

MODERN INDIA AND THE WEST

BEGINNINGS OF MODERN EUROPEAN CONTACTS

India's ancient contacts with Europe receded from the sixth century A.D. The crotchety Byzantine monk Cosmas Indicopleustes (the man who sailed to India), a merchant engaged in the Far Eastern trade whose business took him as far as Ceylon and who in later life retired into a monastery of Sinai where he wrote the *Topographia Christiana*, a Christian account of the geography of the world (c. 640 A.D.), was the last to report on Indian conditions. Only a few Christian missionaries visited India during the Middle Ages, but their attention was centered on winning the heathen lands to Christianity and their writings contribute little to the history of cultural exchanges. In fact India, and generally the East, had become so remote from the European mind that Marco Polo's account of what he saw in the East was long distrusted as a fable, though much of it was quite authentic and factual, as modern research has shown. The more significant contacts between India and the West in modern times began with the arrival of the Portuguese in the last years of the fifteenth century. But they too concentrated more on religion than on trade; however, when their claims to a monopoly of trade relations with the East, based on a preposterous Papal bull, were soon challenged, and the Dutch, English and French entered the

Indian ocean, there ensued a brisk competition among the rival European trading companies for securing trading privileges from the Indian powers, and this, by force of circumstances, led to their increasing interference in the political relations of the native kingdoms and principalities. By their readiness to learn from the experience of others, their astute capacity to take calculated risks, and by their good fortune, the English gained the most signal successes and became the rulers of all India by the beginning of the nineteenth century. The story of this political expansion has been told often and is well known. Our primary concern here will be with the social and cultural changes that accompanied this historic expansion of British colonial power, the influx of Europeans and other westerners for trade, conquest and other ends pursued in India, their mutual relations and their relations with the children of the soil, the social contacts and the mutual cultural influences that resulted, and the abiding results, material and spiritual, so far as they can be traced, for the civilizations of the West and the East, as they may be observed particularly in England and India.

THE PORTUGUESE POLICY AND RESULTS

As, however, the Portuguese were the first European nation to inaugurate the modern movement, and their experiences served as examples in some respects and warnings in others to the nations that followed them, the English not excluded, we shall do well to start with the significant features of this contact which was the first to be established and, perpetuated up to the very recent past, was the last to be terminated. "When Vasco de Gama landed at Calicut, on 20 May 1498, a messenger whom he sent ashore was met, and accosted in Spanish, by a Moorish Muslim merchant from Tangier (or Tunis), who introduced the Portuguese to the Zamorin's court and acted as an intermediary between the Portuguese who knew no Indian language, and the people of Malabar, who knew no western language."¹ This dramatic scene is vividly portrayed in the seventh book of the famous Portuguese epic *Os*

¹ L.S.S.O. Malley, *Modern India and the West*, Oxford University Press, 1941.

Lusiadas, which at this point closely adheres to historical facts. The epic was written in 1572 by Luiz de Camoëns who went out to Goa as a common soldier; it begins with the voyage of Vasco de Gama round the Cape of Good Hope and ends with the defence of Diu by Joao de Castro in 1546. It received high praise from Montesquieu and Richard Burton, who spent many years translating the poem and noted the extraordinary faculty of the writer to reflect the *Lux ex Oriente*.² The Portuguese commanded the sea-routes of the Indian ocean throughout the sixteenth century, and their settlements along the western seaboard of India, Goa being the chief one, were not mere trading stations, but fortified naval bases under their sovereignty. They were meant to be outposts of their empire and their religion, and their colonization was to be effected not so much by immigration as by marriages with Indian women. The children of mixed marriages were under no stigma. Albuquerque (1509-1515), who captured Goa for the Portuguese, was an exceptionally tolerant ruler and was long remembered by the people who, when oppressed by his successors, used to gather at his tomb, make offerings of flowers and of oil for the lamp which was kept burning on it, and pray that he would see that justice was done to them. Persecution of non-Christians began in 1540, and the Inquisition was introduced twenty years later. An officer of that body was posted in each of the Portuguese towns with power to arrest and send to Goa for trial any person suspected of having anti-Catholic leanings. This bigotry and persecution bore its natural fruit, and many districts near Goa were almost depopulated by the eighteenth century. Things were different in Northeast India where Hughli, the principal Portuguese settlement, was filled with adventurers who were under no effective control, most of them being pirates, highway robbers and men of loose lives. Their ways provoked the wrath of Shah Jahan who destroyed Hughli in 1632, and that was the end of Portuguese power in Bengal. Elsewhere too it did not last much longer, since the Dutch wrested the command of the sea from them and forced them to sign a treaty in 1648, confining their possessions to Goa, Diu and Daman, which they conserved until just recently.

² *Ibid.*, p. 540.

NEW WORDS AND THINGS

The Portuguese language contributed many words to the vocabularies of Indian languages. The Tamil language, for instance, derives from it the names of things which first entered the country with the Portuguese, e. g. *annāsi* (pineapple), *koyyā* (guava), *pappāli* (papaw), *vāttu* (duck) *punal* (funnel), *iuppākki* (gun) and so on. Other words in everyday use in other languages like Urdu are *almāri* (wardrobe), *mēz* (table), *pistaul* (pistol) and so on. A corrupt form of Portuguese was for a long time the lingua franca in the European settlements along the coast, and the Dutch and the English had to employ the services of Portuguese interpreters in the seventeenth century. Even as late as 1828 the Indian commandant of the small Danish settlement at Serampore submitted his daily report to the Norwegian Governor in that language. "It was long a medium of conversation between Europeans and their servants and was commonly used by Lord Clive, who was never proficient in any Indian vernacular but had picked up a knowledge of Portuguese in Brazil, where he spent nine months on his first voyage out to India."³ Among other Portuguese importations tobacco and chilies should be mentioned as they effected a revolution in social and dietary habits. The use of tobacco leaf for smoking spread so rapidly that Shah Jahan issued an edict prohibiting the habit on the ground that "it had a very bad effect upon the health and mind of many persons," but his orders shared the usual fate of such orders, and as a contemporary Persian writer said: "Nobles and beggars, pious and wicked, devotees and free thinkers, poets, historians, rhetoricians, doctors and patients, high and low, rich and poor, all seemed intoxicated with a decided preference for it over every other luxury, nay, often over the necessaries of life." The hookah was hailed as a most pleasing companion both to the way-worn traveller and to the solitary hermit. In all Indian languages the name for chilies is derived from that for pepper and the use of the new substitute is forbidden in temples and in sacred ceremonies like the *Śrādh* to this day; but many sections of the Indian people, particularly the Andhras, have grown very fond of chilies.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

THE ENGLISH

Besides the Portuguese, there were also the Dutch, Danes and French who competed with the English at different levels for Indian trade and territory. But they fell out of the race sooner or later and require no more than passing and occasional reference in the course of the rest of this paper, which must necessarily concern itself with the English settlements and their social and cultural life. The cities of Madras and Calcutta, and Bombay which was preceded by Surat as the chief centre on the west coast, are naturally our chief concern. Unlike the Portuguese who were bent on christianizing India and effectively colonizing their Indian territory by means of mixed marriages, the English made no attempt to interfere with native religion and social customs, and concentrated on trade more than on anything else in the beginning. Even when in due course, partly inspired by the French example, they discovered the necessity for building up political and military power in the interests of their trade, and undertook the administration of considerable territory, until at last they found themselves masters over the entire sub-continent, they did not ever entertain the idea themselves of settling in India on a permanent basis. They constantly looked upon India as a colony for exploitation, and not as a colony for settlement. The Company's administration, so long as it lasted, that is till 1858, was also keen on keeping a control over English immigration into India and the activities of Christian missions in their territory. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, indeed up to the opening of the Suez canal in 1869, travel between India and England involved long sea-voyages, and English administrators who had to spend many years at a time in India had more numerous opportunities of intercourse with Indians than their successors of more recent times; and the mutual influences of the two peoples on each other were somewhat more noticeable in the earlier period than in the later.

ADVENTURE AND ROMANCE

There was no lack of adventure and romance in the life of the Company's servants. The voyage to India lasted anything between

three months and a year according to exigencies, and there were stops at Madeira to collect the wine supply for the settlements in India and at the Cape and Trincomalee in Ceylon.

The risks of shipwreck and attacks by pirates were always present. The experiences that befell those who sailed by the *Persia Merchant* from England in March 1658 must be regarded perhaps as exceptional; the ship was cast away on the Maldives in August, and its company reached Ceylon with difficulty in a smaller craft. Thirteen of them were seized by the king of Kandy and imprisoned for life; the rest were shipwrecked again in the Gulf of Mannar. Among them was Roger Myddleton, who eventually reached Porto Novo and went thence by land to Fort St. George (Oct. 1658) where he was appointed to the command of the Garrison.⁴ Two years earlier, a country boat carrying 30 Englishmen and 20 natives to the *Mayflower* capsized in the roadstead of Masulipatam; some were drowned and the rest were imprisoned in the vessel floating bottom upwards but saved by the air enclosed there till they were rescued when the boat was grounded in two hours.⁵ And the Madras surf was often the cause of the drowning of officers, chests of treasure and "paquets of despatches" as in 1697.⁶

THE VOYAGE AND AFTER

The amenities afforded the traveller on board depended on his influence and the size of his purse. There were often young ladies on board, destined for the marriage market in India, who occupied the largest cabin and whose quarrels and intrigues engaged the attention of the rest. It was on board ship that Warren Hastings met the Baroness Imhoff. When he arrived in India, his status in society and the warmth of the reception he enjoyed depended very much on the letter of introduction he had brought from England. In the early days the Governor was ready to enter-

⁴ Love, *Vestiges of Old Madras*, London 1913, p. 173.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 1624.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 588-9.

tain newcomers, but as the settlements grew larger, such indiscriminate hospitality became difficult, and the lack of a proper introduction was a real bar to securing a proper place in social life, and a considerable time might elapse without invitations to public or private breakfasts or dinner.⁷

Apart from the Company's servants and others engaged in commerce on their own, of whom we shall say more presently, there was a much larger class of Europeans, a "vagabond" class whose misdemeanours fill no fewer than twenty-five volumes of the India office records.⁸ These "low Europeans" were a source of considerable embarrassment to the government and their lives and brawls prejudiced Indian opinion very much against the Europeans. The reason why Carey was heartily welcomed by the Bengali villagers at Debarta (1794) was that he was unlike other Europeans "who were worse than tigers". Abbé Dubois ascribed the decline of Christian missions "in a great degree to the immoral and irregular conduct of the Europeans in every part of the country" and recorded that an Indian remarked to a Chaplain: "Christian religion! Devil religion! Christian much drink, much do wrong, much beat, much abuse others." When the Danish missionary Schwartz, the founder of the Tinnevelly Mission, told a Hindu dancer that no wicked and unholy person could possibly enter the kingdom of Heaven, she tartly rejoined: "Alas, sir, in that case hardly any European will ever enter it."

CLAUD MARTIN

The great anarchy of the eighteenth century allowed wide latitude for military adventurers of all nationalities who took service with the various princes of India outside the Company's territory and tried to make their own fortunes. A conspicuous instance was the Frenchman Claud Martin who came to Pondicherry in 1735. After many vicissitudes he entered the service of Asaf-ud-Daula, the Nawab of Oudh, and was in charge of his arsenals as Captain. He was worth thirty-three lakhs at his

⁷ T. G. P. Spear, *The Nabobs*, Oxford University Press, 1932, p. 44.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 60.

death in 1800, most of which he contributed to founding the La Martinière schools in Lucknow, Calcutta and Lyons (his place of birth). He had four Eurasian concubines and a regular staff of eunuchs and slaves. He brought up quite a number of children of Europeans who had left Lucknow and remembered them in his will. He was a generous entertainer whose breakfasts and dinners were famous. His effects sold after his death indicated the range of his tastes; they included 4,000 books in Latin, French, Italian and English, Persian and Sanskrit manuscripts, works of Zoffany and Daniels, and 150 paintings in oils.⁹ "The Europeanization of Lucknow in fact was rather deep and extended from outward things to inner thought and current literature." Bishop Heber who visited Lucknow in 1824 felt that Lucknow was more like "some of the smaller European capitals (Dresden for instance) than anything I have seen in India." He noted that the king of Oudh had "a strong taste for mechanics and chemistry" and was up-to-date in his knowledge of events outside India. His successor Nasir-un-din Haidar (1827-37) inherited his scientific and artistic tastes and often wore European dress with a hat. He built an observatory and put it in charge of an English Astronomer, Royal, and he had a German painter and musician in his entourage. The royal palace was full of good pictures, including portraits by Zoffany. New ideas took root and new methods were adopted in Urdu literature, and a new impulse was given to Urdu drama with plays like the *Indar Sabha* of Amanat, modelled on the European opera. "Wajid Ali Shah, the last king of Oudh, was full of ideas on art and literature, and his court attracted a galaxy of foreign artists. He had a press where books in Urdu and Persian were printed with movable types; he maintained a museum, and his library contained not less than 200,000 rare books and manuscripts. With the end of the Oudh Kingdom in 1856 was extinguished the last bright spot of Muslim cultural development on the old lines as modified by the new civilization from the west."¹⁰

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 83-5.

¹⁰ Malley, *op. cit.*, pp. 397-8.

AND OTHERS

To the same class as Claud Martin belonged Raymond of Hyderabad who saved that state from the Marāthas; de Boigne and Perron in the service of Sindhia; the notorious Walter Reinhardt or Sumroo in the service of Mir Kasim; Skinner, Thomas, and, in the Panjab, Generals Allard, Ventura and Avitable in the service of Ranjit Singh. Few of these returned to Europe, and most adopted a semi-Indian mode of life. De Boigne was unmarried, but had, it seems, his seraglio as part of his establishment at Koil (Aligarh); after a dinner he gave to Twining, he held a darbar at which his little four year old son, dressed as the child of an Indian prince and a Kashmir in color, was brought in.¹¹

Some married into the best Muslim families, like Major Hyder Hearsay who married a daughter of the deposed king of Cambay, adopted as a daughter by Emperor Akbar Shah II; or the Major's son who married a niece of the same emperor. Colonel Gardner's descendants lived far into the twentieth century in the Uttar Pradesh (formerly United Provinces) and laid claim to the dormant family barony. Even some well placed officials of the Company who spent many years in the mofussil followed a similar course. Colonel Kirkpatrick, Resident at Hyderabad, "married a Muslim lady of rank, spoke Persian like a gentleman, and in manners and costume could hardly be distinguished from a Muslim noble."¹² Another famous instance is that of Sir David Ochterlony, Resident at the Court of Delhi, who had mansions at Delhi, Karnal and elsewhere and who startled Bishop Heber by his oriental habits. There were others. The military adventurers, however, did not earn the full confidence of their native employers, and Ranjit Singh, who was friendly to all and even respected some of them like Allard, did not trust them when it came to war with the English. "German, French, or English," he said, "all these European rascals are alike." As a matter of fact not one of them fought on the Sikh side in the Anglo-Sikh wars. Many volunteered for service with the English.¹³

¹¹ Spear, *op. cit.*, p. 93.

¹² Malley, *op. cit.*, p. 535.

¹³ Khushwant Sing, *The Sikhs*, London 1953, p. 62.

THE PLANTERS

Another class of Englishmen dwelling in the mofussil was the indigo planter. The Company began to take an interest in the cultivation of indigo from 1780 and within ten years after that the European indigo industry was well established in Bengal, Bihar, and Oudh. Even Carey, Martin and de Boigne put their hand to indigo cultivation for a time, but the average norm of planters lived isolated and lonely lives and became very unpopular on account of their harsh treatment of the cultivators, and their iniquities furnished the theme of a Bengali play *Nildarpan* (1860) by Dīnabandhu Mitra, which was translated into English by M.M. Datta. The chief aim of the planter was to make a fortune and return home as quickly as possible. Indigo planting remained an important industry till 1897 after which it declined rapidly owing to the competition of German aniline dyes. Though coffee was known from the sixteenth century, its systematic cultivation began in Mysore and South India only in the 1830s and tea and rubber followed soon after.

SETTLEMENTS

The settlements generally began in a small unpretentious way like Masulipatam on the Golconda coast in 1611 comprising only warehouses and a few residences, but the progressive advantages they offered to industry and trade contributed to their rapid growth into considerable centres of population of a more or less cosmopolitan nature. In his very first charter (1639) to the English merchants at Madras, for instance, Damerla Venkatadri guaranteed the amounts advanced by them to weavers and other industrial workers with his prior knowledge and approval; by October 1640 there were "near 400 families, who daily increase to the noe small vexation of our loving neighbours."¹⁴ Judicial power over the entire city was granted to the Company by the Vijayanagar emperor Śrī Ranga in 1645, and this put an end to the uncertainty that had been felt when a murder took place in 1641-2

¹⁴ Love, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

and had to be reported to the Naick in charge of the locality, who "commanded the factors to doe justice upon the homicides according to the laws of England; but if we would not, then he would according to the custom of Karnate; for, he said in his *Olai* (lit. "palm-leaf" used for writing orders and despatches in India in those days), if justice be not done, who would come and trade here." Later in 1666, when another murder occurred, the Company itself created the office of Governor with judicial power over Town and Fort, and the first trial by jury was held in Madras in April 1669 after Foxcroft had become the first Governor.¹⁵ The last trial by jury was held a few years ago, since which the system has been abolished.

MADRAS IN 1700

Round about 1700 Madras was of course much smaller than the present city. The Fort was less than half its present size and formed the European town. Its sea-gate "was the scene of much business with native merchants. The English merchants, many of them dressed in turban and native costume, chattered and bargained on behalf of the Company and themselves. Diamonds smuggled from Golconda, pearls from Tuticorn, rubies from Burma, sandalwood from Mysore, grain, spices, saltpetre, indigo, calicos for exportation; salt, betelnut, ghee, straw, etc. for inland traffic, all found their way to this strange improvised market and changed hands at the sea-gate."¹⁶ The native city, since swept away, was contiguous to it on its northern side. The present Georgetown still further north was a sparsely populated suburb, occupied by gardens and garden houses whither the Company's merchants resorted for rest and relaxation. To the west of the Fort lay tiny villages with agricultural land held by the Company on precarious grants from the government of the country to which belonged everything south of Triplicane, over which the British had no dominion.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 42-68, 271 ff.

¹⁶ Mrs. Penny, *Fort St. George, Madras*, London 1900, p. 71.

The composite character of the rising factory of Madras is already seen in 1642 (June) when the Council of Fort St. George retained the French friar Ephraim de Nevers in order to minister to the Portuguese Catholic residents who were attracted there from the neighbouring Portuguese settlement in San Thomé; the friar built a church dedicated to the Apostle St. Andrews. At first a timber shed, it was replaced by a permanent building to the north of the Fort in 1675. Disputes between the two rival neighbours were frequent and Ephraim was imprisoned at San Thomé in 1657 and sent to Goa to face a trial by the Inquisition. The disputes were settled by a treaty in December 1651 and Ephraim returned to the Fort in April 1652. It is of interest to note that one of the clauses in the treaty provided for the return of married women fleeing from their husbands, but this did not hold when the husbands were not living with the wives at the time and were absent from their proper dwelling. The stay of the Portuguese in Madras depended on the presence of French Capuchin fathers, and the English elements felt that the departure of the Portuguese would weaken the Fort and lower it in the estimation of neighbours; they counted much on "the terror and awe that many white men in the towne strikes (*sic*) to our neighbours."¹⁷

The Siege of San Thomé by the Golconda troops in 1661-2 led to many Portuguese merchants migrating to Fort St. George and augmenting its growth. And Portuguese soldiers could be employed at only half or three-fourths the pay of an English soldier.¹⁸ Round about 1670 we get the following interesting account of Madras from the pen of Thomas Bowrey: "Many Portugals are admitted to dwell, being subject to our English government, many of which are very eminent merchants ... many of them also bear arms in the Honourable East India Company's Service as private Centinals, but not otherways, none of them being raised to any place of Office; and although their Sallary be smal, yet they live very well of it, beings paid monthly as all the English soldiery are, and provisions, with cloths well befittinge such a climate, very cheape and good... The native inhabitants are for

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 183.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 196, 209-11.

the most part Gentiles (commonly called *Gentues*) and Mallabars, many of which live within the Outermost walls of this place called Fort St. Georg's. I have heard it reported, and can well give credit thereto, that there are noe lesse than fourty thousand of them, vizt. men, women and children that live under St. Georg's flagge, and pay customes for all sorts of goods they buy and sell within the compasse or command of our guns."¹⁹ The Portuguese Protestants, a small number, were allowed in 1792 to conduct service once a week in their tongue in St. Mary's church in the Fort till a church for their use was built by local bounty.²⁰

THE ARMENIANS

Another notable foreign element in the Madras population were the Armenians. In 1688 the Company, at the instance of Sir Josia Child, then Deputy-Governor, and through the agency of Sir John Chardin of London and an eminent merchant of Ispahan, granted special privileges to Armenians to settle in British towns in India with trade privileges and all rights, as the English. Wherever forty Armenians were resident, a church was to be built for their use and ground granted for it with £ 50 a year for seven years for the maintenance of a priest.²¹ Notwithstanding their special privileges, the Armenian merchants "behaved themselves in a very insolent and haughty manner" as observed by the President of the Fort in 1724.²² The commerce with Manila in the Philippines was entirely in their hands and they used Danish bottoms for goods from Europe, and consigned goods to Pondicherry and other foreign ports in India. Petrus Uscan came from Manila and played a notable part in Madras life. He built the Marmalong (corruption of Mambalam, name of a village near Saidapet) bridge across the Adyar in 1726 at his own cost. His sympathies were with the Roman Church and he built the long flight of inclined planes

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 279-80.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 548.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 543.

²² *Ibid.*, pp. 231-2.

and steps leading up to the ancient church at the summit of St. Thomas's Mount. The grave of St. Thomas was opened for the veneration of the faithful in 1729, and the event is supposed to be commemorated by a stone inscribed in Armenian characters with words signifying "In Memory of the Armenian Nation, 1729"; the stone is built into the east wall of the church of St. Rita at the south end of San Thomé's principal street. Uscau purchased some godowns within the Fort in the White Town in 1741, and two years later the council resolved: "considering how large a part of the White Town is already in the possession of Foreigners, no person other than 'the natural subjects of the king of Great Britain' should in future acquire property within the walls except with the permission of government." Steps were also taken at the same time to discourage the settlement of Muslims in the Black Town.²³ Uscau died in 1751 at seventy. In the same year, Shawmier Sultan, another Armenian, petitioned for compensation for his house in Charles Street, which was then occupied by the Deputy-Governor and for his continuance in the White Town at Madras; the Directors of the company peremptorily resolved against Armenians continuing there; they must dispose of their houses in the White Town to Europeans and go to the Black Town. They said: "We have not come to this Resolution out of any particular dislike to the Armenians; on the contrary we think them a very useful people, and therefore you must let them have all the Accommodations that the Black Town will afford."²⁴ They directed further that the Portuguese Roman Catholic church in the White Town was to be demolished forthwith. The Armenian Street has continued to this day to be one of the principal streets in the business quarters of Madras.

THE JEWS

There were also some Jews, chiefly engaged in the diamond trade in conjunction with Hebrew merchants in London. They also imported coral to Madras, and the Coral Merchants' street is a

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 308.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 426.

memento of this eighteenth-century trade. Earlier, in 1683-7, a small colony of Portuguese Jewish diamond merchants was established and acquired a separate burial ground at the south end of Mint street in Peddanaikpetta.²⁵

DIFFERENT CONDITIONS IN BOMBAY AND SURAT

Speaking generally, in Madras and Calcutta conditions did not favour free social intercourse or equality between Europeans and Indians. In the political turmoil in the surrounding country, the Indian labourers and craftsmen came to look upon the English settlements with their ordered economic life and their capacity for self-defence as havens of refuge, a peaceful life in which residence was accepted as a favour. On the other hand, every Englishman soon convinced himself of the knavery of the Madras subash and the Calcutta Baniya, while these latter were equally convinced that selfishness and rapacity and the desire to amass wealth by any means were the chief traits of the English trader in India. In Surat and Bombay things were different. In Surat the English established their factory in relatively well governed Mughal territory, and they developed a long tradition of dealing as equals with Hindu, Muslim and Parsi merchants. This gave them a more cosmopolitan outlook and furnished a better basis for free social intercourse and mutual cooperation. Owing to its historical origin, Bombay started with a core of Portuguese and English round which the Indian city gradually grew up; the city could be built up only with difficulty, and merchants had at first to be attracted to create trade, because Surat, already well established, was nearer the great trade routes. One special feature of Bombay, by the way, was the presence of Negro slave labour imported from Madagascar in English ships and from the Red Sea area by Arab merchants. The Government used them both as labourers and soldiers and made careful regulations for their proper treatment.²⁶ Again the Parsis were slow to appear in numbers, but once established they soon became prominent

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 486.

²⁶ Spear, *op. cit.*, p. 73.

and influential. Their outlook on life was nearer the European than that of other Indian communities, and they were the first to adopt European clothes. They were a peaceful and self-reliant community, as enterprising as they were sociable.

THE COMPANY'S OFFICIALS

The average officials of the Company usually came to India as writers at the age of fifteen, and spent their most impressionable years in the midst of Indians while their own habits and principles were still unformed. The situation became accentuated after the acquisition of the Diwani of Bengal in 1765, which necessitated in a short while the dispersal of the young officials as collectors over the entire province and placed them in more intimate contact with the country gentry, the nawabs, and zamindars. These conditions strongly favoured the Indianization of the English in their life and habits. Speaking of Madras, for instance, Dodwell notes that very few appropriate English brides were available, and that the outhouses of bungalows usually served as the abode of the bachelor's lady.²⁷ It must, however, be noted that the more cultured type of officials put such opportunities to splendid use by cultivating an interest in Persian and Sanskrit literature, in Hindu mythology or in social anthropology, local antiquities and so on.

ROYAL TROOPS CHECK INDIANIZATION

There was, however, a strong influence counteracting the process of Indianization. This was due to the presence of Royal troops in India for whom service in India was just a temporary vocation and who never looked upon India as the permanent arena of their career and were ever looking forward to the time of their return to England. At first, in the seventeenth century, such troops were rare outside Bombay, but with the commencement of the Anglo-French Carnatic wars in the middle of the eighteenth

²⁷ Henry Dodwell, *The Nabobs of Madras*, London 1926, p. 210.

century, the Company's military transactions in India merged with the great colonial wars between England and France, and the influx of Royal troops and naval officers began to increase considerably. With the increase in their numbers, Englishmen began to entertain the idea that they should live so far as possible as they had lived at home, and instead of adapting themselves to Indian conditions, should make every settlement and cantonment a replica of the English model. For a time in the eighteenth century these rival ideals "co-existed" so to say, the most notable instance of this being furnished by Lucknow where, as we have seen, the Nawab Europeanized himself as much as the Europeans about him Indianized themselves.

OTHER FACTORS OF THE SAME NATURE

But time and circumstances strongly favoured the triumph of the English ideal. Cornwallis's exclusion of Indians from the higher grades of the Company's service, which was in force almost to the beginning of the twentieth century; the opening of the Suez canal and the progressive improvements in steam navigation and other means of communication, which shortened the duration of travel between England and India and drew the countries closer, making it possible, among other things, for English women to come and live in India with their husbands; and above all, the establishment of English political power all over India and the new "prestige" it conferred on the British were all powerful influences which reenforced the trend. And the events of 1857 created for over a generation a strong mutual suspicion which poisoned the relations between rulers and ruled.

RACE RELATIONS

The Europeans, the Hindu and the Muslim differed among themselves too much in their habits and outlook to have any great attraction for one another, but at first there was no trace of race feeling or any talk of superiority and inferiority. Foreign travellers like Pelsaert, Bernier and Manucci noticed and com-

mented on the many shortcomings in Indian society and government but none of them had any objection to mixing freely with Indians, living in their midst, or even accepting service under them. Though ignorance and prejudice was mutual in their estimates, there was little sign of racial bias. Even in this period of cosmopolitan intercourse the Europeans felt more free with Muslims and Parsis than with the Hindus, because of caste restrictions on inter-dining. In the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries every settlement contained, besides a handful of the Company's officials, several free merchants, the common soldiers—a source of constant anxiety on account of their habits and behaviour—and a considerable floating population of sailors and others. It is easy to forget that this class formed the majority whose favourite resorts were the "Roman Catholic" taverns and the pariah houses. Though a few officials lived with their families from the beginning, there was an acute shortage of European women, and no strong opinion against mixed marriages till far into the nineteenth century. Some married French and Portuguese women, but marriage with coloured women was accepted as quite normal and the children of such unions (Topasses or Eurasians) "were considered to have a moral right to employment" in the Company's service; they formed a Company of the Madras garrison. "The inhabitants of Goa," observed Mandelslo in 1638, "are either Castizes, that is, Portuguese born of Portuguese father and mother, or Mestizes, that is, born of a Portuguese father and Indian mother. The Mestizes are distinguished from the others by their colour, which tends to be olive colour, but those of the third generation are as black as the inhabitants of the country; this happened also in the fourth generation of the Castizes, though there was no mixture among them."²⁸ The model set by the Portuguese was more or less followed by the English also for a considerable time. But mixed marriages were discouraged by requiring the Governor's consent for a marriage. This was also the rule in Pondicherry, while the Dutch even set up a court before which the parties had to prove the suitability of the contemplated marriage.²⁹

²⁸ Cited by Spear, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

²⁹ Dodwell, *op. cit.*, p. 202.

Along the whole of the Coromandel coast in 1699 there were estimated to be 119 Englishmen and 71 women, only 47 of whom were married, and many of whom were not English. The English civilian population in Madras about the same time was 114; 77 were the Company's servants, 29 were freemen, 39 were sailors, 11 were widows and 8 were maidens. With the soldiers added, the total would go up to 400. Calcutta had then a much bigger English population of about 1200, of whom Hamilton says 460 were buried in one hot season.³⁰ The upbringing of the children of mixed unions did create problems, and they were tackled in different ways at different levels. Warren Hastings's natural children were well educated in England and proved to be good and sensible, as Palmer wrote to him. From another letter of Palmer we learn that Innes had three such children, two almost as fair as English children who were therefore to go to England, while the third was "too dark to escape detection" and so, although the strongest, was to have his education in Bengal.³¹ Some of these children remained in England as grownups, but the majority came back to India with a gentleman's education to lead the life of clerks, and their position did not become easier when after 1792 they were debarred from employment in government service. There were orphan asylums in Calcutta and Madras for the children who did not go to England. Officers' children got a special institution founded in 1782 and maintained by deductions from the pay of officers on a graduated scale. "Officers' children were apprenticed to business firms, soldiers' sons were sent to the regiments as drummers and pipers. Many girls married European soldiers and thus reduced the earlier promiscuity, some became ladies' maids, some the wives of officers, but many their mistresses, owing to the growing English prejudice against mixed marriages." (Spear). The position in Madras about 1790 is thus summed up by Mrs. Penny: "Society was lax enough in England in the Georgian era; Englishmen allowed themselves an unbounded licence as a kind of compensation for their life of exile. There was a certain percentage of men who did not follow in the stream of

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 63.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 63.

pleasure, who married wives and lived decently. But English women were not plentiful, and many men found it easier to form liaisons with native and Eurasian women than to procure a suitable wife of their own class. These unions resulted in a large increase in the Eurasian population. Many children were brought to the font (in the church) and their baptisms were recorded under names to which they had no legal right.³²

ENGLISH WOMEN IN THE 18TH CENTURY

In the eighteenth century the English ladies in India moved quite freely among Indians and had not developed the tastes and taboos of their Victorian successors. They had no scruples, for instance, about mixing with men whose wives remained in *pardah*, and they were inclined on occasion to be a little too free in their behavior, shocking Indian sentiment. They even occasionally smoked a hookah and certainly did not object to its use by others in their company; they attended and enjoyed *nautches* as much as the men; they adopted the fashion of the turban and introduced it in London, and they used familiar Urdu terms like "bibi." But increase in their numbers and a change in outlook gradually brought about a higher standard of refinement. The freedom of social intercourse that prevailed in the eighteenth century also led to the formation of close personal friendships between Englishmen and Indians, several instances of which are on record, especially because by then the Indians had no need to learn English to cultivate the friendship of Englishmen who had gained a reasonable command of Persian or Urdu, or in some cases even Sanskrit.

CHANGE IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

But as already indicated the end of the century brought about a noticeable change in all this. Lord Cornwallis's exclusion of Indians from the higher posts of government tended to create an ex-

³² Mrs. Penny, *op. cit.*, p. 181.

clusive governing class of Englishmen. Shore, who succeeded him and had a good knowledge of the country and its people, also held rigid views on social intercourse. His successor Wellesley was apt to treat even the princes as blundering ignoramus in constant need of his masterful guidance, and to ignore the existence of people of lesser rank; he excluded both Indians and Anglo-Indians from entertainments at Government House, and kept a great distance in his dealings with the representatives of the country powers. With him originated the custom of regarding Indians as a lower order of civilization to be impressed by pomp and power above all else. In 1802 Palmer wrote to Warren Hastings from India on this subject. After mentioning "the strongest attachment to you (Hastings)" on the part of several Indian gentlemen among his friends, he proceeds: "I observe with great concern the system of depressing them adopted by the present government and imitated in the manners of almost every European. They are excluded from all posts of great respectability or emolument and are treated in society with mortifying hauteur and reserve. In fact they have hardly any social intercourse with us."³³ Mrs. Graham who visited Bombay, Madras and Calcutta in the early years of the nineteenth century (1810) deplored that "the distance kept up between the Europeans and the natives, both at Calcutta and at Madras, is such that I have not been able to get acquainted with any native family as I did in Bombay. This mixture of natives ought, I think, to weaken national prejudices, but among the English at least, the effect seems to be diametrically opposite. Every Briton appears to pride himself on being outrageously a John Bull." Things grew worse in the succeeding years, and it was considered an act of great liberality on Bentinck's part to allow Indians to drive in carriages to the Governor-General's house. The Englishman gave up the habit of calling on the prominent native gentleman when he was posted to a new district, and began to insist on the credentials of the Indian regarding his respectability before receiving him on a visit.

³³ Spear, *op. cit.*, p. 139.

THE WOMEN'S ROLE

One of the chief causes of this increasing social estrangement was the increasing number of English women arriving in the settlements, and the establishment of their homes and families. This was a change to be welcomed for the reason that it improved the morals of the Englishman in India by inducing him to give up the zenana in favour of a genuine family. But unfortunately, the women's reactions to strange surroundings were often deeply emotional and prejudiced, and contributed to arousing the fear in the mind of the men that something untoward might happen at any time to their kith and kin. Indeed, well in advance of 1857 the English community had begun to live on the tenters in India, as we learn from an anonymous pamphlet, *Observations on India*, printed in 1853: "Every youth, who is able to maintain a wife, marries. The conjugal pair become a bundle of English prejudices and hate the country, the natives and everything belonging to them. If the man has, by chance, a share of philosophy and reflection, the woman is sure to have none. The 'odious blacks,' the 'nasty heathen wretches,' the 'filthy creatures' are the shrill echoes of the 'black brutes' the 'black vermin,' of the husband. The children catch up this stain. I have heard one, five years old, call the man who was taking care of him a 'black brute.' Not that the English generally behave with cruelty, but they make no scruple of expressing their anger and contempt by the most opprobrious epithets that the language affords. Those specially who, while young, are thrown much among natives, become haughty, overbearing and demi-Asiatic in their manners."³⁴ Disregard for Indian sentiment had become so common that when on November 22, 1849, Lord Dalhousie visited the Golden Temple of Amritsar, he walked through the sacred precincts with his shoes on in full view of thousands of Sikhs.³⁵

³⁴ Cited by Spear, *op. cit.*, p. 141.

³⁵ Khushwant Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

1857 AND AFTER

The tragic but inevitable occurrences of 1857 completed the estrangement between the two communities; exclusive English clubs became the rule, and the old occasions of personal friendship and meeting on more or less equal terms became things of the past. The rise and spread of the Indian Nationalist movement, though itself the result of English education, did not make social relations easier in general, though there were always some notable exceptions that served only to prove the rule. It has been only since the withdrawal of British political power from India in 1947 that the relations between Englishmen and Indians have become normal and have shed all vestiges of the old mutual suspicion and the superiority and inferiority feelings.