

CHAPTER III

LORD MAYO. RELATIONS WITH SHER ALI. FINANCIAL REFORM

SIR JOHN LAWRENCE retired in January 1869, and on his return to England was raised to the peerage by the title of Lord Lawrence of the Punjab and Grately. Disraeli appointed to succeed him the Earl of Mayo, who had three times held the office of Chief Secretary for Ireland in Conservative ministries. Mayo's abilities, though appreciated by the Prime Minister, a shrewd judge of character, were as yet unrecognized by the people, and the nomination was received with marked disfavour. The fall of the government before the Governor-Generalship was actually vacant afforded Gladstone, the new Liberal Premier, a valid technical plea for cancelling the appointment, and he was loudly urged to avail himself of it. But he declined to do so, and Lord Mayo soon justified both Disraeli's original choice and Gladstone's magnanimity in not interfering with it.

It had been arranged that Lord Lawrence before his departure should meet Sher Ali in conference, but the ruler was long detained by troubles in his unruly dominions, and the Governor-General had sailed from India before Sher Ali could leave Afghanistan. When at last the Afghan ruler came to Ambala in March 1869 he met there not the wearied veteran Lawrence but his young, vigorous, and buoyant successor. There was, however, no breach of continuity in policy, because the new Viceroy in regard to Afghan affairs unreservedly adopted his predecessor's