of the Panjab would be subject to the supervision of a British Resident though conducted by the Darbar and executive officers appointed by them. This arrangement was to hold good till the maturity of the young Maharajah when the British troops would retire from the

Panjab and the British Government recognise its perfect independence.’

The decisive meeting was held on December 15th and 16th, in the presence of not merely the sardars, but even many petty chiefs, officers, and yeomen, and Lawrence’s eye caught the ‘high blue turban wreathed with quoits and crescents, of an Akali in the full costume of his order.’ The British officers retired, there was some bargaining as to the sum required for the expenses of the army of occupation, but in the end there was not a dissentient voice to the new arrangement, and general quiet was reported as prevailing in the country.¹ The terms of December 16th were solemnly confirmed at a meeting with the Governor-General himself at Bhyrowal Ghat on December 22nd.² The Maharani had done her best to upset the arrangement, but without success. There were rumours that the Maharaja was to be imprisoned and the sardars exiled, but Lawrence, who now became Resident at Lahore, was able to report the calming effect of the meeting at Bhyrowal: ‘Nobody was content to think that there was merely to be a meeting. When, therefore, the interview took place, and not only were neither the Maharaja nor his sardars treacherously seized, but both received with even more state and ceremony than was ever shown to Ranjit Singh in the height of his power, the reaction was in proportion, and for some days nothing was talked of at Lahore but the auspicious meeting at Bhyrowal, and “the escape” of the Maharaja ! I doubt if so much gratitude were either felt or expressed when the Panjab was conquered and not annexed.’ Perhaps the quaintest comment on the great affair was that of the Rani’s slave-girls, who praised the honesty of the British, and bade ‘Her Highness no longer mourn after Lal Singh, but plunge into new intrigues.’

So, for the time being, things fell quiet, Henry Lawrence

¹ H. M. L. to the Secretary to the Government of India, 17 December, 1846.

² Treaty of Bhyrowal, 22 December, 1846.

being Resident with full power and an army, the Council of Regency being composed of the eight most influential leaders of the Sikhs, and Her Highness the Maharani being granted a lakh and a half of rupees for her maintenance.¹

From December 22nd, therefore, until his departure on leave on November 30th, 1847, the conduct of the new Resident was governed especially by these three clauses of the Bhyrowal new agreement:

‘ (2) A British officer, with an efficient establishment of assistants, shall be appointed by the Governor-General to remain at Lahore, which officer shall have full authority to direct and control all matters in every department of the state.

‘ (3) Every attention shall be paid, in conducting the administration, to the feelings of the people, to preserve the national institutions and customs, and to maintain the just rights of all classes.

‘ (4) Changes in the mode and details of administration shall not be made, except when found necessary for effecting the objects set forth in the foregoing clauses, and for securing the just dues of the Lahore Government. These details shall be conducted by native officers as at present, who shall be appointed and superintended by a Council of Regency, composed of leading Chiefs and Sardars working under the control and guidance of the British Resident.’²

Critics of Henry, and appreciators of John, Lawrence, usually forget the exact scope and character of the Resident's duties. His position was much more personal and diplomatic than merely administrative, comparable less to that of a modern Indian Lieutenant-Governor than to the indefinable but potent control of the British High Commissioner in Egypt in Lord Cromer's day. Whatever reforms or additions he might make must be enforced through Sikh agency; so that the future rights of the young Maharaja, and the present claims of the national tradition, would at all points affect in practice British plans for order and efficiency.

¹ Treaty of Bhyrowal, 22 December, 1846.

² *Ibid.*

It was of vastly greater importance to be able to live in friendship and co-operation with the Rajas and sardars of the Panjab, than to be able to make satisfactory returns of revenue settlements and customs reforms – not that these could be neglected. It fell to two men, John Lawrence and Frederick Currie, to operate the new machine for a longer period than Henry himself was permitted to spend on it; and while it is indubitable that John Lawrence conformed more strictly to the ideal of the ordinary efficient British Commissioner, Henry alone saw that the new position was that of an uncrowned King of the Panjab, effecting his purposes through such general qualities as sympathy, energy, courage, and the influence of a powerfully individual character. If technically his position was that of Lord Cromer, his method in action was more closely akin to that of Abraham Lincoln in his presidency days.

There was one undermining influence which had to be removed if the new system was to work – there could be no peace with the Rani in the palace. Happily, early in 1847, she had begun to undermine her own position. It was useless to shut one's eyes to the possibilities of disturbance. 'A large majority of the disbanded soldiery have returned to the plough, or to trade,' wrote the Resident. 'But there are still very many floating upon the surface of society: and such is the fickleness of the national character, and so easily are they led by their priests and pundits, and so great is the pride of race, and of a long unchecked career of victory, that if every Sardar and Sikh in the Panjab were to avow himself satisfied with the humbled position of his country, it would be the extreme of infatuation to believe him; or to doubt for a moment that, among the crowd who are loudest in our praise, there are many who cannot forgive our victories, or even our forbearance.'

On this material the Maharani chose to work. Like other women, Western as well as Eastern, who have sought political power, she was greedy in pursuit of her lusts. The

birth of the young Maharaja was one proof of her carelessness of court decorum; her love-affair with Lal Singh another. Sexual excess was for her but one way to political control, and that control she sought, not for utilitarian or rational or national ends, but, as she followed her desires, simply for its own sake, and to be used without any reference even to her own proper good. She appears in the Resident's letters, at one time amusing herself and her lover by pushing her slave-girls into the ponds and fountains of the palace, to watch them duck and dive in their efforts to get out; at another luring some new fool who dreamt of power to occupy the dishonourable vacant place left at her side by Lal Singh; and again trying to wheedle the Resident into some concession to her of influence. She was a strange blend of the prostitute, the tigress, and Machiavelli's Prince.

Early in February, information, partly through Tej Singh and other Sikh leaders, partly through his own munshi, came to the Resident that a certain Prema, an old retainer of Gulab Singh, along with certain other desperadoes, had plotted to kill Tej Singh, and, among other objects, to assassinate the Resident at one of his receptions in the Shalimar gardens. Henry Lawrence made little of the whole affair. He thought some of the rumours true, as indeed they were proved to be. He was also satisfied that of a small matter a great deal had been made.¹ As he told the Governor-General with calvinistic calm, 'I look on it that all political officers in India are more or less liable to be shot at, but it is absurd to suppose that any single individual who was determined to take my life could not a dozen times have done so within the last three months, or could not any day do so. . . . A man's destiny is to be worked out without reference to time or place.'² The fate of the offenders is of no importance beyond the fact that neither panic nor anger affected the treatment of their case. But it seemed clear that

¹ H. M. L. to Lord Hardinge, 11 May, 1847.

² H. M. L. to the Governor-General, 23 May, 1847.

they were not disconnected with the Rani's circle. 'Deprived of both her lover and her influence in the state,' wrote the Resident, 'the Rani conceived the wish to revenge her private and public quarrels at a blow by disturbing the present Government.' Discretion naturally forbade any direct punishment, but the Maharani Jindan opened the way herself for ending her troublesome presence in Lahore. It was the intention of the Resident to recognise the services of a number of the Sikh leaders by conferring letters and marks of honour on them, and more especially on Tej Singh, whose usefulness the Resident estimated highly. All arrangements had been made for the installation, and an auspicious day chosen. 'All went off well, except for a momentary check occasioned by the decided refusal of the Maharaja to make the saffron "teeka," or mark of Rajaship, on Sardar Tej Singh's forehead. At first I thought it might be bashfulness, or dislike to wet his fingers with the saffron paste, but when I pressed the point in vain, and on Sardar Sher Singh's leaning forward and begging the Maharaja to comply, H.H. folded his arms and shrank back into his velvet chair, with a determination foreign to both his age and his gentle disposition. . . . There cannot be a doubt that the young Maharaja had been carefully schooled by his mother, not to take any part in the ceremonies of the day further than as a looker on, but more particularly to refuse to have a hand in making a raja of a sardar she so much dislikes as Sardar Tej Singh.'¹ The members of the Darbar were unanimous in resenting the insult. The Resident reaffirmed his approval of the candidates for honours by directing, to each of the fifteen chiefs so decorated, a congratulatory letter signed by himself, his brother, and his four assistants. The Governor-General urged that any mark of displeasure shown to the Rani should have reference, not to any trifling act of discourtesy, but to her persistent interference with the Government, and to her indirect connection

¹ H. M. L. to H. M. Elliot, 7 August, 1847.

with Prema's plot. It was decided that she should be sent into honourable restraint at Sheikhapura, and Dalip Singh freed from the menace of her control. The last scene in her banishment produced comic relief in the tragedy of Jindan's fall; for at the critical moment the hearts of the sardars failed, and, to quote the official report, 'Not a chief could be found to bell the cat. I believe that the Rani would at this moment be in possession of her own apartments, and ignorant of her destination, if I had not consented to accompany the sardars with my assistants half way to that part of the palace where Her Highness resided.'¹ So, for the time, Jindan passed from the stage 'without any crying or angry words at first, but later, recovering her usual spirit, and violent in her threats to appeal to London.' Her little son took all that happened philosophically, continuing to play his games and sending the Resident his salaams.

The whole affair may seem too trivial for record, but in such ridiculous ways the British control was constantly being tested. Henry Lawrence's most notable quality as Resident lay in his faculty for meeting these preposterous and dangerous incidents with quietness and firmness, and convincing men like Tej Singh, the Diwan Dina Nath, and Sher Singh, that he was both their friend and their master. When he left Lahore on temporary leave on August 23rd, John Lawrence, who was to act for him, noted that all the chiefs accompanied the Resident to his carriage, repeatedly shaking hands with him, and expressing their hopes for his speedy return.²

The impression which ought to be created by these personal affairs is that the most important of all the Resident's duties lay simply in impressing his Sikh colleagues with his personality, and living among them so that they felt him their true leader. But, meantime, the hard work of administration in the interests of the Sikh Government was

¹ H. M. L. to H. M. Elliot, 20 August, 1847.

² J. Lawrence to H. M. Elliot, 23 August, 1847.

proceeding with equal success. One section of that work, the control of the frontier and outlying territories of Lahore, is so impressive and romantic that it demands a separate chapter. Our concern for the present is with the reform of government within the Panjab proper.

It would be wearisome to relate the details of Henry Lawrence's labour in reducing the old Sikh army, paying all arrears, and assisting in the creation of a smaller but better disciplined force. The operations in Kashmir had tested the new army, and had proved both its spirit and its efficiency. But there had been too much of the army in recent Sikh administration, and the chief duty of the Resident in the 'home country' must lie in inducing the Darbar to renovate its system of domestic administration. It was clear that some proper kind of justice must be administered, for, as the Resident walked or rode in his city, he was besieged by petitioners for redress of their very real grievances. The pre-existing machinery was quite inadequate, and corruption wrecked any that seemed to exist. All classes of officials, from highest to lowest, regarded office only for what might be obtained through it; and country folk found that the only agents of judicial power in the neighbourhood were the Kardars, against whom chiefly they wished redress. 'The remedies I would offer,' wrote Lawrence in his report on justice,¹ 'are good pay and honour on the one hand, and disgrace and punishment on the other.' He proposed to accept the natural division of the Panjab into separate districts, to put a judge of good standing, with a deputy, in each, and to reform and strengthen the local authority of the Kardars and Thanadars, but to see that there was some easy appeal from local injustice to higher authority. At the same time lawlessness was checked, with sharp punishment of the bands of ruffians who wandered over the country, robbing and slaying.² Reform in justice demanded not only machinery but some simple and real kind of popular law. 'Early in 1847

¹ 3 July, 1847.

² H. M. L. to H. M. Elliot, 26 April, 1847.

the attention of the Resident was directed to the necessity of having something like a code of Sikh law. Record there was none, and the practices were as various as were the dispositions of the Kardars and their subordinates. Fine and mutilation were the ordinary punishments, but these were inflicted on little rule, and often contrary to all rule. The practice in civil justice was still more vague and uncertain. With no statute of limitations, a debt or an estate might be recovered after half a century, but in all cases there was party, family, or ministerial interest. In one instance a Sikh who had turned Muhammadan recovered his estate after thirty years' dispossession. To reduce these important questions into form, the Resident, through the Darbar, summoned the heads of the principal villages in the Manjha, 45 in number, to Lahore, and kept them in consultation for some months.' In the Panjab, as well as in Kashmir and, under John Lawrence, in the Jalandhar Doab, the practices of sati and infanticide were firmly repressed, and a proclamation of July 1847 forbade anyone to exact unpaid labour or the free use of horses, carts, and the like for private purposes.

It would take too long to dwell on what one might call the moral principles behind the Resident's method of government, but one or two *obiter dicta* will help to show the temper and general views with which he thought India should be governed. His opinion on annexation will demand attention later. Meanwhile it is interesting to know that he hated our whole policy towards Sind – 'I don't think that Government can do better than restore it to the Amirs.'¹ His keen eye had noted the interest taken by our sipahis in British policy towards Indian princes: 'I am satisfied that they do not like the idea of destroying the few remaining Hindu principalities – I well recollect the hearty cheers with which Gulab Singh, and afterwards the young Maharaja, were received by our troops at Kussur and Lalliana. I watched the countenances of the men. Many were glad to have hopes of peace; but

¹H. M. L. to Lord Hardinge, 24 April, 1847.

*there were as many who rejoiced to save a dynasty.*¹ He had both the Englishman's love of openness and the Oriental ruler's instinct for direct personal dealings. As he told one of his men: 'Let all your dealings with the natives be *in public*. When they have private access to you, they will abuse your confidence and not improbably bring suspicion on yourself. I refer to private rooms and closets; for the more accessible you are, the better, *so that all may see and hear what takes place.*'² And he, like all his school, knowing that good government and personal purity were inextricably bound together, warned an assistant in Kashmir³ 'against the allurements of Kashmir. Connexion with native women leads to all sorts of ill; *indeed a political officer loses half his value when he has anything to say to it.* I would endeavour to get rid of any assistant who kept a woman.'

In the financial and economic region, however, Henry Lawrence, since such was his disposition, had less mastery and gave less skilled attention; and here one begins to see the clear distinction between the methods and spirit of Henry and his brother John, just as, in their joint work, one notices the kind of co-operative labour which made the later Board of Administration so useful. More especially after August 1847, John Lawrence, as deputy, began to make himself felt in Lahore administration, and from the first it was apparent how different, although also how equally admirable, were the talents of the brothers. Henry, with just a dash in him of the old adventurer, and perhaps of the ideal benevolent despot, cared for men, and especially for those with whom he had to work in the Darbar; was the born man of action, interested in wide and rough stretches of territory to govern, and thought of rule as the choosing of fit helpers, the instant settlement of difficulties by rapid movement and action, and the assertion, as far as possible, of authority through personal contact. Justice, as the field in which the greater Eastern

¹ H. M. L. to Lord Hardinge, 24 April, 1847.

² H. M. L. to J. Christie, 1 September, 1846.

³ 14 June, 1847.

rulers showed themselves most admirably, he could reform because it was human, and a piece of the common life which he loved to study in his tours through the countryside. In finance and commercial regulations he found the complications of civilisation get in his way, and so it was that John, who, like his brother, also loved the freer life of personal contact and spirited adventure, but was something less natural and primitive than Henry – an embodiment of the Western scientific and practical temperament – did well what his brother did less easily, but never possessed that indefinable genius for personal influence and sympathetic understanding which set Henry definitely above him as an Oriental governor. It fell to John, therefore, to complete and in a sense to criticise his brother's work. 'Looking at the finances and the mode of managing the revenue,' he wrote to Henry of Sikh methods in 1847, 'they appeared to me to be execrably bad. . . . I think myself that, unless as matters are altered for the better, a bankruptcy must ensue. . . .' In the same way he not only found the administration of customs dues hopelessly corrupt and expensive, but that it pressed upon the poor, raising the prices of such necessary things as corn, ghi, vegetables, and fuel. He did not claim to be pioneering, frankly confessing that what he as deputy was pushing through, the Resident had already discussed and in part arranged; and he told his brother, in answer to a remonstrance, that he had no intention of undervaluing his labours.¹ But it was true that it was John Lawrence's clear head and ruthless will that set on its way a systematic summary settlement of the land revenue throughout the Panjab, and it was he who established an entirely separate department for customs, over which the Lahore Diwan should have no individual control, and in which an adequate system of checks and audits would prevent dishonesty. As for the subordinate directors of affairs, it is plain that, while Henry honestly attempted, as far as possible,

¹ J. Lawrence to H. M. L., 21 September, 1847.

to let the Darbar and its agents do their own work, even at some expense of efficiency, from the first John placed little reliance on native agency for good government. 'Not only is it necessary that such a system be introduced,' he wrote in an admirable survey of customs affairs,¹ 'but that European energy and honesty be brought in direct contact with the finances to keep them in order. It is for this reason that I think that direct reports from the Treasury, Customs, and Revenue should be made to the Resident. More direct interference may even at times be required; certainly nothing short of it will prove effectual.' Besides all this, as the first Panjab report pointed out, the material development of the country occupied the Resident's attention. Plans were formed for the construction of new canals, the repair of old ones, the re-opening of ruined wells, and the re-peopling of deserted villages.²

But now the health of the Resident set a limit to this fruitful period of personal government. In writing to Lord Hardinge in July about leave, Henry Lawrence frankly confessed that he must go, but that he wished to maintain his hold on what he counted his own personal possession in the right to govern the Panjab. 'I hope it is from no abstract love of office, for on the score of obtaining political employment in India after even two or three years' absence I should have no fear. But my heart is with my work here, and I would prefer working out the present policy on the frontier to obtaining a seat in council.' He added with the naïve frankness peculiar to him, 'It would be a satisfaction to me, both publicly and privately, to leave my brother John, if your Lordship thinks it fit to recommend him to your successor.' Hardinge too was about to leave, and work in India, when Henry Lawrence returned, would be under a new chief. The arrangement, especially with regard to John, could not be made; but the closing days of Hardinge's Governorship

¹ J. Lawrence to H. M. Elliot, 10 September, 1847.

² *Report on the Administration of the Punjab for the Years 1849-50 to 1850-1*, pp. 12-13.

were marked by peculiarly complimentary acknowledgment of what Henry, and John too, had done; and the Governor-General's friendly spirit expressed itself with singular graciousness when he invited Henry, now inexorably ordered home by the doctors, to accompany him on the ship placed by the East India Company at the disposal of the retiring Governor-General. So on January 18th, 1848, he embarked with the viceregal staff for home on the *Mozuffer*.

NOTE

THE LAWRENCE MILITARY ASYLUMS, 1846-1857¹

Sir Henry and Lady Lawrence, both of them confirmed members of the Evangelical group which dominated English religious life during the first half of the nineteenth century, made their contribution to the philanthropic work, which so distinguished all the great Evangelicals, through the foundation of schools, in healthy quarters, for the children of European soldiers serving in India.

The children of the Indian barracks presented moral and physical problems to the authorities which they were slow to face; but from an early date, as has been already seen, Henry Lawrence grappled with the difficulty. In his surveying days at Gorakhpur he had gathered round him his 'offsets.' In the month during which he had charge of Dehra Dun, he began at once to speculate on Mussoorie as an ideal place for the education of Army children. With his departure that project fell to the ground, but he found in the hills about Kasauli another site for the institution of his dreams; and in the quiet of Nepal he and his wife worked out a detailed project. In his own words, his plan was 'to provide for the orphan and other children of soldiers, serving, or having served in India, an asylum from the debilitating effects of a tropical climate, and the demoralising influence of barrack life; wherein they may obtain the benefits of a bracing climate,

¹ Along with the annual reports, the completest account of the first Asylum is contained in a little volume, printed at Sanawar in 1858, entitled *The Lawrence Military Asylum, being a brief account of the past ten years of the existence and progress of the institution established in the Himalayas by the late Sir H. M. Lawrence K.C.B.*

a healthy moral atmosphere, and a plain, useful, and above all religious education, adapted to fit them for employment suited to their position in life, and, with the divine blessing, to make them consistent Christians, and intelligent and useful members of society.¹

There was much initial indifference or criticism to face, even James Thomason regarding the idea as doubtful; but Henry Lawrence seldom accepted defeat. After the first Sikh troubles were over, he induced Lord Gough, with all the prestige of his recent victory at Sobraon adding to his influence, to support a public meeting in Lahore on March 10th, 1846. At it the project was launched, and Lord Hardinge gave it very useful aid. A suitable position for a school having been found at Sanawar, not far from the place where he had buried his little daughter, Henry Lawrence proceeded to will the institution into existence. Among the names of the first subscribers are those of most of the great pre-Mutiny soldiers and civilians, from Gough and Hardinge downwards; the list also includes every member of the Lawrence family then resident in India. Dina Nath, Ranjit Singh's old Finance Minister, gave a thousand rupees, and the Maharaja Gulab Singh was permitted, after certain natural difficulties raised by Government, to endow the Asylum with a lakh of rupees. From first to last, Henry Lawrence himself gave his institution 86,400 rupees.

The building of the school at Sanawar has its own romance. Someone had to be put in charge of operations; and it seems strange, in view of the vicissitudes of Hodson's later career, that he, of all men, should have been chosen to act as secretary and general manager of the foundation. Seemingly the air of adventure which attended all that he undertook was not absent from this routine affair, for, as he wrote home, 'I have the sole direction and control of nearly 450 workmen, including paying them, keeping accounts, drawing plans, and everything. I have to get earth dug for bricks, see the moulds made and watch the progress of them till the kiln is full, get wood for the kiln, and direct the lighting of the same, and finally provide a goat to sacrifice to the demon who is supposed to turn the bricks red. Then I must get bamboos and grass cut for thatching, and string *made* for the purpose; send about the hills for sand for

¹ *The Lawrence Military Asylum*, p. 3

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¹ *The Lawrence Military Asylum*, p. 3

mortar, and limestone to burn, see it mixed and prepared. . . . Then the whole of the woodwork must be set out, and made under one's own eye, and a lump of iron brought from the mines to be wrought (also under one's direction) into nails and screws, before a single door can be set up. . . . Colonel Lawrence seems determined I shall have nothing to stop me, for his invariable answer to every question is, "Act on your own judgment"; "Do what you think right"; "I give you *carte blanche* to act in my name, and draw on my funds," and so forth.¹

The framework of the school was naturally military, but the education provided was organised according to the most enlightened methods of the day. At its heart was religion; and to secure this the founder faced, and on the whole triumphed over, the countless difficulties which Christian sectarians always raise in the way of religious education. Besides the children of Presbyterians and English Dissenters, there were those of the numerous Roman Catholic soldiers serving in India, whose religious guides had very definite views on education. More especially in the case of these last the obstacles were never completely cleared away, but religious views of a most truly catholic and enlightened character were drawn up. There were to be services in the chapel according to Anglican usage, and Scripture teaching based on the Bible; but Roman Catholics and others could arrange for separate instruction in their own principles at the hours set apart for religious education. From the first the school chapel was the central point in the Asylum; and it was characteristic of the founder's devout optimism that the chapel opened in 1851 is still large, and suitable, enough to meet the needs of the great school which has grown up at Sanawar.

An admirable head, Mr. William Parker, was found by Honoria Lawrence, during her residence in England; and although there were natural difficulties in staffing the growing school with the proper people, it increased greatly in numbers and usefulness throughout the founder's lifetime, the original 14 pupils having become 199 at the beginning of 1856; and in addition there were 100 children transferred by agreement with Government from the Lower Orphan School. By 1856, as will appear later, additional schools had been opened, through Sir Henry's efforts, at Mount Abu in Rajputana, and Utakamand in

¹ Hodson, *Twelve Years of a Soldier's Life in India*, pp. 39-41.

the Nilgiri Hills. The founder never ceased to give his closest attention to the schools, and they were among the last things mentioned by him as he lay dying at Lucknow.

The most searching test to which he submitted his experiment was the residence of himself and his wife for two months, in 1851, at the Sanawar Asylum. In answer to one of the usual uninformed critics of the institution he wrote: 'I have been living on the premises for two months, and from personal knowledge can disprove almost all that has been said. Not only *respectable* persons don't object to send their children, but there are *more* of that class in the Asylum than I wish to have; and we have now above 80 candidates for admission. The appearance of the children is the best answer to the charge of their being underfed. . . . A dozen times I have examined the beds, their food, the kitchen, the wash-house, and at all hours have been in the schoolroom, bedrooms, etc. I have stopped here, instead of at Kasauli, for the very purpose of seeing with my own eyes and being able to meet objections. On a complaint of a boy having been ill-treated by one of the pupil-teachers, I had all the boys drawn up one day last week; and told everyone who had any complaint to make, to step out. More than 20 did so, on which I took the deposition of each. The usual complaint was that his ears had been pulled, or he had received a box or a tap for neglect, etc. The result of the examination was that I was satisfied that *all* had not, during the whole period of their being at the Asylum, received more personal chastisement than I had, myself, received during a single month at school.'¹

The Mutiny created a very serious crisis for Sanawar, as for every other centre of European population in India, but it passed triumphantly through all the perils of 1857. Part of a mutinous regiment, at Kasauli itself, broke loose, but although for a fortnight all the inmates at Sanawar were brought under more adequate protection in the neighbouring barracks at Kasauli, the crisis soon passed, for the Hill Rajas remained faithful. It was touching evidence of the spirit inspiring the whole Asylum that, in the absence of the Europeans, the native servants stood fast by the buildings, protecting the property, and sending in daily reports. In the same way, when the whole financial basis of the school was threatened by the prevailing shock to

¹ Sir H. M. L. to T. Hutton, 23 October, 1851.

public credit, the school banias and contractors did their best to carry on; then, good friends, George Barnes, the head of the Cis-Sutlej states, and John Lawrence in the Panjab, provided temporary relief. The generosity of the Government, and the ready response made to various appeals for Mutiny funds, re-established the Asylum in 1858.

It would be easy to estimate in statistical form the work done by the schools thus started, at Sanawar, Mount Abu, Utakamand, and, in 1860, as a memorial to the founder, at Murree. But Henry Lawrence never cared much for arithmetical tests. His biographer would prefer to record the impressions created throughout a happy day in the winter of 1929, by a visit to Sanawar. The school was reached somewhere about eight in the morning after the long climb by road from Kalka, and breakfast was served in the building which Hodson had once designed. It was clear that the head of the Sanawar school, now Bishop of Lahore, was a man after Sir Henry Lawrence's own heart; and every fresh detail inspected revealed how completely the spirit of the founder still inspired the policy of the modern school. The situation was perfect, with the air cool, the lower snowy hills standing clearly out, and, farther off, the bases of the great hills showing now and then through cloud. The chapel was still - what Sir Henry meant it to be - the centre of the place, where it was possible for all sincere souls to learn of God, and forget their differences. Everywhere there were the traces of benevolence and leadership; in the boys' school, the girls' school, the kindergarten and the crèche, and in the hospital. The touch of military discipline in the organisation suggested, not war, but rational and helpful control; and memories of one's frontier heroes were awakened, as competing houses cheered their teams, shouting the names of Henry Lawrence's lieutenants after whom their houses were named. There is little danger of Henry Lawrence's name being forgotten, among the generations of children whose lives and characters have been saved and made in these schools. I shall not readily forget how, after a lecture on Sir Henry Lawrence, an old lady in the audience rose to say that the half had not been told of Sir Henry's goodness, and that she owed everything in her life to the chance that he had given her, when he founded the school in India in which she had been trained.

CHAPTER X

HENRY LAWRENCE'S YOUNG MEN, AND THE NORTH-WEST FRONTIER

IN the previous chapter the most exciting, and for the Resident himself the most interesting of all the departments of his government – the ordering of the frontier – was left for separate treatment. In the present chapter a general view will be taken of frontier government extending beyond the Residency period. It must be remembered for the sake of clearness that, in 1848, the arrival of Lord Dalhousie substituted for the soldierly and sympathetic co-operation of Hardinge the critical, dictatorial, and autocratic authority of a civilian, hitherto unused to Indian affairs, but determined to let nothing interfere with his own peremptory orders. The Lawrence regime on the frontier was called to order, especially in 1849, in tones that often suggested the irritated pedagogue rather than the calm friendly chief.

As one passes north-west from Lahore, there begins to appear on the northern horizon a silver line of hills, steadily drawing closer as the road or railway pushes north. First come the hills of Punch, then Hazara, then Peshawar and the Yusufzai country, then the western line from Jamrud and the Khaibar, down through the Kohat Pass to Bannu and the Derajat. For the moment it is unnecessary to think of the hills and passes in their relation to Russian advances, in which the frontier men of the time were only in a secondary sense interested. What mattered was that among the hills dwelt the most troublesome and bellicose mountain tribes in the world, living amongst themselves in constant turmoil, afflicted by perennial poverty, treating homicide, where it was not morally justified, as a natural pleasure,

inclined to encroach in winter on the plains below them, and naturally driven to make up for what nature denied them of prosperity by looting the weaker peoples of the plains. Apart from Hindus subject to Gulab Singh, they were fiercely Muslim, and their holy men added fresh ardour to the bloody inspiration of tribal tradition. They had been a thorn in the side even of Ranjit Singh; they furnished ready converts to Afghan projects for troubling India; and, however pacific the Government of India might desire to be, the stern enforcement of border law was essential, if the Province of the Panjab was to recover its prosperity. There were two problems for the Resident, the creation of a stable borderland between the Panjab and Central Asia, and the government of that borderland. The scope of the region to be controlled was limited on the west and north by the waste country of Baluchistan, the Afghan Kingdom, and the great hills of the north. The centres of likely trouble lay in the vicinity of the old trade routes through the great passes.

The problems of government were those everywhere presented by primitive and fighting men. Regulations suitable to Hindustan were obviously useless on the frontier. Carefully trained office-men, with fixed rules for assessing revenue and administering justice, had nothing to say to poverty-stricken and lawless tribesmen. Civilised machinery simply did not function in the hills; and the one obvious instrument of government was the individual master, whose courage, truth, fair-play, and mixture of humorousness and humanity, could convince the hillmen that he must be obeyed. Further, it was useless to suppose that unbroken peace could be maintained. Success in government must mean, at best, lowering the average of tribal raids and wars, and limiting their scope by resolute and immediate action. As for the agents of government, it was clear that they must always count assassination as a probable, rather than a possible, end to their careers. The tedium of hard journeys

was likely to be relieved by sporadic sniping. Mere cleverness was useless among men who failed to approve the standards of Western civilisation. Hard riders, fearless speakers of the truth, men who could make up their minds without hesitation, and in whom profound human sympathy and knowledge never weakened into sentiment and talk – these were the men from whom the new wardens of the marches must be recruited.

Henry Lawrence himself was singularly fitted for the administration of these territories. For one thing, he knew the ground and the tribes. He had learned Peshawar and the Khaibar country in 1842 as other men knew their parade grounds. Nepal had given him experience of another race and section of the border. He had come to understand Sikh character as no other of his generation did. Between 1846 to 1852 he travelled every mile from Leh and Skardu on the north-east, through Hazara and Peshawar down to the Derajat. But his peculiar strength lay in two other directions. In the first place there was his unrivalled eye for promising youngsters, and his faculty for enlisting their enthusiastic friendship and support. It was he who chose – to mention only a few outstanding names – Edwardes, Nicholson, Reynell Taylor, Harry Lumsden, Cocks, Hodson, Lake. Of older men, his brother George, and, in spite of some bitter differences, James Abbott were proud to count themselves his lieutenants. He and they formed a real band of brothers, terribly plain-spoken in criticising each other's faults; accepting responsibility and making decisions, sometimes to the consternation of high authorities; seldom failing in the nobler qualities of the Christian soldier. There still remains a little scrap of paper affectionately sent by his chief to John Nicholson about to go on furlough: 'To-morrow we shall be at Damtur, the scene of your gallant attempt to help Abbott. But what corner of the Panjab is not witness to your gallantry! Get married and come out soon, and, if I am alive and in office, it shall not be my fault if you don't

find employment here.’¹ John Nicholson revealed the other side of the friendship when, on Henry Lawrence’s departure from Lahore, he wrote, ‘I don’t know how I shall get on when you are gone. If there is any work in Rajputana I am fit for, I wish you would take me with you.’

In the second place he had not merely a remarkable external acquaintance with the tribal potentates with whom his juniors had to deal, but an intuitive understanding of their characters. He spent much of his time at Lahore in defending – not always with compliments – the character of Gulab Singh of Kashmir. He could dispute with James Abbott the latter’s judgment on local chiefs like Jehan Dad Khan. Edwardes and Taylor and Nicholson always found shrewd counsel on personal questions concerning maliks round Bannu. So he came to fill naturally the place of competent old Oriental despots, whose sway depended so much on their living knowledge of the men they ruled, and through whom they ruled. It is perhaps too easy to paint a glowing picture, and forget the shadows. The wardens of the marches were not, as in Hodson’s case, always as careful as they should have been in keeping accounts. They could be, like Edwardes and James Abbott, often too stiff in their own opinions, and these wrong. No one but an Irishman like Henry Lawrence could have so long, and with such amazing success, maintained in being a system into which the personal factor entered so largely. One can understand, although hardly pardon, the mixture of amazement and disapprobation with which the ‘Lawrence System’ inspired Dalhousie in his early days in India. Nevertheless the plain fact is that the Indian Government had assumed responsibilities and undertaken tasks for which this personal ‘Lawrence System’ offered the only possible solution – more than that, it was actually the best of all possible means of creating, maintaining, and governing the new frontier. That system, in brief, was to set a specially selected officer

¹ H. M. L. to J. N., 23 October, 1849.

3 or 4 enclosed. ^{Comp. Manservant. 23rd Oct} One line to say
how sorry I am to have
missed you. Tomorrow we
shall be at Sea - I trust the
scene of your gallant attempt
to be at Abott's, but that
corner of the Navy is
not intrinsically your gallantry.
Get married & come out
soon & if I am alive & in
office it shall not be my
fault if you don't find
employment here. Write to
me occasionally if you have
nothing better to do. Perhaps
you will take the enclosed
subscription to my book, 2 or 3 pages
you will say the same.

Letter from Sir Henry Lawrence to John Nicholson,
October 23rd, 1849

with a force of irregulars in charge of a wide tribal area, bidding him collect the local revenue, but more especially to enforce local peace and justice, and leaving him the largest possible measure of individual initiative, short of committing the Government to extensive wars. Along with a standard of moral conduct, and a firmness of character, which won the entire approval of their austere chief, youth was their distinguishing feature. It is true that James Abbott of Hazara was forty in 1847, and that at Peshawar, George Lawrence was forty-three; but, for the rest, in that year, Herbert Edwardes, Hodson, and Lumsden were all twenty-eight, Reynell Taylor in his twenty-sixth year, and Nicholson nearly a year younger. Younger or older, they and their master had all the buoyancy, audacity, and imagination of youth, and even the oldest of these, George Lawrence, never quite surrendered to the conventions and cautiousness of middle life.

It would be impossible, in a life of Henry Lawrence, to attempt a history of all their doings. Suffice it to try and indicate the quality of their work and characters, and the defence of all of them against Dalhousie's attempts at discipline, from a few of their more notable achievements. Perhaps the most perfect illustration of their methods in peace is Edwardes' pacification of Bannu in 1847-48, although the same region saw Taylor and Nicholson run the record of their senior very hard.

As one goes south from Peshawar through the Kohat Pass, the first breathing place is the Kohat Valley, looking green and tranquil from the Northern Hills. Then comes another region of tumbled hills, and difficult passes, until at last the Kurram Valley is reached and the modern town called Bannu. North and east are the hills of the Salt Range, and west the Sulaiman Mountains with stony desert ground at their roots. Towards the Indus, aridity recommences, but, in Bannu proper, the desert has turned to fields, and blossoms like the rose. Of this seemingly

happy valley and the hills above it, the inhabitants, to use Edwardes' own description were: first, the Bannuchis, 'bad specimens of Afghans, with all the vices of Pathans rankly luxuriant, the virtues stunted'; secondly, the Waziri hillmen, who descended each winter to feed their flocks in more sheltered ground below, but who abandoned none of their tribal pugnacity – 'enemies of the whole world' is Edwardes' phrase; and, lastly, Hindus, who had followed the chances of trade, sheltering under any walls that might cover them, and liable to have their throats cut at any moment of tribal excitement or religious enthusiasm.¹ Their country was one of Ranjit Singh's later gains from the Afghans, but never, at the height of his power, had he been able to draw a steady revenue from it. Every two or three years a Sikh army had come to collect land revenue, and after burning, looting, killing, and being killed, they had gone home, with the provincial budget still showing a debit balance, and a rich fund of hate and disorder growing steadily against them. Henry Lawrence had sent Herbert Edwardes to make a financial and political reconnaissance, early in 1847; and, if most of the land tax still remained unpaid, Edwardes had made his observations, noted the chiefs who counted for something, and left behind him a warning that, since the Bannuchis had rejected his fair offers, he would return with a force, 'level their forts, disarm their tribes, and occupy their country.' They would receive the best of laws, but the licence which they counted liberty must cease.

On the 9th of December, 1847, he kept his word. What he accomplished can be best described in the words of his own summary: 'On the 17th of December the powerful, brave, and hitherto unconquered Waziri tribes resigned their independence, and consented to pay tribute; and as far as I know, and with such occasional exceptions as any one

¹ Edwardes' *Year on the Punjab Frontier* will always remain the most inspiring authority on Bannu – one of the best books ever written on India. The lives of Reynell Taylor and John Nicholson are also full of detail about the same region during this period.

might suppose, have abided by that agreement till this day. On the 18th of December was laid the foundation of the royal fort of Dalipgarh. . . . On the 5th of January, 1848, the people and chiefs of Bannu were ordered to throw down their forts, about 400 in number. By the end of the month, in spite of being preached against in the mosques, in spite of two open attempts at assassination, and a third plot to murder me in a gateway, I had carried that measure out, and left but two Bannuchi forts standing in the valley and these two by my permission.

'Such were the chief results which had been accomplished by this expedition in less than three months; but besides these, a new town had been founded, which at this day is flourishing¹; a military and commercial road, 30 feet broad, and 25 miles long, had been undertaken and has since been completed through a formerly roadless valley, and is now, under the protection of ordinary police, travelled by the merchant and traveller in ease and security; tracts of country from which the fertilising mountain streams were diverted by feuds, had been brought back to cultivation by the protection of a strong government; others, lying waste because disputed, had been adjudicated, apportioned, occupied, and sown once more; through others a canal had been designed and begun; while a people who had worn arms as we wear clothes, and used them as we use knives and forks, had ceased to carry arms at all; and, though they quarrelled still, learned to bring their differences to the war of the civil court instead of the sharp issue of the sword.

'In a word, the Valley of Bannu, which had defied the Sikh arms for four-and-twenty years, had in three months been *peacefully* annexed to the Punjab, and two independent Afghan races, the Waziris and the Bannuchis, been subjugated *without a single shot being fired.*'²

The whole fabric had been founded on wisely regulated

¹ In 1851. Still more so, as I saw it in 1930.

² Edwardes, *Year on the Punjab Frontier*, Vol. I., pp. 350-2.

armed force, and a simple set of tribal laws, interpreted by, or rather incarnate in, a young man whose intelligence and sympathy were equal to his courage.

The second illustration comes naturally as a sequel to Edwardes' work. A revolt of the great central frontier city of Multan in 1848, followed by the revolt of the whole Sikh army and the second Sikh War, left the regions across the Indus at the mercy of the tribes, and of their former Afghan masters. Edwardes himself, with a force drawn entirely from the tribesmen whom he had persuaded into allegiance, was conducting successfully one of the most amazing little wars in the history of India, against the rebel Mul Raj and his city, Multan. Meanwhile his friend, Reynell Taylor, had been holding Bannu and Dera Ismail Khan, as far as this was possible, until the Afghan invasion broke on the regions of Kohat and Bannu. Multan meanwhile was proving an awkward nut to crack, and Edwardes, less for his own sake than for his lieutenant's, recalled him to headquarters. But Taylor had no intention of abandoning to rebels and Afghans the territory that Edwardes had so recently recovered. In the Sikh disorders, the Sikh garrison of the royal fort, Dalipgarh, had mutinied, killing their European commander, John Holmes, and overwhelming the gallant tribal chief Fateh Khan Tiwana, to whom Edwardes had given general charge of Bannu after Taylor had come in. Kohat, to the north, was in the hands of the Afghans, and it seemed certain that the flood of mutiny and invasion would sweep away the whole of the region from Kohat, through Bannu, to Dera Ismail Khan.

Then, in his own quiet way, Reynell Taylor struck in.¹ The key of the situation lay at Lakki Marwat, to-day the junction for a military railway from the Indus, branching at Lakki Junction towards Bannu on the one hand, and Tank on the other. Taylor's plans for helping the English men

¹ The following narrative is based on Parry, *Reynell Taylor*; but more especially on Taylor's diaries, 1847-9, published in Panjab Government Records, *Lahore Political Diaries, 1847-49*, Vol. VI.

and women threatened further north had already been foiled; but the arrival of the maliks, or headmen of Bannu, and the creation of a tribal force which it would be unduly complimentary to call irregular, enabled him to make an effort to hold back the mutinous Sikh soldiery, and the invading Afghans. In the strong little fort of Lakki were more than 400 Sikh regulars, with two good guns, a mortar, and other details of artillery which they were skilled in using. Behind them was the rebel fort of Bannu, and behind that Afghanistan. Taylor could not count on a single recruit who had not, less than twelve months before, been in violent resistance to Edwardes. He had not a single European officer to help him. Of his three guns, one carried shot 'about the size of a rackets ball,' while another had in its muzzle 'a large cavern into which I could put my head.' Help was unlikely to come, since, to the north, Kohat, Peshawar, and Attock were in enemy hands; and Edwardes had his hands full at Multan. But Taylor, acting on the maxim of his group that 'Englishmen must not go back,' proceeded, with his disorderly levies and his preposterous guns, to lay siege to Lakki. His numbers made it impossible for him to invest the fort; there was a scarcity of powder and shot; his guns were no match for those so admirably worked by the garrison; and to the north-west, Dost Muhammad was threatening to push south and east in a jihad to 'quell the English rebellion.' He carried on through December 1848, and the first part of January 1849, making little impression on the walls of Lakki, but operating with success against Sikh and Afghan attempts to help the garrison from outside. Happily, on January 6th, 1849, came the news that Multan had fallen; and, four days later, after what Taylor, with humorous enthusiasm, called 'a spirited fire' from his disintegrating guns, and some marked effect on the walls, he received from the garrison a petition 'couched in very mild terms.' Lakki had fallen, and the Derajat was saved. With characteristic modesty the victorious

'commander' dismissed the episode with the comment that his military success might help him if his future was to be in these provinces. But Edwardes said that he had preserved the frontier throughout the war; Dalhousie gave him special commendation; and, later, he took home a mortar with the inscription: 'Taken at Lakki on the Indus, January 1849, by the Irregular Force under Lieutenant Reynell G. Taylor, and presented to him in token of regard and approval by Sir H. Lawrence, K.C.B., President of the Board of Administration, Lahore.'¹

The last illustration of frontier methods must be taken from the career of one of the Lawrences themselves, Major George, of Peshawar, one of the most admirable of the secondary figures in British Indian history. He has already figured in an earlier chapter, where his cheerfulness, unbroken spirit, and real understanding of Afghan and border character had much to do with preserving the lives of the British prisoners at Kabul in 1842, and their ultimate escape. All that he wrote in letter or journal, bore marks of the same indomitable cheerfulness and courage, and the Resident at Lahore had no abler assistant than his brother George, Principal Assistant to the Agent G.G., N.W.F. Major Lawrence's diary,² especially for 1847 and 1848, gives the best matter-of-fact, detailed description we have of what a warden of the marches had to do from day to day. Holding Peshawar, it was his business to guard the keystone of the whole frontier system. He was the expert on whom the Government of India depended for its news of Afghanistan and Central Asia. It was part of his routine duty to hold in some kind of order the most troublesome of all the border tribes, Afridis, Mohmands, Khattaks, Yusufzais, and the like. In societies in which robbery was a natural occupation, and murder in the most revolting forms so natural that even boys of fourteen killed to secure trifling prizes, he and

¹ Parry, *Life of Reynell Taylor*, p. 188.

² Panjab Government Records, *Lahore Political Diaries, 1847-49*, Vol. IV., pp. 307-570.

his assistants had to establish Henry Lawrence's simple border law. Odd as it may seem, he had also to collect what revenue he could; and the instructions which he received in September 1847 reveal the secret of such quiet as he and his fellows established in that land of troubles: 'A country in which the land tax is lightly or equally fixed is a country pacified. Without that, any other remedy will prove fruitless, and with it almost any other will be endured. Check the returns of the Kardars (native collectors) by the statements of these people, particularly as to what they have been in the habit of paying. Hear what they say of their own villages and of those of each other. Observe their dress, appearance, and bearing. You will quickly observe if they are over-assessed and therefore ill-fed, ill-clothed, miserable creatures, or a stirring, comfortable population.'¹ All this work too, had to be carried out in regions wasted and fretted into strife by previous Sikh misgovernment. Harry Lumsden, who got his training under George Lawrence, and was his sword-arm, has left a picture of the Yusufzai country just north-east of Peshawar: 'Such is the fearful state of misrule engendered by Sardar Sher Singh's system of grinding exactions that it is impossible to say what has been regularly paid to Government, taken by the Sardar, plundered by the troops, or made away with by the Khans. There is not a single house in the whole district that has not been literally gutted.'²

To Peshawar, the centre of all this turmoil, and the seat of an important Sikh army of the most doubtful allegiance to Lahore, and in great arrears of payment, came the news of the murder of the British officers at Multan, and the revolt of Mul Raj in April 1848. These Sikh forces in the North-West were to prove the chief assets of the Sikh leaders in the second Sikh War, and the head of the whole affair, Chatar Singh, was able, from Rawalpindi and the borders of the

¹ John Lawrence to G. Lawrence, 10 September, 1847.

² In the diary of G. Lawrence, 17 May, 1847: *Lahore Political Diaries, 1847-49*, Vol. IV., pp. 350-1.

Hazara country, to exert a decisive influence on the important Peshawar garrison. The impression more particularly aimed at in these details is that of a cool and cheerful soldier-political, in the centre of a fighting population, and with his own particular army on the verge of revolt, maintaining the honour of his Government and race, even when his own life, and those of his wife and companions, were hardly worth an hour's purchase. The bad news from Multan came on April 27th, 1848. In answer to advice that he should send his wife to Lahore, George Lawrence refused, because 'it would at once stamp us as being afraid and having no confidence in the troops.'¹ A little later he was warned, on good authority, that the Sikh regiments were not to be trusted. His answer was, 'I never despair, hope to the last.' The stout and faithful old Sikh Sardar, Gulab Singh,² with whom he worked, and who never failed him, tried to safeguard his English colleague by spending much of his days in his presence, but rumours increased that his fidelity would only mean another victim when the massacre took place. The diary of September 7th, runs: 'Warned that it is intended to shoot the Governor (Gulab Singh) and myself as the only means of winning over the troops; highly complimentary to us.'³ At last, on September 22nd, he was forced to send his wife and children under Afghan escort through Kohat to Lahore. But the treachery of Sultan Muhammad kept them at Kohat. Then when revolt did break out at the end of October 1848, and George Lawrence barely escaped to Kohat, he found himself with his family an Afghan prisoner for the second time, and later a hostage in Sikh hands during the war.

But this impression of a great frontiersman would be incomplete if it did not include the closing stages of George Lawrence's adventure. Already, in Afghanistan, he had

¹ Diary of G. Lawrence, 9 May, 1848: *Lahore Political Diaries, 1847-49*, Vol. IV., p. 482.

² Not the ruler of Kashmir.

³ *Lahore Political Diaries, 1847-49*, Vol. IV., p. 549.



Lieutenant-General Sir George St. P. Lawrence, K.C.S.I.

proved himself the soul of good faith and chivalry, by returning, after a mission to Pollock's army, to his captors to tell them that the British had refused their conditions. Once more, just after the battle of Gujrat in 1849, he accepted a mission to ask conditions for his Sikh captors, and, when these were refused by the victors, he returned across the Jhelum to the beaten army. 'I waved a white handkerchief as a signal for a boat to ferry me across. One immediately was sent, the firing ceasing on both sides until I landed. I then joined the Sardar, and surrendered myself in terms of my parole, much to Sher Singh's surprise, and that of the Sikhs, who cheered me long and loudly for returning to them, now that they had been defeated.'¹

We are so soaked in classical traditions that Regulus still stands for the gallant soldier returning to suffer death for having kept his faith. One need not turn to Livy or Horace when the unpretentious annals of British India are at hand. George Lawrence never found a Homer, or even a Horace, to sing his praises; but it has been through actions such as this that the frontier peace still stands between India and disorder, and British honour still keeps bright.

As the government of the frontier took firm root, it became clear that some special kind of military force, and some reliable sources of information, had become necessary. So far as information was concerned, there was need not only of learning what was happening at Kabul or in the Central Asiatic Khanates, but for accurate and speedy news about robbers, raiders, and murderers, so that they might be followed up and taught that the border peace could not be violated with impunity. For example, James Abbott in Hazara had immense trouble and little success in tracing a party of hillmen, who had, in June 1847, murdered three sleeping women and some children in cold blood²; or again, George Lawrence, time and again, found it necessary to

¹ G. Lawrence, *Forty-three Years in India*, pp. 268-9.

² *Lahore Political Diaries, 1847-49*, Vol. IV., p. 67.

arrange sudden night marches and early-morning attacks on recalcitrant villages. The usual sequence was, an outrage, a night march, an early frontal attack at dawn on a mountain village, encircled by hills, and the decisive blow struck from the rear by specially detached and qualified troops. From this mixture of hill fighting and rough-and-ready criminal-intelligence work, developed one of the most famous units of the Indian Army, the Corps of Guides, and no one can dispute Henry Lawrence's claim to be regarded as its founder. As early as the Afghan War his notion of some body of specially selected irregulars had been brought, fruitlessly at the time, to the notice of the Army authorities, but he never ceased to cherish the idea. In a memorandum on the Nepal frontier, he enlarged once more on his project. 'I was always of the opinion,' he told Hardinge, 'that the frontier could best be watched by a corps of irregulars, a sort of legion of horse, foot, and artillery, and two companies of pioneers, under an active sensible man: these men to be employed from Rohilkand to Darjiling; to be intimately acquainted with the forests and jungles, with the paths and rivers emerging from the hills. Every man should be more or less capable of guiding a column, or at least every company and troop should contain a score of men capable of doing so. The frontier is so extensive that, in all senses, this might be considered a general service legion; the men would labour under none of the disadvantages of locals, have no local ties, and yet by general acquaintance with the same description of wild country, and by long looking at high hills, wild glens, and dark forests, would be liable to few of the alarms that so often influence brave enough regulars, when suddenly led into countries abounding in unaccustomed features.'

The chance came when he found himself master at Lahore, with an unsubdued and partly unknown North-West Frontier, and with a sympathetic soldier Governor-General. He quickly found the appropriate commander in

Harry Lumsden, who wrote with glee to his father early in 1847 that he had just been nominated to raise the Corps of Guides: 'It will be the finest appointment in the country, being the right hand of the army and the left of the political. I am to have the making of this new regiment all to myself.'¹

In those happy days before Dalhousie whipped the Panjab into subordination, Henry Lawrence and his young men had things very much their own way; indeed even Hardinge had to issue a caution to him in October, 1847 - 'As the Corps is a novelty in the Indian Army, you had better keep down the expenses in every possible way by small establishments . . .' ending with the suggestion that he should treat them as the Resident's permanent escort, and do as he liked.² Before long, thanks to their commanding officer, and the real utility of the idea, the first small body blossomed into something quite important. Their usefulness was undeniable, whether at Lahore in tracing out the intrigues of the Rani, or fighting alongside Edwardes at Multan, or doing wonders in the second Sikh War; so, in less than three years from their start, the strength of the Corps was increased from one troop and two companies, to three troops of cavalry and six companies of infantry. The finest compliment ever paid to their first commander was Henry Lawrence's brief saying, 'Lumsden never writes; he fights battles, and Hodson his junior officer reports them.' As for the Corps itself, its history is an important chapter in the story of the Frontier, and their founder, had he but lived to hear it, would have forgotten something of his weariness and disappointment, in joy at their great march of nearly 600 miles to Delhi, in 1857, under Daly, and Daly's answer to the question asked him as he entered camp, 'How soon will you be ready to go into action?' - 'In half an hour.'³

Men of outstanding genius for action naturally create a

¹ Lumsden and Elsmie, *Lumsden of the Guides*, p. 34.

² Lord Hardinge to H. M. L., 8 October, 1847.

³ Sir George Younghusband, *The Story of the Guides*, p. 85. This book should be read by all who care for British-Indian history.

school of lieutenants to carry on their work, as Napoleon shaped his marshals, and Nelson his captains. The difference between Henry Lawrence and either Dalhousie, or his brother John, was that it was his mark and training which distinguished these youthful masters of the hills, and when the Mutiny came to test British India, it is hardly too much to say that they were pre-eminently the men who saved the situation – Nicholson with his flying column, and at Delhi, Edwardes at Peshawar, George Lawrence at Rajputana; and even John, with all the practical genius which he learned from no master but his own stern mind and will, rose to unusual heights of inspiration because he had once worked and disputed with his brother on frontier problems, and learned something of Henry's infallible touch in all matters of irregular and unorthodox policy and campaigning.

The letter to J. W. Kaye in which Henry Lawrence paid tribute to his helpers has appeared in other volumes, and more than once, but it is so characteristic of the writer, and so perfect a judgment on the group, that it must appear again as the master's tribute to his pupils. He had been dwelling on his projects for selecting, and using freely in government, the Sikh leaders whose chief friend he was, and he had passed on to emphasise the danger, in India, of feeble counsels and action. 'No,' he wrote, 'we cannot afford in India to shillyshally and talk of weather and seasons' (he was thinking of delays at Multan). 'If we are not ready to take the field at all seasons, we have no business here.' Then by a natural transition he continued: 'I was very fortunate in my assistants, all of whom were my friends, and almost everyone of whom was introduced into the Panjab through me. G. Lawrence, Macgregor, James Abbott, Edwardes, Lumsden, Nicholson, Taylor, Cocks, Hodson, Pollock, Bowring, H. Cope, and Melvill, are men such as you will seldom find anywhere, but, when collected under one administration, were worth double or treble their number taken at haphazard. Each was a good man; the

most were excellent officers. My chief help however was in my brother John, without whom I should have had difficulty in carrying on. . . . In various ways he was most useful and gave me always such help as few but a brother could.¹

¹ From H. M. L. to J. W. Kaye, 21 August, 1852.

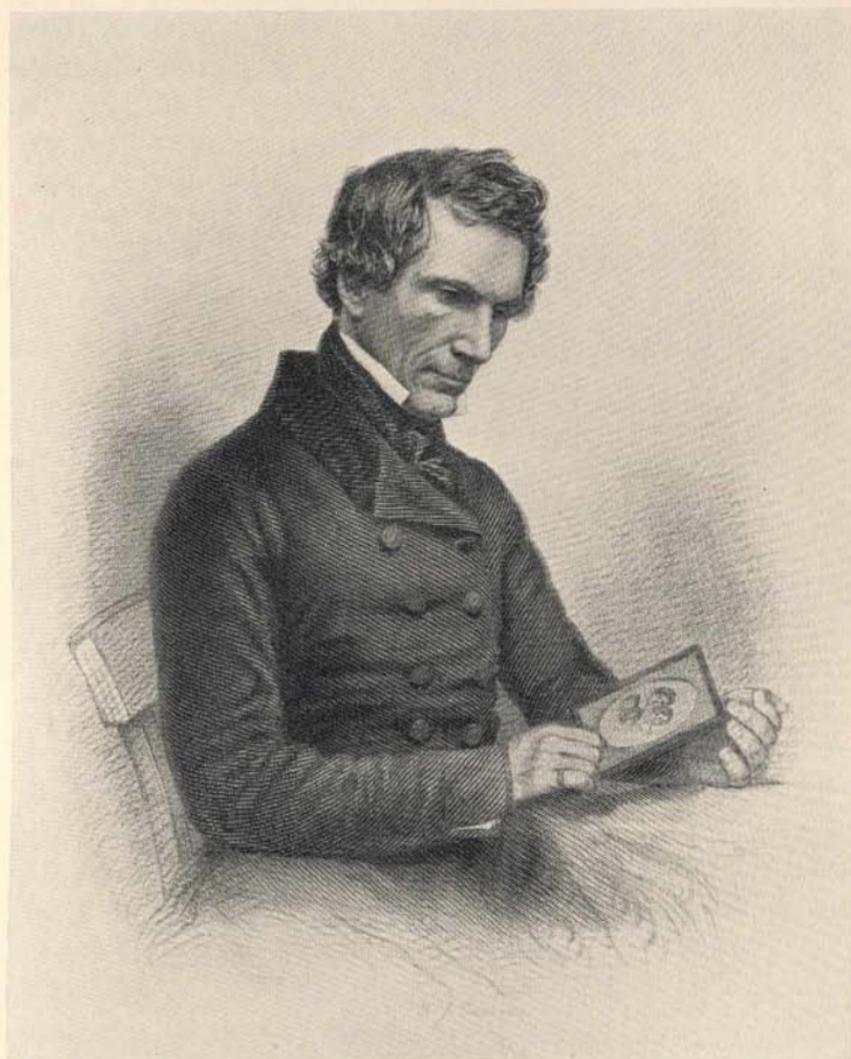
CHAPTER XI

THE ANNEXATION OF THE PANJAB, AND THE BOARD OF ADMINISTRATION, 1849-1853¹

INDIA has always proved an exacting mistress to those who have sought to serve her, and, the more exalted the position, the more exorbitant have been the demands of duty. Few things in Anglo-Indian history are more remarkable than the long stretches of unbroken service fulfilled by some of the most prominent men in all the services. Sir Charles Metcalfe, for example, took no home leave at all in a career of 37 years; and Robert Montgomery had only one furlough between 1828 and the Indian Mutiny. Henry Lawrence had been forced by ill health to go on furlough, but, although it is quite certain that he had not health to carry on without furlough, his short leave of absence in 1848 was disastrous to India, and broke into the continuity of his work in the Panjab. His visit to England, which was so indispensable to his bodily welfare, was otherwise an irrelevant and harmful interruption of his administration. Whether the crisis, immediately to be described, would have arisen had he remained at Lahore, is a matter of opinion, but the solution which he would quite certainly have attempted, might have made all the difference in the history of the Panjab.

To leave the region of speculation, he arrived home

¹ Should the author be accused, in this chapter, of special pleading for Sir H. Lawrence as against Dalhousie, his answer is that, after the most careful consideration, he has found it impossible to set Lord Dalhousie so far above less imposing figures like Hardinge, and the two Lawrences as is usually done. After all, it was Dalhousie who helped to precipitate the Mutiny, the Lawrences who saved the situation; and Hardinge's handling of the first Sikh war was as admirable as Dalhousie's of the first phase of the second war was the reverse.



Sir Henry Lawrence aged about forty-two

about the middle of March 1848. On the voyage, writing from Aden to the President of the Board of Control, Lord Hardinge added another to the many proofs of his appreciation of his subordinate's character and capacity. In a singularly gracious letter asking that Henry Lawrence might receive the K.C.B., he said: 'I should be made most happy if, on Colonel Lawrence's return to England, he could be rewarded by this mark of H.M.'s favour. Since the war closed, early in 1846, his labours have been incessant, and most successful. His personal energies, his moral force of character, were admirably displayed by leading the Sikh forces into the Kashmir passes in the autumn of 1846 – a force scarcely recovered from mutiny to its own government, and hostility to us; and he has, since the Treaty of Bhyrowal, as Government knows, administered the government of the Panjab with great ability and complete success.

'This is the last act of conscientious duty towards a most deserving officer, and there is no one of the many officers whom I have left behind me in India who has such good pretensions to the favour of Government as my friend Colonel Lawrence, and there is nothing which you can do for me which will give me more pleasure than to honour him as he deserves.'¹

The kindness and favour of Lord and Lady Hardinge runs, indeed, like a golden thread through the whole of his troubled furlough. After the arrival of the travellers, Honoria wrote to describe to Tim the great dinner, in honour of Lord Hardinge, at which his old chief, the Duke of Wellington spoke, and where Hardinge paid fresh tribute to his subordinate's services in India. On April 29th, Hardinge sent congratulations on the gazetting of the new title that day; and, a few days later, Lady Hardinge wrote to tell Honoria that Lord Hardinge 'has got the proper star for the order, which he shall have great pleasure in presenting to your husband.'

¹ Lord Hardinge to Sir John Hobhouse, 8 February, 1848.

After the decoration had been bestowed, there was much visiting and receiving of friends, and in July the family went to Ireland, and Sir Henry gave a dinner at Green's Hotel, Londonderry, to relatives and old friends. But events at Multan and throughout the Panjab had already begun to dispel the peace of the holiday. On April 19th, 1848, under circumstances shortly to be described, two British officers, Agnew and Anderson, were attacked at Multan, and next day their murder was one incident in a local military revolt. In a letter of June 13th, Lord Hardinge passed on the first vague news of the rising, conjecturing that 'either Agnew or Edwardes had received a check, and that nothing had occurred at Lahore.'¹ When later information revealed the seriousness of the *émeute*, Sir Henry Lawrence, verbally to Sir John Hobhouse, President of the Board of Control, and by letter to the Court of Directors, offered to return at once to India; and although the Court answered him in its usual tone of impersonal correctness, he was recalled from Ireland towards the end of July. Sir John Hobhouse, whom he saw, advised him to consult the Duke of Wellington, and arranged an interview. The Duke, in a short conversation, after asking some questions about the details of the situation, 'told me that I ought at once to go out to India, and join the Governor-General.'² Happily, better news arriving, it was decided to postpone departure till the end of October, although even then the question of health still offered serious difficulties.

On October 29th, 1848, Sir Henry Lawrence, Honoria, his sister Charlotte, and his younger boy, Henry, set off by the Mediterranean and Red Sea route for India, and there still remains in the mother's letters to Tim, now left at home, a running commentary on the voyage to Gibraltar, Malta, Alexandria, Cairo and the Egyptian desert, until they reached Bombay on Friday, December 8th, where for the

¹ Lord Hardinge to Sir H. M. L., 13 June, 1848

² Sir H. M. L., to Lord Dalhousie, 3 October, 1848.

time being the family party was left, Henry Lawrence himself pushing off on Sunday by sea for Karachi, and thence by river steamer up the Indus. So the Christmas of 1848, which should have been spent by a united family at home, saw them scattered once more, and Honoria praying for her husband who was 'off to the wars.'

A situation of great complexity and danger had developed in the Panjab. The revolt of Diwan Mul Raj in Multan is one of the most familiar of modern Indian stories, and need only be retold in its outstanding features. Henry Lawrence, before his departure on leave, had done his best to counsel and guide Mul Raj, the Diwan of Multan, who had had many reasons for being dissatisfied with his position under the Lahore Darbar, and who was meditating resignation. John Lawrence, when acting for his brother, had at least persuaded him to postpone the date of his resignation, as an event likely to cause trouble. But under Sir Frederic Currie, the new Resident at Lahore, the act of transference of authority from the Diwan to another representative of the Darbar resulted in the assassination of Agnew and Anderson, the two British officers sent to superintend the change, the outbreak of military and mob violence in Multan city, and the desertion of the entire armed force which had been sent with Agnew and Anderson from Lahore. The affair culminated in Mul Raj, whether by panic, or through being terrorised, putting himself at the head of what could only be called an anti-British rising.¹

Throughout the Panjab, at the moment, trouble was brewing. The old army, whether disbanded or in new units, seems to have been awaiting some suitable occasion for a fresh outburst; the Maharani Jindan, in retirement, was still the centre of intrigue against the existing government, and some Sikh leaders, of whom the chief was Chatar Singh of the Attariwala family, were playing with treason,

¹ Panjab Government Record Office : *Trial of Diwan Mul Raj* (edited by Sita Ram Kohli), the most useful first-hand printed source of information.

at least against their British caretakers. It is doubtful whether any real mischief would ever have arisen, if a suitable occasion had not offered itself – certainly Henry Lawrence believed that there was at first nothing solid in Sikh discontent. At a fatal moment, when the old Resident and his dominating influence was gone, when a second-rate man, or at least one inexperienced in Sikh affairs, had taken his place, and when a new Governor-General, Lord Dalhousie, ignorant of Indian affairs, although dauntless and resolute, was still finding his feet, the Multan outrage offered a tempting opportunity for a rising. One man, of the Lawrence school, Herbert Edwardes, acted at once from across the Indus, and so far as a lieutenant could meet the danger by assuming authority, improvising wild and untrained levies across the Indus, and establishing relations with a native ally, the Nawab of Bahawalpur, he succeeded completely, winning two battles, and driving the rebels in on Multan.

But elsewhere everything was wrongly done. Currie, as Resident, took no speedy and decisive action at Lahore; and, when he did act, he sent Sikh troops already faltering, to help at the siege of Multan, under a commander, Sher Singh, whose father was now organising war elsewhere. The Governor-General and the Commander-in-Chief decided that nothing could be done – it was now the end of April – until the cool season came, and that it was more important to conserve their forces and prepare for decisive action at the end of the year, than to strike treason down at once, and incidentally save the gallant officers, who, at Peshawar, Attock, Hazara, and elsewhere, were maintaining their positions with astonishing courage and skill against every possible difficulty. It was a minor rehearsal of the first days of the Indian Mutiny, when only the impossible adventure of besieging Delhi and the equally remarkable defence of Lucknow kept the revolt within certain limits. In 1848, at least until near the end of the year, the Government

in India allowed things to drift, and the consequence was the second Sikh War.¹

Henry Lawrence, writing to the new Governor-General, Lord Dalhousie, in October 1848, left no doubt as to his views: 'What I always urged on my brother John and on my assistants was, never to allow rebellion one day to make head, and what I should have done, had I been at Lahore when the recent outburst occurred, would have been to have asked my brother John to take my place, while with two or three assistants, and half a dozen volunteer officers, I pushed down by forced marches towards Multan, at the head of such troops as were at hand, and there joined Edwardes, Cortlandt, and the Bahawalpur Nawab, while the Lahore and Ferozpur moveable brigades followed us by regular marches. Had such steps been taken, I am convinced that Mul Raj would have surrendered before a British Regiment reached Multan; or, at worst, one week, with half a dozen heavy guns, and as many howitzers and mortars, would have decided the question. No one could surely assert that Multan is one half the strength of Kangra and yet, four months after Sobraon, I was allowed to take four native Regiments, without a single European, against it in the month of May. . . . Although from want of rain the autumn in the Panjab is very hot, the months of April and May are seldom hotter than February and March in Hindustan. The original movement was ordered with a view to save two officers' lives; surely it was as incumbent to prevent the murder of half a dozen others. I think Currie was perfectly right in not recalling them, and I doubt not he was overruled in his original intention by the croakers at Lahore, who talked of Europeans dying of *coup de soleil*. As if war is to be made without loss of life ! As if it was not incumbent to strike a blow for six as for two ! And, above

¹ I cannot possibly, after serious consideration, accept Sir John Fortescue's rendering of these events (*History of the British Army*, Vol. XII., chap. xxxvi.); and regard his general criticism of the 'politicals' at this time as vitiated through prejudice.

all, as if it was not incumbent to break up the nest of rebellion, and destroy the rallying point of the disaffected.¹ Lord Dalhousie, to whom this letter was addressed, was always disinclined to allow others to convict him of sin; and the shrewd criticism of what, after all, Dalhousie had himself adopted as his policy was so pointed that it must have hurt his pride, and radically affected his feelings towards so outspoken a subordinate. But was the letter just in its estimate of the situation before the second Sikh War became general? So far as Mul Raj was concerned it seems certainly correct. At his subsequent trial, the judges, in deciding that he was not an accomplice in the first attempt to assassinate Agnew and Anderson, did so partly on grounds of the man's character, which was timid and mercantile rather than military.² He had already responded, in 1847, to Henry Lawrence's management; and it is almost certain that, even after the *émeute* of April 19th and 20th, the sudden arrival at Multan of Henry Lawrence would have brought him in. Or, if it had not, once more the estimate of the letter, that Multan would not have stood a siege, seems just. There is an obvious answer, that Multan stood a siege in which 35,800 shot and shell had to be fired.³ But that siege came after long delay. If Henry Lawrence, backed by Edwardes, with his composite victorious force, had acted at once, no one familiar with Indian psychology will lightly deny that even the citadel would have surrendered. Again it is quite certain that nothing but six months of British inaction persuaded the Sikh leaders that they might venture, and gave them time, like Napoleon in the Hundred Days, to organise an army. There was one man then in India, almost equally qualified to speak – not so much of the military as of the psychological situation – John Lawrence; and John Lawrence's view was exactly that which, nine years later, made him urge the soldiers to lay siege to Delhi. To Elliot,

¹ Sir H. M. L., to Lord Dalhousie, 3 October, 1848.

² *Trial of Mul Raj*, pp. 179–81.

³ Lee-Warner, *Life of the Marquis of Dalhousie*, Vol. I., p. 183.

at the Governor-General's Headquarters he said: 'The season, no doubt, is terribly bad for moving troops. But the alternative seems worse. The lives of none of our officers in Bannu, Peshawar, and Hazara will be safe, if speedy retribution does not fall on these scoundrels. It was touch and go in the Kashmir affair two years ago. It was then a question whether the Shaikh surrendered or the troops went over to him. *If we do nothing, the whole of the disbanded soldiery of the Manjha will flock down and make common cause with the mutineers*'; and to Currie, 'Despite the heat and advanced season of the year, I would counsel action. Otherwise you will have *émeutes*, as you fear, in Bannu, Hazara, and Peshawar.'¹

It is no uncritical biographer's estimate, but a cool judgment supported by those who in 1848 knew the Panjab and the frontiers best, that the policy pursued, after April 1848, by the Governor-General, and the Commander-in-Chief in India, was the main reason why the second Sikh War assumed proportions so alarming; and that the just and sound view of the position was that of Henry and John Lawrence and the men who worked with them.² The letter of October 3rd, 1848, already quoted, in which Sir Henry explained his views to Lord Dalhousie, contains one of his most memorable expositions of what may be called intelligent and sympathetic imperialism; and since, in the four years which followed, his friendly attitude towards the Indian, and especially the Sikh, people came prominently forward, it is well to emphasise how much he saw the need of competent British leadership. He had been criticising his successor at Lahore, and others, for claiming too much from Sikh co-operation, and exercising too little their own proper initiative and leadership: 'If there had been the tenth part of an

¹ J. Lawrence to H. M. Elliot, and F. Currie, 30 April, 1848: *Life of Lord Lawrence*, Vol. I., pp. 250-2.

² It is the author's opinion that the true history of the second Sikh war has still to be written; but that it can be written only by one who knows the Indian situation from the Sikh point of view.

Edwardes' energy, ability, and honesty at Lahore, we need not, and should not, have been there; and if there had been any patriotism among the Sardars, the Hill country would now belong to Lahore, and neither the Kashmir or Kangra affairs, nor the first rebellion of Mul Raj would have occurred. In no one of these occasions was more energy or zeal displayed, nor is it the fashion of Orientals to make war, or do anything else, as Europeans do it. If they did so, India would not be ours, and if the Lahore chiefs could have acted for themselves, they would not in 1846 have urged our stay, nor in 1847 have merged their nationality in their desire for our protection and tutelage.

'From the earliest days, from those of Murshidabad, Arcot, Hyderabad, and Oudh, down to those of Kabul, Sind, and Lahore, when have we had support or aid from allies, unless when urged on, or rather led on, by British influence, encouraged and countenanced by judicious and brave English officers? My brother George, with Taylor and Lumsden, effected with hundreds of Sikhs what their Sardars never did with thousands; Abbot the same in Hazara, and Edwardes and Taylor still more in Bannu, and so it will ever be. The Sikhs, like our sipahis, when doing our work (for keeping the peace of the Panjab is, I consider, as much our business as that of any part of India), will do much *with* us, or led by any of us; little or nothing can be expected without our countenance and *personal* observation. Everyone knows that there is no patriotism in India; but in its place there are other useful qualities, fidelity to their salt, a quick sense of favour or injury, and a readiness to hazard all for the man or men they believe to be personally friendly.'

With the military details of the second Sikh War this narrative has little to do; but the consequences of the final defeat of the Sikhs made shipwreck of the policy which Henry Lawrence had constructed on a basis of peace and co-operation at Lahore. In addition, after 1849, the controlling power in the Panjab was no longer the British

representative at Lahore, but the Governor-General himself, and with Lord Dalhousie a 'new and disturbing factor in Henry Lawrence's career introduced itself. Indeed it had made itself felt even before he had resumed his official duties on February 1st, 1849.

But, prior to any discussion of the early relations between Lord Dalhousie and Sir Henry Lawrence a brief summary of events in the Panjab is necessary. If the judgment already expressed in this chapter is correct, there need have been no extensive rising, even at Multan, if a master hand had dealt with events in April 1848. After the Multan troubles, it seems fair to say that an error of the first magnitude was made in not taking instant steps to crush revolt. Lord Dalhousie must share with the Commander-in-Chief blame and responsibility for the extent and seriousness of the war which followed. Wherever what may be called the Lawrence policy was applied at once, success, or at least successful resistance, followed. Edwardes not only saved the Derajat, but pinned Mul Raj down to Multan. George Lawrence, Abbott, and Nicholson for long maintained a firm hold on the frontier between Peshawar and Hazara, and, later on, Reynell Taylor's gallantry at Lakki Marwat showed what a single resolute man could do. Most notable of all, John Lawrence, with a skill, energy, and ruthless power, which no soldier could have surpassed, kept the Hills quiet, and saved his own Jalandhar Doab for order and obedience. It was in the minds of the Governor-General, and the Commander-in-Chief, that timidity won the day, and their timidity quadrupled the perils of the situation.

But timidity was not the only fault. Having given the rebels six months in which to organise a real revolt, to arm themselves, and dislodge the few gallant officers who still held out, the Government of India took so little pains with preparations for the campaign, that, when Lord Gough reached Ferozpur in November 1848, and, still more, when he began operations, his army had quite inadequate supplies,

means of transport, and information. The Governor-General was, later, to redeem his reputation for organisation both in the Panjab and elsewhere; he was a man of unusual strength of will, mind, and character; but on the record of the six months which followed the Multan revolt, he must be judged a rather dismal failure.¹ Where his faults ended, those of Lord Gough began. It has already been pointed out that there was really no fair parallel between the events of the first Sikh War, and those of the second. In the first, a numerous, well-equipped, and aggressive force from Lahore took the initiative against an army which nothing saved but the prudent foresight, careful dispositions, and dauntless courage of Lord Hardinge. It was Hardinge who won the war, no doubt with some assistance from his Commander-in-Chief, but in the face of grave disadvantages; and he won the war in sixty days. But in 1848, after six wasted months, government and army, over-burdened with advantages, stumbled through some inglorious preliminary operations, at Ramnagar, Sadullapur and Chilianwala, until the superiority in almost every particular, which neither Gough's gallant recklessness, nor the preliminary faltering of Dalhousie could cancel, asserted themselves, and the Sikh army, handicapped in every direction, collapsed at Gujrat, and in General Gilbert's brilliant pursuit of them after the battle. On March 14th, 1849, General Gilbert received the surrender of the Sikh sardars and their force, and the kingdom, which Ranjit Singh had built with such pains, fell in the dust.

Sir Henry Lawrence had left Britain in a mood of high devotion to duty, and deep interest in the province and people whom he had been guiding so skilfully towards peace. Lord Hardinge's last months of office had seen him wholeheartedly a believer in his subordinate and friend. In England the bestowal of the K.C.B. had announced how

¹ If the proceedings of the Government of India and the military authorities during months in which a state of war already existed in the Panjab be compared, say with Lord Haldane's management of the British military situation just before August 1914, this will not appear an extreme judgment.

unreservedly the old Governor-General and the East India Company recognised the merits of their servant, and not only the interview with the Duke of Wellington, but the repeated confidential consultations with Sir John Hobhouse and others led Henry Lawrence to think (and correctly think) that his Government trusted him. He returned to India, then, feeling that his coming would make a difference to events in his province, and that his past record had justified his expectation of the most cordial co-operation between himself and Lord Hardinge's successor. But Lord Dalhousie answered all this impetuous self-sacrifice by clipping the wings, and taming the force, of his greatest subordinate in the North-West. There was little, save public spirit, and disinterestedness, in common between the enthusiastic, sympathetic, and experienced Irishman, who always acted on his instincts because his whole previous experience in India made these instincts his safest guide, and the dogmatic, theoretic, authoritarian Scotsman, who was determined to assert unchallenged mastery over all his colleagues. Henry Lawrence, accepted as their master by all his men, worked with them in that admirable kind of equality which a great man can so easily will into existence. Dalhousie, with just a suggestion of the well-conditioned bantam cock, never understood how to act as *primus inter pares*. To be fair to the Governor-General, he now recognised that, thanks to his own errors after April 1848, 'the Khalsa army were traitors,' and that 'the Khalsa army was the Sikh state.'¹ As Henry Lawrence could not see from home, the authorities had blundered into so deep a bog that moderate measures were no longer possible; and that, even if his dreams had been as wise as they were noble, his policy of a friendly, independent State rebuilt for Dalip Singh out of the wreck of his Darbar's foolish plans, was probably no longer possible. With his own peculiar kind of ruthlessness, Dalhousie, in October 1848, prepared the mind of his

¹ Dalhousie to Sir H. M. L., 7 August, 1848.

growth in self-control in Henry Lawrence that he was able to answer moderately, while still manfully reiterating the views from which he never moved, 'My own opinion, as already more than once expressed in writing to your Lordship, is against annexation. I did think it unjust; I now think it impolitic.'¹

It will now have become apparent that, on the threshold of some years of gloriously useful work at Lahore, Sir Henry Lawrence had to confess how little he possessed the confidence of the Governor-General. It is true that, when definitely asked if this were not so, Lord Dalhousie refused to admit the absence of confidence. Yet his written word remains, and it is that, disliking the idea of a Board of Administration, rather than a single Chief Commissioner as the head of the new province, Lord Dalhousie created a Board because he had promised that Sir Henry Lawrence should return to Lahore, where, nevertheless, he did not trust him as Chief Commissioner: 'Having so lately, and under such peculiar circumstances, replaced him as head of the government, I could not take him out if he was willing to act. Thus I was tied to Sir Henry Lawrence. But Sir Henry Lawrence was not competent to the sole charge of the Panjab, to the civil government of it. It was indispensable to give him a coadjutor.'²

John Lawrence was the coadjutor, and, as will be seen, the co-operation, and even the differences, of the two brothers produced one of the most notable and successful experiments ever made in Indian government. Yet all the years of co-operation, from 1849 to 1853, were coloured by this adverse opinion of Dalhousie. The judgment was passed early in their mutual relations, and the Governor-General was too dogmatic, and too tenacious of his views, ever to think of modifying them.

With March 31st, 1849, the Panjab entered on another

¹ Sir H. M. L. to Dalhousie, 5 February, 1849.

² Dalhousie to Sir J. Hobhouse, 30 July, 1849.

phase of its chequered history, for from that day dated the operation of the Board of Administration which Lord Dalhousie determined to set up in place of the old independent Sikh government. Characteristically and naturally enough he did not use the former Resident to expound the scheme, but sent the Secretary to the Government in the Foreign Department, Henry Elliot, 'to make known to you the instructions he has received, and proceed to carry them out in concert with you.'¹ The basis of the new instrument of government was the complete annihilation of the Sikh government. In place of the Darbar there were now to be three members of a Board of Administration, Sir Henry as President, John Lawrence, and C. G. Mansel, a distinguished civilian, with plenary authority; Commissioners over, first four, and then five, divisions, and Deputy Commissioners in charge of districts, who were to be given Assistant and Extra-Assistant Commissioners. It is expressly stated that natives might be appointed to the last class. The Governor-General hoped 'to uphold native institutions and practices as far as they are consistent with the distribution of justice to all classes,' but he was persuaded that, 'except in some of the wild districts trans-Indus, or the Alpine country of the Sind-Sagar Doab, there is no portion of the country which will not be benefited by the gradual introduction of the British system at the earliest possible period.'² Under that scheme the Panjab was reorganised between April 1849 and the beginning of 1853.

So many controversial issues were raised during these years that, in the lives of Henry and John Lawrence, the period assumes a troubled appearance, and since, at the end, Sir Henry was transferred to Rajputana, the judgment might not unnaturally be passed that, by 1849, the best of his career was now over. The truth is that, between 1849 and 1853, work of an importance not equalled at that time

¹ The Under-Secretary, Government of India, to Sir H. M. L., 27 March, 1849.

² Instructions to the Board of Administration, 31 March, 1849.

within the Empire was being done, and that, allowing a just share in the work to John Lawrence and the Governor-General, the dominating influence in all which mattered most, except revenue, was the President, especially in view of all that he had previously dreamed, planned, and executed as Resident in the old kingdom. The first years of British government in the North-West saw the accomplishment, except with regard to annexation, and the treatment of the Sikh gentry, of the ideas of Sir Henry Lawrence, through the authority of the Governor-General, and by the hands of the Board. It was the completion of his work as Resident.

The controversial elements can best be prevented from obscuring the view of the constructive work accomplished, if a brief preliminary description be given of the chief agents in the transformation of the Panjab, and the motives which inspired them.

First in importance was the President of the Board, Sir Henry Lawrence. What his character was, readers ought already to have perceived; but it is of the first importance to understand his motives at this time. He knew more and cared more, for the land and people of the new province than any other man. It had been his ambition to maintain an independent principality between the old North-West Provinces, and the trans-Indus frontier; but he had been under no illusions as to the need of the firmest and most competent British leadership, and of the employment, at all vital points, of very carefully selected British officers. Non-annexation, however, for him had meant the employment of all the resources of the Panjab exclusively in the service of the Panjab, and the enlistment of every competent Panjabi administrator and soldier in the working of the State. It may be that the idea was impracticable – it was never given a chance of being worked. But in originality no other scheme could compete with it, whether in audacity of conception, knowledge of, and belief in, the best that the Panjab could offer, or sympathy with a point of view not

English but Indian. Apart from the fact that the Sikhs had assisted in their own destruction, the greatest difficulty in Sir Henry's plan was that it assumed the existence of a succession of men like himself, and the great disinterested, sympathetic Resident is as rare a bird as the benevolent despot. Still to have conceived the idea places its author on a different plane of genius from that of either his brother or the Governor-General. But, it may be asked, how could a man, who believed so profoundly in leaving Indians as far as possible to manage their own affairs, conscientiously accept the position of President over a Board whose existence was due to the destruction of the Sikh realm? A letter to Lord Hardinge, just before the Board came into existence, answers the question: 'I seem singular (perhaps John excepted) in advocating non-annexation. All else seem hot on it, Currie, all the assistants here, and Elliot. . . . The Governor-General is very fair, hears everybody, and thinks for himself; but in this matter I work at great disadvantage coming into the field after a ten months' pre-occupation by the enemy. I tell Lord Dalhousie that we may as effectually support our own interests, nay I think more so, by upholding the puppet Maharaja than by declaring the Panjab a British province. We may have the army and civil administration all in our own hands, as indeed it was gradually coming into your Lordship's. . . . I do not think after all that has passed, and half the Sardars, and almost all the army (whatever the cause) having deserted, that the act would be unjust, but I do think it would be impolitic, and have repeatedly said so to the Governor-General.

'I am, as I was, of opinion that circumstances and our own gross military misconduct have brought things to the present pass, and that, elsewhere in India, a shorter period of military misconduct would have effected a similar crisis. Still, as so many of all ranks have deserted, and as so few of those with us have been actively loyal, the Government have it in their own hands to do as they choose. If I was

sure that Mackeson or some one like him would not get my berth if I vacated, I would resign if annexation is determined on, but I should consider that I had committed a crime were I to throw the reins into such hands.¹

Accepting the position of President as a *pis aller*, and knowing already how little sympathetic to his aims the Governor-General was, Sir Henry determined to fling all his influence on the side of sympathy with the conquered people, and the retention, as far as possible, of their usages, class-distinctions, and legitimate privileges. He meant to use his chosen lieutenants, at the head of local irregular levies, to maintain and improve the frontier. He was still, at Lahore, a kind of king in the North-West, and few monarchs have ever cared for their kingdoms and peoples as he did for the people of the Five Rivers. He was first in importance among the men who reorganised the Panjab, for he alone, along with John Nicholson, the greatest of his lieutenants, had an unmistakable touch of genius.

John Lawrence was as undoubtedly the second of the group. In many things he was his brother's master – in sheer industry, systematic administration, and grasp of method. He had almost Henry's first-hand knowledge of the people he governed, and beneath a rough manner he had a very practical desire to see them well governed. It must be remembered, too, that only reluctantly had he accepted the policy of annexation, although, once accepted, the policy was administered by him without remorse or looking back. In 1848, and indeed earlier, he had proved how good a soldier he might have been, and for ten years in the Panjab he combined, as perhaps no other man in India could have done, some of the highest qualities of the soldier and of the administrator. Superior to Henry in finance, he was perhaps as inferior to him in his general political views, and even if his brother's most cherished plan had been only a quixotic dream, still John had not in him the stuff out of

¹ Sir H. M. L. to Lord Hardinge, 5 March, 1849.

which such dreams are created. Himself a relentless worker, and a masterful man, he did not always understand that there were other ways than his by which the Panjab could be saved, and that greatness in co-operation was as admirable an aim as solitary supremacy. He never quite succeeded in binding to himself in affectionate loyalty the juniors who would have given all they had for his brother; and, to put it plainly, he acted and spoke at times with a rudeness which detracted from the strength of which some may be foolish enough to think roughness a natural concomitant. It was inevitable that two such ardent spirits as Henry and John Lawrence, working together, were bound to fall apart. It was the good fortune of their province that, for four years, their conflicting virtues worked directly for its good.

Although the Marquis of Dalhousie was as deeply immersed in Panjab affairs as his lieutenants, giving much more attention to them, especially between 1848 and 1852, than to anything else in India, and although his attitude was always that of superior to inferiors, he must, as a maker of the North-West, be placed below both of them. From the first he showed himself a man of the most perfect courage, one of the most disinterested of British public men at that time, a great administrator, and one who, unlike the Lawrences, proved his competence by regulating simultaneously half a score of great Indian affairs. His letters to Sir Henry Lawrence reveal a wonderful mastery of exact detail – both personal and impersonal; and, whatever he lacked, it was neither resolution nor his own kind of clear-sightedness. In retrospect, he cannot be placed lower than third among the Governors-General of India. Nevertheless, in the rarest qualities of mind, sympathy, and foresight, he seems to stand below both John and Henry Lawrence as a factor in Panjab affairs. He did what neither of the brothers could have done so well – he regulated and used his difficult team to the best effect, and he did this, not by his superiority of mind, but by his strong will operating through the superiority

of his position. The great administrator is naturally the thief of other men's ideas and work – it is a false convention which attributes to the regulator the genius and the labours which alone have made the success of his superintendence possible. Allowing to all three all the qualities which their eulogists attributed to them, it is still true that the expert knowledge of the two brothers, the constructive ideas of Henry, the wonderful combination of qualities through which he built a province and a frontier, were of an entirely higher kind than the skill in regulation, and the unbending will, which gave Lord Dalhousie his high place among Indian pro-consuls. The Governor-General suffered from an unfortunate disability of not being able to work with his equals, nor did he, with all his courtesy, understand how to differ with a man who might probably be right but who happened to be officially his inferior. Something has already been said of his dealings with Sir Henry Lawrence. That the crisis should have been postponed till 1852 was due much more to Sir Henry's love of the Panjab than to Dalhousie's skill in personal management. Sir Henry Lawrence was already, in 1849, one of the most distinguished servants of the Indian Government, yet Dalhousie, without reluctance, used his official supremacy to silence a man who knew India, and could judge Indian questions as he himself never could. Of a rather stormy conversation in Simla in 1849, he writes, 'I tipped him a little of the "grand seigneur," which I had not given him before, and the storm sank into a whisper in a second.'¹ He continually claimed rights of dictation where he would have been wiser to acknowledge frankly the rights of men better fitted to judge than he. Of his tone, the President of the Board wrote that 'he vents his impertinences on us in a way that would be unbecoming if we were his servants'²; and there still remains, pencilled in rough draft by Lady Lawrence, a grave answer to some

¹ *Private Letters of the Marquess of Dalhousie*, p. 78.

² Sir H. M. L. to J. Lawrence, 13 June, 1851.

petty criticisms of Sir Henry's phraseology – uncalled for discipline, the best excuse for which is that Indian life tells on the temper, and that even the best of men find autocracy a deteriorating occupation. The Marquis of Dalhousie was one of the chief makers of the Panjab, and will remain one of the foremost figures in Indian history. He would have been greater still, if he had recognised that, at Lahore, Henry Lawrence was the better man, and that he should have dealt with him as a man should with his equal.

Time would fail to notice all the gallant, or competent, or grotesque figures who came and went across the Panjab stage in these years. There was Sir Charles Napier, who came out to save India after Lord Gough seemed to have imperilled it by his blunders at Chilianwala – Napier who might have figured as Don Quixote, had his character and mind been equal to the part, but whose short and turbulent career as Commander-in-Chief can be excused only by some failure in mental sanity. It will be unnecessary to add to the oceans of ink which were spilt by Dalhousie, Henry Lawrence, and others, in refuting Napier's statements. He passed through India, emitting misjudgments which seemed all the worse for their extravagance of statement. With some he quarrelled; others he insulted, and he left with almost every major military question in the Peninsula unsettled. Let him rest in peace, if rest be anywhere possible to that unquiet soul. There were the frontier men, revealing themselves usually rather by their deeds than their words: Harry Lumsden, with his Guides, or carrying on for George Lawrence at Peshawar – the reality of what romantic novelists caricature in their 'strong silent man'; Reynell Taylor, proving by years of steady constructive statesmanship across the Indus that his civil powers were at least equal to the gallantry he had shown at Lakki Marwat; James Abbott, ruling Hazara as prophet, priest, and king, quarrelling with even the Board when they sought to invade his territory, but binding his troubled folk to him with an affection probably unequalled

along the frontier districts; John Nicholson, even more silent in letters than Lumsden, but already convincing all, including the Governor-General, that he had the makings in him of something very great.

In these years, Honoria Lawrence hardly emerges so prominently as before. She had returned to India with little of the health which she had possessed when she first arrived in 1837, and Herbert Edwardes, at Multan in 1848, was warned to see her gently on her way to Lahore – she was no longer, her husband warned him, ‘a sprightly lass.’ Before and after the birth of her third child in April 1850 – this time a girl, Honoria – she was often not only seriously but dangerously ill. Yet a perusal of her husband’s letter-books shows how much in mere routine she did for him; how, now and then, she restrained or trimmed his more characteristic replies, or helped him in the innumerable cases of charity which ever constituted the undercurrent in the life of both, or gave shrewd advice to struggling mortals who came for counsel to them. Happily, towards the end of these years, she seemed to grow a little stronger, and some of the happiest notes from the President on tour remind one of the days when honours were fewer, but there were also fewer obstacles to free and frequent correspondence in their times of separation.

These personal notes are not in any way intended to obscure the very many controversial issues of the period, or the bitter differences which ultimately drove Sir Henry Lawrence from Lahore, and even threatened a lasting alienation from his brother. But they reveal how much more memorable and interesting were the positive and constructive things which happened in the Panjab between 1848 and 1853, and what notable people played their part in reconstructing from its foundations the whole North-West of India.

Much of that reconstruction was the joint work of all three members of the Board – work which the substitution of Robert Montgomery for Mansel in 1851 rendered even more

notable; it was a strange chance which delivered over the Panjab in 1851 into the hands of three old pupils of Foyle College. Moreover, in simple justice to Lord Dalhousie, it must be said that the incessant attention of the Governor-General to North-Western affairs, and his unrelenting pursuit of administrative efficiency, were major factors in all that was accomplished. The description, therefore, of the general work of the Board is not strictly part of a life of the President. Yet one who has watched the framework of Henry Lawrence's ideas on the Panjab take definite form, and the spirit of devotion to its people grow in proportion to his increase of knowledge and experience, can trace these ideas and that spirit in all that was done. The official record of this joint work may be found in the *Report on the Administration of the Punjab for the Years 1849-50 and 1850-51*, which Richard Temple drew up, and the Board published in 1852. But Government reports, even when interesting in themselves, subside into mere tediousness in summary; and, by good fortune, a promise by Sir Henry, to tell his old friend Kaye what was being done in the province, produced a letter which, better than any summary could, shows what the Board had accomplished just before it was dissolved. Its subject is so important that the relevant portions must be given entire:

'August 30th, 1852.

'The system introduced by Lord Hardinge into the Cis and Trans Sutlej States in 1846 was followed in 1849 in the Panjab. The country was divided into four Commissionerships, and each of the latter into 4 or 5 Districts. The Districts of Peshawar and Hazara were, until this year, kept directly under the Board. Colonel Mackeson is now Commissioner over them. The Deputy Commissioners over Districts perform all the functions of magistrates and collectors in the Provinces, with some of the duties of a judge. Each District has one or two assistants, according to size and importance, as also an uncovenanted, called extra, assistant. All these Officers work in all the courts, civil, fiscal & police. Natives are eligible to these last named appointments,

and it has been our aim to get as many natives of the Panjab into these offices, and also into berths of tahsildar, &c., but as yet it has been uphill work, as the Panjabis are not acquainted with forms and rules which are unfortunately thought too much of, though happily not so much so as in the Provinces. We wish to make the basis of our rule a light and agreeable assessment; a strong and vigorous though uninterfering police, and a quick hearing in all civil and other cases. We are therefore pushing on the Revenue Survey (you know I was for several years a revenue surveyor), and the revised Settlement. We have hunted down all the dacoits. During the first year we hanged nearly a hundred, six and eight at a time, and thereby struck such a terror that dacoity is more rare than in any part of India. In civil justice we have not been so successful, or in putting down petty crime; but we are striving hard to simplify matters and bring justice home to the poor. In seven years we shall have a splendid canal with four great branches from the hills close down to Multan, and in two years we shall have a magnificent trunk road to Peshawar, and in every direction we are making cross roads (in the Lahore District there are eight hundred miles of new road), and in many quarters small inundation canals have been opened out or old ones repaired. Col. Napier our civil engineer is a great man in this department.

'The defence of the frontier alone has been no small work, considering we have done it in spite of Sir Chas. Napier. We have raised five regiments of as fine cavalry as any in India, and as many corps of splendid infantry; also six regiments of very good military police, & 2,700 cavalry police in separate troops. These irregulars and military police have kept the peace of the country; the regulars being in reserve. There are, besides these, the ordinary thanah police, employed as detectives, and on ordinary occasions they may amount to 6,000 men. Not one shot has been fired *within* the Panjab since annexation. The revenue has been reduced by the summary assessments about three lakhs or about twenty-five per cent on the whole; varying from 5 and 10 to 50 per cent. The poorer classes have reason to be thankful; not so the Sardars, and those who used to get employment under the Darbar; of these, hundreds, perhaps thousands, are out of employ. Liberal *life* pensions have been granted; but still there is distress in the higher circles, especially where parties were connected with the outbreak. In the Panjab there is

not much less than twenty-five lakhs of jaghir, nearly all of which has been enquired into and reported. In this department, we have done more in three years than was done in fifty years in the N.W. Provinces.

'Perhaps I expedited matters by prohibiting in the Cis and Trans Sutlej in 1846 any resumption until the case was reported and orders issued. This was reversing what some of our officers wished, viz. first to resume, and then to enquire, perhaps in ten or twenty years afterwards!

'We have planted thousands of trees, so that in a few years, the reproach of want of verdure will be wiped off. Serais are at every stage on new main roads, and police posts at every two or three miles. We are enquiring as to education and have got up a good English and vernacular school at Amritsar, where 160 boys and men attend; many of whom already speak and write English. I am very anxious to extend vernacular education and educate Panjabis for the public service, and for engineering and medical and surgical offices.'

As to Sir Henry's individual contribution to the work, it is not difficult to give an answer approximately correct. Informally, the three members of the Board divided the work, so that the President dealt with all Military and Political affairs, John Lawrence with Revenue, and Mansel with Judicial and Police administration. It was the right of each to be consulted on what the others were doing, and one of the causes of trouble between the brothers was that the President was not always given a chance of knowing what was being done in Revenue matters. It is still possible to judge, from the rough pencillings on letters and dispatches in the Lahore archives, what each member of the Board thought, and nothing is more remarkable than the greater weight and wisdom of the notes added by the third member of the Board, after Robert Montgomery had taken the place of C. G. Mansel in 1851.

From such pencillings, and the whole mass of Sir Henry's private and public correspondence, three notable contributions made by him to the restoration of the province stand

out. The first affected the spirit and temper of the administration, although it had also a marked effect on the details – it was his constant desire and effort to govern the Panjab in the interests of all classes there, to blunt the keen edge of Dalhousie's militant policy towards old Sikh ways, to conciliate, encourage, and uplift. He did not altogether accept the idea of Western efficiency which his brother and Dalhousie were pushing forward so vigorously at the time, for he believed in allowing a people's own standard of happiness to be maintained as against alien efforts to improve that standard. His letters afford a very noble record of the defence of a defeated nation's rights, and attempts to save something for them out of the wreck. This, as he himself openly admitted, was partly for reasons of policy. So far as the protection of aristocratic privileges was concerned, he held that throughout Indian history the Government of the day was never able to dispense with support from the influential and military classes, and that if Lord Dalhousie's policy were to prevail generally, we would not have a friend left in native India. At the same time he refused to admit that he wished to favour the gentry at the expense of the poorer classes. 'I am derided,' he wrote in bitterness, at the end of his presidency, 'as caring for Sardars and men of rank, the fact being that I respect their positions simply as a matter of justice and of policy – quite as much one as the other – my feelings being rather with the poorer and more industrial classes.'¹ Then, in a striking forecast, which exactly described the effects of all his benevolent and just efforts for the Sikhs when the Mutiny came to test the work of these years, 'you may rely on it, however much folk in smooth weather sneer at what is called policy, and forbearance, and consideration, that when the storm comes, when times are troubled, *then* is felt the advantage of having something more than hireling service in favour of Government.' He consistently stood between the Maharaja of Kashmir,

¹ Sir H. M. L. to C. B. Saunders, 8 January, 1853.

Gulab Singh, and all rumours disparaging his loyalty to the British connection, or militarist projects for holding him in firmer control. Wherever he thought that Sikh gentlemen deserved generous treatment, or should be permitted to retain privileges which, little vexing to Government and people, were greatly valued by their owners, he fought, often quite unsuccessfully, to secure what they wanted from Board or Government. But he was not always dealing with upper classes, and high State policy. From the first year to the last of office in the Panjab, he set himself to be a protector of the poor and the depressed. As he watched the men whom we had beaten pass from armed service into what must often have been poverty, he tried to find some means of subsistence for 'the grey-bearded yeomen who have lost their lands and know no trade but war.'¹ He kept a vigilant eye on the conduct of white men and women towards defenceless natives, whether in the Panjab or as early tourists in Kashmir. 'Last week,' he wrote on his last Panjab tour, 'going into Rawalpindi I witnessed a European girl, neither drunk nor angry, amusing herself flogging her garryman' – and he lamented the hard treatment often inflicted by European women.² His benevolence passed beyond the poor and defenceless, to secure humane treatment for the criminal. In the visits which he paid within his province, the jail was usually the first place inspected. He inquired whether stocks were now disused, and fetters; what accommodation and ventilation the building possessed; whether the different classes of culprits were kept separate, and what special arrangements were made to keep young lads from being contaminated still further by imprisonment. It is the convention to assume that all such philanthropic considerations should be taken for granted, and that Sir Henry Lawrence was merely doing what all others did. But the fact is clear that these common humanities and decencies have seldom

¹ Sir H. M. L. to Dalhousie, 24 February, 1849.

² Memorandum, 3 February, 1852.

been adequately attended to, until some reformer has come, original enough to understand the commonplace requirements of Providence – to love mercy, and to do justly.

In the second place, although the Governor-General exercised a very strict control over the choice of civil and military officials in the Panjab, and although Sir Henry always declared that, especially in civil appointments, he had very little say, there can be no doubt that the men whom he had so carefully tested while Resident were the men who made the work of the Board as outstanding as it proved to be. Besides this, even among civilians, most of the important work was done by men, either indicated as suitable by the President, or later greatly favoured by him. At the very time when Dalhousie as 'grand seigneur' was attempting to tame his lieutenant's spirit, and hamper his initiative, the offender was writing to James Thomason at Agra, preparing him for a raid on the best men of the North-West Provinces. He wanted 'rough and ready men of good business habits and good common sense, men who like camp life, and being among the people.'¹ The men whom he named as ideal for his work were Barnes, Cocks, Saunders, and he obviously intended Robert Montgomery, and Donald Macleod, at that time collector at Benares, for high position. The great civilians, both under the Board, and, later, under John Lawrence, were all men of whom Sir Henry greatly approved, and most of whom owed something to his early favour and support. On and near the frontier, whoever the rank and file might be, the only men who counted, from Hazara to Dera Ghazi Khan, were not merely his men, but lieutenants devoted to his service, and indignant when they lost his leadership. James Abbott at Hazara, as will be seen later, was removed from his little kingdom under strong government criticism, but the fruits of his work remained unshaken, and in spite of differences with him Sir Henry counted him one of the group. Further

¹ Sir H. M. L. to J. Thomason, 10 March, 1849.

west, in the Yusufzai country and Peshawar, Harry Lumsden carried on after George Lawrence left, and before Colonel Mackeson took over, and, on Mackeson's assassination, one of Sir Henry's two chief lieutenants, Herbert Edwardes, became Commissioner at Peshawar. All the way down from Peshawar, through Kohat to the south of the Derajat, there was the same dependence on Sir Henry's men, Taylor and Nicholson chief among them. His quick eye for the right men to keep in training for higher work selected Daly, later of the Guides, Neville Chamberlain, and Hodson, and if his warm appreciation of Hodson's merits might, in the light of Hodson's faults, seem to betray bad judgment, it is nevertheless true that Hodson possessed all the remarkable qualities which Sir Henry attributed to him, and that no one dealt more faithfully with Hodson's faults than his chief.

The third, and the most conspicuous, service rendered by the President to his Board and his province was that he completed the organisation of a true frontier, not merely strong against external forces, but as nearly under control as that troubled mass of mountains, gorges, deserts, and energetic raiders could ever be. At the risk of seeming to reiterate a point already laboured, it must be insisted that if credit is due to any one man for the most constructive piece of political and military work of that time – the making of the frontier – it is to Sir Henry Lawrence; and that what he had already accomplished in 1846 and 1847 was confirmed between 1849 and 1853. Formerly, he had been acting as the adviser of the Sikh Darbar, and his lieutenants were their servants. Now, his Government was in supreme control, and no one, neither Dalhousie, nor Colin Campbell, nor Sir Charles Napier, can take from him the credit for a great achievement. No doubt Lord Dalhousie and his council took every step necessary to maintain the peace of the new province, and the protection of its borders, and Dalhousie himself spent much anxious thought over the

details of the system of defence. Yet, leaving to one side the creation of a great police force, military and civil, or, in the phrase of the Panjab Report, 'preventive and detective,'¹ the feature of the frontier system which most clearly bears on it the signature of its author was the creation of a frontier irregular force, composed of five regiments of cavalry, five regiments of infantry, three horse field batteries, and two companies of sappers and miners taken over temporarily, on account of their gallantry and fidelity, from Cortlandt's Sikh Brigade.² Besides these the Guides, now increased to three troops of cavalry and six companies of infantry, were the eyes and quick intelligence of the whole line, and the regulars, with Colin Campbell among others in command, acted as a fighting reserve. All concerned, except perhaps Sir Charles Napier, may be regarded as having a share in founding the frontier force, but the original and constructive ideas expressed in its organisation were Henry Lawrence's. Looking back on this phase of his work after he had left Lahore, he summarised his general policy in a note to Lord Stanley, whom he had already guided over all the ground concerned. 'It is not to be expected that such a frontier can ever be what is called *quiet*: but it is quite in our power to prevent it being dangerous. We do not want antiquated generals, and brigadiers with antiquated notions, in such quarters, but energetic, active-minded men with considerable discretionary powers, civil and military. It is all nonsense, sticking to rules and formalities, and reporting on foolscap paper, when you ought to be upon the heels of a body of marauders, far within their own fastnesses, or riding into the villages and glens, consoling, coaxing, or bullying, as may be, the wild inhabitants. Such men, in short, as Nicholson, Taylor, Edwardes, Lake, and Becher are wanted; and with them very little writing-paper, still less pipeclay, with their accompaniments of red-coats, heavy muskets, and grey-headed discontented commandants. In short, with a

¹ *Panjab Report*, p. 49.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 35-40.

carte blanche, I would guarantee at a less expense than at present to pacify the frontier within three years. That is, to make it as quiet as is consistent with the character of such a people. Now they hate but do not fear us. I should try to reverse the case – to conciliate them when quiet, and hit them hard when troublesome.’¹

The predominance of frontier policy and organisation in Sir Henry Lawrence’s last four years at Lahore may be gathered, not only from the immense mass of his correspondence with border officers, but from a narrative of the main events of these important years. No doubt stirring events among the hills created a false sense of importance, as compared with the all-important humdrum office work on which the prosperity of the province was so largely founded. It is unfair to John Lawrence, Mansel, and Montgomery, to calculate what they did by the number of miles they rode on tour. Even Sir Henry would never have denied that his first duty to the Panjab lay for him at Lahore. ‘I am seldom less than 10 hours a day at my desk, and often 12 and 13, yet still the ordinary work of the office is with difficulty kept from arrears,’ he wrote in the year 1851, in which he worked most continuously at the centre.

Still, to the reader of letters and dispatches, the sunlight seems to shine most brightly on the three great frontier tours which the President made in 1849, 1850, and 1852, not entirely with the full support of the Governor-General, who thought, perhaps, not only of the other members of the Board working in offices at Lahore, but of the assumption of a supervising authority by Sir Henry which seemed to challenge his viceregal monopoly.

The first tour lasted from August to November 1849. It came as a welcome relief from troubles at Lahore. Sir Charles Napier had already begun to prove himself a general nuisance to the Board; John’s relations with him were showing some signs of strain; a few of the sardars now under

¹ Sir H. M. L. to Lord Stanley, 31 March, 1853.

restraint were suspected of dangerous designs. The active life of travel, and the interest of settling vital frontier questions, brought new energy to him. He spent a little time in Kashmir, whence, in Sir Charles Napier's calculations, a great army with some hundreds of guns was ready, under Gulab Singh, to threaten British India. The most ordinary investigation proved to Sir Henry not only that Gulab Singh had entirely peaceful intentions, but that his army had at most some 12,000 regular troops of poorish quality, and that there were only 30 guns which might count in serious warfare.¹ He thought the Kashmiris 'a filthy, idle, litigious' race, and sized up the policy of his protégé, the Maharaja, in a paragraph. 'Like most natives he is a watcher of events, but a very clever and far-seeing one. . . . If we allow him to be our humble friend and ally he will be so; but there are so many Europeans panting for the possession of this valley, that it will not be an easy task to keep the peace.' By the end of October he was with James Abbott in Hazara, estimating the strength and possible intentions of the tribesmen, not quite consenting to all his subordinate's ideas, but deeply approving of the intimacy of his relation with his people – 'he lives among them more as a patriarch than as a magistrate'; and on his way to Peshawar he had a glance at a centre of religious fanaticism, Sitana, which was to cause trouble later. Of Sitana he wrote that he was quite satisfied that with 1,000 men, and a night attack, he could abolish the nuisance without the loss of a life. From Peshawar he went through the Pass to Kohat – soon to be the scene of trouble, but then perfectly quiet, saw Edwardes' fort at Bannu – 'larger than I intended' – and passed down the Indus, finishing his expedition at Multan. His general estimate of the border country was one of satisfaction, although to true frontiersmen *peace* and *order* at Kohat or Bannu, and at Lahore, stood for quite different things: 'Nothing is more surprising than the perfect

¹ Sir H. M. L. to Dalhousie, 28 September, 1849.

peace of the wild and hitherto lawless tract through which I have passed. I left Lahore with an escort of 16 men – 12 footmen and 4 horse. At the Hazara border I was met by 12 men of the Infantry Guides; and, thus escorted, we have traversed since we left Kashmir not less than 400 miles of country, not a mile of which a Sikh official in my position would have liked to march with less than a regiment at his heels, and in portions of which he would not have been safe with a brigade. Yesterday (he was writing on the Indus below Kalabagh), we dismissed our escort, and now have only a single soldier with us.¹

Between the first and the second of his frontier marches, more especially in the early months of 1850, Sir Henry found troubles in plenty to occupy his attention. On the frontier, there were raids by Waziris and Afridis. The Afridi raid on a working party in the Kohat Pass was serious enough in itself, but Sir Charles Napier gave it additional importance by joining Colin Campbell's force on a punitive expedition. He added nothing to the efficacy of the effort, nor did it help the prestige of the army that its Commander-in-Chief should take part in what proved half a failure; in the hostilities 'a hundred men were put *hors de combat* without hitting a fifth of that number, and without destroying a hundred rupees' worth of property. But worst of all the enemy beat two of our picquets, driving the sipahis off the hill, killing one officer and wounding another. They also followed us to the end of the pass.² There was a transient sensation in Lahore itself, where, in January, six Sikh fanatics attacked and wounded some European soldiers; and two local military disturbances arising out of discontent at some perfectly legitimate reductions in allowances. The second of these minor mutinies was an affair of some importance. The troops in the Panjab had been allowed what was called the Sind batta of two rupees *hutting money*

¹ Sir H. M. L. to Dalhousie, 18 November, 1849.

² Sir H. M. L. to Lord Hardinge, 5 March, 1850.

for serving outside their regular provinces, and another rupee and a half when marching or on active service. These had now been reduced. The details of the whole affair belong much more to the history of Sir Charles Napier's relations with the Governor-General, than to the life of Henry Lawrence, for out of the last of five local mutinies arose the disputes which ended in his resignation. But, although the first four were very minor affairs, the fifth was at Govindgarh, the fort which controlled Amritsar, and it touched the very heart of the Board's territory. It is important to see the President at work in controlling the trouble – the more so because, as he told the Governor-General, it illustrated forcibly the uncomfortable fact that 'our own army is our only danger in India.' The clearest account is in a letter to Herbert Edwardes, then at home on leave:

'The 66th is a General Service corps with a good commanding officer, and a better set of officers than usual. Five days ago, a whole company went to their officers and asked for their discharge, saying they could not serve on 7 rupees. Individuals of other companies did the same. Next day Major Troup paraded the corps, and spoke to them seriously, having first called in Colonel Bradford, who luckily had that day arrived with the 1st Cavalry. He then ordered two men into confinement, on which the regiment shouted and made a show of moving to their rescue. They however were instantly recalled to duty on the order of their commander; they piled arms on his order, and marched out of the fort, some of them hardly knowing where they were going. Bradford had slipped out and now appeared at the gate when the guard attempted to shut it, but the men were beaten back by their officer, Captain Macdonald, and the Cavalry admitted. The regiment was then bivouacked on the *glacis*, and the fort placed in charge of two companies of H.M. 32nd, and a party of the bodyguard. Sir W. Gilbert and I went out early on the 3rd, and he ordered a Court of Inquiry. A drum-head court-martial was suggested, but it was said that the time had gone by. The sight of the *glacis* covered by a whole regiment in confinement, and surrounded by picquets of cavalry was so bad for the country that I begged the General to try and separate

the guilty; so, yesterday morning, the companies were paraded and about 80 men were pointed out by the native officers, and were sent as prisoners into the fort, and two companies that had been most forward were all put aside as prisoners, and the rest of the regiment were allowed to encamp without arms, pending the result of the court of inquiry. . . . I came back to Lahore in the evening. Everything is perfectly quiet, which is more than I expected. There are ten lakhs of treasure in the Fort, a month's supplies for 12,000 men, and great stores of arms, so that though the regiment may not have intended open mutiny *according to their ideas*, yet if they had once shut the gates, and thus committed themselves, they would have had the means of recruiting themselves and might have mustered thousands in 24 hours. . . . You know that I do not consider annexation to have lessened our dangers – indeed I consider that this our transition state has many more dangers than at any time in the last three years. The fewer regular native infantry we have in the Panjab the next few years the safer we shall be.’¹

Engaged in these vexatious affairs, Sir Henry entered on the hot weather of 1850 far from well, while his wife was barely recovered from her recent confinement. It was therefore an immense relief when the Governor-General consented to his project for visiting not only Kashmir, but also Ladakh, Skardu, and Gilgit – a journey which, he hoped, would combine health with business, and clear up some points in general frontier policy. ‘Gilgit, Skardu, and Ladakh, being in Golab Singh’s territory, are all within my charge, and we know so little of that frontier that I expect my trip to be useful. Few people know where Gilgit is, or what the Maharaja’s position there is, further than that it is as expensive to him as Peshawar is to us. We hear also of kafilas and traders being plundered between Ladakh and Yarkand and Badakshan, and are ignorant of all points most necessary to know.’²

He arranged to start early in June, taking Honoria with him as far as Srinagar, and having Hodson, another invalid,

¹ Sir H. M. L. to Herbert Edwardes, 5 February, 1850.

² Sir H. M. L. to Dalhousie, 30 April, 1850.

as his companion in the venture. Few episodes in these years show the happy adventurer in him so distinctly as this raid into the mountains. Unwell he certainly was at the start, and once or twice in his journal he admits fatigue, but there is a spirit of youth and irrepressible energy throughout the story which he sent in instalments to Honoria in Kashmir, and the very fluency of his pen in these months, June to October, is a proof of reviving health. Even when the weather turned rainy, as it did at the end of July, he reported all well, although 'I am constantly wet from the knees downward from shortly after 6 a.m. to 3 p.m.' Hodson, who proved an excellent companion, varying the ordinary jogtrot by occasional ascents of 'peaks fit only for eagles or Hodsons,' found the pace stiff, and wrote that 'few men go the pace Sir Henry Lawrence does.' From first to last, thanks to Gulab Singh's arrangements, he never lost touch with his work. From a variety of villages or camps he wrote to Lahore, the Governor-General, the Sanawar Asylum, and a score of other directions, letters full of detail and shrewd guidance on matters which, for a weaker man, would have demanded official files for reference and a staff of clerks. At the outset, at any rate, he was accompanied by the usual cavalcade which surrounds a great man in India on his official expeditions. There were guards furnished from the Maharaja of Kashmir's own household brigade, some of his court circle, their followers, 'a munshi or two for business and their followers. I dare say we are a party of two or three hundred souls of all colours and creeds.'¹ Sir Henry himself lets us have a little picture of his companions enduring wet weather 10,000 feet above sea-level: 'It is good to see the businesslike style of the Guides, and of four petty native officers (late of the Sikh army, who are following us for fun). There they stand, with blankets tied in a knot over their heads in all weathers, always smiling, and always expressing themselves happy.'

¹ Hodson, *Twelve Years of a Soldier's Life in India*, p. 108.

Passing east from the Sind river valley, across the Dras Pass to the river of the same name, the expedition headed for Leh, finding the weather bad, but the path uncommonly good. At this stage there entered a strange little dash of human, almost dramatic, interest. At the very end of July, and late one evening, his party came across a lady, travelling alone, or in the company of Captain Hay, whose station was Kulu, and whom all the Board regarded with general disapproval. 'She had had no dinner the day before, and no bed clothes at night. We met her and it was then 5 p.m., and she was mounted to go a march of 16 miles after her baggage. We stopped her for the night.' The journal¹ records that 'she sat for about an hour last night, telling of her journey, past and to come, being determined to go this year to Simla via Kanawar, 43 long marches, and has no other reason for continuing her travels, but that she wishes to see Kanawar before she goes home in the cold season.' There were elements in the situation displeasing to the keen eye and conscience of Henry Lawrence. Hay, who had been given his northern post by Dalhousie, not by the Board, was absent from his district without leave, and as the adventurous lady had quarrelled with her husband, Lawrence more than suspected his motives and intentions. Moreover, as the authority responsible for travellers' rules in Kashmir, he was not sure that Mrs. H—— was paying her coolies. Hodson's account of the incident has a dash of admiration in it for a 'young and pretty creature,' whose previous solitary marches surprised even him. 'We met her between Ladakh and Kashmir. She was sixteen or twenty miles from her tents; and the rain and darkness were coming on apace; the thermometer down below fifty degrees. So we persuaded her to stop at our encampment. I gave her my tent and cot; acted lady's maid; supplied her with warm stockings and shoes, water, towels, brushes, etc., and made her comfortable; and then we sat down to dinner and a

¹ For 30 July, 1850.

pleasanter evening I never spent. She was as gay as a lark, and poured out stores of information and anecdotes, and recounted her adventures in the spiritedest manner. After an early breakfast the next morning I put her on her pony, and she went on her way, and we saw her no more.¹

Later notes from Lady Lawrence proved how unsatisfactory both of these wandering souls were. Hay turned up at Srinagar, over-emphatic on the virtuousness of his companion; while she, after writing to the Maharaja for money and shawls, had to be told bluntly by Honoria that 'if the Maharaja sends the customary presents, my dafadar will take charge of them for the Government. If you want ready money, any mahajan here will cash for you the treasury bills of which you were speaking this morning.' So far for Government regulations; but Honoria Lawrence as an old-fashioned woman disliked the whole situation, and while offering all that a mother would to a daughter, she tried to save Mrs. H—— from herself in language which did not lack plainness: 'No consciousness of innocence can make it right to defy public opinion as you have done. A young married woman, so unhappy as to be separated from her husband, requires ten-fold caution, and no modest woman would wilfully expose herself to scandal, insult, and temptation.' So Mrs. H—— passed from the scene, to leave record of her adventures in three substantial volumes.

Eight days were profitably spent at Leh, where traders to and from Central Asia gathered. Hodson was not impressed with these representatives of 'world trade.' The leading merchants, he said, seemed pedlars, and the emporium 'a brace of hucksters' shops.' But his chief had to find out how the local customs dues were levied, and whether there was local injustice. He held a long and careful inquiry in the garden at Leh, where he was encamped, and then, to recompense the traders for the trouble he had given them, he invited the commercial community to a feast. 'About

¹ Hodson, *op. cit.*, pp. 108-9.

300 sat down to a good dinner at an expense of something less than sixty rupees.'

His way from Leh to Skardu, between the rivers which unite east of Skardu to form the main stream of the Indus, cost him more labour; his marches, considering the ground, were long, and often the ascents were bad. How happily the time went for him, and how cheerful he now was, letters from Kapalu and Kuru, little villages east of the junction of the rivers, reveal: 'This [Kapalu] is or was the capital of a little principality, the chief being still called Raja, though his total revenue is said to be only 6,000 rupees, and to be paid by the puppet to Gulab Singh. The Raja is an old man, and met us, about twelve miles off, with a brass band and kettledrums, which commenced thundering and screeching from the top of a hill, as we commenced the ascent, nearly a mile below. The old gentleman was dressed much like a better sort of coolie, and had probably made over his wardrobe to his son, who joined us at Charbat, three days ago. He is clad in a green *chogha* and Hessian boots, and, poor fellow, is most zealous on our behalf.' Then next day, 'Here I am sitting under a walnut tree, on the north branch of the Indus, with a reach of nine miles long by half a mile broad before me, more like a mountain lake than a river. The cliffs average at least 1,000 feet high and mostly ascend abruptly from either bank. Where I wrote yesterday I can see across the river, the apricot and apple orchards backed by snow-capped cliffs, shewing that they must be at least 3,000 feet above the river here, which is about 7,000 feet above the level of the sea.' By August 24th he had reached Skardu. 'In the middle of a fine valley,' runs Hodson's description, 'some 6,000 feet above the sea, surrounded by sudden rising perpendicular mountains 6,000 feet higher, stands an isolated rock washed by the Indus, two miles by three quarters - a little Gibraltar. The valley might be 10 miles by 3, partially cultivated, and inhabited by some 200 scattered houses. There's Skardu.'

Once more there was a feast to all and sundry, including the rajas, and then the party made across the Deosai plateau for Astor, or, as Sir Henry calls it, Husora. But they were crossing now a kind of moral watershed from a region of peaceful trading to one of strife. They found that the people of Chilas had raided and plundered Husora, and destroyed the bridge across the river. It was plain that this condition of things was not likely to mend soon. Gilgit seems to have been besieged, for a force of 1,000 Kashmiris was on the way to relieve it. The feud with Chilas was of old standing, commencing with an act of treachery and bloodshed against the Chilasis fifteen years before, and the counterstroke had been on so elaborate a scale that hardly less than 1,000 souls and 10,000 head of cattle had been carried away.

He paraded the much-reduced bodyguard who now accompanied him, with disquieting results. 'This morning I paraded the brave army that was now to go with me [to Gilgit]. Of Steinbach's 30 men not half of the muskets would go off, and, of the 40 Kashmiri irregulars, the best use that could be made of their match-locks would be to knock fellows down with them.' So he determined to turn back: it would serve no public purpose to risk the fate of being captured and carried into the hills, as already the Indian papers were reporting of his expedition. So he came back through Srinagar and the Banihal Pass, visiting some of the towns in the lower hills on the way, and reported, on October 18th, to Dalhousie that he had arrived in Lahore, and that John had already gone off.

The third and last of these useful and happy journeys the President made early in 1852, as the companion of Lord Stanley, who was bent on seeing all he could of Indian affairs. It came after a long interval of steady but fretting work in Lahore. Dalhousie, not perhaps without some justification, had shown that he wished the privileges of touring more equitably shared among the members of the

Board. So during 1851, with the exception of a visit to the hills at Kasauli and Sanawar, where his wife went to recover from very serious illness,¹ Sir Henry laboured at the centre, with short excursions to test the working of the system in the Manjha – the central Sikh region, of which Lahore and Amritsar are the chief cities. In October 1851 he was glad to welcome Robert Montgomery as third member of the Board in place of Mansel; for not only was Montgomery a very old friend, but his work as Commissioner in the Lahore division had won the President's whole-hearted admiration.² Resentment at some of Dalhousie's cavalier ways, and growing friction with his brother, did not make things easy; and he was glad when the Governor-General's permission, and his commission to help Lord Stanley on his way, left him free to head once more for the north and west. Between January 7th and the middle of April 1852, he made the last of his border progresses, and the letters which told Honoria of his progress have all of the old happiness and satisfaction in his work. Once more he went to see what Abbott was doing in Hazara, for there a crisis in Abbott's career was rapidly reaching its culminating point. Two English officials had been murdered in the district, partly through their own disregard of Abbott's advice, and he insisted on pinning his suspicions on one Bostan Khan, the minister of a local chief, and, generally, his views were running counter both to the policy of the Board and, worse still, to the ideas of the Governor-General. It was a tribute to the confidence which the whole Border felt in Sir Henry Lawrence that he induced Bostan Khan to come in and meet him, in spite of Abbott's suspicions. Feeling strongly as he did the faults in Abbott's judgment and temper, he was still able to report how Abbott 'lived among the people. When he leaves

¹ Sir H. M. L. to Dr. Login, 21 July, 1851: 'Lady Lawrence has been twice at the point of death; but, I am thankful to say, is now better. In a fortnight she will be able to start for the hills.'

² Memo. of 1 August, 1851, on Montgomery's work, especially on making roads,

Hazara, he will be regretted by larger numbers than perhaps any officer in the Panjab.’¹

As usual the tour went by the Yusufzai territory, through Peshawar and Kohat, to the Derajat. He watched with admiration an outstanding example of how his men and his frontier system were working. ‘As I was standing in Shabkadar fort the other day, a messenger came down to say that a large body of hillmen were coming down in Matta. Lieutenant Hughes had been there with a patrol only a few hours before, and had heard that there was a gathering of some kind. On the arrival, therefore, of the messenger, the Sipahi Company was turned out, and marched within ten minutes. I remarked that they had been alert, but looked to see if the Cavalry had gone too; and found they were almost out of sight, although, when the bugle sounded, they had been picketed in the village under the fort.’² From Bannu, where he visited the chief passes into the place, he wrote a very happy letter to Honoria describing the service which he read, on Sunday, March 7th, to a congregation of eleven worshippers, including Stanley, Robert Napier, Reynell Taylor, Daly, and Nicholson. The sermon was one of Dr. Arnold’s, and the Rugby motto, *Laborare est orare*, was most admirably illustrated by two of his congregation; for, a raid of the Khasranis on Dera Fateh Khan occurring immediately after, he was able to report, almost along with the news of the raid, that Nicholson and Taylor had settled the business in their own peculiarly summary way. On April 15th he reported to Dalhousie the end of a very pleasant tour, saying that, making all necessary allowances for tribal aberrations, ‘even in the wildest parts of the country, except just under the Western and North-Western hills, there is as much safety for travellers, and for life generally, as in any part of India.’

With the later months of 1852 we come to the incidents

¹ Sir H. M. L. to Dalhousie, 3 February, 1852.

² Same to same, 20 February, 1852.

which ended in the dissolution of the Board, the promotion of John Lawrence to a new Chief Commissionership of the Panjab, and the relegation of Sir Henry Lawrence to Rajputana. It is useless to pretend that these events did not radically affect all the rest of Sir Henry's life; for, until 1857, they made him feel a disappointed man; they broke his long connection with the people and country loved by him with a lasting passion, and they threatened, happily only for a season, to break the lifelong co-operation and mutual affection of the two brothers. But all this must be viewed in perspective. In spite of all that happened, the great work of the Board stood rockfast as a testimony to what the two brothers had done: a frontier established and controlled; a great army dissolved, and, in its place, a new and far more efficient Panjab army and police force; peace and prosperity restored beyond anything that Ranjit Singh had ever known; crime diminished, public works everywhere in active construction, justice administered, and such a body of young officers, civil and military, trained and in training, as never before or since has been concentrated on the work of a great Indian province. It would be a sheer surrender to the habit of thoughtless or malicious gossip to pretend that the differences between the Marquis of Dalhousie and his President, or the acute disagreement of Henry and John Lawrence, mattered in the light of the heroic labours of all three. Fortunately the story can be told briefly and yet quite fairly to all concerned.

The differences between the brothers began, as has already been seen, quite early in the history of the Board. There were, of course, fundamental differences in temperament, and these were exaggerated by the strain felt by each of two great administrators at having to consult others before action. But, besides this, there was inevitably a continuous cause of friction in the settlement of a multitude of minor matters, each of which related itself to principles on which the two brothers fundamentally disagreed. As Sir Henry wrote,

later on,¹ to his friend Lord Hardinge: 'We differed much as to the treatment of the old Darbar officials, military and civil, and especially as to rewards to those who had served us well in the war. We also differed in practice, though not much in theory, as to the employment of the people of the country, and indeed as to nominations of officials generally. I wished to employ Panjabis wherever they were at all fit. I also wished to help sons of old officers. My brother, on the other hand, stood out for giving all the uncovenanted berths to natives employed in the settlement, which was tantamount to excluding Panjabis and young gentlemen altogether. The opposition I met on all such questions, and as to the treatment of jaghirdars was a daily vexation. The chiefs and people of the Panjab had been accustomed to come to me for relief, aid, and advice. Now I could literally never say or do anything without almost a certainty of my order or wish being upset or counteracted by my colleagues.'

To understand the most specific cause of disagreement, jaghirs, it must be remembered that in the old Sikh kingdom rewards had usually been made either in the form of pensions, that is the alienation of revenue in the form of cash, or in jaghirs, which, to use the phrase of the first *Panjab Report*, meant assignments of land revenue.² But this last phrase is not sufficiently explanatory. It was part of a kind of Indian feudalism, by no means strictly comparable to that of the West. The great chiefs received their grants, partly on condition that they furnished a contingent of feudal horsemen; but also partly as a personal grant, and this personal grant was for life, and might pass to a man's sons. Connected with such grants were privileges and powers such as all territorial alienations are bound to carry with them - whether in countries under the clan system, or Western feudal territory, or, as here, in India. These chiefs, even where they had been friendly in the late war, were bound to suffer, since the contingents were no longer

¹ 6 March, 1853.

² *Panjab Report*, p. 115.

required, and since the new authority could not but automatically reduce all power save its own. But Sir Henry longed to maintain, as useful to the British power, and even to Panjab social organisation, the class of privileged gentlemen represented by those who held such jaghirs. He disbelieved in *levelling*, and also felt for men, most of whom had lost all in the recent revolution, and he was unwilling to push strictly utilitarian ideas of reconstruction too far at their expense. When one man wished, if he could, to concentrate his holdings by exchange of outlying portions for territory nearer his centre, Sir Henry approved, if the man was worthy of approval. Where, in another case, it was a question of what ought to be allowed to pass to a jaghirdar's heir, once more he took the most generous view possible ; and, in most cases, the verdict of the Board was less benevolent than his own proposals.

Towards the end of 1850 the differences had become very acute, and Sir Henry suggested, fruitlessly, however, that they should definitely recognise the specialisation of function, which had already been begun within the Board, so that each man could carry on his own work with as little friction as possible. In a very moving sentence he contrasted their close union while in obscurity with the new coolness introduced by success. But the differences were real differences, which nothing but separation could cure. After Robert Montgomery joined the Board, both brothers used him as a mediator, and there still remains in the Montgomery papers a most touching letter of remonstrance, which the elder brother could only communicate to the younger through the faithful friend of both. 'However able, honest, and industrious John be,' runs its postscript, 'he may rely on it that there are many others who work as hard and as honestly. His great error is excess of reliance on his own judgment, and denial or doubt of the labour of others, especially when they are not exactly of a kin to his own. Indeed it would sometimes appear as if he thought that he

and two or three others are the only men in the Panjab who work at all; all others being idlers and drones. I freely grant that he has hit on my defects, though I think that he has caricatured them. I hope and will try to benefit by the lesson; and I will be glad if he will think over what I have said of him.¹

Along with this strain, and the regular recurrence of severe attacks of his old enemy, fever, Sir Henry grew more and more certain that the Governor-General would be glad to see the last of him in the Panjab. As the earlier part of this chapter has shown, the feeling that his chief had no real confidence in him, as head of the Panjab government, was no illusion; and the relations between Governor-General and President of the Board never possessed any kind of warmth or cordiality. Nor did Dalhousie's weakness for issuing irritating comments and directions grow less. In the correspondence between him and Robert Montgomery, prior to the latter's promotion in October 1851, the Governor-General warned his subordinate that his desire was for a change in the constitution of the Board, and that he looked on John Lawrence as the coming Chief Commissioner: 'His service under me has given him so strong a hold on my gratitude and affection, that I could not prefer anyone to the office of President before him, if at some future time either promotion or health, or any other cause should remove Sir Henry from Lahore.'² Where two men differ so utterly in ideas, sympathies, and experience, as did Lord Dalhousie and Henry Lawrence, and where one of them feels strongly the importance, not of learning from others, but of imposing on them his own strong will and notions, there could be only one end. Towards the close of 1852, Sir Henry and his wife were both considering New Zealand as a possible retreat, and his letter-book contains the draft of a letter to the Governor-General, never sent, in which he

¹ Seen through the courtesy of the late Bishop Montgomery, at Merville.

² Montgomery papers: The Governor-General to Robert Montgomery, 11 October, 1851.



Sir John L. M. Lawrence
(Baron Lawrence of the Punjaub and of Grately)
As Viceroy and Governor-General of India in 1868

intended to report that he had 'serious intentions of proceeding at the end of next year to New Zealand, with a view of spying out the land, and of eventually settling there if I find it answer.'¹

Happily for the British rule in India another solution of this complex of difficulties presented itself. Three days² after the New Zealand draft letter, he wrote to John that, with Hyderabad now in view, he was willing to go there, to make way for him, should the Governor-General be willing. On the following day he wrote what proved the decisive letter. There is room for infinite regret, and, to one whose sympathies naturally turn to the writer of the letter, for a few hard thoughts of the winning side; but, granted the strain, both brothers behaved with sincerity and nobility; nor did the Governor-General act other than as one driven to a decision by his strong sense of duty. 'I did not think of addressing your Lordship on the subject of Hyderabad,' runs the letter, 'but, as my brother tells me he has sent my notes, I beg to explain that though I prefer this frontier to any other part of India, there is so much that is unpleasant in my position in reference to my brother that I would willingly make way for him, should your Lordship be disposed to appoint me to Hyderabad. I would do much to preserve amity with my brother, with whom I never disagreed until we came together in this Board. He chafes more perhaps than I do, and it was seeing this that influenced my notes of yesterday. Could I see him provided for to his satisfaction, and be myself entrusted with the sole executive responsibility in this frontier as Chief Commissioner, on my present salary, with two members as a Revenue and Judicial Board, and to give advice on occasions, I would have nothing to desire for the short remainder of my Indian career. But, whether I go or stay, I think your Lordship will find that some such system will best work for the future. The Board has been the best engine for clearing off pensions

¹ Cancelled draft, dated 9 December, 1852.

² 12 December.

and jaghirs, and organising affairs; but it is difficult to conceive the vexations and heart burnings of everyday work, when three men of different temperaments have to agree on every measure. I have not often troubled your Lordship on personal matters, and should not now do so, were it a question of emolument, or indeed other than of public business.¹ Lord Dalhousie would have been more than human, if he had not seized the occasion, for which he had so long been waiting, of ending the Board, and making John Lawrence Chief Commissioner in a new framework of government. Hyderabad being already disposed of, he offered the Governor-General's Agency in Rajputana; and after a correspondence in which official politeness did not quite conceal the desire of headquarters to end the Board, and disembarass itself of the President, Sir Henry Lawrence intimated his intention of accepting the post in Rajputana. The Government terms were generous, and there was both kindness and sound reason in the considerations urged by Dalhousie in favour of the change: 'Rajputana in your hands will have the same salary as Hyderabad, and a political jurisdiction such, I believe, as accords with your inclinations. The Agent marches all the cold weather, and in the hot weather is privileged to retire to Mount Abu.'²

But it was hard to convince the man who knew and loved the Panjab better than did any other in India, that the decision was just to him, or useful to the Province. The last private comments jotted on the Lahore correspondence reveal the characteristics which had bound Henry Lawrence inseparably in spirit to his people. Poor Abbott's eccentricities had at last brought down on his head an official reproof from Government – he was now to be transferred to Bandelkand, and like his chief was to leave his heart behind him in the North-West. It was the President's

¹ Sir H. M. L. to Dalhousie, 13 December, 1852.

² Dalhousie to Sir H. M. L., 23 December, 1852.

desire that the news should be broken gently to him, and the official terms withheld. In that he failed. In the same way the last fight he had with John over jaghirdars saw him defending the claims of Raja Nihal Singh's heir, and defending them unsuccessfully. He had had rubs in the past with Colonel Mackeson who was now Commissioner at Peshawar. But Mackeson had done some admirable work in ending hostilities among the Hazara tribesmen; and in one of his last instructions, written when the Presidency and the Board were in all but form dead, Sir Henry wrote, 'Say that Colonel Mackeson's combinations appear to have been made with his usual skill and foresight, and carried out with his usual gallantry.'¹

The news of his departure brought laments from all parts of the Panjab – Mackeson, Napier, Becher, and half a score more of the very pick of the services recording, not merely grief, but their feeling that the Panjab was losing its true ruler. John Nicholson, who was to serve John Lawrence better than any other of his paladins, in Bannu and the Mutiny, wrote that he wished Sir Henry would take him with him to Rajputana; and Robert Napier, with his own peculiar quiet sincerity, resented the change as though it were an act of injustice inflicted on himself. There is one note, however, from a man little mentioned in these pages, Charles Saunders at Amritsar, which seems to express more adequately than any other what Panjabis, European and native, felt about their loss: 'Many may, I doubt not, congratulate you on your quitting the harassing duties of your present post (where you are to a great extent shackled and unable to effect the good you desire), for the dignified ease and comfort of the Rajputana Residency. I cannot, however, join in their congratulations. No other consideration but the most disinterested brotherly love, and thorough absence of every selfish feeling, could have induced you to leave the Panjab, the country of your adoption, and

¹ A minute of 3 January, 1853.

whose people are attached to you in no ordinary way. If any other consolation than that of the inward satisfaction you must feel, and the consciousness of having acted nobly by your brother were required to support you through the trial of severing so completely your connection with the Panjab, you may perhaps derive some additional satisfaction from knowing that this act of self devotion on your part has raised you to the highest possible position in the hearts of all who know, and appreciate your character, and the motives which have actuated you.

‘You will be regretted by all, both European officers and natives. With the latter I know not who will supply your place.’¹

It is known to all who know anything of Sir Henry Lawrence that, when he left Lahore, he was escorted on his way for many miles by Sikh chiefs and gentlemen, who wished to recognise what they owed to their most faithful friend. Their devotion would have been even deeper could they have read Sir Henry’s parting note to his brother, written on his last day in Lahore, in which he said that he would leave with no regrets if he was certain that John would ‘preserve the peace of the country and make the people, high and low, happy,’ and he bade him treat the landed people kindly ‘because they are down.’²

¹ Charles Saunders to Sir H. M. L., 4 January, 1853.

² Sir H. M. L. to J. Lawrence, 20 January, 1853.

CHAPTER XII

THE AGENCY IN RAJPUTANA, 1853-1857

ON January 22nd, 1853, just before he left the Panjab, Henry Lawrence was paid a compliment more usually reserved for the representatives of royalty, and seldom offered to statesmen falling from favour. Gulab Singh, the Maharaja of Kashmir, had desired a parting interview with him, and on that day met him on the Sialkot boundary, with all the circumstance of a great occasion. For nearly two hours they talked together. 'I told him I was going away, that we should probably not again meet in this world, but that if I heard his subjects were happy, and his chiefs and army contented, I too should be satisfied; that I had never interfered in his domestic affairs; that such advice as I had occasionally given was for his own good and his son's good. The Maharaja assured me he would act on my advice, and said the news of my intended departure was a heavy blow to him, and expressed a hope that I would accept a remembrance of him.'¹ It was the final exhibition of the personal influence over the northern chiefs of which not even the displeasure of the Governor-General could deprive Henry Lawrence, and that in a society disinclined to honour defeated men. It meant that his Panjabi and Jammu friends found in him a sympathy, understanding, and honest friendliness not met with, to the same degree, in any other Englishman of the time; and they understood that Lawrence's friendship to them depended on their passing on its advantages to those over whom they ruled.

There was therefore some appropriateness in appointing him Agent to the Governor-General in Rajputana; for

¹ Memorandum by Sir Henry Lawrence, 30 January, 1853.

hardly elsewhere in India could he have found so natural a chance of exercising his powers. The Rajput States were, as Sir Alfred Lyall has said, the only ancient political structures in Northern India which the predecessors of the English had been unable to demolish. They lay in the heart of North Central India – some eighteen States in Lawrence's time, with a population of ten millions occupying an area of 100,000 square miles¹ – where first the Muhammadan, and then the Maratha, had driven them in, the desert to the north and west, the Vindhya range to the south, and rough broken tracts bordering the Jumna on the east. Their chief centres were Udaipur of the Sesodia clan, Jodhpur of the Rathore clan, and Jaipur of the Kachwahas. Once the Rajput chiefs had been dominant in Northern India; even in the height of the Moghul power they had been acknowledged as equals in social prestige, if not in political power, by the rulers before Aurangzeb, and they still boasted the purest blood and most ancient descent among the ruling families in India. Colonel Tod, their admirable 'Froissart,' has in his *Rajasthan* left a history of their origins, expansion, wars, intrigues, and social customs – a natural history of the one surviving relic of the Indian Middle Ages – and his authenticated facts far outstrip the most improbable creations of romance. The word chivalry seems inappropriate applied to anything so unrestrained, barbaric, and unexpected, as the characteristic actions of the leading States; but some such phrase, given a strong Eastern colour, is needed to sum up the world of *Rajasthan*, which still endured in the eighteen States now to be guided by Sir Henry Lawrence. The Rajput tradition contained such heroic extravagances as the tale of the fall of Chitor, when the Rajput garrison, devoid of hope or fear, having first slain their womenfolk, and clothed themselves in symbolic saffron, had flung themselves, sword in hand, on their Muslim besiegers, and perished to a man; or the ironic

¹ Figures from G. Lawrence, *Forty-three Years in India*, p. 279.

real fairy-tale of how a prince of Jaipur and a prince of Marwar, contending for the high honour of marriage with a princess of the great Sesodia family, involved themselves and their people in ruin from Pindaris and Marathas, and finally compromised their own and the Sesodia differences by consenting to the poisoning of the bride-to-be.

It is unfortunate that their distinguished historian confused the minds, not only of readers, but of politicians, by tracing an elaborate comparison between Rajput social organisation and mediæval European feudalism. The truth is that as their descent, passing beyond ordinary genealogies, led straight to the sun and moon as ancestors, so their social and political fabric reached beyond feudalism into pure tribalism and the clan system. Like the Scottish Highlanders of Montrose's time, Henry Lawrence's Rajput families still lived in the clan tradition. Like primitive clansmen, the blood made all of the family equal as against the vulgar world, but sensitive among themselves to the differences created by nearness to, or remoteness from, the main family line. In Rajputana, the Ranas of Udaipur, Jodhpur, and Jaipur had acknowledged leadership in their respective families, but all were Rajputs, and the thakurs or lesser chiefs claimed the rights, not of feudal vassals, but of clan equality. They held to the primitive custom of wedding outside their own family, but exclusively within the Rajput circle; had a pride and sense of manners such as all clansmen hold to; and their politics were a tangle of either succession disputes, or struggles between Ranas and thakurs, or, since 1818, when English protection saved them from destruction, jealousy of British encroachments, mingled, when there was a clan dispute, with appeals from both sides to the new suzerain to do them justice. It would be useless to contend that the Rajput States, from Udaipur downwards, any longer mattered in India, as Panjabi Sikhs and Mussulmans, or the Hindus of Oudh, did, but the indirect control of them presented a noble field, demanding

imagination, sympathy, a real understanding of minds essentially Oriental; and only a singularly generous and elevated personality could be of use to them.

If only Lawrence had come to the work with the freshness and energy of 1839, Rajputana, and not the Panjab, might now be the name connected indissolubly with his own; and the work which actually established the frontier, and pacified the Panjab, might have been accomplished with Ajmir and Udaipur as centres instead of Lahore and Peshawar. But although his favourite brother George, with whom he always found it easy to work, was now at Udaipur, Henry Lawrence missed his wardens of the marches, Nicholson, Edwardes, Reynell Taylor, and the others; and perhaps the Ulsterman in him took more kindly to the directness and pugilistic energy of the Sikhs and Muhammadans of the Panjab.

One thing at least he acknowledged, although almost with a grudge, in favour of the new province – he was permitted to make Mount Abu, with its height, coolness, quiet, and charm, his headquarters. He had no intention of keeping himself in isolation there; but it did mean that for himself, and still more for Lady Lawrence, there was as nearly perfect a climate all the year round as India could afford. It gave his wife perhaps some nine months more of life, and it made the final adventure in Oudh and Lucknow possible for himself.

One of his oldest and wisest friends, James Thomason, writing from Agra, where he was now Lieutenant-Governor of the North-West Provinces, bade him think of the deep interest and great importance of the new territory, and told him that ‘a hearty, zealous, and dignified devotion to its duties would be the best means of treating a supposed grievance’¹; but the head of the Panjab Board had plainly had a more stirring life, and more definite duties, than the Agent for Rajputana, and it hurt him to discover that

¹J. Thomason to H. M. L., 10 March, 1853.

Ajmir, under its Commissioner, Colonel Dixon, had been placed outside his sphere. The determining consideration, however, for many months was that he had been taken from the people and country of his first love, and that Dalhousie had plainly 'set him down.' This mood, and his soreness at what seemed a mixture of rudeness and injustice at headquarters, is most touchingly displayed in a letter written by him, after his wife's death, to their oldest friend, Angel Heath: 'I *was* aware that I was exalted beyond my merits or rights. No one knew this better than I did. But I worked hard, and was successful, quite successful. Peace and prosperity crowned my efforts – efforts made in the midst of opposition; and yet that was the time taken to degrade me. I cannot forget all that, and it prevents me perhaps taking a proper interest in present duties. And yet if it gave one extra peaceful day to my wife, I do not regret the change, but I fear it did not, and that, little as she said (indeed we did not, after the first few days, half a dozen times talk on the subject), it preyed on her mind, not on her own account, but mine. But why have I written thus? I hardly know, but that I write as I would speak to you. Had we come here [Mount Abu] from Nepal, we should have had little to desire – peace and quiet with full occupation in a good climate, for both. It is only that our hearts were in the Panjab, and that we were rudely thrust from it, that prevented the full appreciation of this otherwise pleasant place. Lord Dalhousie has been very civil to me, but I like him not, and he likes not me. I sometimes think of trying for one of the cold colonies, the Cape, New Zealand, or Canada. . . . I am vain enough to consider myself well suited to be governor of a Colony, as I am ready to work hard, and to reward those who do, and am quite willing to let people manage their own affairs, and to require little more of them than loyalty. If my sons had any turn for a settler's life, I would much prefer putting them down on plots of ground in New Zealand or South Africa, and

laying my bones there, than either remaining in India, or retiring to England.'¹

How much Dalhousie's decision preyed on his mind is also shown in letters to his older Indian friends, men who knew and valued him, like Lord Hardinge and Sir George Clerk. Concealment of the fact that his pride was hurt is useless; the best justification for his feelings is that, from the Governor-General's private correspondence, we know that he thought lightly of his great lieutenant, and wrote disparagingly of his qualities.

The Agent lost no time in passing to his new work. From Ambala he wrote to George about his movements, planning to arrive in Delhi on February 12th, and going thence through Agra to Jaipur, visiting on his way some Northern Rajput centres – Alwar, Dholpur, and Karauli.

It was from the last of these, Karauli, that he discovered how little of a sinecure his new appointment was. In the previous year the chief of Karauli, Narsingh Pal, a boy of fifteen, had died, adopting in his last illness an infant, Bharat Pal, 'descended through half a dozen generations from the third son of a common ancestor.'² The adoption had in it some irregularities, and Dalhousie was only too keen an advocate of annexation, when the conditions of adoption did not square with his own dogmatic views. Karauli might easily share the same fate as Satara. But the most interesting feature of the case was that the heads of the main Karauli families, fearful of another case of annexation, and supported both by the proper Ranis of the chief's house and by the feelings of the people, had chosen a grown man, Madan Pal, who possessed much the same genealogical rights as the adopted infant, but who also satisfied the fundamental condition laid down by the thakurs: 'This is the reason for adopting a grown-up person – the splendour

¹ H. M. L. to Angel Heath, 16 July, 1854.

² Sir Alfred Lyall, *Asiatic Studies*, Vol. I., pp. 235-7.

and government of the State are preserved, but by adopting a child injury and evil come upon the State.¹

There is no better proof of Henry Lawrence's genius for understanding the India point of view – in this case obscured by Tod's feudal theories – than the speed with which he reached the heart of the dispute. Already, by April 14th, he had seen that Rajput problems demanded an understanding of *clan* customs. 'I gather that the general law *prefers* the nearest of kin, but does not object to any members of the parent stock being adopted. Further, that the practice of Rajputana has given the thakurs a voice in the adoption.'² Then, in a masterly report to the Government,³ which summarised both what his assistants had reported, and the evidence of earlier books and Government papers, he defined first the legality of the thakurs' decision, and secondly in anticipation of action by the Governor-General, the question of the annexation of the State through lapse. His formal dispatch left no doubt that he favoured the candidate of the clan heads: 'It remains for me to give my decided opinion in favour of Rao Madan Pal, and my recommendation that, as nearest of kin to Narsingh Pal, and as accepted by the Ranis of Karauli, and by *all* the most influential thakurs, who under a strictly native regime would probably be the electors; also by more than three-fourths of the 38 chiefs who in Lieut. M. Mason's opinion are alone entitled to vote in important state matters, and, as far as can be judged, by the almost general feeling of the country, he be nominated.' Another part of his summing-up can hardly have been acceptable to the Governor-General, for it was a plain statement of the rights of Indian States to avoid annexation through legal or diplomatic processes. 'I am pleased to find,' he continued, 'that the opinion I had formed as to Rajputana rules, from a careful perusal of every document in my office bearing on the question,

¹ Lyall, *op. cit.*, pp. 236-7.

² H. M. L. to Dalhousie, 14 April, 1853. ³ 17 November, 1853.

coincides in the main with the recorded views of such men as the late Mr. Thomason,¹ Lord Metcalfe, and Colonel Sutherland, that opinion being that by *the existing laws* a Rajputana chiefship, great or small, can never escheat to the suzerain, except by rebellion, and indeed that a Rajputana suzerain seldom excludes an heir for the offence of his progenitor.' Although the letter and report had no influence on the decision reached by the Directors, it is interesting to note that, while Dalhousie had intimated his inclination 'to declaring the State of Karauli a lapse to the British Government,' the Company after full consideration of the case came to the conclusion that the State should continue under a native ruler.²

It would be tedious to attempt a detailed description of the Agent's political doings between 1853 and 1857. Nothing deserving the name of an important event occurred, although during the whole time it was necessary to check, guide, arbitrate, in short to assist in a gradual general improvement throughout Rajputana. The character of his raids down from Mount Abu to the populated areas may be seen in episodes like the definition, survey, and assessment of Nimach in the cold season of 1854-5. To superintend the work Henry Lawrence took to his horse, as in the old Panjab days, and visited among the peasantry and the little towns, chatting, inquiring, and listening to a multitude of petitions. It was his custom to start early, gallop twenty or thirty miles, calling in on villages as he passed, and dealing when he could with disputes about land and boundaries. By noon he reached his tent, usually only to find it surrounded by petitioners; then in the later afternoon he would start again, and investigate till the light failed. He liked the work, he said, if only the people would tell the truth. It would be a mistake to think of his territory as inhabited only by Rajputs. Apart from the merchants,

¹ James Thomason died late in 1853.

² Dispatch to India, 26 January, 1853.

money changers, and traders of the towns, there were masses of peasantry not of Rajput origin at all, and in remoter parts there were wilder tribesmen of the aboriginal population, Bhils, Mhairs, and Minas, natural robbers and desperadoes, and all these the Agent had to keep as nearly as possible within the limits of peace and a kind of order. It was not always the tribesmen who caused trouble, for Rajput troops were indiscriminate in their operations against criminals; in one case at least the villagers, in defence of their own people, took up arms and defeated the so-called forces of order, and then it was the Agent's business to frighten the apparent offenders while yet remembering that they were not the only causes of trouble.

He had made one department of administration his own peculiar hobby – the regulation of jails – and Rajputana offered a notable field for reform. 'In the matter of Jails,' he wrote to his friend Kaye,¹ 'by simply going once into every jail during a rapid tour, and, on my arrival here last year, writing a circular remarking that in different jails (without mentioning names) I had seen strange sights, that must, if *known* to beneficent Rulers, revolt their feelings, etc., etc., I suggested that all Princes who kept jails should give orders somewhat to the following effect: – classification so as to keep men and women apart, also great offenders from meaner ones, tried from untried: to give ventilation, places to wash, and the like. Well, in the course of two or three months I got favourable answers from almost all, and heard that at several places including Jaipur they propose to build new jails. At Udaipur, my brother told me that they released two hundred prisoners, on my circular, and certainly they kept none that ought to have been released; for, when I went to Udaipur last February, I found not a man in jail but murderers, every individual of whom acknowledged to me his offence, as I walked round and questioned them. The Darbar don't like such visits, but they are worth paying

¹ 19 June, 1854.

at all risks, for a few questions to every tenth or twentieth prisoner gives opportunities to innocent or injured parties to come forward, or afterwards to petition. No officer appears before to have been in one of these dens.'

From beginning to end of his stay, George Lawrence's State of Udaipur (Mewar) kept him busy. The Maharana of Udaipur had fallen out with his clan chiefs, and something like civil war in a quiet way prevailed. It was the Agent's business, along with the political officer of the territory, to coerce or persuade these chiefs or thakurs to sign a definite agreement with the Maharana. Then when the majority had done this, as likely as not the Maharana would turn sulky because his chiefs had listened to the British orders rather than to his own. Some of the more powerful remained recalcitrant throughout the whole of his term of office, and the question then arose whether in his colloquial term he was to 'punch their heads' – which meant the application of force – or whether they should have part of their holdings confiscated; or, if they took to the jungle, whether on capture they were to be imprisoned, and for how long. Being no alarmist he did not believe that there was anything desperately serious in such clan conflicts; it was always possible for him to ride alone from one end of the country to the other; but it was disturbing and annoying. He still kept his sense of humour, and as he rode round the walls and ditch of the Raja of Bhindar's town – Bhindar being one of the Udaipur recalcitrants – he told the Raja's man who went with him that 'he was acting the spy.'

Errors of judgment among his assistants fretted him, especially towards the end. He petitioned for the removal of one because he not merely held on his way in spite of the Agent's instructions, but seemed to be alienating the Court and its officials, whose friendship it was his business to conciliate. A more serious case caused him an infinity of fret. His assistant at Jaipur had been surrounded by a body of retainers all of them corruptly connected with

the Court which it was his business to guide. There were rumours, which the Agent refused to believe, that his subordinate had taken bribes. But it was certain that he had allowed Jaipur to decorate and enlarge his house, to spend great sums on creating gardens for him, and he made free use of State elephants and horses and other means of transport. In Rajputana of all places it was essential that the English Agents should have hands absolutely clean — three-quarters of their work was the exertion of influence which the local chiefs must recognise as perfectly disinterested. The man was brought before a Court of Inquiry, removed to another station, but the terms of the decision left Henry Lawrence furious at what he counted insinuations as to his justice and fairness in the matter. In a hot letter to Sir George Clerk, now in England, he relieved his feelings in a tirade against this 'most apathetic Political Agent, who took his ease, allowed his own people and the darbar people to plunder right and left, and the Maharajah to be brought up in the lowest debauchery'; and still more against a futile central Government which censured him by insinuation while it allowed the offender to be transferred to almost as good a position elsewhere. It was at times like these that his mind turned back to old Panjab days, and he recollected the confidence which he could always place in his juniors, and the audacious integrity by which half a dozen competent young soldiers had made and held the frontier. As we shall see, his wife had died, and he was a lonely man now, partly engaged in the duties of the day, but also linked to the past by his memories of her and the friends they had known in common. Not unnaturally, then, one finds the most critical survey of his new work in a long letter to his old friend Donald Macleod, in which just a touch of bitterness tinges his usual unconventional plainness: 'I am sorry to say that time has not improved my opinion of the Rajputs. I am almost in a fit frame of mind to write a leading article in *The Friend of*

India,¹ insisting on the duty of annexing all Rajputana. The kings are tyrants, the thakurs are rebels, and at the same time hardly less tyrannical than their sovereigns. We have interfered mischievously far enough for harm, not far enough for good. Jaipur is financially at a deadlock, eaten up with silly conceit, and at the same time without what deserves the name of an administration. It is only by constant threats that I can keep the roads clear of gang robbers. Half the revenue is not collected. Boundaries are only put up to be knocked down. Jodhpur is a little better, but the thakurs are all discontented, and a force is now out against one of them. The king . . . was a petty chief in Gujarat ten years ago, but now assumes nearly the full quantum of Rajputana airs. I say nearly, for last cold weather he did pay me an unceremonious visit here, and actually walked half way up the hill, after a trip of 50 or 60 miles. But he spoilt all by putting me to sit on the ground while he sat on thick quilted bedding. On his coming to me the first day I had a razai² laid out for myself about an inch lower than his, which caused a sensation. Such is Rajputana. It has been petted while other states have been bullied. For years past Mewar has been in tacit rebellion. Four-fifths of the thakurs have cut the Rana, and now that all parties have begged our interference, the thakur gentlemen tell my brother, and indeed me, that they will abide by no decision that does not give them all their own rights, meaning thereby all they want and have been contending for the last 50 years. I have just fined Jaipur 45,000 rupees for knocking down boundary pillars, and have got a lot of thakurs in jail and have pitched into the Mewar thakurs frightfully as also into the Alwar raja. I suspect I am considered a perfect tiger after the gentle Low, who let every man do much as he liked, and Sutherland, who rather encouraged them in following their own pursuits. Sati

¹ The Serampore paper which supported Dalhousie's policy of annexation.

² Quilt.

was put down only in name, and was hardly punished; in Mewar, Bikanir, and Alwar it was not even forbidden. I have just written that if it be not so now I will cut their acquaintance. I thought I came here for peace, but from the day I joined them there have been little wars going on sometimes 2 or 3 at a time. . . . In Dungarpur a sati took place two months ago, though a fresh proclamation had only a few days before been published on the subject. I fined the villagers 500 rupees, sentenced 2 Brahmins and the thakur's son, the three active agents, each to three years' imprisonment in irons, and the thakur to pay a fine amounting to half his revenue for 3 years. He was absent, but evidently had only gone that very day, to avoid, as he thought, responsibility. Well, the gentleman, his son, and followers, have taken to the jungle. His country is wild, and heretofore such gents after a few months' outlawry got all they wanted. Not only forgiveness but favours. This fellow, I hear, talks of old grievances. I have given him warning that if he do not instantly come in, his estate will be forfeited for good. Fifteen of the Saroli thakurs, after being in the hills for near a year, when we hunted them with the Jodhpur legion, and finally starved them into surrender, are now in jail. I hope the new system will do good. We want good boundary settlements and surveys – the work heretofore has generally been badly done, and has increased rather than diminished disputes. We want a map of the country and at least one road through it. The Derajat was as well off under Ranjit for roads as Rajputana is now. The daks are the worst I know of in India, 6, 7 and 8 days from Agra – 350 miles; from 8 to 14 days to Bombay, and so on. We are, in short, benighted, and I feel will get little help from Government, as the Governor-General cares not a straw for us, and Colonel Low probably thinks we are uncommonly well off, and that I am a troublesome meddler. In January last the district of Nimach was made over to me as Commissioner. It belongs to Sindhia, but is

managed by us. The mode we have, during our incumbency of 8 years, dispensed the blessings of the British Government has been by raising the revenue 30 per cent throughout and in many villages 60, 80, and 100 per cent. Colonel Sleeman never visited the district, and though Mr. Bushby did, it was to very little effect. When I went to Nimach in February I was overwhelmed with complaints.¹

In many ways life at and round Mount Abu resembled former days at Katmandu, although there was little of the tremendous aloofness of Nepal from the outside world. Henry Lawrence's middle and later life indeed consisted of two periods of quiet and recuperation, leading in each case to a time of great activity and astonishing achievements. But Rajputana brought one fundamental difference, for there he suffered the greatest loss and grief of his life. On January 15th, 1854, Honoria Lawrence died at Mount Abu after a last painful illness. She had not been well when they left Lahore, and although Mount Abu brought her into a climate better than any she had known since Nepal, she had been dangerously ill in August 1853, and whatever improvement came was but passing. At the end, her husband was, mercifully for her, present; she had the services of a good and faithful doctor, Ebden; and one of her dearest friends, Mrs. Hill, was with her to the end. Three things, the deepest in her, dominated her mind to the end – her religion, the love of her husband, and, in the background, an Irishwoman's instinctive longing for the loughside where she had grown up, and which neither the glory of the Indian hills, nor absorption in the pressing cares of her family could obliterate. Her death, following the disappointment at Lahore, marked a decisive change in her husband's life. Husband and wife had been so long flung together in isolation; each had come to depend so absolutely on the other's strength; their mutual love had borne so unusual and varied

¹ H. M. L. to Macleod, 28 September, 1854.



Honoria, Lady Lawrence

strains; each had contributed qualities so notable to the partnership; their work as separate beings had become to themselves and those they cared for so perfectly one, that the death of either must be an irreparable loss to the other, must hurt the other beyond chance of remedy. Yet for years Honoria had been living with the constant possibility of death before her. She had known – to use her own words – ‘what it was to be often so near death, and not to die’; and perhaps the best reason for coming to Rajputana was just the chance that Mount Abu might save her as Lahore could not. She told her friend Mrs. Hill that the rest and peace of Abu had been one of her greatest blessings; that the last nine months had been full of happiness – she could now rejoice heartily that she had left Lahore.¹ But now the end came, and there are few more touching letters than those which Henry Lawrence wrote to his sons in England from beside the death-bed of their mother. It seems permissible to quote from one of them²: ‘My dear sons: By the side of the remains of what five hours ago was your fond mother, I sit down to write to you, in the hope that, weak as may be my words, you will both of you, Alick and Henry, remember them as the dying message of your mother, who never passed a day, indeed an hour, without thinking of you; and the happiness of whose life was the fortnightly letters, telling that you were good, well, and happy. Two hours after her death, which occurred at 20 minutes to 12 to-day, your letters of December reached me. She had been looking out for them, as she was accustomed to do, from the earliest date of their being due, and her pleasure, nay delight, was always great when all was well, and her sons seemed to be trying to do their duty. Her daily prayer was that you might be good boys and live to be good men – honest and straightforward in thought and deed – kind and affectionate and considerate to all around you –

¹ Mrs. Hill to H. M. L., 4 February, 1854.

² 15 January, 1854, 4.30 p.m.

thoughtful and pitiful for the poor and weak, and those who have no friends. . . .¹

Henceforward it was a different, I do not say a weaker, Henry Lawrence who faced his duties in a world where now more than half of what he counted his life had passed into the unseen. A visitor at Mount Abu in 1855 noted how on his morning walks he used to meet Sir Henry 'making his little pilgrimage to the grave. He would stand a few minutes by its iron railings, imbibe as it were a fresh draught of the bitter waters of unavailing sorrow, and then return to his house and duties, to that round of endless, arduous work which for him had no cessation.'²

In judging his character in those later days, one too easily forgets that notable and interesting as are the public records and demi-official letters, with their occasional turbulence of criticisms and outbursts of strong feeling, they show only half of the real Henry Lawrence. Many little private notes remain to reveal how universal his benevolence was. Incidents are recorded such as that of the three small Panjabi landowners who came all the way from about Firozpur to seek advice in their land troubles. But it is perhaps from his letters to the two boys at home, Alick and Harry, that one gets an insight into the Henry Lawrence whose friends and beneficiares – and their children long afterwards – ever remembered him with affectionate reverence. In these intimate letters Mount Abu seems a place of rest and unselfish happiness, its altitude lifting the little company into an air less dusty and harassing than the streets of Lahore; the house, built, as it was, on a high granite rock, with a little garden, and birds flying round it, and its view over lake, rocks, and woods, friendlier and more homelike than one expects in India. There his

¹ Like her husband, she chose the inscription and text for her gravestone. The text was to be from Daniel ix.: 'To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgiveness, though we have rebelled against Him' (last diary of Lady Lawrence).

² MS. recollections of Sir Henry Lawrence by Major Oldfield (1860).

daughter Honoria was growing up, guided by her aunt, Charlotte Lawrence, and there were other children too, and games and parties. At the Agent's house there were always friends to be housed; lame ducks to be saved from further misfortune; protégés to be guided into useful careers. 'While I write, at 9 p.m.,' runs one of these happy letters, 'Mr. Galway is working by my side at algebra, and helping Mr. Maconnachie who is on his other side. They are all getting on famously in Hindustani, though they did not know a word, 6 or 8 months ago'; or, again: 'Here we are our usual house party sitting round the round table, Maconnachie and Robert Young one on either side of me, working at survey calculations; Aunt Charlotte and William Galway sitting opposite reading. Honey had just gone to bed after hearing a story from me of a *good* giant who had a good, kind daughter.'

By good fortune there remains a very clear description of his appearance at this time, written by Major Oldfield, who served under him, and who, after a first impression that he was restless, abrupt, and unsatisfied, came to feel towards him the same strong affection and devotion which all his Panjab colleagues felt. 'He was,' says Major Oldfield, 'a tall, thin, wiry-looking man, with hollow cheeks, a haggard face, restless eyes, and a long grey beard which extended nearly to his waist. The lines of care and hard Indian service were deeply stamped upon his brow and face, and he looked at least ten years older than he really was. He received me cordially, asked me to dine with him in the evening, and then going into the bungalow was soon immersed in business details. One constant tide of visitors, almost all natives, were making their way to him, with various petitions, requests and remonstrances. All were received and patiently heard, but none could boast of an audience of more than a few minutes.'¹

¹ Unprinted recollections of Major Oldfield, dated April 1860. For these I have to thank Miss Angel Lawrence, St. Hild's College, Durham.

The obvious climatic advantages of Mount Abu, connecting themselves in his mind with what he and his wife had done for children at another similar refuge from the climate of the plains, Sanawar, made him plan an extension of the idea of the Lawrence Asylum. Almost as soon as he had arrived, seeing the advantages of the place, and learning that, with the mixture of stubbornness and imbecility which characterised so much of English military routine in those days, Bombay military invalids were housed in a far less healthy place, and actually marched back in the worst and most feverish time of the year by road, he urged Lord Elphinstone, the Governor, and the Commander-in-Chief of the Army in Bombay, to use Mount Abu; and he himself took pains to see the invalids properly housed. But not even his philanthropy and the high authorities behind him could check the cruelty of military routine. 'After barracks have been made comfortable for 120 men,' he wrote to General Stalker in 1855, 'the detachment from Deesa has arrived, 21 strong, *including* 5 duty men.'

In the matter of a new children's school or asylum he was his own master, and, doubtless moved by thoughts of what Honoria would have wished, he proposed, in the autumn of the year in which she died, to the Governor in Bombay, to submit a scheme 'for a school for European children at Abu.' By November he had purchased two small houses, and hoped to have others built by March 1856, suitable for thirty or forty children. All his good friends in Rajputana helped, and the Bombay Government supported the project. At the same time he urged a similar school for Madras Presidency, at Utakamand, in the Nilgiri hills. There, the chief trouble came from the ultra-Protestants, who thought Henry Lawrence's peculiarly tolerant views of Bible religion in relation to Catholic children a danger to religion. 'Bible teaching,' he wrote in an energetic memorandum, 'is the basis of religious instruction at Sanawar. . . . Let them eject any promoters

of proselytism, be they Roman Catholic or Protestant. . . . There is ample in the Bible, at least for *children*, without running into religious controversy. We wish to make Christians, not controversialists.’¹

Nothing, perhaps, of all that he planned, so perfectly succeeded as these schools; although only in Madras did he manage to persuade the other founders to omit his name. ‘At the school meeting to-day,’ he wrote to Alick,² ‘I objected to the school being called after me, but I was unanimously overruled. On your account and Harry’s I am not sorry, as the interest in the place where Mama lies may thereby be strengthened. The Madras people have at length, after two years’ writing, commenced their school. They have agreed to my proposition to strike the word ‘Lawrence’ out of its name. . . . The Abu school has flourished far beyond my expectations, the buildings are all finished, and we have nearly £1,000 in hand and about 40 pupils. At the Lawrence Asylum³ there are 199 children on the foundation, besides about 100 paid for by Government. You know, I believe, that it was Lord Hardinge who called the Asylum after me, by an official order.’

Since Rajputana had brought Henry Lawrence an immense relaxation in the strain of administration, and a real increase of health and power, his restless energy drove him, as it had done in Nepal, to vigorous general thought, and the renewal of his literary efforts, whether in actual contributions to the *Calcutta Review*, or in long and extremely interesting letters to old friends and colleagues now in England. Being an Ulsterman, he naturally assumed the initiative, and, as usual, his most notable ideas were stated with a pugnacity not always relished by quieter or more conventional minds. Sir Charles Napier, as restless in death as when alive, had bequeathed fresh trouble to his former Indian colleagues by his posthumous

¹ Memo. on the project of a school at Utakamand, 27 August, 1856.

² 18 June, 1856.

³ Sanawar.

Defects of the Indian Government, in which the Panjab received its full share of punishment. The book is now as dead as is the military fame of its author, but it kept Sir Henry busy during the leisure moments of a year, in collecting material for correcting Napier's errors and publishing a set answer. The whole affair may best be dismissed in the whimsical exaggeration of one of Lawrence's official friends, who held 'that the most favourable sentence that justice can pronounce is that he [Napier] was just not mad enough for Bedlam, and just not knave enough for Bridewell.'¹ It was impossible for him not to be absorbed in the Crimean War, and his interest naturally took practical as well as literary form. In February he urged Lord Hardinge, now nearing the end of his life, to call for volunteers from India – 'picked fellows, Sikhs, Muhammadans, and even Hindus, would, brigaded with British regiments as in India, be quite a match for the Russians of the line.'² Then, a little later, when the War Office had leant towards a Turkish rather than an Indian contingent, he suggested Indian support, especially in artillery and irregular cavalry, and offered to go, even if it were only as second in command.³ In reporting his suggestions to the Governor-General he placed his services without reserve in Dalhousie's hands. Meanwhile his impatient soul broke loose over the colossal stupidity of the British conduct of the war. 'The starving of our troops within 7 miles of ample supplies is inexplicable. It is clear that the military commanders and staff miscalculated their means; did not make use of what they possessed; left vital matters to chance, and bandied responsibilities from one to another. Having seen several armies brought very low by such a system, and, as a boy, during the first Burmah War, having seen 10,000 men reduced to 800 effectives I can quite understand the cause

¹ From F. F. Courtenay, Dalhousie's private secretary, to H. M. L., 13 April, 1854.

² To Lord Hardinge, 6 February, 1855.

³ To the same, 6 April, 1855.

of much that has occurred in the Crimea.’¹ One direct consequence of his Crimean interests was the publication of two very able and well-informed articles, on the Indian Army and its reform, in the *Calcutta Review*. Much that he wrote has in process of time become obsolete or uninteresting. But three of his propositions were of lasting importance – the need for a proper army staff, the abolition of an inflexible system of promotion by seniority, and the introduction of native Indian soldiers into military positions of rank and importance, adequate to the ambitions and talents of the ablest of them. Again and again Sir Henry’s pungency of phrase, and ironic common sense, proved how little they understood him who thought him without literary power. He wished for ‘Commanders-in-Chief having the use of their limbs and with their senses about them’; protested against officers ‘whose only guarantee of efficiency is old age, whose very existence is often a token of their never having earned command, who have kept themselves in clover, and thus, while generous souls have sunk in the struggle, survive to win the prizes.’² With real vision and some eloquence he argued against the neglect of that native military genius which formerly had produced Holkar and Sindhia, Gulab Singh and Ranjit Singh, and which now the Company regulations shut out from its legitimate ambitions. ‘*These outlets for restlessness and ability are gone; others are closing.* It behoves us, therefore, now more than ever, to give legitimate rewards, and, as far as practicable, employment to the energetic few, to that leaven that is in every lump – the leaven that may secure our empire or may disturb it – nay, even destroy it.’³

About the same time, moved still by Russo-Turkish troubles, his peculiar interest in allowing native, and especially Oriental, States to develop along their own lines, with the minimum of Western guidance, made him a most original

¹ To Dalhousie, 19 April, 1855.

² Lawrence, *Essays*, p. 383. ³ *Ibid.*, p. 396.

contributor to the Eastern question. He thought of Turkey, as he had done of the Panjab, and as, later, Mustapha Kemal was to think of his own country, and seems to have wished Turkish reform to develop on Turkish lines, and without the incubus of Western exploitation. 'Turkey may be disorganised and the ministers corrupt, the Sultan an idiot and so on: all these circumstances except the last caused by the incubus of the quasi-Christian powers. The Turks seem to me better fellows, and even better soldiers, than the Russians. I go heartily with them, and would gladly be at the head of a brigade on their side.'¹

Then passing by a natural transition to consider our position in India towards almost exactly the same problem as that presented by Turkey in Europe, and with Oudh and Hyderabad very plainly in his mind, he proceeded to define his own policy of non-annexation as against the Governor-General: 'It is now the fashion to cry out for their annexation, but I am quite at a loss to understand the grounds. They are badly governed – so is Russia and so is, or at least was, Ireland, the Cape, Canada, etc. In the same breath that we reprobate the ambition of Russia, America, France and the rest, and while our oldest Indian possessions have scarcely a road worthy of the name, not a railway, not a canal, and while we have done as little for them morally, as physically, our philanthropists desire to annex all native states for *the good of the people*. Bad as we are, I believe we are a good deal better than any native ruler of the present age, but that does not justify us in picking their pockets, or breaking treaties. With Oudh the treaty distinctly permits us to take the management of the country into our own hands, if necessary, but it *does not* justify us in putting the proceeds into our own pockets. The humanity question is therefore disposed of, as regards Oudh, and, if needful, we might similarly arrange for Hyderabad. At this moment, out of the 18 independent states in Rajputana, I have 5

¹ To Lord Stanley, 16 August, 1854.

under my direct management because the sovereigns of 2 are minors, and of 3 are incompetent. Rajputana has already paid us for protection, as have Oudh and Hyderabad, several times over. It is a novel mode of protection to seize for ourselves. It is also impolitic, for, where we manage native states, we can indulge our philanthropy without expense and by spending the *naughty* prince's revenue in his territory, and on his own people, we gain their affections and thereby strengthen ourselves. Thus without breach of treaty we gain all we ought to do by annexation, for assuredly the revenues of India ought to be spent on India. I feel I have not expressed myself clearly, but you will understand my argument. I am however in a terrible minority. The Army, the Civil Service, the Press, and the Governor-General are all against me. But I still say "*Read our treaties.*" We have no right to make one day and break the next: to put our own interpretation this year on what was acknowledged to bear a different one last year.¹ In spite of its vehemence it would be foolish to think of this as being anything but the most remarkable kind of insight and political wisdom, or of its author as being in any way inferior to the best minds who have tried to think fairly on Indian politics.

The chapter opened with Lawrence in a mood of bitter resentment at Lord Dalhousie's treatment of him. As has already been said, had he seen the Governor-General's private correspondence, that resentment would have been greater, and, on the whole, justified.² But his partisans, and certainly his biographer, must confess, as at times he himself did, that Dalhousie could be generous; for the years in Rajputana were marked by a series of offers or chances which ought to have salved his hurt pride. At the beginning of July 1853, the Governor-General offered him Hyderabad, now vacated by Low, and greatly increased in importance through a new treaty with the Nizam.³ It would have

¹ From the same letter to Lord Stanley.

² *Private Letters of the Marquess of Dalhousie*, p. 378. ³ 4 July, 1853.

been unwise – indeed under the circumstances, more especially his wife's health, it was nearly impossible – for him to accept the offer, and Dalhousie thought him right in declining to move.¹ His own answer, touched with a little gloom, and an unusual lack of self-confidence, is important in the history of his relations with the Governor-General: 'You know that my health is bad, and that it was with difficulty I struggled through the vexation of the last four years at Lahöre. Your Lordship's kind permission to reside at Mount Abu gives an opportunity for recruiting my energies, worn out during a busy career of 31 years. This may seem inconsistent with my desire to remain in the Panjab, but there I had mastered my work, and was intimately acquainted with the country, the people, and the affairs of all ranks. I sought, then, to stay because I felt myself at home, and that my past labours had earned comparative future repose. I bitterly lamented my departure, but, having here worked hard to acquaint myself with my duty, I now see my way before me; and though the work is not to my taste, as a direct civil charge was or would be, yet I freely confess that personally I am happier and better off here than I was at Lahore. At Hyderabad my position would be entirely different from what it was in the Panjab. The field, as your Lordship observes, is now of increased importance, and it is not without a struggle that I forego such an opening as you have had the goodness to give me. Ten years ago it would have been my highest ambition, but now I do not honestly feel that I could do justice to the work, with everything to construct, an army to reduce and organise, an able and discontented sovereign to humour, a system of civil administration to introduce in three extensive tracts, lying in three different directions and more than 100 miles from the capital.'²

The offer of Hyderabad was only the first of a series of

¹ Dalhousie to H. M. L., 2 August, 1853.

² H. M. L. to Lord Dalhousie, 17 July, 1853.

honours, bestowed or offered, which might have mollified – perhaps did somewhat mollify – his injured pride. In June 1854 he was appointed Honorary Aide-de-Camp to the Queen; and in September, when it became necessary to appoint someone to act for Colonel Sleeman at Lucknow, Dalhousie, in a most courteous note, said that his *possible* wishes had not been overlooked, and that Outram and not he had been appointed when the position ‘was only an acting one, while if it became permanent it was not more lucrative, not more dignified, and neither politically so extensive nor commanding so many advantages, incidentally, as your present charge.’¹ When Canning took Dalhousie’s place in February 1856, the chances of promotion certainly did not diminish. On his own initiative, when Outram was invalided home in 1856, he offered to act for him, ‘half to help him, half to help the country, and with no views for myself, but great discomfort.’² His offer came too late. A little later he told one of his intimate friends: ‘I was nearly going to Oudh the other day.’³ It would have been foolish, but pride, anger, and other evil passions probably instigated me. I have reason to believe that if Lord Canning had thought I *would* go, he would have offered me the berth. Had he offered I would have gone, though privately, and indeed publicly, I am much better off here; but as I have said, pride influences me.’⁴

About the same time his brother John, in one of the frankest and most notable of his letters, was urging on the Governor-General the duty of appointing Henry in command of the force which was to invade Persia: ‘He is not an officer of much technical knowledge, except in his own branch (the Artillery), and he is not fond of details,’ wrote John with his own rough honesty, ‘but he has great natural

¹ Dalhousie to H. M. L., 17 September, 1854.

² H. M. L. to Kaye, 16 July, 1856.

³ It must have been when Jackson’s impracticability had first impressed the Governor-General.

⁴ Sir H. M. L., to Dr. Hathaway, 3 August, 1856.

ability, immense force of character, is very popular in his service, has large political acumen, and much administrative ability. I do not think there is a military man in India who is his equal on these points.¹ Meanwhile Henry had renewed his request for permission to go to England in March 1857 ('I have only been 8 months in England in 26 years,' he wrote), to meet and return with his son Alick. With the true Lawrence family feeling he urged on Canning, as he had on Dalhousie, the claims of his brother George to act for him; and, even more characteristically, having heard that John might go home on medical certificate, he told Canning that, if such were the case, he would forgo all view of home could he thereby return to the Panjab 'even for a twelvemonth . . . to a people among whom I spent the best years of my life, and to a province where I left no enemies and many friends.'

But already the spirit was moving on the face of the waters in India, and they who believe in Destiny may be permitted to think that a providential necessity kept John Lawrence in the Panjab, and prevented Henry from embarking for England. However that may be, it was arranged that Charlotte and little Honoria Lawrence should go to Bombay, and that Henry should leave Rajputana on February 1st, 1857, embarking on March 6th for a twelvemonth's leave. Then, on January 19th, came Canning's summons of him to Oudh, his acceptance by telegraph and post, and the opening of the last great adventure of his life: 'I am honoured and grateful by your kind letter of the 9th, this day received. I am quite at your Lordship's service, and will cancel my leave, and move to Lucknow at a day's notice, if you think fit, after this explanation, to appoint me. My own doctor (my friend Ebden) thinks better of my health than any other doctor - three others, whom I consulted before I came here, replied that I certainly ought to go home. The two staff doctors at this station say the same. But Dr.

¹ B. Smith, *Life of Lord Lawrence*, Vol. I., pp. 502-3.

Ebden and Dr. Lowndes, both of whom know me well, say that my constitution has that elasticity that, in a work so much to my taste as Oudh, I may be able to hold out. Annoyances try me much more than work. I went round Gujarat last month, several times riding 30 or more miles a day, and being repeatedly out all day or night, and sometimes both. I can also work at my desk for 12 or 15 hours at a time. Work therefore does not yet oppress me. But ever since I was so cavalierly elbowed out of the Panjab, I have fretted, even to the injury of my health. Your Lordship's handsome letter has quite relieved my mind on that point; so I repeat that, if on this explanation you think fit to send me to Oudh, I am quite ready and can be there within twenty days of receiving your telegraphic reply.¹

¹ Sir H. M. L. to Lord Canning, 19 January, 1857.

CHAPTER XIII

LUCKNOW AND THE CHIEF COMMISSIONERSHIP OF OUDH, MARCH-MAY 1857¹

SIR HENRY LAWRENCE'S arrival at Lucknow was destined to be, both for him and for India, something more than a mere change of scene, and the story of his last months belongs, not to himself, his friends, and those over whom he ruled, but to the general stock of what we call the history of the world. It was not that a greater task than the reorganisation of the Panjab had been imposed on him, or that the defender of the Lucknow Residency was a braver man than the Resident at Lahore, when in 1846 he went to pacify Kashmir. But in 1857 the seclusion which has usually cut Indian history off from that of the world outside was rudely broken into; and, since the men who held the Ridge at Delhi and the Residency at Lucknow, to use an Indian phrase, loosed an act upon the world whose consequences we may still mark, the two brothers, Henry and John Lawrence, who dominated the scene, and assured the victory, entered as they had not before into general history. In 1857, and at Lucknow, Henry Lawrence did and said some things which it is difficult to forget. Yet the real danger for the historian lies, not in failure to appreciate the greatness of the occasion, but in a natural assumption that

¹ I have based this narrative primarily on Sir Henry Lawrence's own papers, but the facts have all been tested, and the gaps filled in, by reference to the many contemporary accounts in print and MS. Of these, Captain T. F. Wilson's little anonymous volume, *The Defence of Lucknow*, supplemented by the MS. memorandum which he made for Sir Herbert Edwardes, is the most reliable; as, of later books, General McLeod Innes' *Lucknow and Oude in the Mutiny* is easily first. It is unfortunate that Merivale's concluding pages in the official life are negligible. He misdates the fight at Chinhat (June 29th instead of June 30th), and, entirely misunderstanding Captain Wilson's MS., he gives 8 p.m. on July 2nd, instead of 8 a.m. as the hour soon after which Sir Henry was wounded.

what seems so obvious now in so great a crisis ought to have been plain to men in India in the first months of 1857.

Henry Lawrence went on his way to Lucknow, his satisfaction mingled with regret: 'You cannot grieve more than I do over my stay,' he wrote to his sister Charlotte, from Bharatpur,¹ 'I have nearly given way more than once, but I hold to stay because I so much want to go. I have *no* inducement to stay. The very offer of the Governor-General to me is a sufficient salve to my Panjab sores. I therefore stay simply because I think it my duty, and that I can do good, but *at utmost* it would be for two years. It would never do for you and Honey to stay.' His mind had for long been full of doubts about the state of the native army. His articles, described in the last chapter, had revealed how seriously he viewed the errors of our military administration. On his way to Lucknow he spent three weeks with his old friend E. A. Reade, at Agra, and Reade's recollections were that 'his forebodings of evil and troubled times were constant and repeated,' affecting even the jests in his ordinary talk, and in this spirit they parted, 'with a promise that I should take Lucknow in my next official tour down the Doab. Yet somehow we both felt that there was no assurance of this. He was worn and depressed. The mutual misgiving was shown by his last expressed wish that we might both be spared to 1858 to go home together, he to rest, and I to retire from the public service.'²

Nor were the misgivings without foundation. Innumerable rumours and suspicions were already prevalent throughout the native army – that the English were bent on destroying caste and all other symbols of Indian religion; that they were issuing polluted cartridges and flour tainted with powdered bone; that they were planning general compulsory conversion to Christianity. It is well to remember that the first indications of serious trouble in Bengal, at Barrackpur and at Barhampur, occurred before the new

¹ 17 February, 1857.

² MS. recollections of E. A. Reade, March 1864.

Chief Commissioner reached his capital. But there were other reasons for anxiety. Dalhousie's Governor-Generalship, with its startling changes, was now beginning to have its natural effect in widespread disquiet, and, of the many regions vexed by his annexations, Oudh was that most lately and most deeply affected. In truth, when Lawrence entered Lucknow on March 20th, he was facing the acutest administrative problem which India then had to offer.

His new territory, Oudh, was a region about the size of Scotland, with a population reckoned by him about three millions. Its capital, Lucknow, was the second city in India, with between six and seven hundred thousand inhabitants. It had once been a province of the Moghul Empire, but its superstructure was mixed, Muslim and Rajput, its general population by great majority Hindu. After the decline of the Empire it had been appropriated by the Wazirs, who had once been servants of the Empire but now became independent princes, since 1819 recognised by the Company as of kingly rank. No useful purpose would be served by dwelling on the changes in the relations between the East India Company and the rulers of Oudh, but three salient facts must be borne in mind.

In the first place, the Company had guaranteed the security of the dynasty and territory of Oudh, on condition that the principality, subordinate also in its foreign policy, accepted British-Indian military protection, paying for the troops and services placed at its disposal. In the second place, after a period of monetary dealings, not entirely to our credit, Wellesley, in 1801, had obtained the cession of half the province as payment for past debts and present and future services of the Company. In the third place, the rulers of Oudh, now kings, protected from danger internal and external by Company troops, their military impotence fearing no external enemies, and their administrative incapacity no threat of deposition, developed, with perhaps one exception, into a race of royal imbeciles,

notorious, even among Eastern princes, for private debauchery and public worthlessness. Bentinck and Hardinge, men of some conscience, had each issued grave warnings, but Wajid Ali Shah, who ascended the throne in Hardinge's time, reached the lowest depths of vicious incompetence – an imbecile, Sir William Sleeman called him, in the hands of a few fiddlers, eunuchs and poetasters.¹ Hitherto the Government of India, although it had long been in full enjoyment of lands worth more than two million sterling, ceded as payment for the protection of Oudh, and had professed through its Residents to advise and assist the king in his efforts at improved administration, had found no really effective way of forcing on improvements. We were guarding Wajid Ali against the consequences which in the East naturally attend the degeneration of a royal line: but we had done nothing, either to relieve the royal house of the powerlessness created by our control, or to save the inhabitants of Oudh from the evils which indirectly we had helped to bring upon them. 'An irresponsible ruler ridden by a powerless pro-consul,' had been Henry Lawrence's description of the double government in 1845.² Lord Hardinge had certainly been explicit in 1847. Giving two years' grace, he had warned the king that, in case of failure, 'it has been determined by the Government of India to take the management of Oudh under their own authority.'³ Pre-occupations in the Panjab and elsewhere had delayed action, but Dalhousie was hardly the man to let things drift much further. Sir William Sleeman, the Resident appointed by him, had been ordered to report on the state of Oudh, and his *Journey Through the Kingdom of Oude in 1849-50* gave in unanswerable detail the case for the prosecution; a king living exclusively in the society of musicians, eunuchs, and women, and incapable of any kind of serious business; ministers either taken from this

¹ Sleeman, *Journey Through the Kingdom of Oude*, Vol. II., pp. 354, 369.

² Lawrence, *Essays*, p. 72.

³ Viscount Hardinge, *Hardinge*, p. 163.

fiddling and singing crowd, or at their mercy; a soldiery unpaid, disorderly, and useless for war, with transport animals enfeebled because the court group stole the fodder money, and guns wrecked through neglect; the official revenue collectors petty tyrants, or servants of the rogues at court, or terrorised by local potentates: these potentates or taluqdars, whose original position had in many cases been that of revenue agents rather than landlords, converting their agencies by all kinds of violence into ownership through theft; the small owners in exile, or driven by necessity to become dacoits; and the British Resident powerless. In Sleeman's pages the most characteristic figure in Oudh, before 1856, was the robber baron in the country, terrorising the region round him, and secure in his strong fort, which he rendered doubly strong by surrounding it with a belt of jungle. Sleeman left no doubt that he thought annexation a false solution of the situation. 'Were we to take advantage of the occasion to *annex* or *confiscate* Oudh, or any part of it, our good name in India would inevitably suffer; and that good name is more valuable to us than a dozen of Oudhs. . . . Annexation or confiscation is not compatible with our relations with this little dependent state. We must show ourselves to be high-minded, and above taking advantage of its prostrate weakness, by appropriating its revenues exclusively to the benefit of the people and royal family of Oudh.'¹ There were many shades and stages between independence and annexation, differences not always easy to define; but it may be said that men like Sleeman and Henry Lawrence, given the need for drastic action, agreed with that honestest of Governors-General, Lord William Bentinck, who thought that we should frame an administration entirely native; 'so composed as to individuals and so established upon the best principles, revenue and judicial, as should best serve for immediate improvement, and as a model for future imitation. The

¹ Sleeman, *op. cit.*, Vol. II., pp. 378-9.

only European part of it should be the functionary by whom it should be superintended, and it should only be retained till a complete reform might be brought about, and a guarantee for its continuance obtained, either in the improved character of the reigning prince, or, if incorrigible, in the substitution of his immediate heirs, or, in default of such a substitute from nonage or incapacity, by the nomination of one of the family as regent, the whole of the revenue being paid into the Oudh treasury.¹

Disorder and incapacity had gone beyond even abnormal limits. After Colonel Outram, who had succeeded Sleeman at Lucknow, reported to the Governor-General in 1855, Dalhousie's verdict was: 'It seems impossible that the home authorities can any longer hesitate to overthrow this fortress of corruption and infamous misgovernment. I should not mind doing it as a parting *coup*. But I doubt the people at home having the pluck to sanction it, and I can't find a pretext for doing it without sanction. The king won't offend or quarrel with us, and will take any amount of kicking without being rebellious. I must therefore have authority from home – and as I said before, I doubt their giving it.'² Nevertheless the sanction came, and, at the beginning of 1856, Outram was entrusted with the extinction of yet another Indian State – from February 7th, 1856, the kingdom of Oudh dissolved into a British province. It is an arguable point whether Outram, with all his notable qualities, was the ideal man to reorganise the territory; but it mattered little, for by April his health had broken down, and Oudh fell into the hands of men who spent the next year in creating problems for Henry Lawrence to solve in 1857. Outram had reported all well, the populace of Lucknow quiescent, the upper classes reconciled to the change, and masses, especially of the middle and lower classes, heartily welcoming the new regime.

¹ Lord William Bentinck, quoted from Lawrence, *Essays*, p. 123.

² *Private Letters of the Marquess of Dalhousie*, p. 344 (22 May, 1855).

It may be doubted whether Oudh, after February 1856, was ever really tranquil. Certainly it was unlikely to remain so long. Many factors co-operated towards disorder. As a shrewd observer noted, 'Apart from the king and his family, the influential men connected with the court, and all the hangers on of its purlieus, a few tradesmen of peculiar crafts, such as tissue or brocade makers, etc., whose business almost ceased with the extinction of the court, and lastly the restless spirits who before had found occupation in serving the king, and native officials who had lived luxuriously on the country people, and found themselves adrift at the annexation,' naturally hated the foreign usurpers who had driven them into unemployment.¹ The reorganisation of the land revenues had created a complicated mass of grievances. At simplest there were many districts where the new and well-intentioned land settlement had been fixed far too high – in some cases Sir Henry thought a 35 per cent reduction necessary. That at once bred unrest. But the fate of the taluqdars presented grave difficulties. Mr. Martin Gubbins, who as Revenue Commissioner superintended the settlement, has left a clear description of this problematical class. 'The term taluqdar means holder of a taluqa or collection of villages, for the payment of the Land Revenue assessed upon which villages the taluqdar was admitted to engage. The single engagement with one person for a number of villages saved the native government trouble; but it used to convey no right of property to the taluqdar in the villages for which he engaged. . . . For nearly half a century the taluqdar's system has been greatly abused, and the great aim of the taluqdar has been to supplant the villager in the property of the soil, and to constitute himself sole proprietor.'² To be strictly fair it should be added that some of the taluqdars held a local authority not unlike that of a chief in the Scottish clan

¹ G. H. Lawrence, MS. memorandum on the Defence of Lucknow.

² M. Gubbins, *Mutinies in Oudh*, pp. 61–2.

system; while others had so long controlled the land revenue that their position was difficult to distinguish from one of direct ownership. Along with the corruptness of the royal agents and court creatures, these territorial usurpations had kept Oudh in a condition of nearly universal private war, and the natural inclination of the British administrators was to strike hard at these rural tyrants. But apart from the fact that some taluqdars held positions more defensible than that described by Mr. Gubbins, there were many villagers under their sway not illiberally treated; and in any case, with all the world in Oudh in process of transformation, judicious caution should have been the order of the day. It was undeniable that the beginnings of a great and beneficial change had been made. Sir Henry's nephew, young George Lawrence, noted how police posts had been established; transit duties abolished; law courts set up after the Non-Regulation fashion of the Panjab; claims to rent-free lands and pensions investigated; the king's troops paid up and dismissed; indeed 'the whole machinery of British Government started on the latest and most approved system.'¹

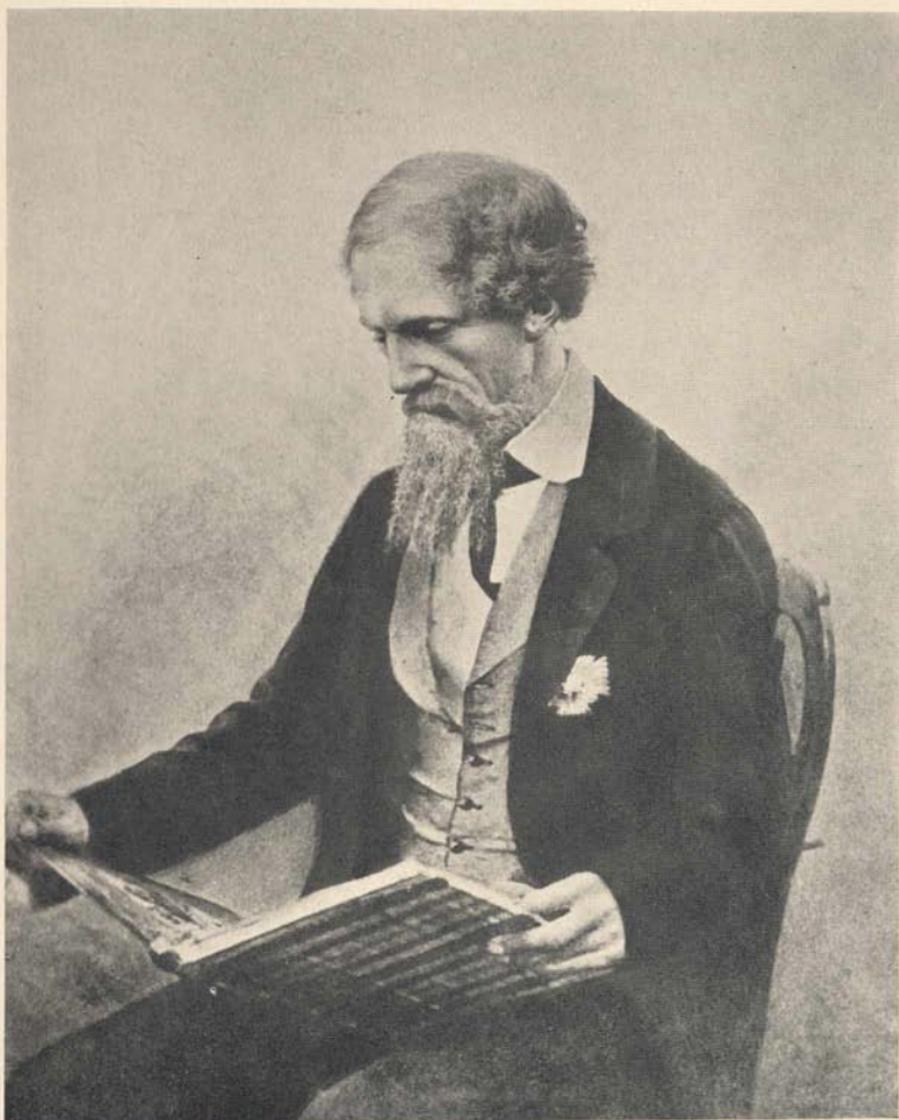
As though there were not already sufficient causes of future disorder, the stability of the new fabric was threatened from two other directions. In the first place, since the Bengal army was seething with discontent, and since Oudh was its headquarters for recruiting, the unrest had spread naturally from the old provinces to the homes of the Oudh sipahis; and, besides this, the marked change in the social standing at home of these sipahis from Oudh added not only to military but to provincial troubles. 'I used to be a great man when I went home,' said an Oudh cavalry man to Henry Lawrence. 'The best of the village rose as I approached; now the lowest puff their pipes in my face' — and both despisers and despised blamed the British Government.

¹ MS. memorandum.

The other circumstance was the utter lack of concord between the Acting Chief Commissioner, Mr. Coverley Jackson, who filled Outram's place, and his chief subordinates, Mr. Martin Gubbins, the Revenue Commissioner, and Mr. Ommaney, the Judicial Commissioner. It is just possible that, with Sir Henry Lawrence as Chief Commissioner when Oudh was annexed, the risings of 1857 might have been, if not avoided, at least reduced to manageable proportions. It is certain that the mutual ill will, reckless ill temper, failure in co-operation, and even worse, failure in discretion and moderation, which marked British administration in Oudh after Outram became ill, prepared the way for the great disaster of 1857.

On March 20th, Sir Henry entered on his duties at Lucknow. By good fortune, both in Agra on his way thither, and on his arrival at his capital, there were friends, visited or entertained by him, whose impressions recorded at the time give an exact and singularly beautiful picture of him at this culminating point in his career. Charles Raikes, who saw him at Agra, speaks of him as 'ripening fast alike for that goal of human glory which he was soon to attain, and for that sublimer change which so quickly awaited him.'¹ Herbert Edwardes, his closest friend outside the Lawrence family, spent a week with him early in April, and writing to John Nicholson after the news of his death had reached Peshawar, described his visit in some happy phrases. 'Grief had made him grey and worn, but it became him like the scars of a battle. . . . He had done with the world except working for it while his strength lasted, and he had come to that calm peaceful estimate of time and eternity, of himself and the judgment, which could only come of wanting and finding Christ.' But the most natural and spontaneous picture is that of Mrs. (later Lady) Daly, whose husband had just been ordered to the Panjab to take over the command of the Guides. Acting as hostess for

¹ C. Raikes, *Revolt in the North-West Provinces*, p. 23.



Sir Henry Lawrence in 1857
From a photograph taken at Lucknow

their friend, she was able to see the details of his ordinary life – his old carelessness in, or dislike of, petty convention and social circumstance; his universal benevolence and friendliness; the interest in little children, ‘because,’ said he, ‘I have had little children of my own’; the munificence towards every project aiming at the service of others, and his perfect indifference about his own comfort. Like his other friends, Lady Daly was chiefly struck with the way in which the frontiers between the seen and unseen had broken down for him: ‘He certainly, more than any one I ever knew, gives one the feeling of living for another world. He is perfectly cheerful, active, and interested in this, yet every now and then some little observation falls from his lips, which proves how fully he is imbued with the feeling of the transitory nature of our present existence, how perfect is his faith that the real life is to come.’¹

But Henry Lawrence had even less opportunity at Lucknow than in the past to allow spirituality to turn into merely passive meditation. His new position introduced him into what, even in that doubtful time, was the most disordered corner of India; and his trials were not merely those of the simpler and greater kind which sympathy, endurance, and foresight can conquer, but others less susceptible to treatment, which sprang from distressing private relationships with men who differed from him in opinion, and whose actions he had to criticise or check. No second-hand rendering of the general situation in March and April can take the place of his own summary, given in a letter to his brother-in-law, Dr. James Bernard, and intended by him to be a record of his fresh impressions of Oudh: ‘You will be glad to hear that after seventeen days’ occupancy of my new berth I feel myself more comfortable than I expected. The work is *decidedly* not overwhelming and I have less fear of the heat than I had. There is a large town house and another nearly as large in the cantonment four miles off at my

¹ Diary of Lady Daly, March 24–April 12, 1857.

disposal. I was never so well housed. All hands seem glad at my coming, the natives especially. For the first time since annexation have the doors of the Residency been open to the nobles and the traders. I have held large darbars for both classes (separately); and now the individual members of each class come to me daily. General Outram writes to me that he is glad I am come as he is sure "I [he] could not have restored order." His wife, a nice gentle creature, writes to me that she too is very glad as, when she was here in January last, "everyone was wretched, and all wanted a firm kind hand." The Civil officers, whether civilians or soldiers, may well be glad of the change, for in the whole course of my service I never saw such letters as have issued from these offices. "Evasion," "misrepresentation," etc., were common words flung about right and left. I tore up two drafts of letters that came to me the first day, and altered three others. Mr. Jackson was not altogether to blame. He is a violent but able and kindly man. When thwarted he could not restrain himself and lost his judgment. He stayed eight days with me, and was very amicable though I told him he was very wrong in some of his acts and in more of his expressions. . . . He was on bad terms with five out of the six principal officers (civil), and also with the Civil Secretary. The Judicial Commissioner, as also the Revenue one, were at bitter feud with him. The first is not a wise man, jealous of interference, and yet fond of interfering. Mr. Ommaney is his name. . . . I cannot say I admire him, but have no fear of his disturbing me. I took an early opportunity, even while Mr. Jackson was here, to let him [Mr. O.] know that he was not to lead me by the nose. The first occasion was regarding a Thuggee jail, in which I found all sorts of people mixed up with Thugs, and the sentries, all with muskets in their hands, at the mercy of the prisoners. *On the spot* I put the sentries into safe positions. Jackson was with me, and expressed surprise at my daring to interfere, in as much as in one of his

despatches he had been told by Government that the Judicial Commissioner had *plenary* power in jail matters. As soon as I came in I wrote an official letter to Mr. Ommaney, saying I did not wish to interfere in details, but that the case was urgent as I was mobbed by life prisoners, mixed up with those confined for misdemeanours, and that all could escape when they liked. . . . The Revenue Commissioner, a better and abler man, whom I like, though I have never been officially connected with him, may be a more troublesome coadjutor. He has strong views about breaking up estates and destroying the aristocracy. To a certain extent I agree with him, where it can be done fairly. He also *professes* to advocate low assessments, but in some quarters he has enforced high ones. We have however sympathies in common, and he, Mr. Gubbins, was so tremendously mauled by Mr. Jackson that he, even more than the others, has hailed my coming.

‘The military and political arrangements are perhaps the worst, and mostly owing to General Outram. In the Panjab we were not allowed to enlist the very men who had fought on our side, and were restricted to eighty [?]¹ Sikh Regiments of eight hundred. Here every Policeman and every (with few exceptions) Irregular soldier was in the King’s service. Outram would not hear of any outsiders being enlisted. This was a great mistake. Besides, the position of the troops, magazine, treasury, etc., are all as bad as bad can be – all scattered over several miles, the Infantry in one direction, the Cavalry another, the Artillery in a third, the magazine in a fourth and almost unprotected. The Governor-General seems in some alarm regarding the state of affairs, though I hope there is no serious reason. A few days ago he sent me more than a sheet of paper from an officer in Oudh, whose name he did not mention, giving a frightful picture of the state of irritation afloat in Oudh.

¹ ‘Eighty’ by mistake in the letter; ten is the correct number. Lee-Warner, *Life of Dalhousie*, Vol. I., p. 261; *supra.*, p. 234.

. . . I fear his picture of the revolutionary schemes of many (i.e. of the officials) is quite correct. A dead level seems to be the ideal of many civil officers, both military and civilian. . . . My health is *better*, rather than worse. I am calmer and quieter than I have been for years, and take intense pleasure in my daily work of looking about this immense city in the morning, and dealing with *authority* all day in matters affecting many millions' welfare. While I write, 200 or more traders are calling out against a new tax attempted to be levied in the city by Mr. Ommaney. They beset me yesterday evening, when I sent for Mr. O. He did not know, or affected not to know their grievance. . . . I have stayed the levy pending enquiry.¹

To grasp the meaning of all that happened between March and July, it is essential to have a clear and simple view of Lucknow itself, and of the disposition of troops at the disposal of the Chief Commissioner when the troubles broke on him. The city itself was of great extent, covering twelve square miles. As the capital of an independent kingdom it was full of public buildings, palaces, and places of worship, but what had impressed Henry Lawrence twelve years before had been its curious mixture of old and new, Eastern and Western, fine and sordid. Along the right bank of the river Gumti, whose general direction was from the north-west, there was a line, with off-branches, of palaces and public buildings, the central ones the Chattar Manzil or old Palace, nearer the river, and the Kaisarbagh or great modern Palace, rather further from it. To the south-east, surrounded by parks and open ground were the Dilkusha Palace and the Martinière or European boys' school. To the north, or north-west, lay the Residency with its many attendant buildings on a raised plateau close to the river, the whole forming an irregular square, about a mile and a quarter in perimeter. Still further up the river was an old and once strong native fort, the Machchi Bhawan, forming, with the Residency

¹ Sir H. M. L. to Dr. James Bernard, 7 April, 1857.

grounds, the only commanding natural positions in the city. Beyond that, the princely and official suburb ran to the garden and country house called the Musa Bagh. To the south and west of these official buildings lay the great city, without walls, but bounded on the south-east, south, and south-west by a canal, across which, at the Charbagh Bridge, the Cawnpore Road ran through Lucknow to the south-east corner of the Residency. This canal formed the curving base of a triangle which had the Residency at the north-west angle, and the Cawnpore Road and the line of palaces as the containing sides. As the crow flies, it was rather less than two miles from the canal, where the Cawnpore road crossed it, to the Residency; and well over two miles from the eastern edge of the town to the same place. Across the river was a subordinate kind of town, access to which was given near the Machchi Bhawan by a stone bridge, a little up stream from the Residency by an iron bridge, and further down, beyond the Chattar Manzil, by a bridge of boats, which does not concern us much. Across the iron bridge ran a main road, forking east to Faizabad and north to Sitapur, its northern branch leading also to what was called either the old cantonments or Mariaon, and north-east to Chattar Kothi, where was a cavalry station. A military observer would have commented on the entirely non-military character of the place (apart from barracks), the extreme danger to a small British force of a large, discontented, and turbulent city, the buildings of which flowed up to, and overshadowed, the very gates of the Residency; and the obvious importance of such rising ground as the Residency and the Machchi Bhawan afforded.

Equal in importance with the framework of Lucknow was the disposition of troops in the place. In and about Lucknow itself – which now may be taken to mean the more stately and official part – there were:– a native guard at the Residency, relieved each week; European barracks, a mile and a half to the east, housing H.M.'s 32nd Regiment, not quite

700 strong, with the officers' quarters scattered round in haphazard fashion; a powder magazine, north of the barracks, in an old Muslim tomb, the Kadam Rasul; and, not far off, the 3rd Regiment of Military Police. A mile up stream, still on the right bank of the river, were the headquarters of the Oudh Irregular Force, and still farther up, at the Musa Bagh, the 4th and 7th Regiments of the Oudh Irregular Infantry. North of the river, in the old cantonments, some four miles out, the main garrison was disposed as follows:

- Officers of the native regiments in bungalows;
- 1 European Light Horse Battery;
- 1 Native Bullock Battery;
- 2 Oudh Irregular Horse Batteries;
- the 13th, 48th, and 71st Regiments of Native Infantry.

Beyond these, in one direction at Mudkipur, was the 7th Regiment of Native Light Cavalry, and in another the 2nd Oudh Irregular Cavalry.

The whole force was spread out under purely peace conditions, and haphazard, while the proportion of native to European soldiers was 7,000 to about 750, a disparity which the vicious disposition of the troops exaggerated on the native side. Lawrence was startled at the reckless lack of system, far worse, he thought, in military than even in civil matters: 'Cavalry, Artillery, and Infantry are all separated by several miles. The magazine is as unsafe as it is possible to make it – the only thought is of defence from thieves': this too in a great city full of disbanded soldiery, starving dependents of the old court, and plotters ready for any mischief. His first and immediate measure of reform was to see that the officers of the 32nd slept near their lines, and that they had in support 2 guns of the Native Battery and 30 horsemen. The proper force, as he told Lord Canning, should have been a regiment or $1\frac{1}{2}$ regiments of Europeans, fewer native

Regulars, infantry and cavalry, and as reinforcements a regiment of Sikh and Pathan Irregulars.

One must imagine the Chief Commissioner flinging himself into the reform of the more obvious faults: visiting jails and hospitals; interviewing chiefs, citizens, all the more obviously aggrieved servants of the old regime; investigating and cutting down assessments throughout the province; and restraining the over-eager demolition of buildings by which the new masters were improving on the old. In nothing was he more punctilious than in settling the old scores left by the removal of the royal government. In one direction he found artillery men, disbanded, but still unpaid and hanging about the town; in another no less than 1,200 of the late city police in the same position. 'Truly,' he wrote to Canning, 'we have been tempting providence.'

His whole attention, however, almost at once, and increasingly until the end, was given to problems directly military. Already, as has been seen, the dangers before India had been revealed by events at Barhampur and Barrackpur; and alike for Westerner and Indian there was a general feeling of uneasiness, Oudh being the most natural centre at which the restlessness might be expected to show itself. To grapple more effectively with the situation, if one may anticipate events, Sir Henry had his hands greatly strengthened, and his spirits relieved, by obtaining from Calcutta full military authority and the rank of Brigadier-General.¹

Early in April an error in judgment on the part of the regimental doctor of the 48th N.I. led to the burning down of his bungalow by incendiaries, who were not discovered. Then came rumours that sipahis from the 48th were intriguing with one of the chiefs, and that a rising had been planned. Later still, the story was that the 48th were in correspondence with the police. Apart from rumours, the Chief Commissioner knew that now the 48th seldom even saluted officers,

¹ Sir H. M. L. to Dr. James Bernard, 18 May - 'To-day I received full military authority.'

except their own, and he told Canning that while there seemed to be no incivility, there were angry looks; and he strengthened his statement by saying that that very morning (May 1st) a clod had been flung at Ommaney, and another at Major Anderson, his chief engineer, 'while in a buggy with myself.'¹

The long and most enlightening letters which Sir Henry Lawrence wrote to Lord Canning during the month before the Meerut outbreak furnish the earliest and frankest analysis of the circumstances out of which the Mutiny arose. It is sometimes difficult to remember that most of what he said was written before the seizure of Delhi by the mutineers. As a foundation of his views lay his belief that our military policy in India was wrong, more especially because it had failed to provide sufficient European troops, because the senior officers were senile, and because no incentive had been offered through pay and promotion to the bolder and abler spirits in the native ranks. He was sure that the rumours of polluted cartridges and flour were chiefly important because they aggravated a general dissatisfaction which was being skilfully exploited by incendiaries. As to the chief seat of intrigue, it might be that Barrackpur infected Lucknow, or Lucknow Barrackpur, but he suspected 'the half-educated Calcutta babu' as among the most disaffected subjects in India.² Keenly aware how much harm had been done in the ranks by the new general service order, which compelled all recruits to undertake to serve 'beyond the sea, whether within the territories of the Company or beyond them,' he quoted to the Governor-General the criticism of an old subadar, who said, 'Anything in India is better than wealth beyond the sea.'

In a most significant talk with an artillery jamadar, who was about to be promoted, Sir Henry learned through the man's sullen and stubborn honesty the profound distrust

¹ To the Governor-General, 1 May, 1857.

² To the Governor-General, 10 May, 1857.

which had now universally laid hold of our Indian soldiers' minds: 'He did not conceal that he and all others saw no absurdity in the ground bones atta¹ belief, but that he considered we were quite up to such a dodge; and that it was only consistent with our whole career of fraud. "You took Bharatpur by dagha.² You got Lahore in the same way."³

' "No ! no !" I replied, "all quite false"; to which he replied:

' "Who broke the bridge at Sobraon ?"

' "The Sikhs," I replied, "in their funk. I was there."

' "Yes," he said, "I know you were there." But he was not the more satisfied.' Whether satisfied or not he warned Sir Henry how they would go, once they started. 'I tell you they are like sheep. The leading one tumbles, and down all the rest roll after him.'⁴

As for Oudh, apart altogether from the sipahis, Sir Henry thought that, whether in Lucknow or over the countryside, hunger, poverty, and discontent were prevalent enough to breed any sort of trouble.

All the time he was measuring the extent of the peril, investigating at its very heart what were its constituent elements, and calculating whether it could be checked. He was impressed now, as he always had been, with the bluntness of perception, and indifference to any habit of mind but their own, with which the English masters were meeting a danger, of the extent of which they were quite ignorant: 'We measure too much by English rule, and expect, contrary to all experience that [the] energetic and aspiring among immense military masses should like our own dead level, and our arrogation to ourselves of all authority and all emolument.' He told Canning that we must treat natives, and especially native soldiers, 'as having much the same

¹ A reference to the rumour that ground bones of cows had been mixed with the flour served out as rations to the sipahis.

² Fraud or treachery.

³ To the same, 1 May, 1857.

⁴ To the same: to J. R. Colvin at Agra, 9 May, 1857.

feelings, the same ambition, the same perception of ability and imbecility as ourselves.'¹

With May events began to march. The 48th N.I. had been the first to plan disorder, but it was up the river at Musa Bagh, and in the ranks of the 7th Regiment of Oudh Irregulars, that open disturbance began. On May 2nd news came that they had demonstrated against the use of cartridges. Next day they broke into mutiny, and a letter from them, misdirected into English hands, showed that they were acting with the 48th 'for the faith, and awaited their orders.' Action was necessary, and Sir Henry determined to disarm them. Even at Lucknow there were few more striking episodes than the disarming of the 7th O.I. It was late, but the moon gave good light. The doubtful units, especially the 48th, could not be left in full strength in camp, so detachments from them accompanied the European troops and the guns. Startled by a portlight among the gunners, the mutineers broke into a panic flight, but were finally got together and disarmed, and the whole force returned to quarters by 1 a.m., the men of the 7th being guarded by their own comrades of the 4th O.I. and the 2nd O.I. cavalry.² It was the Chief Commissioner's plan to reward handsomely, with money and promotion, all those who had behaved well; to pardon all the offenders save those whom a court of inquiry should prove especially guilty; and to address the native officers and selected men at special darbars. All this he did, in no spirit of weak optimism, but because the general situation seemed so bad that any measure which might help to save something from the wreck must be attempted. The darbar addresses were very characteristic of the man: 'I have explained our policy of non-interference with their religious prejudices; I appealed to the history of the last hundred years. I also pointed out to them our strength at home, and the utter madness of expecting to subvert our

¹ To the Governor-General, 2 May, 1857.

² Sir H. M. L. to J. R. Colvin, 6 May, 1857.

power. I showed what we had done late in the day at Sebastopol, and now that it is equally possible to bring 50,000 or even 100,000 Europeans to bear on India. Many, perhaps most, believe this. They also know, many of them, that I spoke truly when I said I came to Oudh, not for profit, but to help them and the country.¹

Still restlessness prevailed. The note sent by the 7th O.I. to the 48th, and captured by the authorities, had been brought in by a faithful subadar of the latter unit. On May 7th a fire, which started in his hut, burned down the lines of the 48th, and, although Sir Henry rode through their lines and talked with many of the men, the mischief had gone far too deep to be touched in that way. The news from Meerut began to filter in – at first rumours of the earliest disturbances, then on the 13th, 14th, and 15th, the story of the great misadventure there. Without a day's delay the Chief Commissioner took action. Calling into council all the civil and military authorities, he planned to establish all sick, women, and children, mainly in the City Residency, but some of them in his bungalow in the old cantonment, across the river. He took H.M.'s 32nd, placed a section of them as guard over the Residency, and the rest at the city end of the old cantonment, partly to guard the city, partly also to control the local situation at Mariaon.

It is of the greatest importance to understand exactly what Sir Henry Lawrence meant to do at Lucknow. He had, in the first place, no intention of abandoning the city. He knew the enormous moral effect on India of unflinching resistance, and 'no surrender' was his policy from the first. Talk of retirement on Cawnpore, to one who remembered vividly events at Kabul in 1841-2, seemed criminally foolish, and even if it had not been foolish, he had nothing like Elphinstone's facilities for ensuring a safe retreat. As a practicable military movement, a withdrawal with all the white population from Lucknow was impossible

¹ To Dr. James Bernard, 18 May, 1857.

at any time before Colin Campbell accomplished the feat, under great difficulties, although at the head of a strong force. It is also clear that the Chief Commissioner regarded such a retreat, even if possible, as certain to have the worst possible effect on the rest of India. *There was, therefore, never any alternative to holding on at Lucknow.*

It was not, however, so certain that the English force must stand a close siege. The 32nd had been placed between the old cantonment and the river, to ward or push off possibly mutinous forces from Lucknow itself. It was also to keep open the roads into the country. But what of the city, with its innumerable possibilities of disorder? The Residency and the Machchi Bhawan commanded the two bridges by which city and cantonment could communicate with each other; but, in addition to that, the latter position was very suitable for overawing the city. For all this aspect of Sir Henry's plans there exists the best possible authority – that of Lieutenant McLeod Innes, the young engineer officer to whom Sir Henry dictated his scheme, and whom he used for the fortification of the Machchi Bhawan.¹ That evidence leaves no doubt, first that plans for defence took definite form as soon as news came from Meerut; secondly that from the outset the Residency was chosen as the sole position to be defended should it come to a close siege, and thirdly that, as a provisional (with luck also a permanent) second point of resistance, the Machchi Bhawan was to be cleared and refortified, partly to control the communications across the river, but even more to hold Lucknow in check. Besides all this Dr. Fayrer the Residency doctor had advised that the health of the European community required, as long as it could be secured, the additional space given by the Machchi Bhawan. Since, for the purpose of creating an impression, 'appearance' would prove a good friend to 'reality,' the Machchi Bhawan was equipped not only with workable guns but also with a kind of stage display of 'some two

¹ McLeod Innes, *Lucknow and Oude in the Mutiny*, p. 74.

hundred wall-pieces and small-bore guns (most of them absolutely useless).¹ This demonstration of apparent force had the result hoped for even after the Regulars had mutinied. As it was important to produce this overawing impression at once, the work on the Machchi Bhawan began on May 17th. But as soon as local security had been established, which Innes dates from May 23rd, the fortification of the Residency, and its companion buildings, was pushed on in grim earnest, the external line of defence cleared as far as possible and made continuous; buildings set apart for specific purposes, and stores of all kinds incessantly poured in, and Lieutenant Hutchinson noted,² just before he marched off on a minor expedition to the west, that 'one incessant stream of store carts, conveying grain supplies, munitions of war, etc., lined the principal streets.'³

There was, however, more than Lucknow to think about. Although there was not at first specially disquieting news from the divisions, the Oudh Irregulars could not be trusted anywhere after the attempt at mutiny in Lucknow, and two Native Regular units, the 41st at Sitapur and the 23rd at Faizabad, more especially the 41st, were certain to go with their fellow-regulars. Sir Henry sent out detachments, the largest under Hutchinson, towards the north-west, planning to get troublesome troops away from the chief focus of trouble, and to keep them marching. But Wheeler at Cawnpore gave him most anxiety, for the situation there was infinitely more perilous than in Lucknow. The tragedy of the position was that neither could really support the other, if trouble came; neither could lend effective assistance, with a great river between them; and yet both positions must be held. It is one of the knightliest episodes in the struggle for life that, before Cawnpore was surrounded, Lawrence sent Wheeler a detachment, variously estimated as of 52 and 84, of H.M.'s 32nd Foot, and some Irregular Horse with two

¹ McLeod Innes, *op cit.*, p. 80.

² Some time about 26 May.

³ Hutchinson, *Narrative of the Mutinies in Oude*, p. 53.

guns to keep the road to Agra; and that Wheeler, when at the end of May he secured reinforcements from H.M.'s 84th, sent a detachment of them to Lucknow to repay the loan.

After the middle of May, when Sir Henry Lawrence had begun to measure the full possibilities of the situation; when, really, he had lost trust in all his native units, although not in all the individuals composing them; when, further, as May drew to its close, the chances of Cawnpore going seemed more and more probable, his active mind, little understood by men like his Revenue Commissioner Gubbins, who had not yet measured the possible extent of the risings and of English weakness, and was all for quick action and frontal attacks, began to speculate on ways of saving a situation which threatened to grow desperate. A memorandum of May 18th, among other things, suggests that individual Englishmen or friendly chiefs, organising their own private resources, might arm their own people, make thanahs or police centres of their own houses, and try to 'preserve tranquillity within a circle round them.' When the news from Cawnpore became definitely menacing, he called his brigadiers and commanding officers together to consider a clear-cut proposal for a rise in the pay of all ranks of native troops, and already he and Gubbins had substantially increased the police force. Besides this he sent messages to his country subordinates, bidding them make much of the new terms of service. It seems to me that, in desperation, he was trying – as the event proved, with no chance of success – to raise an alternative native force with which to stay the attack of the old Regulars. 'My firm impression is,' says his memorandum of May 25th, 'that if the Cawnpore brigade riot and move on Lucknow, these regiments [his own] will not on their present footing remain faithful, nor that any will do so, down to Calcutta and up to Meerut. . . . H.M.'s 32nd, numbering half the strength of a wing, could not possibly hold out until relief arrives, nor in truth do I perceive whence relief can arrive, under months, if the whole

native army revolt. *We must then raise another army in Oudh on an improved footing. With God's blessing we may then hold the province.*' His project of increasing pay and promotion he admitted to be 'a cry of distress,' but it was much more – it was the bid, too late, by the one man who had seen clearly the faults of our Indian system, to save the position by precipitating the reforms he had always advocated.

For the present it must suffice to deal with Lucknow itself. A situation so tense could not long remain unchanged, and the crisis came on the evening of May 30th. According to Colonel Inglis, the Commanding Officer of the 32nd, Lawrence had been warned through a native; Kaye, whose account does not necessarily conflict with this, says that his informant was an officer of his staff. However that may be, he had been told that the mutiny would come at gunfire. He was dining at his house in the cantonment, and just as he had said, in grim jest, 'Your friends are not punctual,' the mutineers made themselves heard.¹ The *émeute* proved the man and found him ready everywhere. The European force at hand, and the forewarning given to the officers, prevented the massacre that had been planned. Handscomb, the Brigadier of the Regulars, Lieutenant Grant of the 71st, and Cornet Raleigh of the Cavalry, were shot down or murdered; but Inglis with his men from the 32nd steadied the situation, while Sir Henry rode off with 100 men and 2 guns to block all approaches from the cantonment into the city. Next day he headed a pursuit of the rebels, and notes written to Colvin and Canning assessed the gains and losses. Most of the 48th and 71st Infantry, of the 7th Cavalry, and of the Irregulars, with a few from the 13th Infantry, had gone, but they had been chased ten miles with heavy losses, and sixty prisoners were brought back, and Sir Henry, who always marked special gallantry, reported that Mr. Gubbins had

¹ Kaye and Malleon, *History of the Indian Mutiny*, Vol. II., pp. 249–52. Captain Wilson, the D.A.A.G., received the information from a sipahi of the 13th N.I., 'who had shortly before received a reward from Sir Henry for having assisted in the capture of a spy.' *Defence of Lucknow*, pp. 1–2.

greatly distinguished himself. A hastily written postscript to the Governor-General assured him that 'we are now positively better off than we were, for we now know our friends and enemies. The latter have no stomach for a fight, though they are capital incendiaries.'¹ Inglis did him no more than justice, when he pointed out that nothing but the presence of European troops in the cantonment had prevented a general massacre of the officers, and that the establishment of the European post there 'was entirely Sir Henry's proposition.'²

Immediately after the *émeute* at Lucknow the situation at headquarters was directly affected by events elsewhere in Oudh, and just beyond its borders. On May 31st there were risings to the north-west, at Bareilly and Shahjehanpur in Rohilkand; and between June 3rd and 6th, to the south and east, in succession at Azamgarh, Benares, Jaunpur, Cawnpore, and Allahabad. The western movement told at once on Sitapur, the centre of a division in Oudh, where the 41st N.I. were stationed. On June 3rd and the following days a violent mutiny extinguished English control, and, of the white population, a few escaped to Lucknow, others were scattered, to meet diverse fates, while the rest, together with a party of refugees from Rohilkand, and including the Colonel of the 41st, and Mr. Christian the Commissioner of the district, his wife and a child, were slaughtered.

The eastern and southern risings similarly affected Faizabad, where the 22nd N.I. lay, and Sultanpur, where were the 15th Irregular Cavalry. In both these places, on and after June 8th, there was the same story of difficult escapes, refugees passing from one threat of death to another more certain, and the shooting down of English officers. Elsewhere, at Daryabad, Saloni, Gonda, and Sikrora the local detachments mutinied, but, whether through compassion and sympathy on the part of some of the troops, or

¹ To the Governor-General; PS. to letter begun 29 May.

² MS. Memorandum by Colonel Inglis.

through the fidelity of local rajas, or because of the influence and conduct of officers like Lieutenant Bonham at Sikrora, most of the Europeans escaped. It is indeed difficult to tell the story without, on the one hand, exaggerating the atrocities, or, on the other, seeming to ignore the worst offenders; for, between the brutalities of Sitapur and the moderation at some of the smaller centres, there is all the range between positive evil and comparative good. In the same way the record of the local chiefs or rajas varied very greatly. In at least three cases little or no help was given to the refugees: in many others, as with the chiefs of the Amethi and Baiswara clans, or at Balrampur and Deyrah, many were rescued by the effective assistance of the landholders.

In all cases, however, the result was the same – the complete obliteration of English government. ‘Every outpost, I fear, has fallen,’ wrote Sir Henry to Agra on June 12th, ‘and we daily expect to be besieged by the confederated mutineers and their allies.’¹ Nothing, indeed, could avert that consequence of the mutinies in Oudh. No doubt the mutineers towards the north and west headed, usually, for Delhi, while, thanks to Nana Sahib, the men from Cawnpore settled down to besiege Wheeler’s little garrison there, later to be joined by the 17th N.I. from Azamgarh. But those who had been driven from the Lucknow cantonments joined hands with all the rebels in the east, and ‘kept hovering in the eastern districts of Oudh preparing for an eventual concentration and advance on Lucknow.’²

The month of June at Lucknow was a prelude to the siege, fortunate in many ways as forcing on all, combatants and non-combatants alike, readjustments and precautions, which in the end proved the salvation of the inhabitants of the Residency. In that breathing space the fortification of the Residency was pushed on with new energy; the non-combatants, and especially the women and children who were now concentrated within the Residency grounds, were

¹ To J. R. Colvin, 12 June, 1857.

² McLeod Innes, *op cit.*, p. 89.

able to shake themselves into some kind of order and comfort; and the Chief Commissioner and his staff had time to clarify and define their future policy. From the diaries of the time one can gather vivid impressions of the threatened community – the initial confusion and excitement, liable to be renewed as each fresh incident reminded them of the approaching storm; the heat and crowding; the inroads of cholera, dysentery and small-pox; the arrival in distress of refugees from the out-stations, and the recurring stories of murders and massacres; and through it all the steadying and organising influence of Sir Henry Lawrence – ‘he seems never to take any rest night and day,’ wrote the wife of a commanding officer, ‘and appears to live in the saddle.’¹ Early in the month, Wheeler’s magnanimous reinforcement of about 50 men of H.M.’s 84th arrived, so that the Regular white garrison was now some 632 men of H.M.’s 32nd, 48 of the 84th, and 60 European gunners.² The Chief Commissioner was not, even in these days, forgetful of the state of the city, and, long after it had ceased to be safe to do so, drove daily through Lucknow, inspecting the police station and visiting all sorts of lanes and alleys, preserving throughout an appearance of perfect tranquillity. Actually he was not only facing the abnormal difficulties created by the enemy, but being fretted into exhaustion by the insane activities of Martin Gubbins, whose gallant spirit was, unfortunately, uncontrolled by discretion. ‘Mr. Gubbins,’ he wrote to Colvin,³ ‘would be continually sending 50 men on elephants, 40, 50, and more miles off. He is perfectly insane on what he considers energetic manly measures. His language has been so extravagant that, were he not really useful, I should be obliged to take severe measures against him. He is the one malcontent in the garrison.’ The most painful responsibility of all, and that which perhaps told most

¹ Mrs. Case, *Day by Day in Lucknow*, p. 22.

² To Captain Nixon, 29 June, 1857 – one of Sir Henry’s former assistants in Rajputana.

³ 13 June, 1857.

on his self-control and sense of responsibility, was the decision that Lucknow dare not, any further, help Cawnpore in its death agonies, and that he could do nothing except dispatch messages urging the forces gathering at Allahabad to assist Wheeler. For the rest he could only wait, and watch the end.

On June 9th, Sir Henry Lawrence's health temporarily failed, and Dr. Fayrer, his chief surgeon, gave orders that he must have absolute rest from responsibility for 24 hours – a period extended indefinitely next day. A council to conduct the affairs of the province was authorised, in which Martin Gubbins undertook the intelligence department, Major Banks the victualling, Ommaney correspondence with outlying officers, Major Anderson engineering and defences, and Colonel Inglis, in concert with Anderson, the military command. But Gubbins' wilfulness brought the period of rest to a sudden close. Anxious to rid himself, in spite of his superior's well-known policy, of all coloured troops, he ordered the dismissal on leave of all remaining sipahis of the Lucknow regiments, after the surrender of their arms. As Sir Henry's great object was to gather to the support of his English garrison all Indians who remained faithful to their salt, the measure was one of direct insubordination. Fortified by a doctor's report, the Chief Commissioner reassumed his duties on June 12th, Gubbins ineffectually attempting to retain in the hands of the Council most of the powers with which they had been entrusted.¹ In his book, *The Mutinies in Oudh*, Gubbins' obvious intention was to show Sir Henry, in these last days, as so enfeebled in mind and body as to be unable to fulfil his duties adequately. But every other observer of events speaks with unusual emphasis of the untiring efforts, even after this illness, of one whose body was now indeed weak, but whose spirit mastered his physical weakness. Even if Colonel Inglis had not told Herbert Edwardes that 'his powers of mind

¹ MS. official report of the Provisional Council.

were unabated, his orders clear and concise, his advice excellent and to the point,' two documents remain, one written during his seclusion, the other on June 12th, the day on which he resumed his duties, proving how completely Sir Henry Lawrence dominated the situation – with one short interval of indecision, to be described later – to the very end.

The first consists of general instructions to Colonel Inglis, with clarity and resolution in every word of them. 'Pray get me a big room or two smaller rooms [in the Residency] sufficiently large to hold 6 or 8 of us, in a central position, and where I shall not be very hot. It is important to me to be as cool as possible, as I feel the heat greatly. It is also necessary that I should be near the middle of the position. My staff, you, and Anderson ought I think to be with me day and night. I am decidedly of opinion that we ought to have only one position, and that though we should hold all three, cantonment and Machchi Bhawan as long as we can, all arrangements should be made with reference to a sudden concentration at the Residence.

'1. The Treasure ought therefore to be returned to the Residency.

'2. The grain be brought here.

'3. The mortars and their ammunition and S.A. ammunition.

'4. The mass of the powder, etc.

'5. The 18-pdrs, but the two in position should not be moved until they are replaced by 2 old guns, or suspicions will be excited.

'6. In short all the munitions and stores should be got into the Residency, and the 9-pdr. Field Battery only, with a few old guns in position (to be spiked before abandoned), be left to accompany the troops at the last moment. Pits should be at once dug here for the grain and powder. Every cart and waggon, of Batteries as well as of the magazine, should be employed in bringing in stores, and Captain Carnegie

should furnish hackeries for grain, and elephants to carry old guns, as many as possible of which ought to be brought.

‘PS. 11 p.m.

‘Please read with Anderson, and consult with him as to the extension of the Residency works, so as to include the whole force of 700 Europeans, and, say, as many natives of sorts, and the works should be carried on, *day and night*.’¹

The second, a letter to Colvin at Agra, is a masterly summary of the situation, as he resumed control of it on June 12th. In it the one trace of hesitation lies in his language about holding the Machchi Bhawan – a point on which his mind obviously was labouring incessantly, but on which he followed, in practice, to the end the policy which he had laid down to McLeod Innes a month beforehand. ‘We still hold the Cantonment as well as our two posts, but every outpost (I fear) has fallen, and we daily expect to be besieged by the confederated mutineers and their allies from Cawnpore, Sitapur, Sikrora, etc. The country is not yet thoroughly up, but each day brings it nearer that condition – at Sikrora and Daryabad the troops allowed the ladies and officers to come off unharmed. From Gonda, Faizabad, Sultanpur, and Saloni we have not heard for 2 days, and entertain the worst fears for their safety, especially for Faizabad. All our Irregular Cavalry, except about 60 Sikhs of Daly’s Corps, are either very shaky or have deserted. The remnant of Hardinge’s Corps, numbering 130 men, must be excepted, and their gallant commander thinks they will remain staunch, if got out of Lucknow. They therefore march to-night in the Allahabad direction though we can ill spare them. The remnant of the N.I. regiments have behaved well since the outbreak. Mr. Gubbins has been almost insubordinately urgent on me to disband these remnants, but the fact is that they consist of men who either joined us on the night of the *émeute*, or who stood to their guns, etc., on that occasion. If not better they are certainly

¹ To Colonel Inglis, 11 June, 1857.

not worse than the Irregulars and the Military Police, in whom Mr. Gubbins places, or affects to place, implicit reliance. He is a gallant, energetic, clever fellow, but sees only through his own vista, and is therefore sometimes troublesome. . . . The Irregular Infantry are behaving pretty well; but once we are besieged it will be black against white with some very few exceptions. More than 100 Police Horse deserted last night; and since I began this page I have received the report of the Military Police Foot having deserted the great central jail over which they were specially placed. There are above 1,000 of this body at Lucknow, and every effort has latterly been made, especially by Mr. Gubbins, to increase the strength of this branch at the capital, on the assumption of their superior fidelity. Their misconduct is a bad business.

‘The upshot of the business is that our position is critical, owing to our being obliged to keep the field with 200 Europeans and 4 guns on account of supplies. We have no hay, and not much bhoosa,¹ and not even enough grain. Then again we ought to have only one position. I put this question to some 16 officers five days ago, but all stood out for the two positions. I am convinced they were wrong, and the best of them now think so; but we are agreed that on the whole the Residency is the point to hold. It is the healthiest, and if time be permitted us, will be made much the strongest. We are entrenching every point, and running up earth works, and in time shall be strong, but I hope that every effort will be made to relieve us, for assuredly in a few weeks, perhaps days, we shall have the whole country as well as the mutineers about our ears. The taluqdars have all been arming, and some have already regained possession of the villages of which Mr. Gubbins dispossessed them. Their example will soon be followed, and once committed against Government, it will be their interest to help to destroy us.

¹ Mixed straw for fodder.

'However I have strong hopes under God's blessing to hold out for a month, by which time I confidently look for succour. If we had a single trustworthy regiment we could keep the field and do much. It is the almost general disaffection that paralyzes. This is my answer to Mr. Gubbins's accusations of want of energy on my part. For 2 days, from fatigue and want of sleep, I was ill, and by order of the doctor stopped work. I accordingly appointed a council of five to carry on for me: Mr. Gubbins, Mr. Ommaney, Col. Inglis, Major Anderson, Major Banks. This morning I resumed charge though Mr. Gubbins (*solus*) wished to retain a position of authority for the council. He got no sympathy. He has done excellent service during the last month, and is a valuable though troublesome coadjutor; but, in case of anything happening to me, I think it would be dangerous to make him Chief Commissioner. Major Banks is the safest man in the Province for the post. Colonel Inglis should command the troops. The conduct of H.M.'s 32nd and the artillery is excellent: not a murmur at one continued round of duty. The weather has been auspicious, cool for the season of the year: the health of all ranks is good, but this cannot be expected to last if we are cooped up here.

'8 p.m. 12th. I have kept this open to tell you that we followed up the revolted Police Battalion with 2 guns, 100 Europeans, 70 Horse, and after a chase of about 8 miles killed about 40, with a loss of 2 Sikhs killed, one European soldier dead from the sun. The mutineers were quite dispersed; night prevented us going further. The effect will, I hope, be good on the town. Nine prisoners were brought in. Kind regards to all friends. We left only 100 Europeans in the Residency works, which made the move an anxious one.'¹

The only notable events, before the enemy closed in round the Residency, were the mutiny of the police, mentioned in the letter to Colvin, the news of the fall of Cawnpore, a false

¹ To J. R. Colvin, 12 June, 1857.

rumour that Delhi had been recaptured, and the defeat at Chinhat, which precipitated the siege. As late as June 21st it was Sir Henry's opinion that, if Delhi fell and Cawnpore held its own, he might not have to stand a siege at all. But his preparations went on incessantly. An exact description of the Residency positions would be irrelevant in the life of one whose life ended before the siege had developed its characteristic features; and in any case books like McLeod Innes' masterly *Lucknow and Oude in the Mutiny* have made the task unnecessary.

But some general idea of the condition in which Sir Henry left the Residency for his successor to maintain it, is essential. It is well to keep in mind that the defeat on June 30th, shortly to be described, upset all earlier calculations and ended the chance of further uninterrupted work on the fortification, which was still terribly incomplete; and that, in addition, the serious losses in that defeat left the position with a much smaller garrison of Regulars than had been expected. Besides all this, we must picture a garrison, throughout June, too fully employed otherwise to give more than part of its energy to digging and building; a labouring force of natives on tip-toe to desert when the chance offered; and a city which must not be startled into premature revolt by any signs of panic haste in the work. When all allowances have been made, and when it is remembered that the scheme of defence could not be other than an improvisation, it is still possible to say that Henry Lawrence's plans made the defence of the British position possible, and saved the British population in Lucknow from the fate of Cawnpore.

As has been seen, he had ordered his engineers to trace a general line of defence about the time when he reconstructed the position at the Machchi Bhawan. His stronghold was in the form of a very irregular square, the sides roughly each a quarter of a mile long, and facing approximately towards the main points of the compass. Two of these sides, the north and west, were so secure that they were

never seriously threatened except by mining, and the Redan battery on the north proved again and again of vital importance. On the east or Baillie Guard Gate side, where the distance from the enemy shrank in places to 25 yards, the original battery dispositions afforded a powerful frontal and enfilade fire, and the lines were never entered by the enemy. On the south, where the average distance between the opposing positions was 13 yards, it is still true that only once in the siege was a breach successfully made by mining, and entered for a moment by the mutineers. Two positions outside this trace, the Johannes' house on the south, and the Captain Bazaar on the low ground between the Residency and the river on the north, had not been cleared, and afforded formidable cover, but in both cases it had been planned to hold the buildings, and the defeat of June 30th, which made their retention impossible, left no time for their destruction. It has been said that, especially on the south and east sides, the demolition of buildings had not been complete enough; and it is certainly true that Sir Henry Lawrence was characteristically considerate of the interests of owners, and had all houses registered and valued, for future compensation, before they were destroyed.¹ But ruins had carefully been left of a certain height to prevent direct breaching fire, and their existence, as General McLeod Innes points out, while it afforded shelter, hampered any free movement in large numbers among the besiegers. In the long run it was the unconquerable hearts of the garrison which saved the Residency, but, as Wheeler found at Cawnpore, courage, without cover, supplies, and equipment, can do little. These, with inspiring leadership, Henry Lawrence gave to the Residency. To illustrate from a single instance, nothing so clearly demonstrated how the skill of the old artillery officer was still unsubdued in the Chief Commissioner as that, on the very first day of the siege, the headlong advance of the victorious mutineers on June 30th was held

¹ Hutchinson, *Narrative of the Mutinies in Oude*, p. 156.

up by the fire, from across the Gumti, of one of the Residency batteries.

So ample were the supplies laid in that, even after Havelock and Outram had drawn on them, there was still a surplus left when Colin Campbell relieved the place on November 20th. It was Henry Lawrence, too, who, by checking Gubbins' dismissal of the loyal sipahis, added their numbers to the garrison, and who recruited, in addition, pensioned sipahis who served with absolute fidelity throughout the siege. Colonel Inglis, then, was indulging in no flattering words towards the dead when, in his dispatch of September 26th, he said, 'The successful defence of the position, has been, under Providence, solely attributable to the foresight which he [H. L.] evinced in the timely commencement of the necessary operations, and the great skill and untiring personal activity which he exhibited in carrying them into effect.' Not only his spirit but his skill was still protecting his garrison when Havelock and Outram marched in.

CHAPTER XIV

THE END

IT was the hard fate of Henry Lawrence, after he had secured the salvation of his garrison, to be involved in, and broken by, an early disaster.

Three or four days before the end of June, reports began to come in of a concentration of the Oudh mutineers at Nawabganj, some twenty miles north-east of Lucknow. On June 26th and 27th Cawnpore surrendered and the garrison was massacred. The news from Cawnpore came in about seven o'clock on the evening of June 28th, and during the next twenty-four hours further news of the hostile concentration arrived.¹ It was clear that the crisis for Lucknow could not be long delayed; in a letter of June 29th, Sir Henry himself said that he expected to be besieged in two or three days.² As the strain increased, so also did the vehemence of Martin Gubbins' calls for energetic action, and when the Chief Commissioner refused to weaken his defences at Lucknow by an attack on a position twenty miles off, Gubbins in a mood of hysteria exclaimed, 'Well, Sir Henry, we shall all be branded at the bar of history as cowards.'³ It is impossible to understand Sir Henry's actions on June 29th and 30th, if one does not remember this constant pressure of militant councils on the mind of a man naturally pugnacious, and confronted with a situation in which there was just sufficient argument for a dashing move to make the waiting

¹ *Defence of Lucknow*, p. 37.

² To Captain Nixon, 29 June, 1857.

³ Wilson, Memorandum. These words were spoken in Wilson's presence. Captain Wilson's exact position (cf. Colonel Inglis's dispatch of 26th September) was Officiating Deputy Assistant Adjutant-General. As such he was much more intimately connected with Sir Henry Lawrence at this time than any other person.

policy, always approved of by his sober judgment, seem at times less essential than it really was. Events were to prove that the limit of any initiative within the power of the garrison of Lucknow was a reconnaissance in force, pushed a few miles out from the city.

Patrols feeling their way towards Nawabganj on June 29th reported that the advance of the mutineers had begun, and that at 10.30 a.m. 'about 500 men, 50 sowars and one small gun had arrived. . . . They were collecting supplies in every direction.'¹ It is clear from Gubbins' comments on this piece of news, sent to his chief, that he, as Director of Intelligence, was now in a condition quite incapable of stating the facts honestly, and Sir Henry, who had his own cavalry patrols bringing in later information, was convinced that his Intelligence officer was under-estimating the strength of the enemy's advance. 'Referring to Mr. Gubbins' remarks, the evidence also shows that the force now (4 p.m.) *almost certainly* does greatly exceed 500 foot and 50 horse: indeed Captain Forbes and Lieut. Tulloch were followed at 2 p.m. to the Kukrail bridge, seven miles on this side of Chinhat, and only 3 miles from Lucknow. I write in the presence of Captain Forbes and Lieut. Tulloch (4½ p.m.), and feel satisfied that now there are 2 or 3 thousand men at Chinhat, and that in the morning there will be many more.'² From first to last Sir Henry Lawrence's estimate of the situation, even while he was being harried into action, was always clear and sound. The tragedy (and it was a real one) for him was that twice – on the night of June 29th, when he ordered an advance for the following day, in the direction of the enemy, and on June 30th, when, after having halted his force prior to ordering them back, he countermanded the order for retirement and advanced – he allowed considerations other than those which deep common sense supported to move him, and the results were disastrous. The considerations seem to have been: the

¹ Intelligence Report, 29 June, 1857.

² *Ibid.* Remarks appended thereto by Sir Henry Lawrence.

influence which strong and successful action was likely to have on the city, and indeed on the mutineers throughout Oudh; the chance of at least postponing the coming siege for a few days, for he knew that every day saved now meant the better hope of ultimate relief; but without doubt there was also the weakening effect on his strained mind of the bitter reproaches which his chief civil assistant flung at him for what he called inertia and lack of spirit.

What happened late in the evening of June 29th is clear. At eight o'clock Gubbins came to report, and, although there was no other person present, the effect of the interview appeared when Sir Henry asked Captain Wilson, his D.A.A.G., to call an informal council of war, including Colonel Inglis of the 32nd and Captain Simons of the Artillery, but not his engineers. The object of the expedition then arranged was, according to both Colonel Inglis and Captain Wilson, *reconnaissance*, unless the enemy advance had progressed so far as to call for an action near the city. 'As far as I understood Sir H. L.'s plan of operations for the morning of the 30th June,' Wilson told Herbert Edwardes, 'it was this – that he would proceed with the force as far as the Kukrail, and that if he met the enemy he would oppose them at *that* point, or if they were coming on that day he would await them there, and if they were not coming on he would return – as he said that even in the latter case the demonstration, among the city people, of our being quite prepared to meet the mutineers would have a good effect.'¹ The incalculable fact both for the staff, and in Sir Henry Lawrence's own mind, was that Martin Gubbins, and apparently others of those not in official direction of affairs, believed that there was a chance of some startling *coup de main* on the rebel advanced guard, and that their solicitations, or faintly veiled reproaches, operated on just sufficient doubt in Sir Henry's mind to make him break away from the carefully considered judgment, both of himself, and of

¹ Wilson, Memorandum.

all responsible members of the staff. As the task of shaping and communicating orders lay with Captain Wilson, the final authority on the affair lies in the statement which, later, he made to Herbert Edwardes.

The actual force employed was as follows : two parties, each of 150, from H.M.'s 32nd, one from the Machchi Bhawan, the other from the Residency; about 230 native infantry, drawn mostly from the 13th N.I.; 36 of the volunteer European cavalry, and a number of Sikh horsemen variously estimated at from 80 to 120. As for artillery, the first plan was to take 4 light European guns, with an 8-inch howitzer recently discovered in Lucknow, and Captain Simons, in charge of these, had promised to be ready by 3 a.m. But, later, Wilson was ordered by Sir Henry (the last instruction issued as late as 3 a.m. on June 30th) to add first 2, and then 4 more, native guns to the artillery; and when that officer suggested that this would make the artillery disproportionately numerous, Lawrence's answer was, 'Good Heavens, do I not know that? But I believe it safer to take them than leave them here.' The enemy force actually met seems to have amounted to about 5,500 foot and 800 horse, with some 12 or 16 good guns – the whole commanded by Barkat Ahmed, a native officer of the lately revolted 15th Cavalry, and Khan Ali Khan, who controlled, for his own taluqdar, such taluqdari levies as had joined the mutineers.¹

Nothing but perfect precision and sustained audacity could have won the day; but somehow everything went wrong. The start, planned for daylight, was delayed until the sun was up. Food and drink had been carried with the force, but nothing was served out, as Sir Henry had ordered, when a halt was made at the bridge across the Kukrail.² The order of march seems to have been as follows: an advanced guard of 25 Sikh and 15 European horse, 20 Sikh

¹ M. Gubbins, *The Mutinies in Oudh*, pp. 189–90; MacLeod Innes, *Lucknow and Oude in the Mutiny*, p. 97.

² MacLeod Innes, p. 98.

and 20 European foot: then came the guns, all except 4, the 13th N.I., and H.M.'s 32nd; and the rear, which apparently was also to form the reserve, was entirely native, 4 guns and some 50 or 60 of the 48th N.I. under Colonel Palmer. The first part of the adventure was perfectly normal, and when the force was halted at the Kukrail with no enemy yet discovered, and after Sir Henry, his staff, and a few cavalry rode forward and found nothing, orders were sent, through Captain Wilson, to the main body to countermarch. The expedition had now exhausted all that it was capable of doing. It had made a reconnaissance in force as far as it was safe to push troops, who were at once too numerous to serve as a merely exploratory force, and too few to challenge with any hopes of success the main enemy force in the field.

The first error had been to improvise an expedition whose purpose had really been inadequately defined. The second and more fatal error now followed. For while Captain Wilson was carrying out his orders to send the men back, Sir Henry, moved partly by false information obtained from 'some native travellers' that there was no force in Chinhat, and also, as Captain Wilson judges (although he was not at the moment on the spot), by 'the *urgent* representations of one or two officers' that an advance on Chinhat would be productive of the best effects, changed his mind and ordered an advance.

From that time there was nothing but misfortune. The day was scorching; the troops had had no food, and the water-carriers seem to have deserted already; the fidelity of the native gunners, heavily undermined as much by fear of imminent disaster as by active treason, was giving way; the men of the 32nd, hungry, exhausted, and perplexed by move and counter-move, had seemingly lost all initiative. There must have been imperfect scouting for, says Wilson, 'a turn of the road showed us the enemy drawn up with their centre on the road and their left resting on a lake.' In the engagement which followed, the Lucknow force never had a chance.

The opposing guns operated from the road, or near the road, which marked the centre of the position. In the exchange the mutineers at least held their own. On the British right, the native troops with the European cavalry successfully occupied a little village to the right of the road. But, on their left, beyond which lay the village of Ismailganj, all that the 32nd could do was to deploy on the open ground between the road and the village, and lie down without firing. The enemy, who seem to have been admirably handled, at once began to outflank to both left and right; but the main stroke came from the occupation of Ismailganj, the direction of a terrific fire in reinforcement of that of their guns, against the 32nd, and the threat of an encirclement of the whole force. To this the 32nd could make no effective reply, and, heavily punished, they began to retreat. Meanwhile Lawrence and Wilson had hurried off to put in their trifling and untrustworthy reserve, only to find that the gunners had deserted, two guns had been overturned, and the others tampered with. It was at least possible to use two guns to check an attempt at outflanking on the right. But encirclement remained a distinct possibility. So the whole force fell back in something like a rout.

If Sir Henry had allowed himself to be persuaded into a serious military error, his conduct in retreat saw him at his very best. Staying with the column, he did everything, assisted by some glorious work on the part of the handful of European horsemen, to hold the enemy back. At the Kukrail bridge he tried to make a stand. 'For some five minutes he sat on his horse on the bridge rallying our people, with the enemy's skirmishers firing at him quite close.' Then, handing over command of the column to Inglis, he, Wilson, and Couper, his secretary who was acting as his A.D.C., rode at full speed to the Residency; a detachment of 50 of the 32nd was sent to hold the head of the Iron Bridge, and after the garrison had been called to arms he hastened to the Redan battery which commanded the ground across

the river, and still further checked the pursuit by turning its guns on the head of the advancing column.

But the move had ended in a great disaster. Half of the detachment of the 32nd had been killed or wounded, and the losses, apart from wounded, certainly mounted up to 200. The enemy had been inspirited, as the garrison had been depressed. The siege had been precipitated at the very time when fresh work on the fortifications was very necessary, and it was plain that no longer could the Machchi Bhawan be held as a position auxiliary to the Residency. There is an incomplete laconic note to Havelock written before all available information had come in, which gives a soldier's verdict on his own mistake. 'This morning we went out to Chinhat to meet the enemy, and we were defeated, and lost five guns through the misconduct of our native artillery, many of whom deserted. The enemy have followed us up, and we have now been besieged for four hours, and shall probably to-night be surrounded. The enemy are very bold, some Europeans very low. I look on our position now as ten times as bad as it was yesterday; indeed it is very critical. We shall have to abandon much supplies and to blow up much powder. Unless we are relieved quickly, say in 15 or 20 days, we shall hardly be able to maintain our position. We lost 3 officers killed this morning and several wounded - Col. Case, Captain Stephen, and Mr. Brackenbury.'¹

There are also a few well-authenticated remarks which he made in the heat of action, and which gave his judgment on himself. To Ogilvie, his Inspector of Prisons, he exclaimed, on his return, 'Well, Mr. Gubbins has at last had his way, and I hope he has had enough of it'; meaning, not to escape from the responsibility which he knew must properly attach to himself for all that had been done, but that Gubbins' persistent, reckless, and cruel onslaughts, operating on the generous and impulsive love of decided action in him which reason and good sense usually held in check, had led him to

¹ Sir H. M. L. to Brigadier Havelock, 30 June, 1857.

a plan which spelt disaster from the first. And, as he watched the last stages of the retirement, they heard him say, 'My God ! My God ! And I brought them to this.'¹

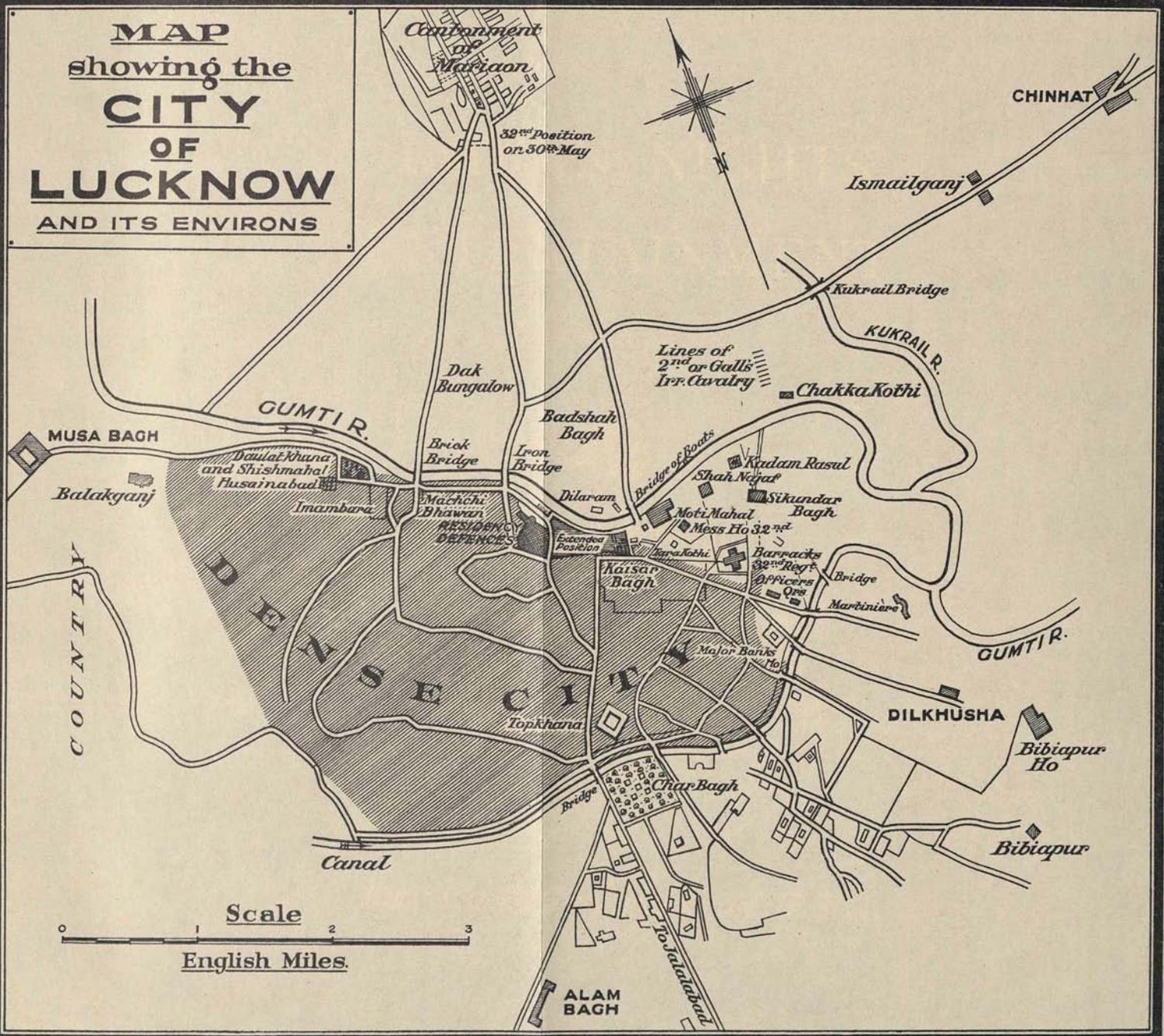
By one o'clock that afternoon (June 30th) the siege of the Residency had begun, the enemy's round shot crashing through the upper storey of the main building. It was now essential to concentrate the entire force within the Residency grounds; but the transference of the garrison in the Machchi Bhawan promised to be difficult, for the enemy was in occupation of the intervening ground, and although one written message from the Residency (in Greek characters) got through, the reply to it did not.² Fortunately Sir Henry had already prepared for semaphore signalling between the Residency tower and the Machchi Bhawan, and although the enemy's fire frustrated the first attempts at communication, a message was passed through, 'Blow up and retire at 12 to-night. Bring prisoners, guns and treasure,' and an answer given. By way of precaution, the intervening space was heavily shelled from both positions; but by good luck the mutineers had chosen that night for looting the city; and the operation was completely successful. Colonel Palmer of the 48th N.I., who commanded the party, had every detail precisely ordered, and the only check, a momentary one, came when the party from the Machchi Bhawan arrived at the lower Water Gate of the Residency at 12.15 a.m., a little sooner than they had been expected. As they entered the Residency the Machchi Bhawan vanished in a great explosion of 240 barrels of gunpowder and 594,000 rounds of ball and gun ammunition.³ Sir Henry's last active work in Lucknow was the organisation and posting of this reinforcement, and the placing of the new guns in position. This he seems to have worked at throughout the night, and at 8 o'clock on the morning of July 2nd he returned to the main building, exhausted, to rest.

¹ Edwardes and Merivale, *Life of Sir H. M. L.*, p. 603.

² McLeod Innes, *op. cit.*, p. 101.

³ *Defence of Lucknow*, pp. 44-5.

MAP
 showing the
CITY
OF
LUCKNOW
 AND ITS ENVIRONS



For him the end came, like the beginning of the siege, with startling suddenness. Already, on the preceding day, the main building had received special attention from the opposing guns, and an 8-inch shell from the howitzer captured on June 30th had burst in the room where Sir Henry and his secretary, Couper, were sitting. On being pressed to change his quarters he said in jest 'that he did not believe the enemy had an artilleryman good enough to put another shell into that small room.' His real reason for resisting a change was that he thought his position the best from which to direct the defence. At last he promised to change quarters next day. The delay proved fatal. The most exact and vivid description of what happened is that of Captain Wilson, one of the two white witnesses of the event.¹ 'Towards 8 [a.m. July 2nd]² he returned greatly exhausted – the heat was dreadful – and laid down on his bed with his clothes on, and desired me to draw up a memorandum as to how the rations were to be distributed. I went to the next room to write it, but previous to doing so I reminded Sir Henry of his promise to go below. He said he was very tired and would rest a couple of hours and that then he would have his things moved. In about half an hour I went back into the room with what I had written; his nephew, Mr. George Lawrence, was then lying on a bed parallel to his uncle's, with a few feet between them. I went between the beds and stood on the right hand side of Sir Henry's, with one knee resting on the bed. A coolie was sitting on the floor pulling the punkah. I read what I had written . . . and he was in the act of explaining what he wished altered, when the fatal shot came – a sheet of flame, a terrific report and shock, and dense darkness is all I can describe it. I fell down on the floor, and for perhaps a few seconds was quite stunned. I then got up, but could see

¹ I have compared this with the account of the other eyewitness, G. H. Lawrence.

² Immediately before this, Captain Wilson gives the hour as 8 a.m. G. H. Lawrence's phrase is 'early in the morning.'

nothing for the smoke or dust. Neither Sir Henry nor his nephew made any noise, and in great alarm I called out, "Sir Henry, are you hurt?" Twice I thus called out without any answer; the third time he said in a low tone, "I am killed." The punkah had come down, and the ceiling, and a great deal of the plaster; and the dust and smoke were so great that it was some minutes before I could see anything, but as it gradually cleared I saw that the white coverlet of the bed was crimson with his blood.' A fragment of the shell had struck him high upon his left thigh, and when Dr. Fayrer arrived, direct questions from Sir Henry made it clear that he could not live beyond forty-eight hours. Then he was carried, under heavy fire, into the greater security of Dr. Fayrer's house. It is needless morbidity to dwell on the details of the last hours. Between the spasms of pain, and the temporary clouding of his mind through the administration of chloroform,¹ he had much to say: instructions to give to Major Banks, who was to succeed him in his civil office; messages of help, or apology, or forgiveness to subordinates; exhortations to remember the Lawrence schools; recollections of his wife and remembrances to all his family – in the mists of chloroform he seems to have gone back beyond India, and even marriage, to his home and his mother. Dr. Fayrer thought that his sufferings were less continuous and terrible than did other eyewitnesses, and it is certain that in his last ten hours he passed into insensibility, at least to pain. He died about 8 a.m. on July 4th, and they buried him, that night, in the graveyard in a pit with five other soldiers who had fallen during the day.² He had used the last minutes of vigorous thought to direct the actions of his successors – a month ago he had chosen Major Banks for the civil, and Colonel Inglis for the military headship, in case of accident to himself, and he now confirmed that arrangement.

¹ Dr. Fayrer says in one place that he administered chloroform only once; in another that he 'gave him chloroform at intervals.'

² Mrs. Harris (one of the 'garrison') to Miss Charlotte Lawrence, 29 April, 1858.

The directions jotted down haphazard, and baldly, by Major Banks in his brief diary must be given entire – they were Sir Henry Lawrence's last official orders, and one last clear proof of how he could postpone even the pains and personal feelings of a dying man to the literal calls of duty:

'I. Reserve fire, check all wall firing.

'II. Carefully register ammunition for guns and small arms in store. Carefully register daily expenditure as far as possible.

'III. Spare the precious health of Europeans in every possible way, from shot and sun.

'IV. Organise working parties for night labour.

'V. Entrench – entrench – entrench – erect traverses, cut off enemy's fire.

'VI. Turn every horse out of the entrenchment, except enough for four guns. Keep Sir Henry Lawrence's horse *Ludakee* – it is a gift to his nephew George Lawrence.

'VII. Use the state prisoners as a means of getting in supplies, by gentle means if possible, or by threats.

'VIII. Enrol every servant as bildar or carrier of earth. Pay liberally, double, quadruple.

'IX. Turn out every native who will not work (save menials who have more than abundant labour).

'X. Write daily to Allahabad or Agra.

'XI. Sir Henry Lawrence's servants to receive one year's pay; they are to work for any other gentlemen who want them, or they may leave if they prefer to do so.

'XII. Put on my tomb only this – "Here lies Henry Lawrence who tried to do his duty. May God have mercy on him."

'XIII. Take an immediate inventory of all natives, so as to know who can be used as bildars, etc.

'XIV. Take an immediate inventory of all supplies and food, etc. Take daily average of expenditure.'¹

Before the news of his death reached London, the Directors of the East India Company had paid him the highest compliment which they could offer to their servants. For, on July 22nd, a resolution was unanimously passed 'proposing to

¹ The diary was published in Hutchinson, *Narrative*, pp. 168–9.

appoint Colonel Sir Henry M. Lawrence, K.C.B., provisionally to succeed to the office of Governor-General upon the death, resignation, or coming away of Viscount Canning, pending the arrival of a successor from England.¹

So he passed over, and all the trumpets must have sounded for him on the other side.

NOTE.—In recognition of Sir Henry Lawrence's eminent services his elder son Alexander was created a baronet on 10 August, 1858 (Lawrence of Lucknow); and to commemorate the glorious defence of the Residency the flag on the Residency tower is never lowered, night or day, and flowers are placed daily on Sir Henry's grave-stone. On the tragic death of Sir Alexander by accident in 1864, the baronetcy descended to his son, Henry Hayes Lawrence; then, on his death in 1898 without heirs male, to Sir Henry's second son, Henry Waldemar, whose son, Sir Alexander Lawrence, is the present baronet.

¹ Secretary to the Secretary, India Board, 22 July, 1857. The Queen's approval was given on 24 July.

EPILOGUE

WHEN a man has lived much with his hero, it is difficult for him to end the story of his life with conventional and indiscriminating praise. With Henry Lawrence it is impossible. It was his nature to evade the obvious and accepted ways to distinction. Unlike Dalhousie, or Metcalfe, or even James Thomason, he belonged to none of the traditions acceptance of which simplifies the careers of those who adhere to them. He spent his life in making his own tradition, and told for just so much as he and his work were worth – no more. One longs to use the word ‘genius’ of him; yet he had not a touch of the abnormality which often makes the man of genius in action more interesting to posterity than useful to contemporaries. His qualities were really plain, normal, and usable; his distinction lay in a clear perception that the world is to be saved, or guided, by simple and normal qualities used in heroic fashion.

Since he had no pedestal, asked no honorific phrases from his fellows, clung to simple duties performed with austere directness, he did not, except in the spectacular close of his career, catch the eye, or master the memory, of the undiscerning mass, which is the British Empire. Outside India and a few families who share in the tradition he made, they mention his name, yet without clearly distinguishing between him and his brother John, and there is usually some misunderstanding of what he did at Lucknow. But in India, where neither book knowledge nor absorption in the exciting sterile interests of modern life has spoiled the folk memory, or the gift of knowing men, he is still remembered as a real person. A stout old Sikh, no friend to England, but an honest man, confessed to me that, as Henry Lawrence cared for his people, they still held him for their friend; and the

great-grandson of his mir munshi at Lahore still treasures Henry Lawrence's praise of his great-grandfather as one does the conferring of a title.¹

Looking back over the various chapters of his services, one sees him doing the real and common things which so many illustrious characters in history seem to have avoided on their road to fame: toiling in camp at honest survey work with Honoria by his side; giving a hand to drag the guns up the Khaibar Pass in 1842; talking face to face, careless of all pro-consular safeguards to his dignity, with Sikh sardars or Gulab Singh; desperately eager to get at the heart of the discontent among the sipahis in Oudh; speaking and acting simply in religion as though Jesus meant the words He spoke.

Looking more closely, one sees him the centre of a diversified company of friends, disciples, dependants: Hardinge, Nicholson, Edwardes, his brother George, with John standing by, admiration rudely contending with his stubborn self-confidence; a multitude of Indians, gentlefolk and villagers, who trusted him; and the garrison at Lucknow for whom he died.

His place is not with pro-consuls like Wellesley and Dalhousie, for he was never sure enough, as they were, of the infallibility of his race as governors over alien peoples. He believed that Indians had some contributions to make to the government of India; and he could not dissociate the idea of strong government from the completest imaginative understanding of, and sympathy with, the people governed. I like to think of him rather as the legitimate successor to the great native rulers, for, like Akbar and Ranjit Singh, he knew that government in the East is less the making of constitutions than the establishment of personal relationships.

He has been fortunate in the memorials of him scattered north-west from Lucknow: the gravestone with nothing on it but the words he asked for; the unspoiled simplicity of the

¹ Sayed Rajub Ali, Khan Bahadur: his great-grandson is Mir Sayed Mustafa Hasan, jaghirdar in the Ludhiana district.

Residency grounds; the Lawrence schools, and especially that at Sanawar, where he and Hodson tried their hands at architecture and the children are as happy as he meant them to be. His best memorial is the great province which he set on its way to prosperity, and the North-West Frontier, which stands much as he and his lieutenants planned it, with Nicholson's name still living in the hills, and Edwardes' fort still guaranteeing peace to Bannu, as Henry Lawrence ordained that it should in 1847.

APPENDIX

EXTRACT FROM LAWRENCE'S *DEFENCE OF MACNAGHTEN* (1843)

ASIA has ever been fruitful in revolutions, and can show many a dynasty overthrown by such small bands as, on the 2nd of November, 1841, rose against our force at Cabul; and British India can show how timely energy, as at Vellore, Benares, and Bareilly, has put down much more formidable insurrections. . . . Dissension among our enemies has raised us from the position of commercial factors to be lords over emperors. Without courage and discipline, we could not thus have prevailed; but even these would have availed little had the country been united against us, and would now only defer the day of our discomfiture were there anything like a unanimous revolt. The same causes operated for our first success in both India and Afghanistan; and the errors by which we lost the latter may any day deprive us of the former.

Perhaps our great danger arises from the facility with which these conquests have been made; a facility which in both cases has betrayed us into the neglect of all recognized rules for military occupation. Our sway is that of the sword, yet everywhere our military means are insufficient. There is always some essential lacking at the very moment when troops are wanted for immediate service. If stores are ready, they may rot before carriage is forthcoming. If there are muskets, there is no ammunition. If there are infantry, there are no muskets for them. In one place we have guns without a man to serve them; in another we have artillerymen standing comparatively idle, because the guns have been left behind.

To come to examples. Is Delhi or Agra, Bareilly or Kurnaul, Benares or Saugor, or, in short, any one of our important military positions better prepared than Cabul was, should 300 men rise to-morrow and seize the town? Take Delhi more especially as a parallel case. At Cabul we had the treasury and one of the commissariat forts in the town; at Delhi we have the magazine and treasury within the walls.

Now, suppose that any morning 300 men were to take possession of these.

What would follow if the troops in cantonment (never more than three regiments) were to keep close to their quarters, merely strengthening the palace guards? The palace at Delhi stands much as did the Bala Hissar with respect to the city, except that the former has not sufficient elevation to command the town, as the latter did. What, then, would be the result at Delhi, if the palace garrison were to content themselves, as Colonel Shelton did, with a faint and distant cannonade from within their walls; not even effectually supporting the King's body-guards, who had already sallied into the town, nor even enabling or assisting them to bring off their field-guns when driven back from the city; but should suffer these guns to be abandoned at the very palace gates and there to lie? Let not a single effort be made to succour or bring off the guards at the magazine or treasury; give up everything for lost; suffer unresistingly the communication between the town and cantonment (almost precisely the same distance in both cases) to be closed; — let all this happen in Hindustan on the 2nd of June, instead of among the Afghan mountains on the 2nd of November, and does any sane man doubt that twenty-four hours would swell the hundreds of rebels into thousands; and that, if such conduct on our part lasted for a week, every ploughshare in the Delhi States would be turned into a sword? And when a sufficient force had been mustered, by bringing European regiments from the hills and Native troops from every quarter (which could not be effected within a month at the very least, or in three, at the rate we moved to the succour of Candahar and Jellalabad), should we not then have a more difficult game to play than Clive had at Plassey, or Wellington at Assaye? We should then be literally striking for our existence, at the most inclement season of the year, with the prestige of our name vanished, and the fact before the eyes of imperial Delhi that the British force, placed not only to protect but to overawe the city, were afraid to enter it.

But the parallel does not end here. Suppose the officer commanding at Meerut, when called on for help, were to reply, 'My force is chiefly cavalry and horse artillery; not the sort to be effective within a walled town, where every house is a castle. Besides, Meerut itself, at all times unquiet, is even now in rebellion, and I cannot spare my troops.' Suppose that from Agra and

Umballa an answer came that they required all the force they had to defend their own posts; and that the reply from Soobathoo and Kussowlee was, 'We have not carriage; nor, if we had, could we sacrifice our men by moving them to the plains at this season.' All this is less than actually did happen in Afghanistan, when General Sale was recalled, and General Nott was urgently called on for succour; and if all this should occur at Delhi, should we not have to strike anew for our Indian Empire?

But who would attribute the calamity to the Civil Commissioner at Delhi? And could not that functionary fairly say to the officer commanding, 'I knew very well that there were not only 300 desperate characters in the city, but as many thousands, - men having nothing to lose, and everything to gain, by an insurrection. You have let them plunder the magazine and the treasury. They will, doubtless, expect as little resistance elsewhere. A single battalion could have exterminated them the first day, but you let the occasion slip, and the country is now in a blaze, and the game completely out of my hands. I will now give you all the help I can, all the advice you ask, but the Riot Act has been read and my authority has ceased.' Would the civil officer be blamed for thus acting? Could he be held responsible for the way in which the outbreak had been met?

I have endeavoured to put the case fairly. Delhi is nearly as turbulent and unquiet a city as Cabul. It has residing within its walls a king less true to us than was Shah Shoojah. The hot weather of India is more trying to us than the winter of Afghanistan. The ground between the town and cantonment of Delhi being a long rocky ridge on one side of the road, and the river Jumna on the other, is much more difficult for the action of troops against an insurgent population than anything at Cabul. At Delhi the houses are fully as strong, the streets not less defensible. In short, here as there, we occupy dangerous ground. *Here*, if we act with prudence and intrepidity, we shall, under God's blessing, be safe, as we should have been, with similar conduct, *there*.

But if under the misfortune that has befallen our arms, we content ourselves with blaming the Envoy, or even the military authorities, instead of looking fairly and closely into the foundations of our power, and minutely examining the system that could admit of such conduct as was exhibited in Afghanistan, not in one case, but in many, - then, I say, we are in the fair way of reaping another harvest more terrible than that of Cabul.

The foregoing parallel has been drawn out minutely, perhaps tediously, for I consider it important to show that what was faulty and dangerous in one quarter is not less so in another.

I wish, moreover, to point out that the mode of operation so pertinaciously styled 'the Afghan system,' and currently linked with the name of the late Envoy, as if, with all its errors, it had originated with *him*, is essentially *our Indian system*; that it existed with all its defects when Sir William Macnaghten was in his cradle, and flourishes in our own provinces now that he is in his grave. Among its errors are moving with small parties on distant points without support; inefficient commissariat arrangements; absolute ignorance on all topographical points; and reckoning on the attachment of our allies (as if Hindoo or Mahommedan *could* love his Christian lord, who only comes before him as master or tax-gatherer; as if it were not absurd to suppose that the chiefs of Burmah, Nepaul, Lahore, and the like could tolerate the power that restrains their rapacious desires and habits – that degrades them in their own and each other's eyes).

Men may differ as to the soundness of our policy, but no one can question its results, as shown in the fact of Hyder Ali twice dictating terms at the gates of Fort St. George (Madras); in the disasters that attended the early period of the Nepaul war; in the long state of siege in which Sir Archibald Campbell was held at Rangoon; in the frightful mortality at Arracan; in the surrender of General Mathews; in the annihilation of Colonel Baillie's detachment; in the destruction of Colonel Monson's force; and in the attacks on the Residences of Poonah and Nagpoor. These are all matters of history, though seldom practically remembered. Still less is it borne in mind how little was wanting to starve General Harris at Seringapatam, General Campbell in Ava, or Sir John Keane in Afghanistan. All these events have been duly recorded, though they have not withheld us, on each new occasion, from retracing our old errors. At length a calamity that we had often courted has fallen upon us; but direful as it is, and wrecked though it has the happiness of numbers, we may yet gather fruit from the thorns, if we learn therefrom how easily an army is paralysed and panic-stricken, and how fatal such prostration must ever be. If we read the lesson set before us, the wreck of a small army may be the beacon to save large ones.

Our chief danger in India is from within, not from without. The enemy who cannot reach us with his bayonets, can touch us

more fatally if he lead us to distrust ourselves, and rouse our subjects to distrust us; and we shall do his work for him if we show that our former chivalrous bearing is fled, that we pause to count the half-armed rabble opposed to us, and hesitate to act with battalions where a few years before companies would have been deemed sufficient.

The true basis of British power in India is often lost sight of, namely, a well-paid, well-disciplined army, relying, from experience, on the good faith, wisdom, and energy of its leaders.

We forget that our army is composed of men, like ourselves, quick-sighted and inquisitive on all matters bearing upon their personal interests; who, if they can appreciate our points of superiority, are just as capable of detecting our deficiencies, especially any want of military spirit or soldierly bearing.

At Cabul we lost an army, and we lost some character with the surrounding states. But I hold that by far our worst loss was in the confidence of our Native soldiery. Better had it been for our fame if our harassed troops had rushed on the enemy and perished to a man, than that surviving Sepoys should be able to tell the tales they can of what they saw at Cabul.

European soldiers and officers are placed as examples to Native troops, and a glorious one they have generally set in the field; but who can estimate the evil when the example is bad – when it is not the Hindustani (most exposed to cold, and least able to bear it) who clamours for retreat and capitulation, but the cry is raised by the men he has been accustomed to look up to and to lean upon as a sure resource in every emergent peril.

The degenerate legionaries drove their general with their halberds to capitulation and death; but it was the deliberate counsels of the British military commanders that urged their civil chief to his and their own destruction.

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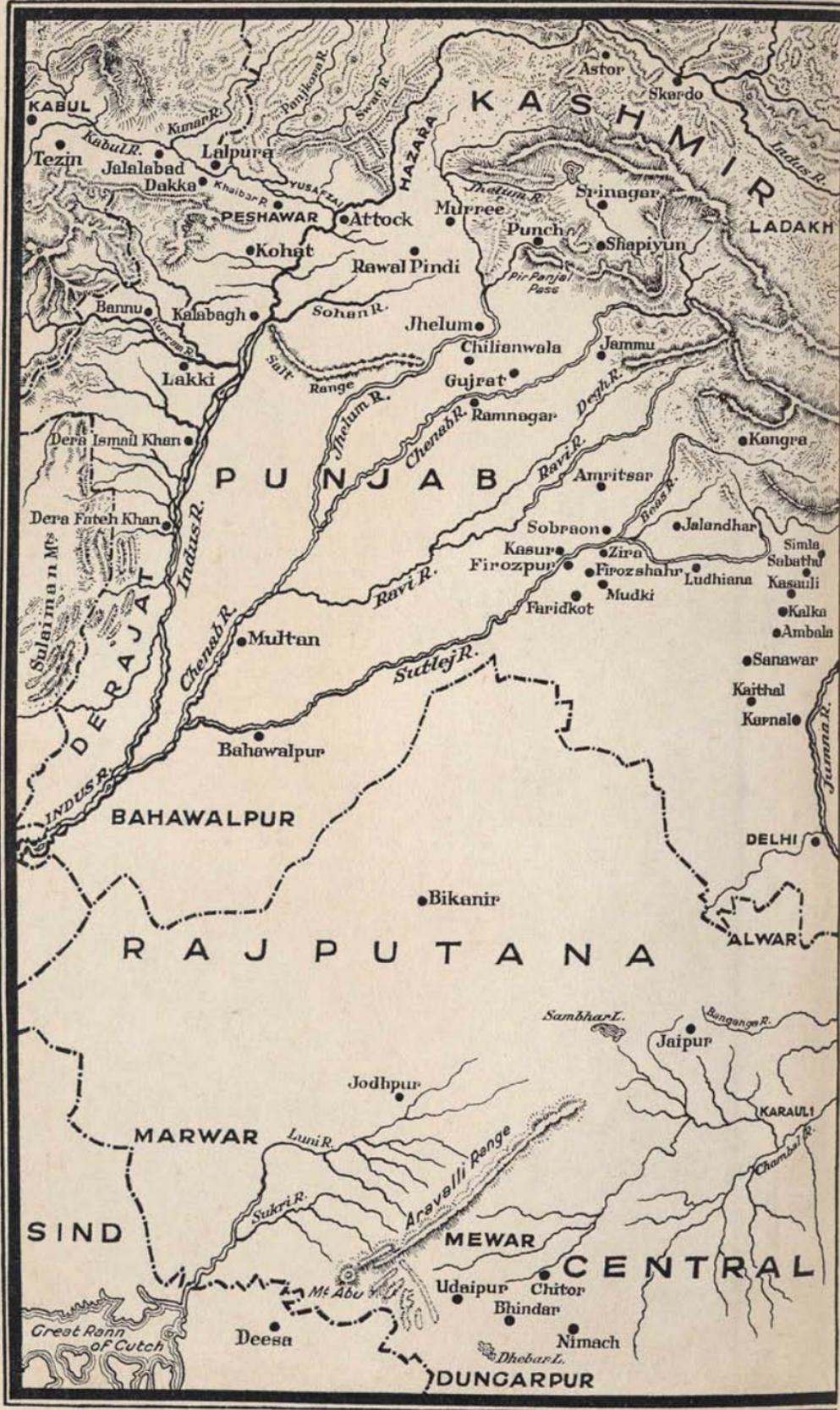
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