

THE
ANNEXATION OF THE PUNJAUB,
AND THE
MAHARAJAH DULEEP SINGH.

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"THE MYSORE REVOLUTION", ETC.

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THE

MAHARAJAH DULEEP SINGH.

FOR the first time, it would appear, since the annexation of the Punjaub, the Maharajah Duleep Singh, in two letters addressed to the *Times*, dated the 28th of August and the 6th of September 1882*—the latter in reply to a leading article in the *Times* of the 31st of August,—has publicly expressed dissatisfaction with his treatment under the Terms which he was made to sign at Lahore, “for himself, his heirs and successors”, on the 29th of March 1849.

Considering the Prince’s long minority, his careful tutelage by gentlemen of the Anglo-Indian service, his English associations, and the amenities of his reception in society, it is not surprising that he has held his peace for such a long time, until, as it would seem, pressed by unexpected reverses and by natural anxieties for the future of his family.

The general belief in this country regarding the annexation of the Punjaub, and the provision made for the Maharajah Duleep Singh, is founded on what may be called an official myth or legend. The British Government, benevolently engaged in an endeavour to reform the administration of the Punjaub, is supposed to have been treacherously assailed by a general insurrection of

* Published in the *Times* of the 31st of August and 8th of September 1882.

“the Sikhs”, and its generous intentions having thus been frustrated, and proved to be fruitless and hopeless, no practicable plan remained except that of annexing the country, which Lord Dalhousie carried out ; and the Maharajah Duleep Singh, having been deprived of all claim to consideration by the bloodthirsty treason of his Ministers and followers, was treated with great forbearance, kindness and liberality, and endowed with a much larger income than could have been justly claimed for a Prince dethroned under such circumstances.

Historical truth differs very widely from this myth of official origin.

Many years have elapsed since, in reply to the Duke of Argyll,* Sir Charles Jackson,† Mr. J. C. Marshman, and other abettors and admirers of the iniquitous and injurious policy of annexation, I made what may be fairly called at this date an exhaustive and final exposure of the Marquis of Dalhousie’s achievements, particularly of what was called “the conquest of the Punjab”.‡ The Duke of Argyll’s little book was withdrawn from circulation, and since that time it may be said that no serious effort has been made to justify or defend Lord Dalhousie’s various processes and principles of territorial acquisition.

Continuous and uniform experience, nowhere more conspicuous than in Oude, has utterly dissipated all the confident anticipations expressed by himself, his councillors and his school, as to financial gain for the Empire, and provincial prosperity for the people. Notwithstanding the limited and languid interest felt in Indian affairs, the verdict pronounced against Lord Dalhousie’s policy

* *India under Dalhousie and Canning* (Longmans, 1865).

† *A Vindication of the Marquis of Dalhousie’s Indian Administration* (Smith and Elder), 1865.

‡ *Retrospects and Prospects of Indian Policy* (Trübner), 1868.

by both the practical statesmanship and the popular sentiment of Great Britain, has never been reversed or shaken ; and in obedience to the national fiat no renewal of acquisitive operations, except in the case of Mysore, which was negatived, has been proposed from Calcutta since the rebellion of 1857.

But although the political world at home may be pervaded by more healthy views and feelings, the old spirit of arrogant and grasping self-sufficiency, the spirit which informed and animated Lord Dalhousie as its instrument, still prevails among the Anglo-Indian "Services"—the alien bureaucracy domineering over a vast population, with no class of whom it mingles or sympathises. Nothing but a tempting opportunity is needed to bring us at any time from India some plausible proposal for annexing a State, for confiscating landed property, for mediatising a Prince, or for disendowing, wholly or in part, a Prince who has been mediatised. In the interests, therefore, of the Empire, the stability and solvency of which are undermined and endangered by every dereliction from treaty engagements and from Imperial good faith, I think it advisable that Chapter VI of my book, now out of print, containing the truth with regard to the Punjaub State and the Maharajah Duleep Singh, shall once more be placed before the public as an example and a warning.

The following pages will prove that, when the rebellion broke out in the Punjaub in 1848, the British Government was the Guardian of the Maharajah Duleep Singh. The exercise of the functions of Government in the Punjaub, the tutelage of the infant Sovereign, the custody of his Palace, his possessions and his person, remained for three years in the hands of the British Resident ; and the quietude and continuity of that charge were never interrupted or disturbed for a single hour by any incident