

## Selections.

## INDIA.

The country to which the eyes of Great Britain more immediately turn at present is India—the land of “barbaric pearl and gold,” and of all that is gorgeous and gay in the natural as well as the artificial world. The events which are there daily developing themselves necessarily recall the past, and suggest a retrospect of the career of those bold and energetic men, who, from time to time have enabled us to acquire and consolidate dominion over 141,000,000 of people of various blood and various religion; who have given us a territory extending some 2100 miles from Cashmere to Cape Comorin, and some 1500 miles from the mouth of the Indus to the mountain ranges eastward of the Barumputu, covering an area of no less than 1,300,000 square miles. Let us briefly pass in review the men who did this, as they successively appeared on the grand arena where their deeds have surrounded their names with an halo of undying glory.

Alexander was the first to reveal to Europe the splendor of India, when his armies first penetrated the Punjab, more than three centuries before the Christian era. In the eleventh century, however, Constantinople held the trade, and worked the secrets of finance; then came the Italians, who ousted the Turks; then the Portuguese, then the French, and then the English, when Thomas Cavendish and Capt. Raymond opened the door to a joint stock company, placed under the direction of a committee of fifteen. Macaulay tells us that the Honourable Company was incorporated by England's greatest Queen on the last day of the sixteenth century; and on the 2d of May, 1601, a small trading fleet sailed from Torbay under the command of one James Lancaster, who arrived at Sumatra and there dropped his anchor. In this manner our commerce with the East commenced, and from this small beginning it has gradually grown to the wonderful power which it now represents. In 1612 we find the traders at Surat protected by James I., and in 1680 Bombay was ceded to the Company by Charles II. In 1707 Calcutta became a presidency; but it was in 1698 that the rival companies than trading to the East combined under the name of the United East India Company. The first foothold acquired from a native King arose from the skill of the doctor of a merchantman in saving the life of a beautiful princess.

It was in the earlier part of the seventeenth century that Clive, the Napoleon of the East, rose from the position of a clerk to be the founder of the British Empire in India. When he commenced his career as commander he was about the same age as the “little corporal” when chief of the grand army of Italy; and although comparatively inexperienced in military affairs, yet his genius won for him a succession of victories that astonished the world. He was emphatically the man of the time. The Nabob of Arcot was the first to encounter him—he to whom Burke has given a deathless fame. It was at this period that Halliburton began to form and drill the sepoys into soldiers, and from the little band of troops then called into exercise, has sprung up an Indian army now numbering 275,000 native soldiers. Clive came back to England full of riches and honour, but being disappointed of a seat in Parliament he returned to India, the Honourable Company appointing him to the governorship of Fort St. David. Then came the Battle of Plassey, to revenge the horrors of the Black Hole of Calcutta.—Sixty thousand men of the Bengal nabob were broken like a reed, and Clive immortalised his name by the loss of only twenty-two men. Again he came to England, leaving all quiet behind him, and again he returned to India, to end an existence rendered intolerable by the persevering slanders of his enemies.

Clive was succeeded by Warren Hastings—another great man, whose genius, however, was rather administrative than military. He arrived in Bengal in 1750, and, like Clive, commenced his career as a writer, and by his energy and ability steadily ascended the ladder of fame. There was a strength and comprehensiveness in the mind of Hastings which we cannot but admire. All that he did bore the impress of superiority. Whether sending dispatches in quills formed into ear-rings, to elude detection when his life was in danger, or ruling the destinies of India with an exhausted treasury, or defending himself against a nine years' persecution, he evinced the signet of a great mind. Clive and Hastings were the greatest Governors-General of India; and while Lord Cornwallis was allowing the empire of the West to slip out of his grasp, Hastings was preserving the empire of the

East. The one lost America, the other saved the Carnatic.

After him came Lord Cornwallis, who evinced both generalship and governorship, but in 1793, after six years' hard fighting with Tippoo Saib, he made way for Sir John Shore, who was suddenly converted into an Irish peer, and in a very short time made room again for Lord Teignmouth. This peer does not seem to have distinguished himself, when the Company appointed Lord Mornington, the elder brother of the Iron Duke. He was a personage imbued with something of the spirit of Clive and Hastings; but he, in his turn, gave place to Sir George Barlow, who was succeeded by a better man in Lord Minto. This is he whose reign of power was noted for naval exploits. He took Java from the French, and was successful against the Isle of France; but at Macao and Bocca Tigris he signally failed.

In 1813 the Marquis of Hastings became the next Governor General of India, who, following in the path of his illustrious predecessor of the same name, squeezed the Treasury of Oude to supply the means of liquidating the Company's debt. He distinguished himself by disorganising and dispersing the immense bandit hordes of Pindaroes who for years had plundered and robbed and spread terror and devastation wherever their horsemen charged. After him came Earl Amhurst, who successfully carried on the Burmah war, when, in 1833, Lord Auckland was appointed to the helm of affairs. He held it till 1841, after having engaged in the fatal Afghan campaign, in which disgrace succeeded disgrace to such a degree as even to astonish the natives. All the horrors of Indian warfare were experienced during this brief campaign. Twenty-six thousand human beings perished in the cowardly affair of the passes, to the eternal dishonour of those who failed to show themselves worthy of their official position.

Lord Ellenborough was the next Governor-General of India. He assumed the reins in 1842, and by his able management during the Afghan campaign won laurels from the army as well as from those who officially held the reins of power. Even the Duke of Wellington eulogised him among the Peers; but his lofty individuality and authoritative language offended the dignity of the Court of Directors, who displayed their exorbitant power by recalling him in direct opposition to the wishes of the Government. After him came Sir Henry Hardinge, the late Commander-in-Chief, whose activity and energy made him both friend and foe. His administration was marked by several reforms. He modified the duty on salt, and abolished Lord Beatrice's order of flogging, and with such supporters as Sir Chas. Napier, Sir Hugh Gough, and Sir Harry Smith, he conquered the Punjab, compelling the Sikhs to surrender their swords and bow to the authority of Great Britain. In 1848 he was succeeded by Lord Dalhousie, who, as soon as he arrived at Government House, plunged into war. The battle field of Chillianwallah is still red with the blood of the sons of England. During his reign four kingdoms were annexed to the empire—the Punjab, in 1849; Burmah, in 1852; Nagpore, in 1854; and last, though not least, Oude, a few days before he left India for England. Under his auspices, too, were introduced the two greatest inventions of the present century—the telegraph and the railroad. Lord Canning has succeeded him, but upon his administration it is still too early to enter.—*London Standard.*

## THE SUEZ CANAL.

Of the magnificent project now in contemplation to throw the whole earth open to all nations, none is more worthy of attention than the scheme of uniting the waters of the Mediterranean and Red Seas by a canal cut across the Isthmus of Suez. This undertaking has for many years engaged the attention of a French gentleman, M. Ferdinand de Lesseps. His plan is matured and has received the sanction of the reigning Viceroy of Egypt; the whole line has been carefully surveyed, and the estimated cost has been put down at £6,400,000. The proposed length of this maritime canal from Suez to Pelusium, in a direct line, will be thirty leagues, its width one hundred metres, and its depth eight, extending sufficiently far into the two seas by means of Jetties, to obtain the depth necessary to enable ships to enter, without difficulty, having an inland port in the natural basin of Lake Timsal. It is presumed that the whole work might be completed in six years.

M. de Lesseps has visited England to test the feeling of our Chambers of Commerce, and of our principal mercantile cities, and he has received a very encouraging response to his appeal; but Lord Palmerston has denounced the enterprise as impracticable, or, if capa-

ble of execution, inimical to the interests of England. When asked in the House of Commons whether he would use his influence with the Porte to promote the object, he answered decidedly in the negative, averring that it was our policy to sustain and invigorate Turkey; but the canal would render Egypt wholly independent of the Sultan. Another objection is, that it would facilitate an invasion of British India by a coalition of the maritime powers of Continental Europe; but it is answered that the ruler of Egypt would be empowered to close the canal in time of war as the Sultan is now authorised to shut the Straits of the Dardanelles. The subject being now before Parliament it fairly becomes one of the debatable topics of the day, and we shall endeavour to give all the material points of this controversy in a condensed form.

All the great men who have conquered Egypt or reigned in it, have recognised the utility of a junction between the Mediterranean and Red Seas. It engaged the attention of Sesostris, Alexander the Great, Julius Cæsar, the Arab conqueror, Amrou, Napoleon I., and Mehemet Ali. M. Lebeau in his “*Historie du Bas Empire*,” has recorded the following interesting particulars:—

“The coast at Farma (a town a little to the east of Pelusium, on the Mediterranean) was only 70 miles distant from the Red Sea. This space was a very smooth plain, slightly elevated above the level of the two seas. Amrou formed the design of uniting them by a canal, which he would have filled with the water of the Nile; but Omar having opposed it from fear of opening an entrance into Arabia for the ships of the Christians, Amrou turned his thoughts in another direction. There was an ancient canal, called Trajanus Amnis, which Adrian caused to be brought from the Nile to Babylon, in Egypt, as far as Pharoetus, now Belbeis. He met at this place with another canal, commenced by Necho, and continued by Darius Hystaspes, and the two together discharged themselves into a lagoon of salt water, at the outlet of which Ptolemy Philadelphus caused a large trench to be made, which conducted the waters as far as the town of Arsinoe, or Cleopatris, at that part of the gulf where Suez now stands.”

Amrou did not partake of the fears so long and generally entertained that the waters of the Red Sea were higher than the soil of Egypt; he opened a passage for them by canalisation, and thus transported the corn of Egypt into Arabia. That canal is now called Ch. . . passing through Cairo, but it stops at the lagoon called the Lake of Sherib. The remainder, as far as the Red Sea, is filled up, though some traces of the old channel are yet distinguishable. The supposed difference of level between the two seas was disproved by the English in 1840 by the barometer, and this fact induced Prince Metternich, in 1843, to exhort Mehemet Ali to cut through the isthmus. In 1853 the French engineers confirmed the equality of the levels, and this dreaded impediment being removed, it is no longer permissible to assert that the project is impracticable, whatever doubts may be entertained as to its profitableness as a pecuniary investment.

Among the maritime recommendations of this undertaking it is urged that it would shorten the distance between Europe and the extreme regions of the East by 2000 leagues, and a voyage of five months would be reduced to two; thus economising freight, insurance, the wages of seamen, and the wear and tear of vessels. Mr. Anderson has entered into minute calculations on this branch of the subject. He computes the distance from the English Channel to Calcutta, via the Cape of Good Hope, by the route taken by the best sailing vessels, at 19,000 miles; and by the Mediterranean, the Red Sea, and the Indian Ocean, at about 8000 miles; so that the saving in distance by the latter course of transit amounts to 11,000 miles. By the Cape route to Bombay, the distance is about 11,500 miles, and by the Red Sea, 6200, showing a gain of 5300 miles. Mr. Anderson considers that in a political point of view the English Government would derive incalculable advantages from the canal. “From Malta,” he says, “troops would be transported to Bombay in three weeks, to Ceylon and Madras in thirty-five days at most, instead of the four or five months now required by a sailing vessel. Under such circumstances it would require scarcely half the number of English troops for the efficient government of India. The facility for dispatching ships of war with munitions and men would thus increase the stability of British power, while the cost would be considerably diminished.” At this critical juncture the force of his argument will be duly ap-