

THE VICEREGAL RULE OF INDIA.

BY SIR EDWIN ARNOLD, K.C.I.E., C.S.I.*

I AM to speak here of the high office, and splendid but onerous duties, of Indian Viceroy. At the beginning of his clever but necessarily superficial book, entitled "In India," the late Mr. G. W. Stevens has the following passage describing the landing at Bombay, which he happened to witness, of the present Viceroy, Lord Curzon:—

"Boom! came the first gun from the white warship, the first of thirty-one. A launch flickered across the dazzling water. Along the parapet glided a funnel and the point of a flagstaff. The uniforms and Court suits and academic gowns clustered at the head of the steps. They stood for one minute—two—three—in the bunched but shifting group that means greeting and introduction, then broke. 'God save the Queen!' crashed from the band; all stood uncovered; and the new Viceroy stepped serenely into his government. A slow procession along the aisle; a pause and a silence which hinted that the Corporation of Bombay was delivering an address; a few clear-cut sentences of reply; clapping; a grey hat bowing from a carriage; the scrunch of wheels; red and white lance-pennons whirling into column—and the first glimpse of India breaks like a kaleidoscope on the gaze of him who is to govern her."

"A grey hat bowing from a carriage"—that is what this keen observer saw; and

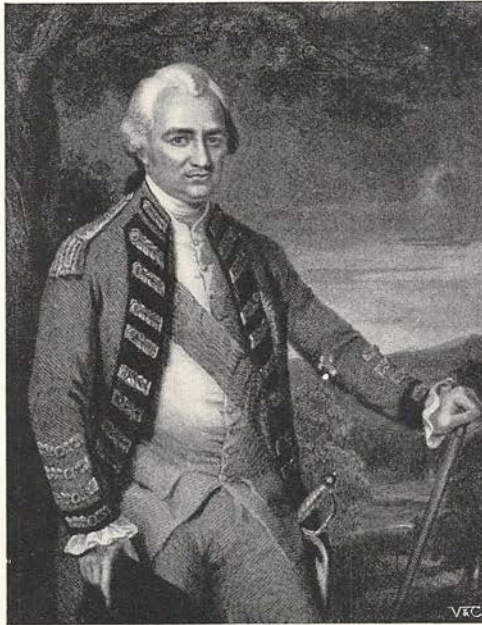
that was how the latest Viceroy of India came to his important post—greatest and highest of all which a man not of royal rank or of presidential dignity can occupy, and with traditions of power and influence beyond all attaching to many diadems.

An account of the same scene may be read in the bright opening pages of Lady Dufferin's two charming volumes, entitled: "Our Viceregal Life in India"; and there, too, will be found the same contrast between the simplicities of the human side of the accession of a new Governor-General appointed to sway the Eastern Empire of the British Monarch, and the singular lustres and responsibilities of that office. The opening wonders of India evidently amazed the Marchioness of Dufferin and Ava herself. She wrote:—

"Bombay, December 8th.—I wish it were possible for me to give you even a faint idea of the splendour of the landing

at Bombay, but it was such a magnificent sight that it seems almost useless to try to describe it. I believe that we shall never, even in India, see anything to compare with it again."

Without doubt, to one so intelligent and imaginative as my illustrious friend Lady Dufferin, there was visible to her mind, beyond the outward picturesqueness of a new Viceroy's arrival in his Empire, the mighty majesty of the task which he undertakes, the extraordinary area of his rule, the prodigiousness of the trust laid upon him by his Sovereign and his destiny, and the many



From the portrait]

[in Government House, Calcutta.

LORD CLIVE.

Founder of the Indian Empire. First British Governor in India. Born 1725, died 1774.

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From a portrait by]

[Masquerier

WARREN HASTINGS.

Governor-General of British India, 1774-1785.

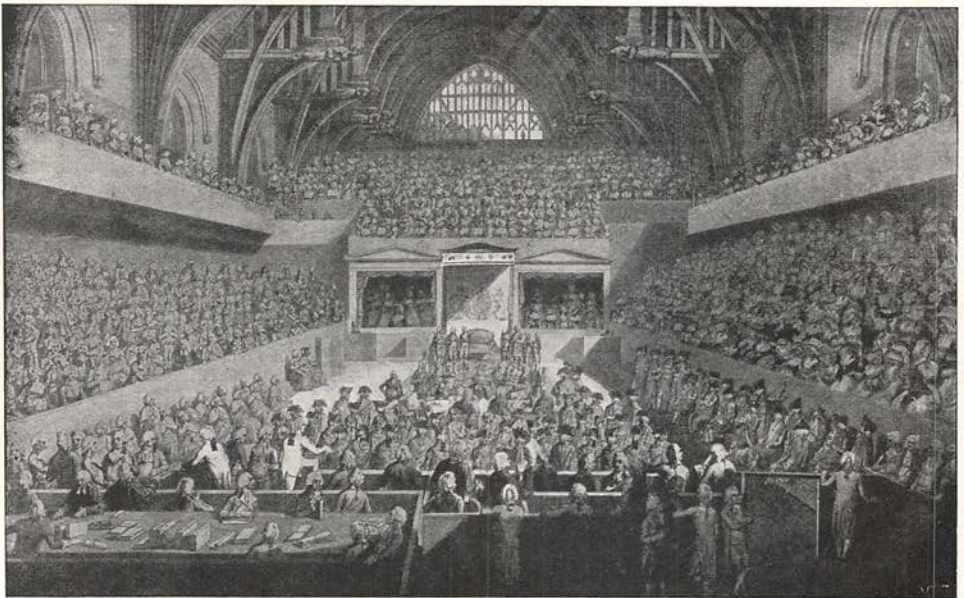
serious risks, as well as signal opportunities, of that position. Briefly, it is the proudest and most onerous which can be reached by any public man in English official life, and I will here briefly essay to convey some information as to this great station, this grave and

responsible post of Viceroy of India, coupled so constantly, as the above extracts show it is, with personal modesty and self-distrust in the succeeding occupants.

The "grey hat" of Lord Curzon belonged to, and brings up to present dates, the line of a most remarkable dynasty of rulers, almost all of them capable men, and some of eminent administrative ability.

True, the political history of the British in India begins no further back than 1639 A.D., when Thomas Day founded Fort St. George at Madras. We were so humble then that we paid a yearly tribute of twelve hundred pagodas to the Mogul Sultan, Aurangzeb, and surrendered Madras to a French squadron almost without a blow, Duplex at that time being Governor of Pondicherry. But, in truth—as I have elsewhere written—if we will trace the special river of British Indian history to its source, it may be demonstrated that the grandeur which Lord Curzon went out to inherit and assume derives itself entirely from a doctor's prescription.

In 1636 A.D., the daughter-in-law of Shah Jehan, and favourite wife of Sultan Shuja, Nawab of Bengal, who was the second son of the Great Mogul, lay sick of a malady beyond the skill of all his Mohammedan *hakims*. Distressed at the danger of one so fair and precious, the Nawab called to his aid the surgeon of the East India Company's ship *Hopewell*, by name Gabriel Broughton, a

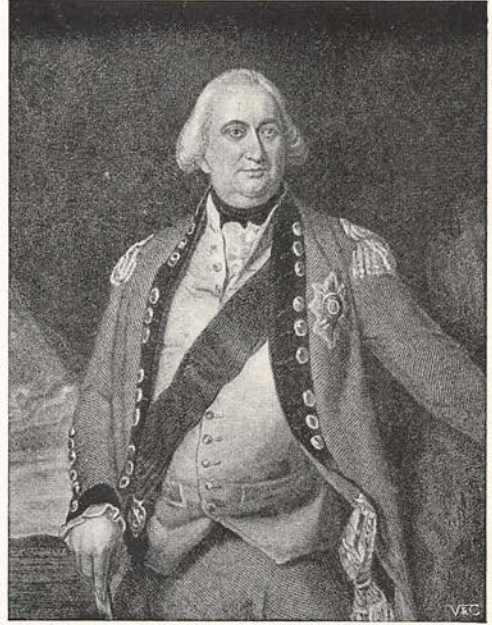


THE TRIAL OF WARREN HASTINGS IN WESTMINSTER HALL, 1788-1795.

clever young doctor, who, although not allowed to see the beautiful face of his royal patient, all the same effected a perfect cure. The grateful prince asked him to name his own fee, whereupon Broughton begged for and obtained a firman granting permission to the East India Company to trade throughout the dominions of the great Moguls and giving them land to build a factory, which factory has since grown up to become the stately city of Calcutta.

But Clive, the young "writer," was awaiting his hour in India, and with his energy and indisputable genius the strange story of England in India definitely commenced. The victories of Arcot and Plassey started and established the orderly succession of Governor-Generals, as they were then called, and Plassey, be it remembered, was not fought until 1757. In 1758, Clive was nominated first Governor of all the East India Company's settlements in Bengal. And after him, a line of some five-and-twenty vice-rulers has carried the British Rāj through its many vicissitudes of glory and of peril.

Warren Hastings organised the Empire which Clive had founded. He ruled for



From a portrait by]

[J. S. Copley, R.A.

THE MARQUESS OF CORNWALLIS.

Governor-General of India, 1786-1793.



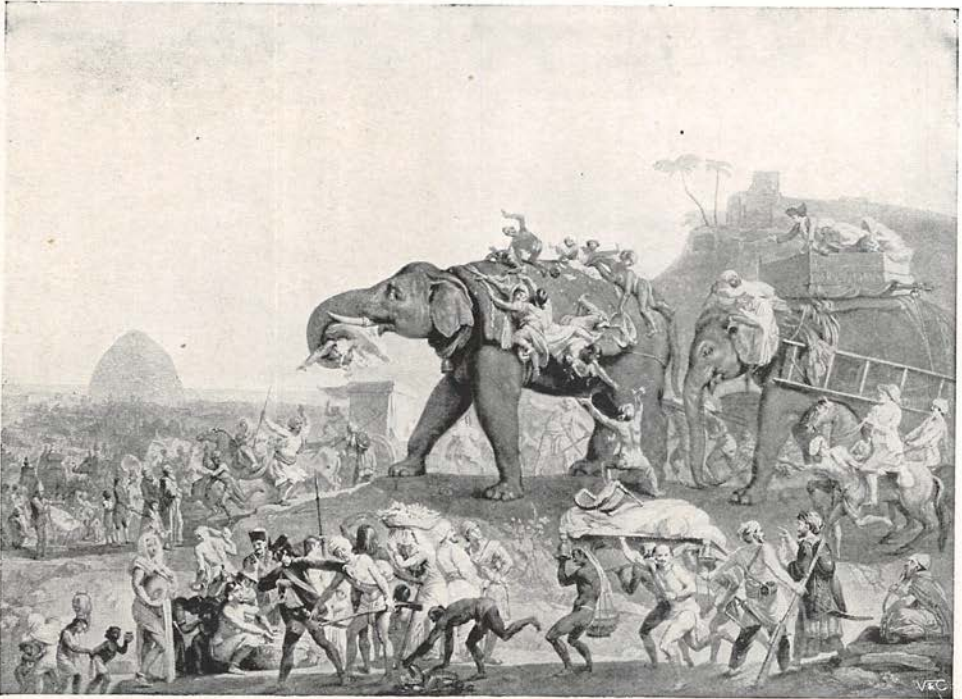
THE DELIVERY OF THE DEFINITIVE TREATY BY THE HOSTAGE PRINCES INTO THE HANDS OF LORD CORNWALLIS.

From the picture by M. Brown.

thirteen years ; and while she was losing her American Colonies, England was thus rapidly enlarging her Indian Possessions. Clive and Hastings had been commoners. Lord Cornwallis, who succeeded, was a great nobleman. But to this day the name of Hastings is remembered among all others in Bengal, and it is perhaps less evidence of his masterfulness and abiding fame to see statues and pictures of him in Calcutta, and to traverse squares and streets there called after the famous

Duke of Wellington, and that renowned soldier, along with Lake, won memorable victories for "John Company."

But the merchants of Cornhill, who thus "held the East in fee," trembled at the too brilliant fortunes forced upon them. Those were the days when it took half a year to sail to India, and when the Court of Directors, time after time at their grand farewell banquets, would earnestly urge upon each Governor not to extend their territory,



EMBASSY OF HYDERBECK TO CALCUTTA FROM THE VIZIER OF OUDE BY THE WAY OF SATNA, IN THE YEAR 1788, TO MEET LORD CORNWALLIS.

From the painting by Goffany.

statesman, than to hear the Bengali black nurses still singing to their white babies —

"Hathi par howdah, ghora par jeen,
Juldi bahir jata Warin Hasteen!"

That is to say —

"The howdah's on the elephant, the saddle's on the steed,
And Warren Hastings soon will come a-riding forth at speed."

Then ensued Sir John Shore, with an uneventful record, and after him Mr. Pitt's friend and nominee, the Marquess of Wellesley, who was the first to entertain and to proclaim the policy that all India must eventually become British. The Marquess had for his General, Sir Arthur Wellesley, afterwards

would receive from each in turn passionate pledges of abstinence and economy, and then in the course of a year or so would have to open flaming despatches which told with reluctant pride how another and another vast province had been brought into the golden round of the Company's dominion. They sent Cornwallis out a second time to check this flood of triumph, and when he died, an old and weary man, he was replaced by Sir George Barlow, who did very much as he was ordered, and for a while actually contracted our Eastern boundaries.

Lord Minto, from 1807 to 1813, also endeavoured to tread the path of self-denial, but was followed by the Marquess of Hastings,



From a portrait by [George Richmond.

SIR JOHN SHORE, AFTERWARDS LORD TEIGNMOUTH.
Governor-General, 1793-1798.

who swayed India during nine years, and had to fight the Gurkha and the third Mahratta wars. As Hastings left the map



From a painting] [at Apsley House.

RICHARD, SECOND EARL OF MORNINGTON, AFTER-
WARDS MARQUESS OF WELLESLEY.
Governor-General, 1797-1805.

of British India it remained practically unchanged until the days of Dalhousie; but in this long interval occur the names, all more or less memorable, of Amherst, Bentinck, Metcalfe, and Auckland. With the latter recommenced an era of wars lasting over twenty years. Ellenborough succeeded Auckland, and the viceregal seat was then ascended by the soldier-Governor Lord Hardinge, who had lost a hand at the battle of Ligny. Under him, in 1845, Sir Hugh Gough valorously defeated the Sikhs. Hardinge had for successor that epoch-



From a portrait by] [Chinnery.

GILBERT ELLIOT, FIRST EARL OF MINTO.
Governor-General, 1807-1812.

making and masterful ruler, Lord Dalhousie, whose eight years of government marked the close of an era. His vast and energetic administrative achievements and earnest reforms have been too much forgotten in the storms raised by his annexations, for the self-willed Scotchman added to the Empire the Punjab, Oude, and many smaller appanages; albeit after him was to come the deluge of the Great Mutiny.

It is at this point that my own humble personal recollections of this notable dynasty of Indian Governor-Generals and Viceroys begin. I went to India in 1857 in the service of the East India Company—being transferred to Her Majesty, along with



From a portrait by] [Sir Thomas Lawrence.

GEORGE CANNING.

Governor-General of India, 1822.

India, in 1859—and have had the honour to be acquainted with every single Governor-



From a portrait by] [Lourdes Dickinson.

GEORGE, FIRST EARL OF AUCKLAND.

Governor-General of India, 1835-1842.

General and Viceroy from Lord Canning, who mounted the vacant throne of Dalhousie, down to the accomplished and high-minded young nobleman who now sits upon it. With some among them, notably Lord Lawrence, Lord Northbrook, the Marquess of Ripon, and Lord Dufferin, I have been privileged to enjoy friendship, which must not, however, prevent me from saying that I think India has been more righteously and conscientiously governed since than before the great catastrophe. To complete my hasty list of the uncrowned kings in this long chronicle of Indian governing men, the Viceroys—for that is their new title—there



From a portrait by]

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LORD HARDINGE.

Governor-General, 1844-1848.

have followed in the order I shall recite :— Lord Canning, the Earl of Elgin, Sir John afterwards Lord Lawrence, Lord Mayo, Lord Northbrook, Lord Lytton, the Marquess of Ripon, the Marquess of Dufferin and Ava, Lord Lansdowne, Lord Elgin (second son of the name), and Lord Curzon.

Let us try to realise what that India is which these twenty-five more or less notable and capable rulers have bequeathed to the present tenant of the golden chair of Tippu.

It is not a country, but a continent. From the little patch of land humbly bought by Job Charnock from the Subhadar of Bengal, then called Kalighat, now the huge city of Calcutta, our possessions have grown

to a prodigious empire embracing fourteen large provinces under direct British rule, with about one hundred and fifty feudatory states and sub-kingdoms, which all, however, acknowledge and obey the British Crown. This vast area, as big as all Europe minus Russia, contains at least two hundred and sixty millions of inhabitants, more than double Gibbon's estimate of the muster roll of races and nations governed by Imperial Rome.

Within its confines there are to be heard spoken more than one hundred and thirty languages and dialects. There exist all climates in the enormous peninsula, from the ice-slopes of Himalaya to the burning plains of the Gangetic Delta and at the South, while the tribes and sub-tribes of the land are positively almost countless. Those broadly called Hindus preponderate and form seventy-three per cent. of the population, the Mohammedans are about twenty-one per cent. It is, however, necessary to remember that most of these latter are low-caste Hindus by blood. There do not survive in India more than a quarter of a million of the true old conquering Mogul race. Of this immense mass of people the Indian Government rules directly about two hundred millions, and Native administrations control the balance of the fifty or sixty millions.

But it must be understood that the strong hand of the Sircar stretches into every court, little or large, and is active and omnipotent over all, from Quetta to Comorin and Bombay to Mandalay. Many of the Indian princes maintain, indeed, a royal state more magnificent than that of most European capitals. They have splendid palaces, sumptuous retinues, armies of no mean force superbly equipped, large revenues, public and personal, and they exercise a real, substantial power within certain clear limits. But in the proudest, as in the humblest chief city of all these Native States, there always dwells a quiet, unobtrusive English gentleman, generally a civilian. He is called the Resident, and is the living embodiment of the might and majesty of the Viceroy himself, distant at Simla or Barrackpore. While all is well and orderly, the Resident's touch is no more felt in the Native State's affairs than that of the lotus petal gliding on the face of the river. When matters go wrong, when there is *zulum* (tyranny) or misgovernment, he becomes the *amicus*, the rock-faced barrier, that checks the fiercest stream and, if needful, diverts its course or changes its channel.



From a portrait by]

[George Richmond.

THE MARQUESS OF DALHOUSIE.
Governor-General of India, 1848-1855.

For the most part these Native courts work now in a steady and excellent harmony



From a portrait by]

[G. Richmond.

VISCOUNT CANNING.
First "Viceroy" of India, 1855-1861

with the central Rāj. Absolutely secure in their inherited rights while they rule their people well and justly, the maharajahs of India, among whom are some enlightened and large-minded princes, came more and more to gather heartily and loyally around the almost worshipped personality of the late Queen as Kaisar-i-Hind, and form to-day a friendly and wealthy reserve to the strength of the Empire, which would certainly show itself at an hour of Imperial need faithful and formidable.

Well, then, over all this vast region of humanity, that plain figure in the "grey hat" whom we watched landing in Bombay, has, like his many and various predecessors, to be an earthly Providence. From the hour he lands upon them, to that when he quits the shining shores of India, the full and ceaseless current of her fates and fortunes must flow daily through his heart and mind. The least energetic Viceroy learns during his Indian sojourn to work like a convict. Those most enthusiastic and absorbed in the overwhelming task are apt to kill themselves, like Cornwallis and Dalhousie. For material strength to sustain their decrees, they have the splendid Army of India, seventy thousand of it picked white troops, with another mass of one hundred and fifty thousand Sepoys and Sowars, the fighting flower of a land which has bred the Rajput, the Mahratta, the Sikh, and the Gurkha. For administrative purposes they command in the admirable Civil Service of the Presidencies the finest body of governing men ever imperially trained.

Not even Rome at the best of her conquering and colonising history produced agents so able, so devoted, and so incorruptible as these most worthy and hard-working successors of Clive and Hastings. Side by side with their educated body, which furnishes collectors, judges, residents, and such-like high officers to every district and every form of duty, is the almost equally meritorious Uncovenanted Civil Service, into the ranks of which the Natives themselves largely enter. Such, roughly, with ample police and provincial staffs, is the machinery of the Government which each new Viceroy finds working smoothly and ready to his hand.

For months, sometimes for years, it will run without those heated bearings which we call "events." Then are the halcyon days of the high office, and to be Viceroy then is to be lord of the best and richest scenes and

chapters of the "Arabian Nights," to enjoy the glory and gladness of royalty without its dangers and troubles, to sit on the very highest pinnacle of human greatness which a commoner can attain, in the sunniest weather that can shine upon mortal head.

The salary of a Viceroy, nominally twenty-five thousand pounds sterling per annum, but larger than this by privileges and allowances, permits the King's representative to uphold a becoming state. He is surrounded by men of vast experience, and has advice tendered to him and Bills proposed by the Legislative Council; but nowadays the final authority is not at Chouringhi or Simla, but in the office of the Secretary of State for India, and with the Parliament at Westminster, which limits the power of Viceroys both for good and evil.

But India is an ocean of which some portion or other must always be having its storm. "Events" are sure to arrive. A war breaks out on the frontier; a popular tumult occurs in a city; the eternal feud between Hindu and Mohammedan arises over a dead cow or a pig; somewhere abroad England has suddenly to call for Indian soldiers; or cholera or plague stalks through the land, working sad havoc with the patient cultivators; or, worst or direst of all, the monsoon fails, and the Viceroy—to the ruin of his own peace and the confusion of his Chancellor's next Budget—has to face the only enemy whom he really fears, the awful famine. For those quiet gentlemen in the "grey hats" representing the English Crown have, ever since the time of Lord Canning, done what Timur and Aurangzeb, what Shah Jehan and Akhbar, what Sivaji and Tippu never for a moment dared to do. They have taken on themselves the task of saving life when the gods are angry in India. They spend millions and millions to keep alive the peasant and his household where the best and most powerful rulers of old folded their impotent arms and waited till Indra or Allah was pleased to send the rain.

The daily existence of these potentates is almost necessarily magnificent beyond our western standards. India in her public life likes colour and expects it, and a Viceroy, were he simple in taste and habits as John Lawrence, or as undemonstrative by nature and preference as the Marquess of Ripon, must be a *Pukkah Lat Sahab*—a great and dazzling personage. There is nothing elsewhere, I really believe, to match what Lord Beaconsfield would have called "the sustained splendour of their stately lives."

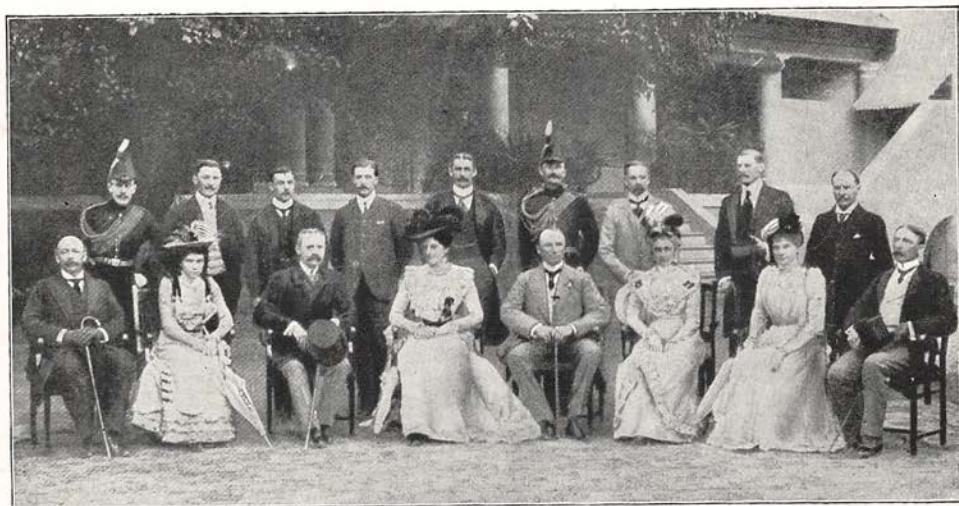
Even in Calcutta or Simla it is, day after day, all guards of honour and gorgeous display; and when these important beings pass into their vast outside Provinces, or march through Native States to hold durbars and receive obsequious kings and princes, it is a town of silk and linen rather than a camp which they pitch at each stage of the viceroyal progress.

Moi qui vous parle—this humble writer who addresses you, when dwelling for a short time in Government House, Calcutta, used to smile with something between pride and embarrassment to find himself going out shopping in a carriage and four with mounted cavalry soldiers on either side. Not but what the Viceroys themselves love plainness and quiet when they can enjoy those blessings. I have had the honour of smoking many a briarwood pipe of tobacco at Lord Lawrence's side while he helped me write the story of the deeds and policies of the Dalhousie Administration; and more than once have I seen Lord Dufferin patiently learning Persian in his garden, his turbaned *munshi* trotting by his side down the avenue of palm and bamboo, and in the kindly hand which governed India, "Robinson Crusoe" done into the classic language of Sadi. For myself, I must confess nothing could ever strip a Viceroy of a certain special lustre and import in those eyes which were early filled,

and must ever remain filled, with the vast visions and marvellous meanings of India.

Look at what Lord Curzon has had to grapple with since his period of Indian office began. On the heels of the cruel pestilence which had decimated some of the fairest regions of the land came the worst famine known since ancient times, and with a hundred other heavy cares upon his brow, the young Viceroy has had daily to feed with public rice more than five million mouths, and to deal with sixty millions of stricken and pinched people.

There is nothing like the British administration of the King's Eastern Empire to be witnessed elsewhere. The more travellers who see India, and the more of India they see, the better will be their comprehension and the deeper their interest in the solid and arduous work which has been done and which is being done to-day under the unflinching line of Anglo-Saxon ruling men, the Indian Viceroys. There, while making the most pleasant of holidays and viewing the most interesting of all scenes, they will oftentimes travel a score or two of leagues without encountering the white face of one Sahib; and yet they will find and know the King's peace kept, and the King's justice present and puissant at the door of every hut and across the shadow of every jungle in the vast and marvellous land.



Lady Curzon. Lord Curzon.

OUR PRESENT VICEROY, LORD CURZON, AND A GROUP AT GOVERNMENT HOUSE, LUCKNOW.

From a photograph supplied by Miss L. De Gruyther, Lucknow.