

THE MAKING OF THE INDIAN PRINCES

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PREFACE

NOW THAT India's right to independence has been acknowledged, the Princes' rights and status remain her outstanding constitutional problem. It cannot be decided by mere legal examination of their treaties with the Paramount Power. There exists, in addition, a body of practice and tradition. Also, there arises the question of the status and position of the parties to those treaties when they were made. This question only a knowledge of the events which shaped India's political framework can answer.

India's political framework was made in twenty years: in 1799-1819, between the death of Tipu Sultan and the elimination of the Peshwa. The period opens with the destruction of the Muslim kingdom of Mysore and ends with the disintegration of the Maratha Confederacy into a series of separate chieftaincies. These two conquests gave the British the control of India.

After Tipu's destruction the Marathas remained. When they were finally beaten down, Modern India was formed and its map in essentials drawn. The arrangement was to stay until the slow process of time and the coming of new systems of political thinking made it an anachronism, calling for Round Table Conferences, White Papers, and their sequel in constitutional legislation and political offers. India, as we knew it yesterday and the world has known it, was made in the space of these twenty years, first by the shattering of what Lord Wellesley styled 'the Mahratta Empire' and then, after a brief period of uncertain and faltering doctrine, by Lord Hastings' firm establishment of the States which had survived, each in the niche and status which was to be legally accepted as its own until our day. The Indian 'Prince' emerged in 1806, arising, like the Puranic Urvashi,¹ from the churning of the Ocean by the Gods and Demons, and received his position in India's polity in 1819.

In these twenty years were three major wars, the last major wars to be fought in India, except for the two Sikh wars, and one minor campaign. A detailed study of the first of these, that between the British and Tipu Sultan, lies outside my present purpose. The Muslim dynasty of Mysore was an excrescence, whose roots lay in

¹ The renowned courtesan and dancing nymph of Indra's heaven, who arose, like Venus, from the sea.

the personal qualities of two unusually vigorous alien rulers. It never challenged the overlordship of all India.

It was the second of these wars, the Second Anglo-Maratha War, that revealed the outlines of the India which was ultimately to escape absorption into the British system. Its result involved the subordination of 'the country powers' to the East India Company's Government, whose paramountcy now merely waited for the name. After 1819, only stupidity or hypocrisy or an excess of tactfulness could pretend that the East India Company was not the Paramount Power or that any of the Princes were its equals in status; the Third Anglo-Maratha War had made this clear.

Indeed, the rebound to an opposite opinion was so extreme that for close on forty years it seemed doubtful if the Princes would survive at all. The Paramount Power made no secret of its intention to annex their territories whenever a pretext could be found. The Mutiny caused a sharp revision of this attitude, and when it ended the Princes were ceremoniously re-established where 1819 had left them. The historian therefore finds himself compelled continually to return to twenty all-important years, to explain all the years which have followed.

'Personality' history is not now in vogue. A historian whose approach is through the medium of men rather than economic factors and trends is suspected of leanings to the Ruritanian school of history, a pleasant region halfway between history proper and the historical novel. The modern reader may therefore be deterred when he glances through these pages, to see an apparently multitudinous field of princes and princelings, chieftains and satraps and functionaries in the various secretariats. Historians of Modern India have been oppressed by the mass of detail unfamiliar to their readers, which they must handle and build into generalizations, and have not unnaturally been preoccupied with Governors-General and Commanders-in-Chief. In particular, Native India and its leaders have made only incidental appearances, their motives rarely understood or even regarded, their personalities left shadowy. Our writing of India's history is perhaps resented more than anything else we have done.

It has also resulted in error and misconception on our side. For us, over a century later, to accept the Princes as they are presented after that century—during which they have been a part of India yet separated from British India and in nearly all that concerned India as a whole almost passive agents—and to assume a modern attitude of over-simplification to a polity and constitution which were worked out by a succession of hammer-

blows alternating with much wise and patient action, is to misunderstand India entirely. There is no other road to understanding the Princes and the problem their position and status now are, than by going through twenty significant years in detail, weighing the imponderables of personal forces as the men of that time had to weigh them.

To obtain this knowledge, one must have access to the diaries, minutes, reports, and records of the time, of which many have never yet been used. This brings me to the duty of acknowledgment of help that can rarely have been given so generously and by so many. Ten years ago, the Leverhulme Trustees by the award of a research fellowship enabled me to begin a study which was to take me far afield, into small dark rooms in remote places, where I found myself turning over bundles of mouldering letters of once-powerful men long dead, records tied up in *roomals* (handkerchiefs) and often still unsorted. The representatives of Lord Metcalfe put into my hands practically all that survived of his correspondence; for this kindness I am indebted to Miss Clive Bayley above all, and for much additional information. The India Office, and Dr. H. N. Randle, its librarian, gave free access to their own records. Lord Lothian, Secretary of the Rhodes Trust, cared about India and cared about history, and the Trustees twice gave me a grant to visit India in search of material. Friends like Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru told me historical details which they came across in law practice, some of them throwing light on men before my period, such as Warren Hastings. M. R. Jayakar put me in touch with men who held the key to Maratha traditions and manuscripts. Sir Akbar Hydari gave me the freedom of the Hyderabad records. Jawaharlal Nehru drew my attention to matters which an Englishman, left to himself, would be bound to overlook. Rai Saheb Sardesai left his remote home in the Western Ghats, to help me as no other student of Maratha history could. Lieutenant-Colonel Reginald Schomberg, D.S.O., C.I.E., my friend from days when we were both before Kut, introduced me to the Records Department of the Bibliothèque Nationale, Pondichéry. I have been allowed to examine records in Persian, Marathi, French, Urdu, Bengali, as well as my own tongue.

I wrote first my *Life of Lord Metcalfe*. I had known in a general way how remarkable and noble a man he was. But I had known far less than the reality, and I saw that I must go yet further and try to light up a whole period, a whole vanished and scarcely realized generation. The period 1799-1819 has not merely a

political importance. It has a personal interest exceeding that of any other period in British-Indian relations.

No other period threw up so many men who were outstanding in gifts and character. Our nation has not begun to be aware of even their intellectual quality. Such a letter, for example, as the one Elphinstone (whose letters I have seen lying in scores, still awaiting study) wrote immediately after the Battle of Assaye should be famous. It came from the brain swiftly and was sent as it came, but no professional writer who ever lived could better it as literature in a single phrase. And Elphinstone habitually wrote on this level or very near it. Nor is there much wrong with the letters, written without any thought of their being 'literature', of Metcalfe and Malcolm (except that their handwriting is a sorrow to read, and Malcolm's in particular, especially in his later days, something which ought to be an offence against the law). They were wonderfully attractive men, vivid and eager and in the main tolerant and far-seeing. They have hardly had their equals in British history of any land or age.

Part of the reason for this intellectual quality was their experience. It was in this period, and most of all in the earlier of its two Maratha campaigns, that the British became 'acclimatized' in India. The psychological change and shift in their attitude was immense. Before this, their people had been adventurers. Now they were in India to stay. This compelled a revolution in thought, and not least in its subconscious levels.

Men to whom a change like this comes rarely themselves perceive it. But the historian has no right to look through his material so carelessly as to miss it. Perception of this change came to me, not in official despatches, but in the hurried and often confused letters of quite unimportant men, who had done little serious thinking in their lives but found themselves in the presence of a new world that forced thinking upon them. I have tried to make these men, and their leaders especially, living and distinct, and make no apology for citing freely incidents which might be regarded as trivial and beneath the dignity of history. In the process I learnt also how vivid and attractive were many of those Indian leaders who before had been little more than mere names of men who had gone down in defeat and hopeless resistance.

In conclusion, I return to acknowledgment of indebtedness. Most of all, I am in the debt of Mr. and Mrs. H. N. Spalding, who established a fellowship in Indian historical research, and to the Provost and Fellows of Oriel College, who accepted it and elected me to their number. Their steady kindness and interest can never

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PART I

THE EMERGENCE OF THE PRINCES

I. INDIA AT THE END OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

The Marattahs possess, alone of all the people of Hindostan and Decan, a principle of national attachment, which is strongly impressed on the minds of all individuals of the nation, and would probably unite their chiefs, as in one common cause, if any great danger were to threaten the general state.—*Warren Hastings, in 1784.*

India contains no more than two great powers, British and Mahratta, and every other state acknowledges the influence of one or the other. Every inch that we recede will be occupied by them.—*Charles Metcalfe, in 1806.*

WARREN HASTINGS left India in 1784. On his voyage home he drew up an analysis of its political condition.¹

The list of Powers which might be considered independent had shrunk from one cause or another, the East India Company having been the most effective dissolvent: 'it seems to have been the fixed policy of our nation in India to enfeeble every power in connection with it'. The Mogul Emperor, though hardly worthy to be reckoned among Powers of any sort or kind, he mentions because of the prestige attaching to his ancestors and in some degree to his person. The Nawabs of Oudh and the Carnatic, nominally servants of the Emperor, he notes as entirely dependent on the Company. Another nominal officer of the Emperor, the Nizam of Hyderabad, he sees in the position of a star destined to become a satellite but now the object of contention between rival heavenly bodies:

'His dominions are of small extent and scanty revenue; his military strength is represented to be most contemptible; nor was he at any period of his life distinguished for personal courage or the spirit of enterprise. On the contrary, it seems to have been his constant and ruling maxim to foment the incentives of war among his neighbours, to profit by their weakness and embarrassments, but to avoid being a party himself in any of their contests, and to submit even to humiliating sacrifices rather than subject himself to the chances of war.'²

There were also a number of small principalities, whose safety was in lying quietly under the shadow of some greater Power. Some of these, notably the Rajput states, all nominally dependents of the Emperor though actually fallen within the orbit of the Maratha chieftain Sindhia, were respectable from their antiquity.

¹ G. W. Forrest, *Selections from the State Papers of the Governors-General of India, Warren Hastings*, ii. 58.

² *Ibid.*, ii. 55.

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They still survive, almost the only States with a title older than that of the British Government or with one not originally derived from an office under the Mogul Emperor.

The Punjab was unsettled. The Sikhs (as Hastings notes, a sect rather than a nation) were there struggling with Mussulman invaders and adventurers. Apart from this and other districts beyond the Company's present purview—such as Nepal, Sind, and Kutch—in India Hastings saw only two genuinely independent Powers, Tipu Sultan in the Mysore, and the Maratha Confederacy straddling across Central India and now reaching far into the north, controlling Delhi itself. It was certain that sooner or later war would come between these two Powers and the British.¹

THE DESTRUCTION OF TIPU SULTAN

The first of the wars which Hastings foresaw began when Tipu (29 December 1789) attacked the Company's ally, the Raja of Travancore. 'That mad barbarian Tippoo has forced us into a war with him.'² It ended, 1792, in Tipu's utter defeat. But the peace which followed this Third Mysore War was to be merely an armistice.

In the decade that ended the century, Tipu was in fitful communication with the French. Raging from his loss of a huge indemnity and of half his dominions, he felt blindly for allies, inside and outside India. This restlessness in no way differed from the normal behaviour, then or since, of warring or threatened States, but it was reprobated as proof of his ingrained faithlessness. His quarrel with the British was one of deep mutual hatred; the stories of his treatment of captives had rung through England.

Three wars only—the two World Wars and that against Napoleon—have been waged by the British with a conviction that defeat meant submergence. During the Napoleonic War the ruling oligarchy knew that the commerce which brought it wealth and financed the political arrangement which secured enjoyment of that wealth was threatened. When the Earl of Mornington reached India as Governor-General, May 1798, his class had worked itself into a frenzy of patriotism and exasperation against

¹ To the testimony of the Marathas' outstanding importance, which I cite from British sources, could be added that strewn *passim* in the French records at Pondichéry, especially the *Correspondance de Montigny avec Piveron de Morlat*. Morlat was sent as French agent to Poona in 1782; his duty was to counteract Malet, the British representative. The Marathas are styled 'la seule Puissance réelle dans l'Inde' (14 February 1787), a fact freely and often admitted.

² Lord Cornwallis, 15 April 1790: *Correspondence*, edited by Charles Ross.

Jacobinism (a term used as widely and loosely as such terms as 'Red', 'Left', and 'Communism' in recent years) and against Buonaparte. The latter was entangled in his Egyptian and Syrian adventure, which in retrospect appears a mere escapade but at the time was accepted as a serious attempt to break through to the growing British Empire in the East. Such a break-through was, as a matter of fact, part of Napoleon's larger hope. The new Governor-General came resolute to end the Company's quarrel with Mysore once for all. He regarded this as his contribution to Buonaparte's defeat.

Madras, long sunk in selfishness and corruption, and Bombay, an isolated and fragmentary property overshadowed by the power of the Marathas, he found hard to stir. But he infused his own excitement and enthusiasm into the British of Bengal. Calcutta subscribed and sent home, July 1798, £130,785 3s. 1½d., a sum which included a small contribution by Indians.¹ There was immense, if passing, zeal to enrol as volunteers against invasion by the Corsican ogre, and plans were drawn up for the defence of the capital. Gentlemen turned out on Calcutta *maidan*,² complete with sidearms and musket, and attended by native servants carrying umbrellas, and bricks to put beneath Master's feet if Master had to drill in squashy places. The season was the monsoon, when the *maidan*, even now, can be very wet.

Tipu could hardly have escaped destruction by even the most circumspect humility. He gave a *casus belli* by inept negotiations with the French Governor of Mauritius,³ which the latter boastfully published. These intrigues, with a not very important official, furnished an excuse for the war which Lord Mornington would have made in any case. It began in February 1799, and was over in three months. Seringapatam was stormed (May 4), and the Sultan's body was found in a pile of about five hundred crowded into a small space. The Governor-General's brother, Arthur Wellesley, as unshakably phlegmatic as Lord Mornington was excitable, standing in torchlight felt heart and pulse, and reported Tipu to be lifeless. His conquerors buried him with military honours, in which the elements joined, sweeping the island with a tempest of thunder and rain such as was hardly remembered in even that storm-ravaged region.⁴

¹ *India Office Records, Home Miscellaneous Series*, 481 (5), p. 80. Towards the loan presently raised for the Mysore War, the Governor-General himself subscribed Rs. 120,000.

² An open space for recreation.

³ Mornington to the Secret Committee, 30 October 1798.

⁴ Seringapatam, an island in the river Kaveri, is notorious for electric storms.

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A shrunken Mysore was placed under a Prince of the Hindu dynasty which Tipu's father, Haidar, had dislodged. The new Maharaja, a child,¹ showed a 'highly proper' decorum during the ceremony of his enthronement. His family, who had been discovered in abject poverty, behaved equally well, and acknowledged their grateful sense of dependence. 'We shall at all times', the two ladies of highest distinction told the Commissioners for the settlement, 'consider ourselves as under your protection and orders. . . . Our offspring can never forget an attachment to your government, on whose support we shall depend.' This language was rather more than the flowery recognition of favours received, which etiquette and custom prescribed. It underlined what was obvious; Mysore had become a puppet state. Its pacification was undertaken by a group of able soldiers, who afterwards left administration in the hands of Purnayya, a veteran Brahman politician, who governed it as Dewan.²

The French, all but ejected from India, had long watched despairingly from Pondichéry, conscious of their inability to help a state which they had encouraged into wars which destroyed it. To Cornwallis' campaign against Tipu, ten years earlier, they had given close and unremitting attention, and at its close exclaimed that at last both Nizam and Marathas must surely have their eyes opened, and begin to see how unwise they had been in warring against Mysore, thereby enfeebling the only Power '*qui puisse en imposer aux anglais*'.³

Haidar and Tipu brought the East India Company nearer to ruin than any other Indian foes had brought it, and nearer than any subsequent foe was to bring it. But they were an episode only, lasting less than forty years. They took no root among the country powers.⁴ With the Marathas, the greatest of these powers, Tipu's destruction left the Company fairly face to face.

¹ Three years old, according to Malcolm; five, according to Beatson.

² Chief civil officer.

³ 27 February 1792: Pondichéry Records. It is interesting to note that, so far as my own uncompleted researches show, Warren Hastings is mentioned only once, in these very full records. Bengal was far away, and it was not until Cornwallis came in person to make war in South India that the French realized that the East India Company's actions were passing under a genuinely unified control.

⁴ A common mode of reference to Indian states at this time.

II

THE MARATHAS

THE MARATHAS are a hardy nation from the Deccan and Western Ghats. Their homeland, Maharastra, lies between the 16th and 22nd degrees of north latitude, and stretches from the Satpura Hills to the Wainganga¹ and Wardha rivers, and to the borders of Goanese territory.

They became prominent in the later decades of the seventeenth century, under Shahji and his celebrated son Sivaji. The Rajputs had hitherto been the spearhead of Hindu resistance to the Mogul Empire. They now weakened, worn down by long and desperate fighting, and the Marathas took their place. Sivaji, founder of Maratha greatness, was a particularly devout Hindu and fought for Hinduism almost as much as for his own hand. For this reason, and because the Marathas were peasants, low in the caste scale, their Brahmans had exceptional power and influence. One main cause of the ascendancy which the Peshwas obtained was the fact that they were Brahmans and their persons sacred, whatever their misdeeds. This essential consideration is often overlooked.

With our recent historians, the Marathas' reputation is that of robbers pure and simple. It is true that this opinion can find support in the great authority of Sir Thomas Munro. 'The Mahratta Government, from its foundation, has been one of the most destructive that ever existed in India.'² But Munro's service was in Mysore and Madras, and he saw the Marathas solely as enemies; he never was where he could understand Northern India, an entirely different world from the South, and one which all through the centuries has had a different history and outlook. His exasperated witness was written in 1817, when for many years the Marathas had been the dregs of what they were. Munro himself was then marching against their last Peshwa, a man in whom no one has yet found any good quality, his memory still felt as a humiliation to the nation that he ruined.

Most of the distinguished men who dealt directly with the Marathas thought better of them. Hindu India cherishes their memory with pride, and they could not have conducted their

¹ The river made famous by Kipling's story, *Red Dog*.

² 23 November 1817.

protracted and successful fight against the Mogul Empire, without the support of the regions by whose resources they subsisted. We cannot

'deny to the Mahrattas, in the early part of their history, and before their extensive conquests had made their vast and mixed armies cease to be national, the merit of conducting their Cossack inroads into other countries with a consideration to the inhabitants, which had been deemed incompatible with that terrible and destructive species of war.'¹

An officer who knew them exceptionally well, though he bears testimony to the desolation that they brought—'a Mahratta army are more indefatigable and destructive than myriads of locusts'—and speaks of the hardness of heart acquired from warfare,² which as in the case of Prussia had become their 'national industry', gives us also this attractive picture of their 'great simplicity of manners': 'Homer mentions princesses going in person to the fountains to wash their household linen. I can affirm having seen the daughter of a prince (able to bring an army into the field much larger than the whole Greek confederacy) making bread with her own hands, and otherwise employed in the ordinary business of domestic housewifery. I have seen one of the most powerful chiefs of the empire, after a day of action, assist in kindling a fire to keep himself warm during the night, and sitting on the ground on a spread saddle-cloth, dictating to his secretaries and otherwise discharging the political duties of his station. This primeval plainness operates upon the whole people. There is no distinction of sentiment to be discerned: the prince and his domestics think exactly in the same way, and express themselves in the same terms. There appears but one level of character, without any mixture of ardour or enthusiasm; a circumstance the more surprising, considering the great exploits they have achieved. But their simplicity of manners, uncorrupted by success, their courtesy to strangers, their unaffected politeness and easiness of access, must render them dear to every person that has had a commerce with them. Such a character, when contrasted with the insidiousness of the Brahman, and the haughtiness of the Mussulman, rises as superior to them, as candour and plainness are to duplicity and deceit, or real greatness to barbarous ostentation.'³

¹ Sir John Malcolm, *Central India*, i. 68-9.

² 'The Mahrattas are total strangers to charity, and possess an insensibility of heart with which other nations are unacquainted. The feelings get steeled by a repetition of distress, especially in a people whose ruling passion is avarice.' I would add that one thing which stands out in the literature that depicts India in the last forty years of the eighteenth century is the general hard-heartedness of Europeans and Indians. Misery was so common that men grew accustomed to it.

³ *Illustrations of some Institutions of the Mahratta People*. By William Henry Tone, Esq., commanding a regiment of infantry in the service of the Peshwa. It is undated, but internal evidence places it in 1794 or 1795. It was addressed to an officer who was probably John Malcolm. Tone was a brother of Wolfe Tone.

India, usually under the necessity of selecting between two evils (except when no choice at all has been offered), has never been too critical of armed power operating in its midst. When Providence has seen fit to make your standard of comfort a wretched one, you accept chastening without complaint; if you must choose between King John and Robin Hood, Robin Hood seems saintly. Sivaji accordingly has been deified,¹ and not in Maharastra only.

RISE OF THE MARATHA CHIEFTAINS

Sivaji's successors held their Court at Satara and were nominal heads of the Maratha Confederacy. But early in the eighteenth century they fell completely out of sight behind the Peshwa, who was originally Second Minister in Sivaji's *Astha Pradhān*, or Cabinet of Eight. The Eight all became hereditary ministers, and to-day the descendants of two are 'Princes'.² The Peshwa of Shahu, Sivaji's grandson, secured an outstanding authority, which his son, Baji Rao I, so strengthened that in 1727 he was granted full administrative powers. Henceforward the Maratha Government was in fact the Peshwa's Government, checked and qualified by the influence of the great semi-independent chieftains.

The Raja of Satara, the Confederacy's original and nominal overlord, 'from the mere force of prejudice' received 'some occasional attentions', scrupulously paid him. Enjoying 'the splendid misery of royalty and a prison', confined to his capital, on 'a very moderate allowance',³ he yet formally invested every Peshwa with his *khelāt*.⁴ No Peshwa could take the field without previously taking leave humbly of the Raja. The Satara district possessed a sacred perpetual peace, 'an exemption from military depredations of all kinds'. When any chieftain entered it he laid aside all marks of his own rank and his drums ceased to beat. Apart from this outward homage, which one of the four great chieftains, the Bhonsla Raja—who claimed to be himself, as Sivaji's descendant, the true Maratha head—hardly paid at all, the Raja of Satara did not matter in the least but was an empty pageant. The descendants of the *Astha Pradhān* ministers also, except for the Peshwa, sank into subordinate positions.

Four of the semi-independent military chieftains were of the first rank of importance: the Gaekwar, Sindhia, Holkar, and Bhonsla. They became associated respectively with Baroda, the

¹ His sword is worshipped in its own temple, at Satara.

² The Rajas of Aundh and Bhore. ³ W. H. Tone.

⁴ Sign of appointment, usually a shawl.

Ujjain-Gwalior¹ country, the Vindhya-Narbada country (Indore), and Nagpur-Berar. They were finally established in the third decade of the eighteenth century, but arose a full generation earlier. Their homage therefore went directly to the Peshwa, since in 1727 the Maratha Government became *de facto* the Peshwa's Government. The Gaekwar and Holkar and the Bhonsla were very loosely attached to the Confederacy, whose heart was Sindhia and the Peshwa. Gaekwars, Sindhias, and Holkars have survived into modern India as leading Princes—a title which in the eighteenth century they would have disclaimed with formal modesty.

A main source of Maratha strength was that from the first they were catholic in their political and military system and habits. They made use of the fighting qualities of other racial stocks in a manner to which only the Company, with its armies recruited from many castes, could in the late eighteenth century show anything comparable. The English, whose military commanders have been almost usually Scots or Irish and their Prime Ministers and great Cabinet officers often Scots or Jews, were the only enemy whose sinews of war were as elastic as theirs. Sivaji himself had freely employed Muhammadans, as Mahadaji Sindhia did later.

Warren Hastings, who understood most things Indian and possessed an unsleeping curiosity, knew all this. But it came as slow puzzling information to his successors. Lord Wellesley² seems to have been unaware of the Satara family's existence. He styles the Peshwa a 'sovereign' (which, theoretically, he emphatically was not; he was merely a Minister) and throughout his time in India he was under the impression that the Marathas were an 'Empire', with a 'Constitution' under which Sindhia, Holkar, Gaekwar, and Bhonsla held places like that of himself and his fellow hereditary peers under the British Constitution. It is true that the term 'Empire' was used by men better informed than Lord Wellesley, including Arthur Wellesley and Malcolm. But what to them was a term of convenience to him was an accurate description and in the light of his faith that this was so he acted throughout.³

During the latter part of the eighteenth century, Marathas and British had met in desultory fashion, both as friends and foes. The

¹ Gwalior, the Sindhia capital to-day, belonged to the Rana of Gohad until the last quarter of the eighteenth century.

² Lord Mornington was created Marquess Wellesley for his defeat of Tipu.

³ Arthur Wellesley early saw his error. 'The greater experience I gain of Mahratta affairs, the more convinced I am that we have been mistaken entirely regarding the constitution of the Mahratta Empire' (20 June 1803).

former prowled very far from their home lands and Sivaji's brother Venkaji established a Maratha dynasty in Tanjore, near Madras. In the casualness of those earliest wars of the Company, a body of Marathas under an adventurer, Morari Rao, fought sometimes against the British, sometimes (as in Clive's Arcot campaign) on their side.

In 1772, when Warren Hastings lent the Nawab of Oudh a brigade to subjugate the Rohillas, it was well understood that the real menace, behind the Rohillas, was the Marathas. Two years later, in 1774, the Government of Bombay precipitated an iniquitous war with Sindhia and the Peshwa, and achieved thereby the miracle of bringing Hastings and his Council into temporary accord. The latter informed the Bombay Government that its action was 'impolitic, dangerous, unauthorized, and unjust', adjectives which were explained and elaborated.

The Gaekwar kept outside this war. So did the Bhonsla Raja, who was always 'somewhat aloof from the politics of Poona'¹ and throughout Clive's and Hastings' time cultivated with the Company friendly relations, which served the latter well. Holkar, too, can hardly be considered to have taken part in the campaign, which dragged on for several years. In January 1779, the Bombay Government surpassed itself in incompetence, an army surrendering at Wargaon, where its commander signed a convention which, Hastings said, 'almost made me sink with shame when I read it'. The convention, like that which Roman generals made at the Caudine Forks with a Samnite army, was repudiated, and the Marathas lost their advantage. Hastings, rising to perhaps the highest moment of even his vigorous clear-sighted career, in 1780 thrust out across Central India—into territory almost as legendary in its uncharted immensity as the kingdoms of Prester John or Kubla Khan—two soldiers, Popham and Goddard, who largely repaired the first disasters, though Goddard afterwards lapsed into carelessness that all but brought about a second Wargaon. Two years later (May 1782),² the war ended by the Treaty of Salbai.

This Treaty was important in more ways than one. The Company at last stood out among the Indian Powers, and negotiated on equal terms with one of the two other genuinely independent Powers. The war was recognized as having been on the whole a drawn contest, and it left a conviction on both sides that the sovereignty of India would ultimately be fought out between

¹ Colebrooke, Sir T. E., *Life of Elphinstone*, i. 111.

² The Treaty was not ratified by Nana Farnavis, the Peshwa's chief minister, until the following February.