

ENGLISH WRITERS IN INDIA.

BY THE REV. JOHN F. HURST, D.D.

THE more prominent bonds connecting England with India have always been military and commercial. But there are also literary associations which have played no small part in the great drama of English supremacy in Hindustan and Ceylon. In the early operations of the East India Company there was now and then an Englishman combining keen literary taste with an eye to commercial advantage, who helped in both ways to weld the chain which has finally brought India within the enduring control of his little island in the West. The English tradesman pure and simple was not even the first revealer of the boundless treasures of India. This was the work of the scholarly traveller. He was the pioneer who wandered over the country, lingered at those splendid courts, and came home with the story of the industries, the gorgeous architecture, the unrivalled jewels, the flora, and the exhaustless soil. His marvellous accounts stirred the commercial mind, and induced the English capitalists of three centuries ago to undertake the forming of great enterprises in the East. Sir Thomas Roe, not content with exploring the Amazon on the Western continent, never gave a pause to his long pilgrimage until he reached the court of the Great Mogul. The moment when that traveller—the first Englishman to behold the splendor of the Peacock Throne of Delhi—touched the marble floor of the greatest palace in the East, and breathed the perfumed air of its audience-hall, was full of fate to that mighty empire. From that time onward England's eyes were never turned away from the wealth of India.

The East India Company never displayed greater skill in the management of its affairs in India than in its selection of men. Many of its civil servants were skilful with the pen—an ability which served in good stead after they had become domesticated in India. Warren Hastings was hardly less as a literary character than as a civil administrator. His wide reading, his delightful style, his abiding interest in the antiquities of India, then new to Europe, gave him a prominent place in the group of English statesmen who knew how to enjoy with equal ease the delights of literature and the absorbing engagements of civil rule.

Sir Philip Francis, the most probable author of the "Letters of Junius," led a checkered life in India. He had been connected with the War-Office in London, and resigned in 1772. In the following year he was appointed a member of the Council for India.

As the vessel bore Francis and the other members of the Council up the Hugli to Calcutta, it was expected by the strangers from afar that the royal salute of twenty-one guns from the batteries of Fort

William would be given them. But, alas, the number was seventeen.* Hastings had taken great care that the royal salute should not be given. Francis was disgusted. His pride was wounded. When he met Hastings the reception was cold and formal. He took no pains to conceal his sense of injury. A few ounces more of gunpowder would probably have made them cordial friends. But now there could be no friendship. This first affront laid the foundation of

* Busteed's *Echoes from Old Calcutta*, p. 55.



CARICATURE OF SIR PHILIP FRANCIS.

that bitter hostility of Francis to Hastings and his administration, sharpened the pen of Francis for invective and satire hardly less keen than one finds in the "Letters of Junius," and led to a duel between the two in India, which resulted in the wounding of Francis and that trial of Hastings by the House of Commons which shook all England and her distant colonies.

Francis indulged in all the license and splendor which his position, salary, and skill in gaming permitted. It is said that he paid a rent of \$60,000 a year for his house, employed 104 servants, had his grand dinners and balls, but all the while he watched Hastings with an eagle eye. Never has the Indian mail carried back to England more violent attacks on a Governor-General than those of Francis against Hastings. During all the first years of his stay in India he underestimated the genius of his foe. Hastings triumphed in the end. His pen, and that endurance which "resembled the patience of stupidity," triumphed over the malignity of the temper and the ambition and the venomous pen of even Philip Francis.

There is hardly any notable event in Anglo-Indian history with which English literature has not some immediate connection. Even the Black Hole tragedy has its literary associations. That is the best known of all the individual crimes perpetrated by a native of India on English people. Calcutta was captured from the English by the native troops under Siraj ud Dowla (Lamp of the State), the Suba of Bengal. The later judgment of those best able to judge the conditions of the times is to the effect that the young Hindu commander was not responsible for the imprisonment and suffocation of the English people in the Black Hole, but that subordinate officers were the real perpetrators of the tragedy.

J. Z. Holwell was one of the few surviving prisoners. He became the historian of the tragedy, and afterward erected a monument to the memory of his murdered fellow-countrymen. Holwell's history in India was that of a man who seems to have been aroused to intense mental activity by the historical and literary wealth of the country. The very air about him inspired him to earnest research. His *Narrative of the Black Hole Tragedy* was an exhaustive monograph, and is the best original source for



J. Z. HOLWELL.

From an old print after a painting by Sir Joshua Reynolds.

the proper understanding of that blackest chapter of Anglo-Indian history. But Holwell's study of India led him into larger fields. He inquired deeply into the religions of the people, their architectural achievements, their usages, and their far-distant history. His principal works are his *Mythology*, *Cosmogony*, *Fasts and Festivals*, and *Interesting Historical Events Relative to the Province of Bengal*. He was probably one of the best collectors of ancient manuscripts and other literary treasures in India at a time when the European craze for Oriental literary treasures had not as yet made them scarce in India. But his rich gatherings were lost at the capture of Calcutta. In addition to his elaborate books, he wrote monographs on various Indian topics, and contributed largely to awaken in England a literary interest in India. His fame spread to the Continent, where he was recognized, even more than in England, as an author of great worth. Voltaire says of him: "This is the same Holwell who learned not only the lan-

guage of the modern Brahmans, but also that of the ancient Brahmans. It is he who wrote most precious memoirs on India, and who translated sublime specimens of the first books written in the sacred language. We owe much to this man, who has only travelled to instruct. He has revealed that which has been concealed for ages."

An important movement in India in the latter half of the eighteenth century was the founding of the periodical press. The first newspaper established in India was *Hicky's Gazette*, which began its history on January 29, 1780, and soon took its place as an organ for the representation of the large Anglo-Indian colony in Calcutta. The freedom with which it discussed social topics made it a great power. *Hicky's Gazette* was the parent of a large number of newspapers and periodicals, not only in Calcutta, but in other parts of India. These periodicals, which had grown into a very respectable number by the year 1830, became the medium by which young Englishmen of literary tastes made their acquaintance with the public. The *Calcutta Literary Gazette*, established about 1835, and edited by D. S. Richardson, was ably conducted. The editor himself became known in Europe as the author of *Literary Leaves*, *Home Visions*, *The Ocean Sketches*, and the *Selections from the British Poets*. Macaulay, during his residence in Calcutta, was so pleased with this last work that he drafted a plan for a similar book of selections from the British prose writers, but never completed his undertaking. The *Bengal Annual*, of 1833, was a great favorite with ambitious young Anglo-Indians. It had a list of fifty contributors, and there seemed to be no end to the enterprise and daring of those young and aspiring tyros in literature in the far-off land of their adoption.

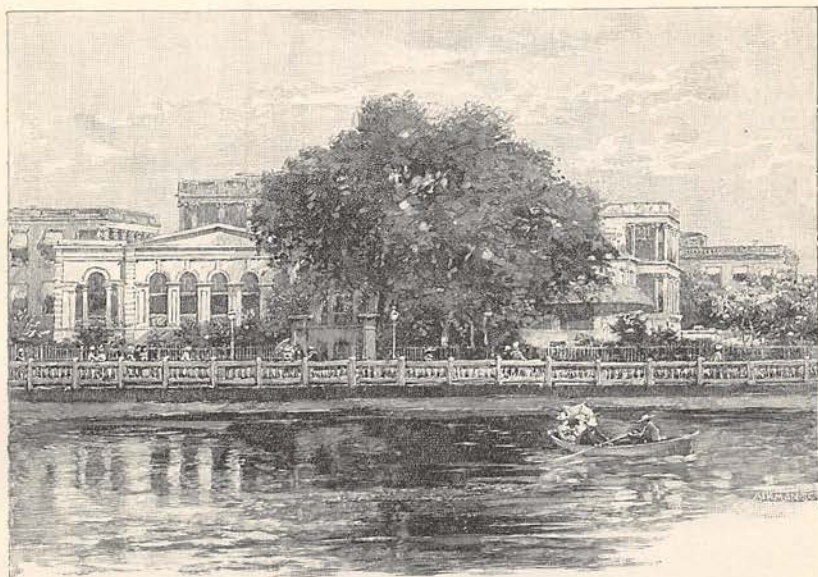
The military authorship of Anglo-Indians received early attention, and has grown with remarkable rapidity. Since the conquest of India by Clive, and its solidification by Hastings, there has grown up a wealth of books on the military history of the country which would constitute a vast library in itself. The expeditions to Afghanistan and to Burma, the Sikh war, the Sepoy Mutiny, and, indeed, every military movement in the country, have awakened a spirit of historical investigation which has taken shape in large

works. Some of them are not only treasures of history, but even of archaeological research. The conquest of the Punjab has not only been treated in a military point of view, but that country having been the scene of Alexander's conquest, the old Greek relations have been discussed, and points of identity between Hindu and Greek civilization established. These works have become a part of the permanent treasure of the world's literature.

Many of the great campaigns have been treated by the leaders themselves. Havelock wrote *The Campaigns in Ava*, Neill wrote a history of the First Madras-European Regiment, Sykes wrote valuable notes on ancient India, and Phayre wrote on the Burma race. The important writings of Sir John W. Kaye—such as his *Essays of an Optimist*, *History of the War in Afghanistan*, *Life of Lord Metcalfe*, *History of the Sepoy War*, *History of the Administration of the East India Company*, and *Lives of Indian Officers*—show how strongly the literary spirit has prevailed among the military leaders who have established English supremacy in India.

To the military treatment of the country belongs also the attention given to the industrial and social life. We do not believe a single industry has been forgotten. Men who have conducted large tea and coffee plantations have written on each subject. No study of cotton culture would be complete without consulting the works of the Anglo-Indian writers. Special antiquity, such as the architecture of the temples, has been treated with scientific thoroughness, and new light has been furnished by Fergusson and other patient English inquirers. The best writers on all these themes have not been mere tourists, like Sir William Jones—they had sympathy with the country. Their duties, either as civilians or soldiers, confined them often to one locality, where the history or some other interest of the place set them to thinking and writing. India owes to England not only a good government, the introduction of Western civilization, the freedom for the propagation of Christianity, but also the revelation of India to itself and to the great Western world.

From Macaulay's connection with India we have the two most brilliant papers on that country which have been written, namely, the essays on Clive and Hastings.



RESIDENCE OF MACAULAY IN CALCUTTA.

The relation of the Macaulay family to India did not begin with the going of Thomas Babington Macaulay as a member of the Council in 1834, and his remaining there four years. His father, Zachary Macaulay, had been a merchant in India, and returned to England. The uncle of the historian had lived on the western coast of India. An aged lady of Madras told me of the insecure life of himself and his children, and proved it by the fact that they often slept in couches lodged in the trees of the plantation, as the only refuge from the prowling beasts of the forest.

In Calcutta I had a conversation with Mr. Andrews, who had been a familiar aid to the historian during his stay in Calcutta, from 1834 to 1838. The reverence with which he spoke of the historian, and of his kindness to him, and the methods of his daily life, was exceedingly beautiful. Of all the memories of Mr. Andrews I doubt not that those of his daily service to Macaulay will remain the most cherished. The residence of Macaulay is one of the most attractive in Calcutta, and is now the Bengal Club-house. The club is a delightful resort. The rooms are spacious and beautiful. The tables are supplied with the best periodicals from every part of the world.

William Makepeace Thackeray was born in Calcutta. The Armenian convent is pointed out as the house where the great novelist first saw the light. The family had long been associated with India. In January, 1766, the *Lord Camden* sailed from England for Calcutta. There were on board eleven men who were to do service in India as writers for the East India Company. One was Ray, the son of Lord Sandwich, and subsequently distinguished as a Bengal author. The other was William Makepeace Thackeray, the grandfather of the novelist. This elder Thackeray was one of the four employed in the Secretary's office. He seems to have given satisfaction to his superior, for in the following year the president informed the board that he was in need of an assistant as cash keeper. Thackeray was appointed to this office. The register of St. John's Cathedral, in Calcutta, contains an entry of his marriage to Miss Amelia Webb, January 13, 1776. The family became permanent residents of that city. The father of the novelist seems to have been of no special prominence. He was buried in the North Park Cemetery, Calcutta, where his tombstone is still to be found.

The cemeteries of India tell many a romantic story, by the bare mention of



SUPPOSED BIRTHPLACE OF THACKERAY,
CALCUTTA.

names, of the close relation between that country and the writers at home. In a cemetery at Puna there lies buried the celebrated African traveller Sir W. C. Harris, who died October 9, 1848. He was author of *Wild Sports in the West and Highlands of Ethiopia*. In the North Park Cemetery of Calcutta there is a black marble slab containing the inscription:

IN MEMORY OF
The Honourable
ROSE WHITWORTH AYLMER,

who departed this life March 2d, A. D. 1800.
Aged 20 years.

This name calls to mind the most romantic period of the life of Walter Savage Landor. Landor left Oxford in 1797. He spent some time on the Welsh coast, where he made the acquaintance of Lord Aylmer's family. An attachment sprang up between Rose, the daughter of Lord

Aylmer, and young Landor. One day she loaned him a book from the Swansea Circulating Library. It was a romance by Clara Reeve. Here he found an Arabic tale which so profoundly impressed him that it suggested his first great work, "Gebir." The attachment between Rose Aylmer and Landor grew stronger. But an event occurred which separated the two. Rose went to Calcutta to visit or live with her aunt, Lady Russell, wife of Sir Henry Russell, who was at the time a judge in Calcutta, and afterward became chief justice, and, later, a baronet. Landor, in his poem "Abertawy," indicates both her unwillingness to go and his own sorrow at her departure:

"Where is she now? Called far away,
By one she dared not disobey,
To those proud halls, for youth unfit,
Where princes stand and judges sit.
Where Ganges rolls his widest wave
She dropped her blossom in the grave;
Her noble name she never changed,
Nor was her nobler heart estranged."

A little poem to "The Three Roses" commences as follows:

"When the buds began to burst,
Long ago, with Rose the first
I was walking, joyous then,
Far above all other men,
Till before us up there stood
Britonferry's oaken wood,
Whispering, 'Happy as thou art,
Happiness and thou must part.'"

In another poem he sketches an incident of their idyllic life at Swansea. They could find no convenient seat. Landor constructed one by plucking up some thorn-rose bushes, for which he had to pay the penalty of a severe scratch:

"At last I did it—eight or ten;
We both were snugly seated then;
But then she saw a half-round bead,
And cried, 'Good gracious, how you bleed!'
Gently she wiped it off, and bound
With timorous touch that dreadful wound.
To lift it from its nurse's knee
I feared, and quite as much feared she,
For might it not increase the pain,
And make the wound burst out again?
She coaxed it to lie quiet there,
With a low tune I bent to hear;
How close I bent I quite forget,
I only know I hear it yet."

The death of Rose in far-off Calcutta was a great blow to Landor. Here is only a part of his famous elegy:

"Ah, what avails the sceptred race?
Ah, what the form divine?
What every virtue, every grace?
Rose Aylmer, all were thine."

Rose Aylmer, whom these wakeful eyes
May weep, but never see,
A night of memories and of sighs
I consecrate to thee."

Charles Lamb was so delighted with the tender words that he wrote Landor: "Many things I had to say to you which there was no time for. *One*, why should I forget? 'Tis for Rose Aylmer, which has a charm I cannot explain. I lived upon it for weeks."

Henry Crabbe Robinson wrote to Landor of a visit to the Lambs, as follows: "I have just seen Charles and Mary Lamb, living in absolute solitude at Enfield. I found your poems lying open before Lamb. . . . He is ever muttering Rose Aylmer." Landor survived Rose sixty-four years. Shortly before his death, in Florence, a young Englishman appeared in the old singer's presence, and handed him a letter from Lord Houghton (Monckton Milnes). It was the coming of "the youngest to the oldest singer that England bore." The young man afterward wrote the following beautiful tribute:

"And thou, his Florence, to thy trust
Receive and keep,
Keep safe his dedicated dust,
His sacred sleep.
So shall thy lovers, come from far,
Mix with thy name,
As morning star with evening star,
His faultless fame."

IN THE "STRANGER PEOPLE'S" COUNTRY.*

BY CHARLES EGBERT CRADDOCK.

IV.

ALL day the slow process of the restoration of the household gods went on. For many a year thereafter all manner of losses dated from this period. "Hain't been seen nor hearn tell on sence 'fore the infair," was a formula that sufficiently accounted for any deficit in domestic accoutrement. There was no one in the Pettingill family so lost to the appreciation of hospitality and the necessity of equalling the entertainment given by the bride's relatives as to opine that the game was not worth the candle. But more than once Mrs. Pettingill, with a deep sigh, demanded, "Who would hev think it would hev been so much more trouble ter kerry in things agin 'n ter

kerry 'em out!" She did not accurately gauge the force of enthusiastic anticipation as a motive power. Nevertheless she bore up with wonderful fortitude, considering that the triumph of the supper had been eclipsed. The inanimate members of the household were exhibiting a sort of wooden sulks as they were conveyed to their respective places—now becoming stiffly immovable, despite the straining muscles of the men folks; then suddenly, without the application of appreciably stronger force, bouncing forward so unexpectedly that the danger of being overrun was imminent, and cries of "Stiddy, thar! Ketch that eend! Help up, thar!" resounded even through Rhodes's dreams in the roof-room, as he drowsed peacefully

* Begun in January number, 1891.