

III. In Lesson IV., Section II., there was a short note concerning India's present government. And Band members naturally are asking, "But how did the British become the rulers of India?" Let us try to make a short summary of a long, long story. For further study see Hunter's "Brief History of the Indian People."

In the sixteenth century, when the English first went to India, their only desire was to trade with the people. From 1500 to 1600, the Portuguese held a monopoly of Oriental trade. The Dutch were masters of the seas in the seventeenth century, and they also came from the East laden with spices, ivory, pearl, and other rich treasures. Do you wonder that the English longed to share this wealth? A few English merchants took the six months' journey round the Cape of Good Hope, but this all proved too hazardous a scheme. Finally, a company was organized in 1600, which received a royal charter from Queen Elizabeth. It became known as the British East India Company. There were 125 shareholders, and £70,000 capital. At first, the Company simply bought saleable articles to dispose of in England. As business increased, settlements were formed, and factories built. Some land was purchased, such as Madras, which was their first-territorial possession. Here they built Fort St. George.

India was divided into many kingdoms, some powerful, others petty, and ruled by chiefs, who frequently warred with each other. For protection of property, the Company has a police force, then a small standing army. These native princes sought their aid in war, and, in exchange, would give special trading privileges in their territory, and also possession of certain sections of land. The Company gradually assumed political power, and in 1689 de-

finitely determined to gain more land, so as to be able to resist the oppression of the powerful Moguls and Marathas. "A Governor-General and Admiral of India," was appointed.

But ruling-power in any land is not easily attained. It is so often won at the point of the sword, and men waded to victory through rivers of blood. In 1746, war broke out with the French, and the dream of a French-Indian empire came to an end in a few years. When Lord Clive led his men to victory in the battle of Plassey in 1757, British history in the East may be said to have truly begun. Native kingdoms, one after another, acknowledged the superiority of British arms. Before the end of the eighteenth century, British power was felt all over the Southern Peninsula, and the treaty of Lucknow in 1801 extended it into Northern India. The Sikh war in 1845 and 1849, gave the Punjab to the British. What was the relation of the East India Company and the Parliament all these years? The Regulating Act of 1773 gave definite political powers to the Company. Pitt's Indian Bill in 1784 founded the Board of Control in England. The renewed charter of 1813 compelled the Company to work for India's good government. The last renewal of charter in 1853, was made for no term of years, but just for so long as would suit the Parliament's wishes. Then in 1857 the great Indian Mutiny, or Sepoy Rebellion, broke out in India. There was a reign of terror, and the fighting did not wholly subside for eighteen months. This mutiny sealed the fate of the Company after an existence of two and one-half centuries. Henceforth, the administration was in the hands of the British Crown. To-day all India is ruled by this power, except a small French possession in the south, a little strip on the west coast belonging to Portugal, and three native