

sane a statesman as John Bright committing himself to the monstrous statement that the history of Great Britain in India prior to 1862 was 'a hundred years of crime against the docile natives of our Indian empire'.¹ Between these partisan judgements truth somewhere resides, and the historian must walk warily in quest of her. Further, many of those who played the chief part on the Indian stage are either still living, or have passed away too recently for their work to be finally appraised, and, for the latter part of the period at any rate, to pass non-committal verdicts is not only the fairest and safest but often the only possible course.

The conquest of India within its own natural frontiers was now over. The status of the protected princes was settled and defined. They had rendered valuable services in the Mutiny and were described by Canning as 'breakwaters to the storm which would otherwise have swept over us in one great wave'. To preserve them as bulwarks of the empire has been ever since a main principle of British policy. Henceforward with the integrity of their territories guaranteed and the coveted right of adoption conceded, they had no need to fear incorporation in British dominion through the natural decay of their dynasties. Thus their relations with their suzerain entered on a new phase. They were brought into closer connexion partly by the confidence sprung from their now more assured position, partly by the material links of railways, canals, posts, and telegraphs. The supreme government became at once more sensitive to mal-administration in a native state and more loth to impair the position of Indian princes. One instinct often warred with the other. The practical solution gradually worked out was that the Governors-General did everything in their power, by the early education of the chiefs, if possible when the occurrence of minorities gave them the opportunity, by

¹ Speech at Birmingham December 18, 1862.