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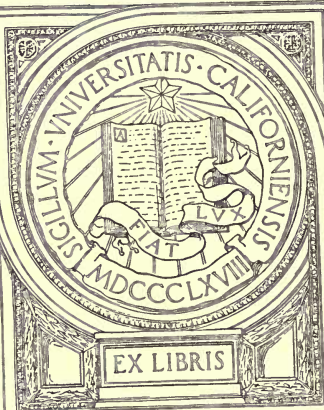


A Letter to the Court
of Directors of the East-
India Company.

by
Warren Hastings

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T O T H E

Court of Directors

O F T H E

EAST-INDIA COMPANY

F R O M

WARREN HASTINGS, Esq.
Governor-General of Bengal.

Dated, Fort-William, March 20, 1783.

L O N D O N :

Printed for GEORGE ROBINSON, in
PATER-NOSTER ROW.

MDCCLXXXIII.

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REPORT

TO THE

Court of Directors

OF THE

EAST-INDIA COMPANY

FROM

WARREN HASTINGS, Esq.

Governor-General of Bengal.

Dated, Fort William, March 20, 1783.

LONDON:

Printed by GEORGE ROBINSON, at

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P R E F A C E.

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THE following LETTER was read on the 23d instant at a General Court of Proprietors. The gentlemen who were present wished it might be published; to which there can be no objection, because a copy if it lies at the India-House for every body to peruse. For the better understanding the Letter, it has been thought proper to print, from the Reports of the Select Committee, such parts of the Company's General Letter as are alluded to by Mr. Hastings.

London,
September 27, 1783.

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EXTRACTS

FROM THE

GENERAL LETTER to BENGAL,

Dated the 28th of August, 1782.

YOUR proceedings, respecting Mr. Francis Fowke, are really surprising to us. Mr. Fowke's first appointment, to be Resident at Benaris, was in August, 1775.

He was recalled from thence in August, 1776, and Mr. Graham appointed to succeed him. —

Our

Our orders, however of the 30th of January, 1778, were positive for his restoration; but they were rendered ineffectual by your resolution, in July, 1778, to suspend the execution of them. In May, 1779, we repeated the orders respecting Mr. Fowke; and, in consequence thereof, Mr. Fowke was again appointed to proceed to Benaris. But judge of our astonishment, to find that, in January, 1781, in contempt of our authority, Mr. Fowke was once more removed from his station at Benaris. So far from a charge having been brought against him, on which ground alone his removal could be justified, we find his conduct approved and his character esteemed; and, in lieu of the station from which he is thus removed, another positive order of the Company was broken through, by his being appointed agent for the provision of boats to be employed for the military service of your establishment, with a commission of 15 per cent. upon his disbursements, and an allowance given him of rupees, 1000 per month, until the expiration of the then-subsisting contract.

Without

Without pretending to disapprove of the conduct of Mr. Markham, who was appointed to succeed Mr. Fowke at Benaris, but merely to vindicate the authority of the Court of Directors, we hereby direct, that Mr. Fowke do immediately resume his station at Benaris. As to the boat-agency, that appointment must be immediately annulled, and the business performed by contract, in the manner repeatedly laid down for your guidance.

Equally extraordinary and unwarrantable have been your proceedings respecting Mr. John Bristow. He was appointed Resident at Owde, in December, 1774. In December, 1776, he was recalled, without the shadow of a charge being exhibited against him. By our letter, of the 4th of July, 1777, we signified our disapprobation of the proceedings against Mr. Bristow, and directed that he should be restored to his station, which direction we confirmed by our subsequent letter of the 23d of December,

1778. Mr. Bristow arrived in India in February, 1780; and, in October in the same year, I was resolved, by your Board, that Mr. Bristow should return to Owde, but that his appointment should be limited solely to the conduct of political negotiations, Mr. Middleton being, at the same time, nominated to settle pecuniary matters with the Vizier. On the 21st of May, 1781, upon receiving a letter from the Vizier, expressing a desire that Mr. Bristow should be removed from his court, he was again recalled. But, without entering into the consideration of this matter, and in order to vindicate our authority, — We do hereby positively direct, that Mr. Bristow do forthwith proceed to Owde, in the station of our Resident there. We do not mean in the least to reflect on the character and ability of Mr. Middleton, who must be immediately recalled from thence; but it is a duty incumbent on us thus to maintain the respect due to the orders of the Court of Directors. You are likewise to observe, that we shall not suffer any other person to proceed to Owde for the management of the finance; one person being, in our opinion, sufficient to transact our business there, as principal in both departments;

departments; and we expect our orders, respecting the succession to that Residency, to be fully complied with.

The proceedings of your government, respecting Rajah Cheit Sing, have been, for some time, under our serious consideration. Our enquiry commenced with the death of Sujah Dowlah, in 1775; when the Governor-general and Council concluded a treaty with his successor, by which the Zemeendarry of Benaris, with its dependencies, was surrendered, in perpetuity, to the Company.

Previous to the conclusion of the before-mentioned treaty, we find that, on the 13th of February, 1775, the Governor-general proposed, that each member of the Board should deliver in his sentiments of the conditions to be required or acceded to for the new treaty. This was accordingly done; and, on the opinions then delivered, the Governor-general proposed, that the perpetual and independent possession of

the Zemeendarry of Benaris, and its dependencies, be confirmed and guaranteed to Rajah Cheit Sing and his heirs for ever; subject only to the annual payment of the revenue hitherto paid to the late Vizier, amounting to Benaris Sicca rupees 23,71,656 12; that no other demand be made upon him, either by the Nabob of Owde or your government; nor any kind of authority or jurisdiction exercised by either within the dominions assigned him. The Governor-general's observations on this proposition are as follow: " The Rajah of Benaris, from
 " the situation of his country, which is a frontier
 " both to the provinces of Owde and Bahar,
 " may be made a serviceable ally to the Com-
 " pany, whenever their affairs shall require it.
 " He has always been considered in this light,
 " both by the Company and the successive
 " members of the late Council; but, to ensure
 " his attachment to the Company, his interest
 " must be connected with it, which cannot be
 " better effected than by freeing him totally
 " from the remains of his present vassalage un-
 " der the guarantee and protection of the Com-
 " pany, and, at the same time, guarding him
 " against any apprehensions from this govern-
 " ment,

“ ment, by thus pledging its faith that no
“ encroachments shall be made on his rights by
“ the Company.”

On the 3d of March, the Board resume the consideration of the business, and the Governor-general proposes the following questions: —
“ Whether it shall be made a condition of the
“ new treaty, that Rajah Cheit Sing shall exercise a free and independent authority in his
“ own dominions, subject only to the payment
“ of his tribute ?”

This question was resolved in the affirmative.

Every preliminary being settled with the Vizier, and the treaty executed, the Governor-general, on the 12th of June, 1775, laid before the Board a minute, with observations, respecting the arrangements to be made with Rajah Cheit Sing, in which he declares his readiness to acquiesce in any plan which may be proposed, on terms by which more effectual provision may be made for the interest of the Company,

pany, without an encroachment on the just rights of the Rajah or the engagements actually subsisting with him. He proposes, that Cheit Sing shall pay to the Company, in equal monthly payments, the yearly revenue of 22,48,449 Sonaut rupees; that he shall be empowered to exercise a complete and uncontrouled authority over his Zemeendarry, under the acknowledged sovereignty of the Company; that he shall maintain, in constant pay, a body of 2000 horse, for the service of the Company, whenever they shall be required; and that, while the Rajah shall continue faithful to these engagements and punctual in his payments, and shall pay due obedience to the authority of your government, no more demands shall be made upon him, by the Company, of any kind; nor, on any pretence whatsoever, shall any persons be allowed to interfere with his authority, or to disturb the peace of his country. At the conclusion of this Minute, the Governor-general observes, “ That voluntary restraint, made by
 “ the government on its own actions, will af-
 “ ford the Rajah the greatest confidence; and
 “ naturally inspire him with sentiments of fide-
 “ lity and attachment, both from the principles
 “ of

“ of gratitude and self-interest. Without some
 “ such appearance, he will expect, with every
 “ change of government, additional demands
 “ to be made upon him ; and will, of course,
 “ descend to all the arts of intrigue and con-
 “ cealment practised by other dependent Rajahs,
 “ which will keep him indigent and weak, and
 “ eventually prove hurtful to the Company.
 “ By proper encouragement and protection, he
 “ may prove a profitable dependent, an useful
 “ barrier, and even a powerful ally, to the
 “ Company ; but he will be neither, if the
 “ conditions of his connection with the Com-
 “ pany, are left open to future variations.” —

On the 5th of July, the Board agree with the
 Governor-general, except in the article to *oblige*
 Rajah Cheit Sing to keep up a body of 2000
 horse. They resolved, indeed, to recommend
 the same to him ; but declare there shall be no
 obligation on him to do it ; the Governor-gene-
 ral at the same time observing, that it was far
 from his intention to propose this or any other
 article to be imposed on the Rajah by compul-
 sion.

We are much surpris'd at the conduct of the Governor-general towards the Rajah on his arrival at Benaris, when we observe that, by the instructions he received for his guidance, previous to his departure from Calcutta, the arrangements he was to make with Cheit Sing *were to be consonant to the mutual relation and actual engagements subsisting between the Company and him.*

The imprisonment of his person in the midst of his country, which, for time immemorial, has been the residence of the most respectable persons of Hindostan, thereby disgracing him in the eyes of his subjects and others, was unwarrantable and highly impolitic, and may tend to weaken the confidence which the native princes of India ought to have in the justice and moderation of the Company's government.

The

The resolutions of the Court of Directors, on your proceedings relative to Cheit Sing, are as follow :

“ That it appears to this Court, that, on the
“ death of Sujah Dowlah, 1775, a treaty
“ was made by his successor, by which
“ the Zemeendarry of Benaris, and its
“ dependencies, was ceded in perpetuity to
“ the Company.

“ That it appears to this Court, that Rajah
“ Cheit Sing was confirmed, by the Go-
“ vernor-general and Council of Bengal,
“ in the management of the said Zemeen-
“ darry, (subject to the sovereignty of
“ the Company,) on his paying a certain
“ tribute to the Company, which was
“ settled at Sicca rupees 22,66,180; and
“ that the Bengal government pledged it-
“ self that the free and uncontrouled pos-
“ session of the Zemeendarry of Benaris and
“ its dependencies should be confirmed and
“ guaranteed to the Rajah, and his heirs, for
“ ever, subject to such tribute; and that no
“ other demand should be made upon
“ him,

“ him, nor any kind of authority or jurif-
 “ diction exercised within the dominions
 “ assigned him, so long as he adhered to
 “ the terms of his engagements.

“ That it appears to this Court, that the
 “ Governor-general and Council did, on
 “ the 5th of July, 1775, recommend to
 “ Rajah Cheit Sing to keep up a body of
 “ 2000 horse; but at the same time de-
 “ clared, there should be no obligation on
 “ him to do it.

“ That it appears to this Court, that Rajah
 “ Cheit Sing performed his engagements
 “ with the Company, in the regular pay-
 “ ment of his tribute of Sicca rupees
 “ 22,66,180.

“ That it appears to this Court, that the
 “ conduct of the Governor-general to-
 “ wards the Rajah, whilst he was at Be-
 “ naris, was improper; and that the im-
 “ prisonment of his person, thereby dis-
 “ gracing him in the eyes of his subjects
 “ and others, was unwarrantable and
 “ highly impolitic, and may tend to
 “ weaken the confidence which the native
 “ princes of India ought to have in the
 “ justice

“ justice and moderation of the Compa-
ny’s government.”

Such farther resolutions, as we may think proper to come to on this very important subject, will be communicated to you by a future conveyance; but we cannot avoid remarking, that, by the Governor-general’s last Narrative, the real object of his journey to Benaris was to exact from Cheit Sing 40 or 50 lacks of rupees, or to remove him from his Zemeendarry, as appears by a confidential conversation, which passed between the Governor-general and Mr. Wheler (as stated in the Narrative) previous to the Governor-general’s departure.

N. B. The letter, from which the foregoing extracts were taken, was signed by the two Chairs and eleven Directors.

TO THE HONOURABLE
COURT of DIRECTORS
OF THE HONOURABLE
United EAST-INDIA COMPANY,

FORT-WILLIAM, 20th March, 1783;

Honourable Sirs,

IN your letter to the Governor-general and Council, dated the 28th of August, 1782, you have been pleased to enter into a large discussion of my proceedings at Benaris; and to apprise the Board of certain resolutions, comprehending your judgement upon them. These resolutions, as the immediate cause and subject of my present address, I shall, to avoid the perplexity of frequent and remote reference, hereto sub-join:

“ That it appears to this Court, that, on
 “ the death of Sujah Dowlah, 1775, a
 “ treaty was made with his successor, by
 “ which the Zemeendarry of Benaris, with
 “ its dependencies, was ceded in perpe-
 “ tuity to the East-India Company.

“ That it appears to this Court, that Rajah
 “ Cheyt Sing was confirmed by the Go-
 “ vernor-general and the Council of Ben-
 “ gal in the management of the said Ze-
 “ mindarry, (subject to the sovereignty of
 “ the Company,) on his paying a certain
 “ tribute, which was settled at Sicca ru-
 “ pees 22,66,180; and that the Bengal
 “ Government pledged itself, that the free
 “ and uncontroled possession of the Ze-
 “ mindarry of Benaris, and its dependen-
 “ cies, should be confirmed and guaran-
 “ teed to the Rajah and his heirs for ever,
 “ subject to such tribute; and that no o-
 “ ther demand should be made upon him;
 “ nor any kind of authority or jurisdiction
 “ exercised within the dominions assigned
 “ him, so long as he adhered to the terms
 “ of his engagements.

“ That

“ That it appears to this Court, that the
“ Governor-general and Council did, on
“ the 5th of July, 1775, recommend to
“ Rajah Cheyt Sing to keep up a body of
“ 2000 horse; but at the same time de-
“ clared there should be no obligation on
“ him to do it.

“ That it appears to this Court, that Rajah
“ Cheyt Sing performed his engagements
“ with the Company, in the regular pay-
“ ment of his tribute of Sicca rupees
“ 22,66,180.

“ That it appears to this Court, that the
“ conduct of the Governor-general to-
“ wards the Rajah whilst he was at Be-
“ naris was improper, and that the im-
“ prisonment of his person, thereby dis-
“ gracing him in the eyes of his subjects
“ and others, was unwarrantable and high-
“ ly impolitic, and may tend to weaken
“ the confidence which the native princes
“ of India ought to have in the justice
“ and moderation of the Company’s go-
“ vernment.”

I understand that these resolutions were either published or intended for publication. As they have proceeded from an authority so respect-
able,

able, every reader of them will naturally and without hesitation believe, that the facts, on which they necessarily and indispensably depend, have been fully established. And who are the readers? not the proprietors alone, whose interest is immediately concerned in them, and whose approbation I am impelled, by every motive of pride and gratitude, to solicit; but the whole body of the people of England, whose passions have been excited on the general subject of the conduct of their servants in India; and before them I am arraigned and pre-judged of a violation of the national faith in acts of such complicated aggravation, that, if they were true, no punishment, short of death, could atone for the injury which the interest and credit of the public had sustained in them.

I hope, therefore, I shall not be thought to give unnecessary trouble in calling your attention to a subject not wholly personal, nor to fail in the respect, in which I have never yet failed, to your Honourable Court, in the mode of my vindication, which will not admit of the common delicacies of expression; for I cannot admit facts, however affirmed, which I know to have no existence, and by which my charac-

ter has been blasted; nor will a simple denial or refutation of them be sufficient against such a charge, if I can at the same time appeal to your own knowledge, proved by the evidence of your own arguments, and to what your Honourable Court possesses of candour for my first justification and acquittal.

The facts affirmed, or expressed in terms equal to affirmation, in your resolutions, are as follow: —

I. That the Bengal Government pledged itself, that the free and uncontrouled possession of the Zemindarry of Benaris, and its dependencies, should be confirmed and guaranteed to the Rajah and his heirs for ever.

II. That it pledged itself that no other demand should be made upon him, nor any kind of authority or jurisdiction exercised within his dominions assigned him, so long as he adhered to the terms of his engagements.

III. That the Governor-general required him to keep up a body of 2000 horse, contrary to the declaration made to him by the Governor-general and Council on the 5th of July, 1775, that

that there should be no obligation on him to do it.

IV. That Rajah Cheyt Sing was bound by no other engagements to the Company than for the payment of his tribute of Sicca rupees 22,66,180.

V. That Rajah Cheyt Sing was a native prince of India.

The judgement passed on my conduct, as deducible from these facts, is, that it was “improper, unwarrantable, and highly impolitic, and may tend to weaken the confidence which the native princes of India ought to have in the justice and moderation of the Company’s Government.” Here I must crave leave to say, that the terms “improper, unwarrantable, and highly impolitic,” are much too gentle as deductions from such premises; and, as every reader of the letter will obviously feel as he reads the deductions which inevitably belong to them, I will add, that the strict performance of solemn engagements on one part, followed by acts directly subversive of them, and by total dispossession on the other, stamps on the perpetrators of

of

of the letter, the guilt of the greatest possible violation of faith and justice.

But this, and every other conclusion from the facts adduced in proof of them will fall, if the facts themselves have no existence. I do therefore most positively and solemnly deny their existence.

I deny that the Bengal government pledged itself, that the free and uncontroled possession of the Zemindarry of Benaris and its dependencies should be confirmed and guaranteed to the Rajah and his heirs for ever.

I deny that the Bengal government pledged itself that no other demand should be made upon him, nor any kind of authority or jurisdiction exercised within the dominions assigned him, so long as he adhered to the terms of his engagements.

I deny that I ever required him to keep up a body of 2000 horse, contrary to the declaration made to him by the Governor-general and Council on the 5th of July, 1775, that there should be no obligation on him to do it.

My demand, that is, the demand of the Board, was not that he should maintain any specific number of horse; but that the number

D

which

which he did maintain should be employed for the defence of the general State.

I deny that Rajah Cheyt Sing was bound by no other engagements to the Company, than for the payment of his tribute of Sicca rupees 22,66,180.

He was bound by the engagements of fealty, and of absolute obedience to every order of the government which he served. The various and repeated professions of his letters are proofs and acknowledgments of this construction of his vassalage; and his own cabuleeat, or the instrument by which he engaged to perform the duties of his Zemindarry, expresses it in the acknowledgment of the Company's sovereignty.

I deny that Rajah Cheyt Sing was a native prince of India.

Cheyt Sing is the son of a collector of the revenue of that province, which his arts, and the misfortunes of his master, enabled him to convert to a permanent and hereditary possession. This man, whom you have thus ranked amongst the princes of India, will be astonished, when he hears it, at an elevation so unlooked-for, nor less at the independent rights which your commands have assigned him; rights which are so
foreign

foreign from his conceptions, that I doubt whether he will know in what language to assert them, unless the example which you have thought it consistent with justice, however opposite to policy, to shew, of becoming his advocates against your own interests, should inspire any of your own servants to be his advisers and instructors.

I forbear to detail the proofs of these denials. In legal propriety I might perhaps claim a dispensation from it, and require the charges to be proved, not myself disprove them. But I have already disproved them in my narrative of my proceedings at Benaris, which has been long since in your hands, and is, I hope, in the hands of the public. To that I think it sufficient to refer, and to point out the ninth and following pages of the copy, which was printed in Calcutta, for a complete explanation; and I presume as complete a demonstration of the mutual relation of Rajah Cheyt Sing, the vassal and subject of the Company, and of the Company his sovereign.

The subject to which I now proceed, and on which I rest my fullest acquittal, is too delicate to admit of my entering upon it without

requesting your indulgence and pardon for whatever may appear offensive in it, and declaring, that I should have submitted in silence to the severest expressions of censure which you could pass upon me, had they been no more than expressions, and applied to real facts; but, where the censures are not applied to real facts, and are such as substantially affect my moral character, I should be myself an accomplice in the injury, if I suffered the slightest imputation to remain, which it was in my power wholly to efface.

A breach of faith necessarily implies antecedent and existing engagements, and can only be construed such by the express terms of those engagements. I have been guilty of this crime in my treatment of Cheyt Sing, or of none; and I may be allowed to regret, that, while you stated such facts as implied it, you did not in terms declare it. There is an appearance of tenderness in this deviation from plain construction, of which, however meant, I have a right to complain, because it imposes on me the necessity of framing the terms of the accusation against myself, which you have not only made, but have stated the leading argument to it so strongly,

strongly, that no one, who reads these, can avoid making it, or not know to have been intended.

But, permit me to ask, May I not presume that this deviation arose from something more than a tenderness for my character or feelings? that it was dictated by a consciousness that no such engagements existed? For, if any such did exist, why were they not produced in support of the charges?

Even the facts, which are affirmed in the resolutions, are such as must depend upon some evidence, for they cannot exist independently. If the Bengal government "pledged itself," its pledge must be contained in the written instruments which were expressly formed, and declared to define the reciprocal relation and obligation of the Rajah and the Company.

The resolutions of your honourable Court, as they stand unconnected in their original state, must be accepted as the conclusions from certain and established evidence; and this evidence, I must presume, you meant to produce in the long process of detailed argument which precedes them in your general letter. This consists of pieced extracts, from opinions delivered by me in the debates of Council,
which

which not only preceded the settlement, made with the Rajah Cheyt Sing, when his Zemindarry became the property of the Company ; but, strange as it will appear, which passed on an occasion wholly foreign from it, and at a time when the Company had not obtained the cession of the Zemindarry. At the point of the settlement your detail stops. Had it proceeded, it must have exhibited the conditions of the settlement, which would have contradicted every fact which you have asserted ; and every man of candour will believe that this was the only reason why it did not proceed. For why are my speculative opinions on the claim made upon the Nabob Affof ul Dowlah at the cession of the Zemindarry of Benaris, which I thought an infringement of a treaty already subsisting with him ; and upon the mode by which we should allow Rajah Cheyt Sing to exercise the management of his Zemindarry, when it had become the property of the Company, quoted in evidence against me ; when the actual deeds which conveyed to Cheyt Sing his possession of the Zemindarry, and all the conditions on which he held it, were the only criteria by which my conduct towards him could be tried ? The de-
bates

bates from which my opinions are extracted, are so voluminous, and my share in them bears so large a proportion, that it would take up much time and argument to prove, what I could prove, that in their collective and relative sense they are perfectly consistent, so far as they can apply at all to my subsequent conduct; but, were it otherwise, they were not to be made the rules of my conduct; and God forbid that every expression dictated by the impulse of present emergency, and unpremeditatedly uttered in the heat of party contention, should impose upon me the obligation of a fixed principle, and be applied to every variable occasion.

The wisdom of the Legislature has declared, that the whole collective body of the Governor-general and Council shall be bound by the opinions of the majority; but the doctrine implied in your quotation of my opinions is the reverse of that obligation, if my opinions were not conformable to those of a majority of the Board; and, if they were, the acts of the Board, formed on such concurrent opinions ought to be quoted as the rules of my conduct, not the opinions which only led to them.

Having

Having solemnly pronounced that Rajah Cheyt Sing had performed his engagements with the Company, and that my conduct towards him was "improper and unwarrantable," you proceed to say, that "such farther resolutions, as you may think proper to come to on this very important subject, will be communicated to us by a future conveyance." This I cannot otherwise understand than as an indication of your intention to order the restoration of Rajah Cheyt Sing to the Zemindarry of Benaris. It will be expected, after the judgement which you have passed, as an act of indispenfable justice; and, when ever this promissory declaration is made public, as it must be, if not already known, what may have been expected will be regarded as a certainty. If any thing were wanting but the express notification of your intention to confirm it, the recall of Mr Markham, who was known to be the public agent of my own nomination at Benaris, and the re-appointment of Mr Francis Fowke by your order contained in the same letter, would place it beyond a doubt. This order has been obeyed; and, whenever you shall be pleased to order the restoration of Cheyt Sing,

I will

I will venture to promise the same ready and exact submission in the other members of your Council.

Of the consequences of such a policy I forbear to speak. Most happily the wretch, whose hopes may be excited by the appearances in his favour, is ill-qualified to avail himself of them; and the force which is stationed in the province of Benaris is sufficient to suppress any symptoms of internal sedition: but it cannot fail to create distrust and suspense in the minds both of the rulers and of the people, and such a state is always productive of disorder.

But it is not in this partial consideration that I dread the effects of your commands. It is in your proclaimed indisposition against the first executive member of your first government in India. It is as well known to the Indian world as to the Court of English Proprietors, that the first declaratory instruments of the dissolution of my influence, in the year 1774, were Mr. John Bristow and Mr. Francis Fowke. By your ancient and known constitution the governor has been ever held forth and understood to possess the ostensible powers of government. All the correspondence with foreign princes is conduc-

ted in his name ; and every person, resident with them for the management of your political concerns, is understood to be more especially his representative, and of his choice : and such ought to be the rule ; for how otherwise can they trust an agent nominated against the will of his principal ; or how, knowing him to act under the variable instructions of a temporary influence, or the casual dictates of a majority, can they rely on the measures which he may propose, and which a sudden change of influence, always expected in a deviation from constitutional forms, may undo, and subject them, in every instance of their connection, to a continual fluctuation of affairs ?

When the state of this administration was such as seemed to admit of the appointment of Mr. Bristow to the residency of Lucknow, without much diminution of my own influence, I gladly seized the occasion to shew my readiness to submit to your commands. I proposed his nomination : he was nominated, and declared to be the agent of my own choice. Even this effect of my caution is defeated by your absolute command for his re-appointment, independent of me, and with the supposition
that

that I should be adverse to it. I am now wholly deprived of my official powers, both in the Province of Owd and in the Zemindarry of Benaris.

Nor will the evil stop at these lines. My general influence, the effects of which have been happily manifested for the support of your interests, is now wholly lost, or what may remain of it sustained only by the prescription of long possession, and something perhaps of personal attachment, impressed by the habits of frequent intercourse.

I almost shudder at the reflection of what might have have happened, had these denunciations, against your own minister, in favour of a man universally considered in this part of the world as justly attainted for his crimes, the murderer of your servants and soldiers, and the rebel to your authority, arrived two months earlier. You will learn, by our common dispatches, what difficulties Mahdajee Sindia has had to surmount in reconciling the different members of the Maratta state to the ratification, and even, when ratified, to the interchange of the treaty, concluded by him in May last, with this government. I dare to appeal even to your
judgement

judgement for the reply, and to ask, whether the ministers of the Peshwa, possessing the knowledge of such a circumstance, would not have availed themselves of it to withhold their consent to the treaty, either claiming to include Cheit Sing as a party in it, or either overtly or secretly supporting his pretensions, with the view of multiplying our difficulties; or, which is most probable, waiting for the event of that change in the superior government of Bengal, which such symptoms portended, before they precipitated their interests in a connection with a declining influence, which they might obviously conclude would render this, with all its other acts, obnoxious to that which succeeded it.

Their counterpart of the treaty is ratified, and in our actual possession; and, such is the character of the man whom we have made our principal and the guarantee of it, that it will insure us against any change of sentiment, which might arise, from any cause, in the breasts of his countrymen. I am happy in having been the sole instrument of the accomplishment of so great an event. It originated in a scene of universal revolt encompassing my own person: it began
with

with the immediate separation of the first power of the Maratta state from the general war, and was followed by the instant and general cessation of hostilities; in effect, by a permanent peace; for I have a right now to affirm this, having positively assured you that it would prove such, while the formal confirmation of it remained so long in a state of suspense. In every progressive state of it, it has met with obstructions which might have discouraged even the most determined perseverance; in the known indisposition of the presidency of Bombay; in the calamities of the Carnatic; in the alarming interference of the President and Select Committee of Fort St. George, by the exaggerated portrait of their affairs in a letter addressed to our minister, and sent in circulation through the midst of Deccan and Indostan, intreating him at all events, and with whatever sacrifices, to precipitate the conclusion of the treaty, and save them from destruction; but, above all, in the vehement exclamations for peace from men of every description in Great-Britain. To all these counteractions I have opposed the principle of firmness and defiance; and, aided by the peculiar talents, and wariness,

and

and incomparable perseverance, of Mr. David Anderson, I have at length brought my wishes and yours to their destined point. Perhaps with a less able minister I might yet have failed; but even the merits of his services I claim as my own; for it was my choice which called his mind into action, and my confidence that gave it its best exertion. Pardon, honourable Sirs, this digressive exultation. I cannot suppress the pride which I feel in this successful achievement of a measure so fortunate for your interests and the national honour; for that pride is the source of my zeal so frequently exerted in your support, and never more happily than in those instances in which I have departed from the prescribed and beaten path of action, and assumed a responsibility which has too frequently drawn on me the most pointed effects of your displeasure. But, however I may yield to my private feelings in thus enlarging on the subject, my motive in introducing it was immediately connected with its context, and was to contrast the actual state of your political affairs derived from a happier influence with that which might have attended an earlier dissolution of it.

It is now a complete period of eleven years since I first received the nominal charge of your affairs. In the course of it I have invariably had to contend, not with ordinary difficulties, but such as most unnaturally arose from the opposition of those very powers from which I primarily derived my authority, and which were required for the support of it. My exertions, though applied to an unvaried and consistent line of action, have been occasional and desultory: yet I please myself with the hope that, in the annals of your dominion which shall be written after the extinction of recent prejudices, this term of its administration will appear not the least conducive to the interest of the Company, nor the least reflective of the honour of the British name; and allow me to suggest the instructive reflection of what good might have been done, and what evil prevented, had due support been given to that administration which has performed such eminent and substantial services without it.

You, honourable Sirs, can attest the patience and temper with which I have submitted to all the indignities which have been heaped upon me in this long service. It was the duty of fidelity

ty which I essentially owed to it; it was the return of gratitude which I owed, even with the sacrifice of life, had that been exacted, to the Company, my original masters and most indulgent patrons. To these principles have I devoted every private feeling, and persevered in the violent maintenance of my office; because I was conscious that I possessed, in my integrity, and in the advantages of local knowledge, those means of discharging the functions of it with credit to myself, and with advantage to my employers, which might be wanting in more splendid talents; and because I had always a ground of hope that my long sufferance would disarm the prejudices of my adversaries, or the rotation of time produce that concurrence, in the crisis of your fortune with my own, which might place me in the situation to which I aspired. In the mean time there was nothing in any actual state of your affairs which could discourage me from the prosecution of this plan. There was indeed an interval, and that of some duration, in which my authority was wholly destroyed; but another was substituted in its place, and that, though irregular, was armed with the public belief of an influence invisibly upholding

upholding it, which gave it a vigour scarce less effectual than that of a constitutional power. Besides, your government had no external dangers to agitate, and discover the looseness of its composition.

The case is now most widely different. — While your existence was threatened by wars with the most formidable powers of Europe, added to your Indian enemies; and while you confessedly owed its preservation to the seasonable and vigorous exertions of this government; you chose that season to annihilate its constitutional powers. You annihilated the influence of its executive member; — you proclaimed its annihilation; — you virtually called on his associates to withdraw their support from him, and they have withdrawn it. But you have substituted no other instrument of rule in his stead, unless you suppose that it may exist, and can be effectually exercised, in the body of your Council at large; possessing no power of motion but an inert submission to the letter of your commands; which, however necessary in the wise intention of the legislature, have never yet been applied to the establishment of any original plan or system of measures, and seldom

felt but in instances of personal favour or personal displeasure.

Under such a situation, I feel myself impelled, by the same spirit which has hitherto animated me to retain my post against all the attempts made to extrude me from it, to adopt the contrary line. The season for contention is past. The present state of affairs is not able to bear it. I am morally certain, that my successor in this government, whoever he may be, will be allowed to possess and exercise the necessary powers of his station, with the confidence and support of those, who, by their choice of him, will be interested in his success. I am become a burthen to the service; and would instantly relieve it from the incumbrance, were I not apprehensive of creating worse consequences by my abrupt removal from it. Such an act would probably be considered, by Mahdajee Sindia, as a desertion of him in the instant of his accomplishment of the treaty, and defeat the purposes of it, which remain yet to be effected by his agency. I am also persuaded that it would be attended with the loss of the commander in chief, in whose presence alone I look for the restoration of [peace to the Carnatic,

which

which he, perhaps, would think too hazardous an undertaking with no other support than that of a broken government. I have now no wish remaining but to see the close of this calamitous scene, and for that I hope a few months will be sufficient. My services may afterwards be safely withdrawn; but will still be due, in my conception of what I owe to my first constituents, until they can be regularly supplied by those of my appointed successor, or until his succession shall have been made known, and the interval but short for his arrival,

It therefore remains to perform the duty which I had assigned to myself as the final purpose of this letter; to declare, as I now most formally do, that it is my desire that you will be pleased to obtain the early nomination of a person to succeed me in the government of Fort William; to declare that it is my intention to resign your service as soon as I can do it without prejudice to your affairs, after the allowance of a competent time for your choice of a person to succeed me; and to declare, that if, in the intermediate time, you shall proceed to order the restoration of Rajah Cheit Sing to the Zemeendarry, from which, by the powers I legally possessed, and

conceive myself legally bound to assert, against any subsequent authority to the contrary derived from the same common source, he was dispossessed for crimes of the greatest enormity, and your Council shall resolve to execute the order ; I will instantly give up my station and the service.

To these declarations suffer me to add this reservation : that if, in the mean time, the acts, of which I complain, shall, on a mature revision of them, be revoked, and I shall find myself possessed of such a degree of your confidence as shall enable me to support the duties of my station, I will continue in it until the peace of all your possessions shall be restored, or it shall be your pleasure to allow me to resign it.

I have the honour to be,

Honourable sirs,

Your most obedient
and faithful servant,

WARREN HASTINGS.

P. S. Upon a careful revival of what I have written, I fear that an expression, which I have used respecting the probable conduct of the Board,

Board, in the event of orders being received for the restoration of Cheit Sing, may be construed as intimating a sense of dissatisfaction applied to transactions already past. It is not my intention to complain of any one; but to vindicate my own character, and to state the difficulties of my situation. Neither do I mean, by excepting one person, to cast a censure on any others. Yet I feel, in my esteem for Mr. Wheler, and in my solicitude to avoid even the imputation of reflecting unjustly on his conduct, a duty impelling me to declare, that, in my experience of it, since the time that we were first in the habits of mutual confidence, it has been fair and honourable to myself, and zealous to the public; equally free from profession and subterfuge, and his support, given to me in every instance, equal to whatever claim I might have to it.

When Mr. Hastings wrote the preceding letter, no account had been received, in Bengal, of the very honourable and effectual support, which ten gentlemen in the direction, and 428 proprietors, had given him, in opposition to

13 directors and 75 proprietors, who voted to remove him for acts which did not originate with him. The Secretary of State forbade the Directors to send intelligence of this event to India above ten months ago, nor has it been officially transmitted to this moment.

Mr. Hastings has always declared, that he would not abdicate, or run away from, his government, while it was under the pressure of so great difficulties and such imminent dangers; but he would continue no longer than until he saw the Company safe, and peace and tranquillity restored. Great progress was made in this desirable work when his letter was written. Tippoo Saib evacuated Arcot on the 13th of March; and, on the same day, our troops took possession of the place. He has since entirely quitted the Carnatic. Sir Eyre Coote left Bengal, the 23d of March, with ten lacks of rupees and a reinforcement of European artillery. The Maratta peace was finally and fully settled, and some progress made in a treaty of alliance with the Marattas, which would, in its consequences, effectually destroy the power of Tippoo Saib. The provinces of Bengal, Bahar, Benaris, and Owde, were in perfect tranquillity.

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The revenues increasing; and the salt-revenue, from a scheme solely owing to Mr. Hastings, has increased to fifty-seven lack of rupees per annum. Very considerable retrenchments had been made in every branch of the public expenditure, and farther savings were about to take place. These great and important services were performed before there was any idea, in India, of a peace in Europe; and at a time, too, when, by the tenor of the Company's letters and the parliamentary proceedings, a dissolution of the government of Bengal appeared to be near. "What might have been done, and what evil prevented, had due support been given to that administration, which has performed such eminent and substantial services without it!"

T H E E N D.

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