

Essays On British
Policy Towards Sindh
Upto The First Afghan
War 1839

C. L. Mariwalla

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ESSAYS ON BRITISH POLICY TOWARDS
SINDH UPTO THE FIRST AFGHAN WAR
1839

By
C. L. MARIWALLA, 1947

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To

My Father-in-Law

Diwan Kansing Kundandas Lalla

FOREWORD

The Essays in the present volume have already seen the light of day, having been read, at various times, before the Sindh Historical Society. The University of Bombay must be commended – and congratulated – making possible their publication in book form. The Essays present an accurate, instructive and, on the whole, a readable and well-documented account of British Relations with Sindh in the 18th and 19th centuries.

To the impartial student of history, these relations cannot fail to appear somewhat one-sided and selfish. Till 1830 the English never really cared for Sindh except so far as its rulers, or the peoples living beyond Sindh, – Afghans, Baluchis or Persians – displayed the smallest inclination to ally themselves with the "natural enemies" of the British – French or Russian. Then Missions were hurriedly dispatched to Sindh, to cajole the Meers or coerce them. But once the danger had passed away, Sindh was forgotten – only to be remembered when the next danger arose.

About the thirties of the 19th century the horse-breeder Moorcroft recommended the opening of the Indus for purposes of Commerce. And Malcolm, Governor of Bombay, made a similar recommendation to the Government of India for a different reason – not for Commerce, but for Defence against a Russian danger, fancied or real. Sindh now leaped into a sudden importance, and, after the famous English dray-horses had served their purpose of enabling Burnes and his party to survey the Indus, a Commercial Treaty was negotiated with the Meers, and the navigation of the Indus was an accomplished fact. But the Flag either precedes or follows Trade. Within a few years of the Treaty of Commerce, family dissensions among the Talpurs, and the ever present fear of the Sikh, reconciled the Hyderabad Meers to what they had all along been fighting against – a British Residency at Shikarpur – and the political subordination of the country was all but accomplished. It only needed an Afghan War to make possible its completion.

Provincial separation has not been without its advantages to the cause of historical research, and more and more documents are now becoming available to the student for the reconstruction of Sindh History. The whole story of the British connection with this province can now be told not only fully, but with understanding and a sympathetic insight into the view point of the Meers, whose only fault, apparently, was that their country was a sort of 19th century Poland wedged in between very powerful neighbors. If it is true that the small history makes the big one, Mr. Mariwalla's articles will have fulfilled their purpose in inspiring either him, or some enthusiastic student, to give a full length picture of the Meer-jo-Raja Raj which naturally provokes contrast, – and sometimes invites comparison – with the present Raj in the oldest of India's provinces.

Karachi, 20th January 1946.

Adrian Duarts

PREFACE

I have had the opportunity recently of going through a number of works, both published and in manuscript, dealing with British Policy towards Sindh prior to its annexation in 1843 A. D. I have also had the privilege of looking into the Records of the Sindh Government dealing with the same period. A detailed perusal of these convinced me that with the help of the unpublished records available in the Record Office at Karachi and printed works of a historical nature pertaining to the years 1798-1843 better justice could be done to this important problem of Modern Indian History and the subject could be placed in a better and fairer perspective than had been the case in the attempts so far made. Hence the present attempt—*Essays on British Policy towards Sindh upto the First Afghan War, 1839*. In addition to the mere narration of events and presentation of policies that dictated and directed British connection with Sindh, I have attempted to make of these essays a live and human document by drawing attention to the exchange of presents that played so important a part in the politics of the day and some salient and interesting points in the conversations between the Ameers of Sindh and their confidants on the one hand and the British envoys on the other, which throw a flood of light on the character and ability of the parties concerned. I was greatly encouraged in my enterprise by the warm appreciation my "essays" received from Messrs. H. T. Lambrick, I. C. S., Special Hur Commissioner and A. P. LeMesurier I. C. S., Labor Commissioner in Sindh and Chief Secretary to the Government of Sindh, both of whom are keenly interested in historical research relating to Sindh.

I have purposely not brought the subject upto the Conquest of Sindh in 1843. It was only one step forward from what transpired upto 1839, but the nature and extent of the material, published and otherwise, warrant a more extensive treatment than was possible in the present volume. In course of time I hope to present the reader with another volume dealing with the period from 1839-1843.

The "essays" may not have seen the light of day in a book form but for the publication grant I obtained for them from the University of Bombay. It was not the amount that mattered but the recognition it carried that induced me to print the essays. I am indeed grateful to the University for their encouragement. I am particularly thankful to Dr. Adrian Duarte for looking into the manuscript and making valuable suggestions and for writing the Foreword. I am also thankful to Messrs. H. T. Lambrick and A.P. LeMesurier for their personal encouragement and to Mr. Mahomed Ahsan, Keeper of Records to the Sindh Government for affording me every facility to obtain the necessary information from the Provincial Government Records. To the Sindh Historical Society, Karachi, I am obliged for allowing me to print the first three essays which were originally read before that Society, and to the Modern Review for permitting me to print the last essay which appeared in that periodical under a different caption. And finally I

must thank my colleague and friend, Dr. H. I. Sadarangani, for going through the proofs, and preparing the Index. and the Manager of the 'Daily Gazette' Press and his staff for executing the work as neatly as possible.

Karachi, 30th June 1947.

C. L. Mariwalls

"The author acknowledges his indebtedness to the University of Bombay for the grant-in-aid received by him from the University towards the cost of publication of this work."

THE ENGLISH FACTORY IN SINDH 1799-1800.

The British Empire in India is the result of a series of commercial adventures which necessitated the occupation of the country if Britain's commercial aims had to be fulfilled. And these adventures are a grand spectacle indeed! A systematic growth can be perceived in the British adventures in any province which now forms a part of the British Empire in India. The first attempts are purely commercial. But when the British find that the Indian Princes are at logger-heads with each other, they perceive a substantial danger to their settlements and the purely commercial enterprise becomes a commercial-cum-political adventure. And if, unfortunately, the Indian Princes do not appreciate fundamental basis of British connection and begin to apprehend political disaster, the Britisher, having no other alternative, gets on to the third stage—the political stage, which ultimately results in the transfer of power from Indian to British authority. Such is, in a nut-shell, the history of the passage of each of the Indian Provinces from Indian domination to British control. And the little province of Sindh does not deviate from this usual path. The British Embassy in India took notice of the commercial potentialities of Sindh quite early. "The prime commodity" of Sir Thomas Roe Indigo—was easily procurable in Sindh. Soon Sindhian Saltpetre too attracted their attention. Hence British commercial enterprise in Sindh started with a 'Factory' at Tatta, the chief mart of Sindh, as early as 1635 A.D. This 'Factory' lasted upto 1662, for nearly 30 years. During this period it was commerce alone that mattered. Once again a purely commercial venture was launched by the British in Sindh after nearly a century of pause—in 1758. This 'Factory' lasted till 1775—for about 17 years. These two attempts were purely commercial and the British by their perseverance were able to revive Sindhian trade, which had greatly languished. But by the time the second 'Factory' was withdrawn, circumstances had changed. The East India Company was now not only a mere commercial body, it governed a substantial portion of India and it was necessary that the Company must keep itself informed of the movements of those powers which were likely to create trouble for it and also have friendly connections with certain Indian Princes to minimize the efforts which would win success for the Company, in case it came to quashing the quarrelsome. Hence by the time the 18th century was out, the aims of the British connection with Sindh had substantially changed. The commercial stage gave place to the commercial-cum-political stage. And the establishment of a British Residency in Sindh in 1799 had this dual purpose. This Residency lasted hardly for a year and a half. The future attempts which were in the nature of open Political Missions—in 1809, 1820, 1831 and others—mark the beginning of the last stage, which culminated in the conquest of Sindh in 1843 A.D. In this essay an attempt will be made to survey British 'adventure' of 1799 in Sindh.

The second British venture in Sindh ended in 1775, as noted above. In the very next year the Sind¹ ruler solicited a British 'Factory' in Sindh. This time the British Factors at Bombay deferred consideration of opening the 'Factory' in Sindh and informed the Kalhora Prince accordingly. Once again in August 1780 "the Prince of Scindy" invited the East India Company to resettle in his country, but again the President of the East India Company at Bombay civilly declined the invitation on the ground that there appeared no prospect of advantage "from establishing a Factory in a country where the Government was so very unsettled."² But by 1799 things had changed. Sindh had, by this time, settled down under the new ruling dynasty of the Talpur Ameers. On the other hand, it was deemed highly politic by the Bombay Government to open a 'Factory' in Sindh.³ It was not trade that mattered now, as it did formerly. It was something else that was upper-most in the mind of the Bombay Government when they thought of establishing a 'Factory' in Sindh in 1799. "With the ostensible object of furthering trade, in reality the new venture was attempted to counteract the then highly dangerous and spreading influence of Tippu Sultan and to interrupt the growing ambition of Zamanshah, the Kabul monarch, whose views seemed to threaten British Dominion in India." The British Resident appointed in 1799 found in Sindh sufficient proof and "instructive argument of the silent and serious combination of Mohamedan Powers against us (British)."⁴ At the same time he came to perceive the ambitions of Zamanshah as well. So by 1799 the aim of the British 'Factory' in Sindh had undergone a change. From a purely commercial enterprise the Sindhian 'adventure' had risen to the commercial-cum-political stage.

Zamanshah, the grandson of the great Ahmedshah Abdali, had acceded to the Kabul throne in 1792 A.D. He was quite an able commander and his movements during the very first years of his reign aroused suspicions in the mind of the East India Company. These suspicions were confirmed by the letters received from Zamanshah by the British Governors General of the time. Lord Wellesley writes as follows to Mr. Dundas:- "I have lately received a letter from Zamanshah, containing a declaration of his intention to invade Hindoostan and the peremptory demand of the assistance of the Nabob Vazier and of mine for the purpose of delivering Shah Alem from the hands of the Mahrattas, of restoring him to the throne of Delhi, and of expelling the Mahrattas from their acquisition on the south-western frontier of India. That the Shah entertains such a design is unquestionable and whatever may be the result, it is prudent to be on our guard." As early as 1796 Zamanshah came as near to the Indian capital as Lahore, at the head of 33,000 men and "struck terror into the Mahrattas and excited alarm in the English Government itself."⁵ It appeared to Sir John Shore, the Governor General, that the impending onrush of the Kabul monarch "formidably threatened British interest,"

¹ India Office Records, Home Series, Miscellaneous Vol. 182, pp. 187-90.

² *Ibid*, Vol. 158, Pp. 335-434.

³ Postans, Lt. T., *Personal Observations on Sindh*, p. 286.

⁴ India' Office Records, *op.cit.*, Vol. 333, pp. 393-602.

⁵ Mill and Wilson, *History of British India*, Vol. VI, p. 128.

but he found it difficult to decide as to the measures to be undertaken to counteract the coming danger. The Mahrattas were highly panicky at this time and so approached the British to join issue against the Afghans. But since Sir John Shore was anxious for the reduction of the Mahrattas themselves, he did not approve of joining hands with them. At the same time he feared the consequences attendant on the success of Zamanshah. The Governor General also feared a formidable increase of Mahratta power as a result of the Mahrattas prevailing over the Shah by their own exertions. Lastly, the most alarming consequence all, which disturbed the mind of Sir John Shore, was the possibility of the French leader, who at that time governed a great portion of Sindhia's dominions, in his name, at which the Afghans were now aiming, raising himself to sovereignty over the territories in dispute, in the midst of the commotion which was likely to arise in case of an open rupture between the Mahrattas and the Afghans.⁶ So while the Governor General was yet making up his mind as to the course of action he was to adopt, a rebellious brother of Zamanshah forced him to effect a retreat to his capital, by raising the banner of revolt there. So the danger was for sometime postponed. Once again, in 1798, well-founded rumors were afloat of Zamanshah's invasion of India in October of the same year. "The English Government deemed it their duty to take every precaution against the possibility of an event which, combined with the designs of Tipoo and the French, might become of the most serious importance." By this time a man of a different caliber came to be at the helm of affairs on behalf of the British in India. Lord Wellesley after surveying the situation resolved on a comprehensive plan of defence against the coming enemy. Endeavors were used to prevail upon Sindhia to put his dominions in the best posture of defence. At the same time British forces were kept ready to prevent the Afghan foe from entering the Nawab Vazier's dominions in Oudh. A British Politico-commercial Mission was sent to Persia with the object of inducing the Persian Shah, Baba Khan, to keep renewed his attacks on Khorassan, a part of the Afghan dominions. In the mutual Treaty with Persia it was stipulated, "that the King of Persia should lay waste with a great army the country of the Afghans if ever they should proceed to the invasion of India, and conclude no peace without engagement binding them to abstain from all aggressions upon the English;"⁷ in lieu of which, "the English were bound, whenever the King of the Afghans or any person of the French nation should make war on the King of Persia, to send as many cannon and war-like stores as possible, with necessary apparatus, attendants and inspectors and deliver them at one of the ports of Persia." "The commercial part of the Treaty was of course of slight importance." Lastly, the British needed base for obtaining authentic information regarding the movements of Zamanshah and Lord Wellesley, the Earl of Mornington, felt that a 'Factory' in Sindh would answer the desired end, since Sindh was an unwilling subordinate of the Afghan ruler. The Governor General in his letter to the Honorable Jonathan Duncan, the Governor of Bombay, dated 8th October 1798, writes as follows in this connection: – "It has been suggested to me that a further

⁶ Mill and Wilson. *op. cit.*, Vol. VI, pp. 127-28.

⁷ *Ibid*-Vol. VI, p. 129

diversion of the Shah's force might be created by our affording certain encouragement to the nations occupying the delta and the lower parts of the Indus, who have been stated to be much disaffected to the Government of the Shah. I wish you to give this point the fullest and the most serious consideration; to state to me your ideas upon it and in the meanwhile to take any immediate steps which shall appear proper and practicable to you."⁸ And as a sort of reminder to the above, the Governor General wrote to the Governor of Bombay as follows, in a letter dated 24th October 1798:— "With a view to the same object, I must repeat my desire that you will immediately employ all practicable means of exciting the people of Sindh and any other tribes occupying the countries which border on Multan and Kandhar, to alarm Zamanshah for the safety of his possessions in those quarters. These people have been stated to be generally ripe for revolt against the authority of the Shah; and possibly they might be induced by a liberal supply of arms and ammunition, and by the countenance of this Government, to take advantage of his absence in Hindustan."⁹ The Honorable Jonathan Duncan, the British Governor of Bombay, busied himself with the new task set to him. He thought of deputing Agha Abdul Hassan, a merchant-diplomat a merchant-diplomat of Bushire, as the British Vakeel to the Court of Sindh, for obtaining the necessary permission for the opening of a British 'Factory' in Sindh, with ulterior political motives. Accordingly, in the early part of 1799, the Agha was summoned and he gladly accepted the offer, assuring the Governor of Bombay of the success of his Mission. He carried two letters from the Governor, one to the address of Meer Fateh Ali Khan, the eldest brother of the ruling family in Sindh, and another to Meer Ghoolam Ali Khan, styled as the broker of Meer Fateh Ali Khan. In his letter to Meer Fateh Ali, the Honorable Jonathan Duncan explained the object of the visit of a Vakeel on the part of the English to their Court and emphasized the mutual benefits which would accrue to both parties due to the impetus which a British 'Factory' in Sindh would give to the trade of the Ameer's dominions. In this letter, soliciting a British 'Factory' in Sindh, the Bombay Governor wrote in the following strain to the Talpur Chief:— "Let me bring to your Highnesses consideration that since the Author of all Existence has woven the threads of friendship and affection into an everlasting brocade for the sons of Adam, and with His invaluable garment, has invested the whole human race, these socialities have become an indispensable obligation on us all."¹⁰ And to Meer Ghoolam Ali, he wrote:— "After presenting you with every kind wish that friendship and sincerity can suggest, I proceed to acquaint you that I have learnt from the worthy and faithful Abul Hassan, merchant of Bushire, the many eminent and splendid qualities for which you are so justly distinguished. He also informed me that he was for sometime fostered in the shade of your favor and made me sensible how much the extension of trade and the protection of the merchant is the object of your kindness and attention. I have, therefore, determined once more to send to Tatta, on the same footing as formerly, a gentleman in the Honorable Company's Service for the general purpose of commerce and to link

⁸ Montgomery Martia. *Dispatches, Minutes and Correspondence of the Marquis of Wellesley*, Vol. I, pp. 286-87.

⁹ *Ibid.* Vol. I, Pp. 306-09.

¹⁰ Parliamentary Papers, A. Burnes & others on a Mission to Sindh A. C. 1835-37, Reports Commercial, P. 9.

more firmly the connection between us. I now likewise dispatch the faithful Abu! Hassan to adjust these matters, in full hopes that the result will be for the mutual interest of both parties. Whenever, therefore, you have come to a decision, favor me with your answer and I shall send the appointed person accordingly."¹¹ After sending Agha Abul Hassan to Sindh, the Governor of Bombay apprised the Governor General of the steps taken by him with regard to diverting Zamanshah's attention by exciting the Sindh rulers against him, in which connection the Bombay Governor received the following communication, Fort St. George, dated 7th April 1799, from the Governor General, entirely approving his plan and issuing directions for the conduct in future: – "I approved your instructions to Agha Abul Hassan, sent on a mission to Sindh, in consequence of my former suggestion. The prospect of establishing a British Factory in that country appears to me to be very desirable, not so much with a view to commercial as to political advantages. I therefore wish that you should by all means encourage the favorable disposition of Futteh Ali Khan, and endeavor if possible, to settle a Factory in Sindh. Whenever such a Factory shall be established your attention will of course be directed to facilitate the means of communication with it, as the most probable mode of obtaining authentic information relating to Zemaun Shah. I do not see the necessity of entering into any engagements with Futteh Ali Khan, which might hereafter impose on us the obligation of supporting him against Zemaun Shah by any further exertion than by furnishing him with arms and ammunition. To this extent, I authorize you to afford him whatever assistance may appear necessary. Assistance of this nature will probably be sufficient to induce him to admit a British Factory; but if the Factory cannot be established otherwise than by contracting extensive engagements for the eventual support of Futteh Ali, the object must be relinquished."¹²

Agha Abul Hassan arrived at Hyderabad on 24th February 1799 and resided with Syed Ibrahim Shah, the Vazier. Meer Fateh Ali Khan was out on his *shikar* and hence nothing transpired for the next week. The Meer returned on 1st March and the Agha was allowed an audience the very next day. He was very well received at the Court – so he reported to the Bombay Governor in a letter from Hyderabad, dated 17th March 1799. On this occasion he took the presents given to him by the Honorable Jonathan Duncan for the Ameers, "arranged in tea-boards," including glass and China vessel – which he laid before the Ameers, "distributing some among the rest of the Company, according to their rank."¹³ And lo! the British Vakeel perceived from the 'warmth of their applauses,' "the universal satisfaction the presents had wrought at the Sindh Court." After due salutations, the Agha presented his petition and the Meer after consulting his Vazier Ibrahim Shah, who favored the new relationship, assured the Agha that the English would be granted the same facilities for a 'Factory' in Sindh as had been enjoyed by

¹¹ Selections from the Records of the Commissioner in Sindh, File 203, p. 500.

¹² Montgomery, *op.cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 518-10.

¹³ Selections *op. cit.* - S. File 203, pp. 501-10.

them in the days of the Kalhoras. The Agha was further assured that the "new institution should experience their kindness in a much larger degree."¹⁴

In his letter dated 17th March 1799, Agha Abul Hassan apprise; the Governor of Bombay of the receipt of a Parwana from the Ameers in favor of the English regarding Customs etc., and informs him that the Ameers had granted this Parwana because of the advantages the country was likely to derive from trade and therefore requests the Governor to dispatch a Resident for Sindh immediately and adopt such other means as would convince the Ameers that the object of the English in establishing a 'Factory' in Sindh was merely trade. In this connection he asks the Governor to show every regard to Agha Mohamed Beg, who was being deputed to Bombay by the Ameers to make some purchases for them. Further, the Agha mentions the articles in great request in Sindh and asks the Governor to send per the British Resident to Sindh large quantities of the following, to give real trade semblance to the British Residency:—Sugar-candy, black-pepper, cinnamon, articles of China-ware of the best as well as inferior kinds, lead, tin, iron; cotton and English steel, different kinds of cloth— bright maroon, red, green, sea-green, yellow, nut-colored and gulkhary. Finally, in his post-script the Agha adds, "Honorable Sir, His Highness the Meer Sahib has made a request for one middling striking Chamber and one watch ... Meer Ibrahim Shah has likewise requested a sedan chair;" and requests attention to these requests.¹⁵

Immediately on the receipt of the above letter along with the Parwana and letters from Meers Fateh Ali and Ghoolam Ali, the Honorable Jonathan Duncan appointed Mr. Nathan Crowe as British Resident for Sindh and expedited his departure for the new post. Thus the British connection with Sindh was re-established.

By the Parwana dated 6th March 1799, under the seal of Meer Fateh Ali Khan, the English were to house their 'Factory' at Tatta in the same building wherein the old English Factory had been housed in the 18th century. Originally during the period 1758-75 the English had deposited their goods in a warehouse at Tatta, but due to the unsettled condition which developed in Sindh a few years after the establishment of the 'Factory', it was quite unsafe to deposit the Honorable Company's goods in the original warehouse and so the Sindh Factors had removed all their goods to the new house built by their Vakeel Bumba in 1768.¹⁶ This is what the Agha has to say on the matter;— "The old Factory, as I hear, was built at the expense of the broker without any allowance from the Resident, except perhaps Rs. 100- per month. This monthly rent I intend considerably to reduce." The Agha also reports that the Factory-house needed repairs, "but as the landlord's son is in indigent circumstances, it will be necessary for the outlay to fall on me."¹⁷ The Agha in his letter of 17th March 1799, requests the Governor of

¹⁴ Selections, *op. cit.* S, File 203, pp. 501-10.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Journal Sindh Historical Society*, Karachi, Vol. III, No. 4, p. 79.

¹⁷ Selections, *op. cit.* - S. File 203, pp. 501-10.

Bombay to send him a flag-staff and other necessary apparatus to erect the Honorable Company's Ensign.¹⁸ According to the Parwana, the English also received four Bigahs of land, 'without the town of Tatta,' for a garden. The Agha remained in Sindh so long as the British 'Factory' lasted, to look after its interests. The first consignment of goods for Sindh arrived in May 1799, per the East India Vessel 'Drake' and the goods were valued at Rs. 69,805/-. Thus the English started plying their trade in Sindh once again.¹⁹

It was in August 1799, that the full Parwanas were issued to the English detailing the privileges the English had enjoyed during the time of Ghoolam Shah Kalhora and which had now been granted to them by the Talpur Ameers. In addition to the earlier privileges the Ameers gave to the Resident a Farman for establishing a 'Factory' at Karachi. The English were allotted "a spot of ground for a country-house to the English Factory and four bigahs of ground for a garden outside the Fort of Currachee, with exemption from land and tree tax".²⁰

By the establishment of an English 'Factory' in Sindh, the Indian merchants were certainly affected. And they started filling the cars of the rulers against the English. The English Resident visited the Ameers' Court periodically and it is evident from his letter dated 7th May 1800, written from Karachi, to the Governor of Bombay, that he was not treated well by the Ameers during his visit prior to that of March 1800, because the Ruling Family had started doubting the honesty of purpose of the English.²¹ The Ameers had given to the English facilities for trade in good faith and when they were told by reliable men at Court that the English had ulterior political motives behind this external show of commerce, they felt aggrieved and hence the uncordial reception of the English Resident. Mr. Nathan Crowe soon realized the gravity of the situation and started handling English affairs in a different and more approved manner. He visited the Court again in March 1800. By this time the rumors about English designs were subsiding and hence the Ameers too seemed favorably inclined towards the English. "I was gratified when I waited upon them, by finding their access divested of the studied difficulty and their behavior of the affected severity I had formerly experienced." The Resident did not lose this excellent opportunity for winning the goodwill of the Sindhian rulers. He presented each of the four brothers, the Ruling Family, with suitable presents in addition to the fire-arms and powder and shot which they had ordered. Each of the courtiers too received a share from the British bounty, according to his rank. Meer Fateh Ali Khan received presents worth Rs. 1045/-, the presents for Meer Ghoolam Ali were valued at Rs. 849/-, those for Meer Karam Ali were worth Rs. 735/-, and lastly Meer Murad Ali was the recipient of presents valued at Rs. 735/-. The Queen Dowager too was not forgotten on this occasion. She received a piece of China Damask, one of Khard-Baft, four of Pelongs and glass-ware, costing in all Rs. 175/-. In all, the

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, S. File 203, pp. 420-25.

²⁰ India office Records, *op.cit.*, Vol. 470, pp. 235-301.

²¹ India office Records *op.cit.*, Vol. 383, pp. 393-602.

presents on this occasion were valued at Rs. 4342/-.²² Finding the Ameers in a proper frame of mind, the Resident tried to remove all the misapprehensions they had regarding the English. The Indian merchants had brought home to the rulers that the one proof of the fact that the English had ulterior motives behind the trade maneuvers lay in the small value of the business transacted by the English during the period that their 'Factory' had been working in Sindh. The small value of the trade transactions of the English thus emphasized, convinced the Ameers, 'that conquest and not commerce was our view.'²³ Mr. Crowe explained this matter pointing out that that being the beginning of the new connection with Sindh, they could: not fully gauge the requirements of the country until after sufficient experience had been gained. And at the same time he stressed the point that the field was already occupied by able and hostile competitors and much caution and circumspection therefore became necessary, and assured the Ameers that the near future would belie the suspicions of the Indian merchants.²⁴ Meer Fateh Ali Khan, the eldest of the Ruling Family, was satisfied with the explanations of the English Resident and showed his proof of "the further kindness to the new institution", by granting two new Parwanas dated 12th April 1800. One of them ensured for the "Honorable Company's Residency the highest position in Currachee in mercantile privileges", by remitting one third of the fee of Foujdaree, the whole of the fee of Moajdaree and suspending the fee of Mree. The second Parwana conferred on the English Resident: "a mark of rank and confidence greater than that enjoyed by the highest of Baloochee Chiefs in Sindh who, unless in command of the fort at Currachee, could not enter the gates until disarmed." According to this Parwana the British Resident could get admission to Karachi Fort even when armed.²⁵ At his departure the British Resident received for the Bombay Governor the present of a valuable horse from the Ameer and a gold mounted scimitar, along with a costly Kamarband from the Prince's own waist, for himself. The privileges granted to the English go to show that the Ameers were honest in their efforts to revive trade in their dominions. But the British Resident was all the time alert on his political mission. In the letter in which he informs his master regarding the new privileges, he assures him that he had carefully concealed the British view of "making this Government a Political Engine" and had "as assiduously tried to study the possibility of converting it to such purpose." In the same letter the Resident glibly speaks of the great political advantages which could be derived from the Sindh Residency, when he ought to have been dreaming only of commercial possibilities, for which the Parwanas had been granted to him. In his 'humble judgment' six solid advantages would accrue to the English from their Residency in Sindh: –

FIRST. Zaman Shah's attention would be drawn to the new English 'Factory' in Sindh. This would act as a check on his designs on India.

²² India office Records *op.cit.*, Vol. 383, Pp. 393-602.

²³ India office Records, *op.cit.*, Vol. 396, Pp. 303-602.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Ibid.*

SECOND. In case the British ever took offensive against the Afghan Empire, a riper friendship with the Sindhian Chiefs would secure for the English an easy passage for troops, if not direct help of the Sindhian Forces.

THIRD. If at any time any Sindhian Prince should think of liberating his dominions from the yoke of tribute to the Afghan Ruler and of expanding his dominions, the English would be useful helpers. to him and consequently they could look forward to a handsome reward for their services.

FOURTH. By being in Sindh the English had a safe ground to create a breach in case of a Mahomedan rise against the English.

FIFTH. The English could easily subdue any Mahratta rebellion with a Residency in Sindh.

SIXTH. Lastly, the English could keep an effective watch on Zaman Shah and secure reliable information about his movements from their Residency in Sindh.²⁶

But it was not as easy to get information of the movements of the Afghan ruler as Mr. Nathan Crowe, the British Resident in Sindh, had at first thought and reported. He himself realized his mistake in coming to such a hasty conclusion and he wasted no time in correcting himself. In a letter to the Governor of Bombay, the Sindh Resident writes as follows:— "Upon recurring to my communications by the 'Drake' etc. which were the result of a short experience, confused by many avocations, I have to accuse myself of much too sanguine a calculation of the facility of investigating the state of Zemaunshah's country and spying into the Politicks of his Court. But the error is pardonable as arising from circumstances, which I had not at the time, the opportunity of discovering and therefore could not take into account, namely, the suspicion of this Government and the active malignity of those hostile to the Residency. I found myself so narrowly watched and so little able to rely upon any body that I could not pursue a particular train of enquiry or indulge much in general curiosity, without raising an alarming idea to the Government of some mysterious purpose in my deputation and damping that which it appeared to me was the primary object of my duty to acquire."²⁷ It was pretty hard for the British Resident to convey news of the Afghan dominions to his benefactors at Bombay. But he was a man of courage and skill and he felt that if he could convince the Ameers that the purpose of the Residency was trade, then the reports of those who opposed the existence of the Residency would not bear much value. And he set himself to that task—the task of keeping the Ameers in good humor.

²⁶ India office Records, *op.cit.*, Vol. 333, pp. 393-602.

²⁷ India office Records, *op.cit.*, Vol. 333, pp. 393.602.

He succeeded admirably. The cordiality with which he was received at the Sindh Court in March 1800, the generous attitude of the Ameers towards the Residency as shown by the grant of two Parwanas, placing the Residency on a high pedestal in matters mercantile as well as social, and lastly the easy informality in his June visit, convinced Mr. Crowe that he could thence forward ply his trade without much hindrance. He periodically reported the movements of the Afghan ruler to his Chief at Bombay. During March, 1800, he informed the Honorable Jonathan Duncan that the troops of the Shah of Persia were marching for the occupation of Khorassan.²⁸ At the same time he reported the growing discontent among the Afghan nobility due to the ambitions of the Afghan Vazier, Wufadar Khan, in whose favors Zaman Shah had for sometime past resigned the principal duties of the empire, to be able to devote his time to religion. further reported that the Vazier was said to be responsible for the , beheading of the first five nobles of the Afghan State, and that these executions had caused great discontent in the Afghan forces.²⁹ In his letter of 31st July 1800, the British Resident reported the positive intelligence of Zaman Shah's taking the field against the Persians who had arrived at Herat. He further informed the Bombay Governor, in the same letter, that Shah Mahmood, a brother of Zaman Shah, had raised the banner of revolt and "has appeared in another part of Khorassan and drawn to his standard several disaffected chiefs."³⁰ And to explain fully why some of the Afghan chieftains had forsaken Zaman Shah, Mr. Crowe wrote:— "Within these three months Zaman Shah has split much of the blood of his Court and amongst at least a dozen of his eminent nobles, who have been cut off, his former Vizier, Ameer-ul-Molk, a character generally beloved, has been included. The cause of these executions is a profound secret to all, but the King and his minister are daily more and more deprecated. The latter, it is justly concluded by everybody, is intent upon elevating himself and without the attack of the Persians, there is little doubt, from internal circumstances, that there will be soon some revolution in the Afghan Government."³¹ On 31st August 1800, Mr. Crowe. furnished further news to his master. He wrote to say that a messenger, who arrived from Khorassan just then, informed him that Baba Khan, the Persian Shah, had sent a manifesto to Zaman Shah to hand over Herat and its dependencies to him or else 'let force decide when persuasions fail'. In this manifesto the Shah of Persia made it clear that he had sided Shah Mahmood, since he had sought refuge at his Court and he was quite justified in supporting Shah Mahmood. The messenger further informed the British Resident that the Persian Shah had placed a force of not less than 40,000 troops at the disposal of Shah Mahmood and another force of 10,000 under a discontented. Afghan nobleman, who had joined Shah Mahmood. Further, Mr. Crowe informed the Governor of Bombay that "intelligence is just arrived that an accommodation had taken place' and Zaman Shah was retracing steps from Herat. The British Resident in this same letter of 31st August 1800, reported the receipt of a "Khelat" by Meer Fateh Ali Khan, as also of a note from

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ India office Records, *op.cit.*, Vol. 338, pp. 393-602.

³¹ *Ibid.*

Zaman Shah, in which the Afghan ruler wrote in inflated language how his mere approach had struck terror, among the Persians and disposed them to sue for peace.³² On 29th October 1800, the British Resident in Sindh reported that the Afghan ruler "is positively at Paishawar with his army and artillery and meditates an attack of the Seiks or a visit to Sindh."³³ And as a result of this move, the Ameers were "in such a state of despair, from apprehension of the King's entering Sindh, that they had refused themselves to all public visits, forsaken all their customary entertainments and remained in a mournful state of preparation, to fly at a moment's warning." And during all this time Mr. Nathan Crowe did not remain inactive in the matter of knowing the attitude of the Ameers of Sindh in case the British launched active hostilities against Zaman Shah—their formal suzerain. As early as May 1800, he reported to Governor Duncan as follows:— "I should like, I said to Mirza Ismael, the son of Ibrahim Shah, to have his opinion in what character the Prince's friendship would appear, were anything to offend the English and determine them to hostilities against Zemaun Shah? Such a circumstance, he said, would be, I might suppose, too desirable to the Prince to require any apprehensions."³⁴ And he adds his own comment, "Mirza Ismael could only corroborate what was evident on a little reflection to any one, that this Government must have a material interest in seeing the King employed."³⁵

It must, however, be admitted that Mr. Crowe was sufficiently careful to keep up the mercantile show of his residency. On every opportunity offered to him he informed his master what things were in request in Sindh. He found Sindh a goodly mart for the sale of British woollens. The people of Sindh were rather too poor to enjoy British woollens themselves, but since Sindh was a part of the Afghan Empire, the Afghan merchants found it easy to buy their woollens if they could, in Sindh. At the same time the Talpur Ameers found it quite profitable to pay a part of their tribute in woollens to the Afghan Chief. And when Mr. Crowe furnished the Ameers with musters of British woollens, Meer Fateh Ali "gave me encouragement to hope that he would take annually a quantity from the amount of 50,000 to that of 200,000 of rupees."³⁶ Mr. Crowe found "that independently of the prospect of a mart for British woollens," Sindh had "an annual demand to the amount of at least Rs. 400,000" for articles like British staples, China sugar, Malabar pepper etc.³⁷ which the English could easily exploit to their advantage. Thus politics were combined with trade in the British Residency in Sindh of 1799.

But a storm against the English was brewing in Sindh. On 18th August 1800, the English Resident received an order from the Ameers, to close down his 'Factory' at Karachi

³² India office Records, *op.cit.*, Vol. 338, pp. 393-602

³³ India office Records, *op.cit.*, Vol. 333, Pp. 383-602.

³⁴ *Ibid*, Vol. 474; pp. 147-170.

³⁵ *Ibid*.

³⁶ *Ibid*.

³⁷ India office Records, *op.cit.*, Vol. 474, pp. 147-170.

immediately, and forthwith proceed to Tatta and confine his commercial transactions to that place, as was the case in the time of Ghoolam Shah Kalhora.³⁸ Severe instructions were issued to the Commandant of Karachi in this connection. Finding therefore that any hesitation or evasion would occasion serious indignity to the Honorable Company's name, the Resident left Karachi, at the earliest convenience, for Tatta – on 19th August 1800. The goods at Karachi were hurriedly removed and some of them were sent back to Bombay. On 17th August, the dependants of the English 'Factory' were not allowed to enter Karachi. On 27th August, the Munshi, broker and some other English dependants, who were proceeding to Tatta with documents and other things from Karachi, were attacked on the road and severely dealt with. The documents and moneys were taken away. Certain circumstances had conspired against the English. The Ameers had been assailed by letters from Zamaun Shah, the Rajas of India, Meer Sohrab of Khairpur, the ruler of Kutch, the Muscat Government, as also from Bhonsle, "filling the Prince's ears with formidable stories of our – English – insidious and encroaching nature and designs from our first getting a footing in India," and "remonstrating with them for admitting Englishmen and warning them of the consequences of giving us – English – a footing on the coast." These repeated admonitions strengthened by the news of the British having taken possession of Surat without a sufficient cause, and backed by the disaffected part of the Sindh Durbar had stricken the rulers with panic. "The pain of alarm was no longer supportable," and hence that 'brutal' quit order from Karachi. Meer Fateh Ali Khan was against this step being taken, as he had pledged his word with the English, but as the Ameers were ever accommodating to each other the order had been passed.³⁹ Mr. Crowe feeling rather insulted at this daring misdemeanor on the part of the Ameers of Sindh, advised the Bombay authorities "to take Currachee" or stop transactions with the port of Karachi for a season. Soon after this important incident "a barge arrived on 8th September 1800, for my (Crowe's) accommodation upto Hyderabad," an invitation to visit the Court in order to appreciate the circumstances that led to the quit order being pawed, having been received earlier and accepted.⁴⁰ The reception of the British Resident at the Court was very cordial. The Resident was explained the reasons of the quit order and it was clear that the Ameers did not mean any insult by the summary behavior by which the British were removed from Karachi. Mr. Crowe was quite vehement in his opposition. At last the misunderstanding was cleared and the English Resident returned to Tatta smitten by an ague. Mr. Crowe was quite satisfied with the interview. He wrote as follows in this connection: – "The result was as successful as I could wish," the Prince promising to dispatch a deputation to Bombay to explain the expulsion order.⁴¹ From the English point of view the quit order was certainly an insult, but still for the sake of. political exigencies, no serious account of it was taken, for to Mr. Crowe's, "if the friendship of the Prince be the more desirable object and deserving of every sacrifice, this occasion passed over must attach it forever,

³⁸ *Ibid*, Vol. 335, pp. 383-608.

³⁹ *India Office Records*, op.cit., Vol. 388, Pp. 393-602.

⁴⁰ *Ibid* Vol. 474, pp. 147-170.

⁴¹ *Ibid*.

it should be supposed," no definite reply was received and the Residency continued to function.⁴²

It seems that the English had started the Sindhian adventure under unlucky auspices. The quarrel had just been patched, the wound was healing, when suddenly a new order arrived from the Sindh Court on 29th October 1800. Mr. Nathan Crowe received a letter from the Ameers that the English must forthwith close down their 'Factories' in Sindh within 15 days, as an order had been received from Zaman Shah in which the Afghan ruler disapproved of the action of the Ameers in admitting the English in Sindh. Zaman Shah wrote as follows to Meer Fateh Ali Khan:— "It has been represented at our Presence that you have admitted the Goomashtahs of the English into Sindh and that they have established their Factory at Tatta and are employed in trade. Since the aforementioned English are hostile to the established Faith and enemies to Royal prosperity, you must therefore immediately at the sight of this, without remissness or delay, appoint and send some severe officers to turn them out from Sindh and Tatta, that not a trace of them remains in the country and in case you should be slow in your obedience to this order, then Uktur Khan to whom another order is issued on the subject, will send some resolute people of his own to drive them out."⁴³ The Resident was therefore requested by the Ameers to withdraw his 'Factory' during the prescribed period or else anything might be expected in consequence. Mr. Crowe realized the peril and by 3rd November 1800, the English 'Factory' at Tatta was vacated and within a few days the Resident left Sindh with the goods, for Bombay.⁴⁴ Thus the British adventure in Sindh of 1799 came to a premature end.

The East India Company by their 'Adventure to Sind' suffered an 'apparent loss of Rs. 1,09,659.'⁴⁵ Out of this amount Rs. 23,145 had been spent in giving presents to the Ameers and the courtiers of the Sindh Court to win their favors.⁴⁶ The English had thus derived at an 'apparent loss' a superb experience of the Ameers of Sindh. By this short venture of 1799 the British were convinced that it was advisable to send direct Political Missions to Sindh rather than carry on political investigations under the garb of commercial enterprise.

⁴² *Ibid*, Vol. 335, pp. 303-402.

⁴³ India Office Records, *op.cit.*, Vol. 338, pp. 393-402.

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, Vol. 474, pp. 203-207.

⁴⁵ Selections, *op.cit.*, S. File 203; pp: 520-25.

⁴⁶ *Ibid*.

SETON, SMITH & SADDLER MISSIONS TO SINDH 1801-1820.

As the 18th century was spending itself out and giving place to the 19th, the British Empire in India was threatened with an invasion from the north-west. At first the dread of an Afghan invasion disturbed the mind of the British Administrators in India, but as the new century dawned, they were afflicted, in turn, by fear of French and Russian designs on India. Hence the north-west frontier attracted immense attention during the whole of the 19th century. A particular policy was followed for the first quarter of the new century, but a new and more aggressive policy was subsequently adopted. The province of Sindh was affected by both these policies. In this essay an attempt will be made to trace British relations with Sindh during 1801-1820, as a result of the general north-west frontier policy adopted by the Governors-General in the first quarter of the 19th century.

Since the overthrow of the Kalhoras in Sindh by the Talpur Ameers in the last quarter of the 18th century, the last of the ruling Kalhoras, Mian Abdul Nabi, had sought the aid of the neighboring States to win back his lost kingdom. But all such attempts had proved futile. Abdul Nabi tried his luck for the last time by inducing the Afghan nobles to persuade the Kabul Chief to give him a helping hand. Despite previous experience of the Mian, the Afghan monarch afforded him aid, but the Mian was found as incompetent as before. Yet, these several incursions into their territories and the interest of the Afghan Sovereign in Mian Abdul Nabi created an alarm in the minds of the Ameers and it was primarily with a view to counteract the danger from the north-west that Meer Fateh Ali Khan agreed to afford facilities for commerce to the E.I. Co.'s 'Factory' in his dominions in 1799. But as soon as the Ameers were apprised of the 'encroaching' nature of the English, they felt greatly disturbed. Meer Ghoolam Ali Khan, in the words of Agha Abul Hassan, 'was like a man suffocated with the oppression of his fears and begged in a piteous strain that every dispatch might be used towards getting the Factory from Carrachee removed, for, the pain of alarm was no longer supportable.'⁴⁷

Soon after the withdrawal of the English 'Factory' from Karachi, the British Resident, Mr. Nathan Crowe, was unceremoniously asked to withdraw from Sindh, due to the peremptory orders the Ameers had received from their sovereign, the Afghan Chief, in this connection and they felt that it was better to be subordinate to Afghanistan than to conciliate the English. The English felt insulted at the treatment meted out to them by the Ameers; they however remained quiet, not being sure if the conquest of Sindh would be to their advantage, though such a proposal had been made to them in 1799.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ India Office Records, *op.cit.*, Vol. 333, pp. 393-602.

⁴⁸ *Ibid*, Vol. 474. pp. 143-170

The Ameers, however, could not afford to remain aloof from the English. As the 19th century dawned, the danger of an Afghan invasion of the Ameers' dominion became imminent. Accordingly, the Talpur Chiefs sought the aid of Persia, which was readily promised. But before the Persian force reached the confines of Sindh, the Ameers had effected a compromise with Shah Shuja, the Kabul monarch, in 1803.⁴⁹ Now, the Talpur Chiefs apprehended some trouble from their allies, the Persians, as they could not be quietened without some payment. The Ameers found it to their advantage 'to oppose one powerful friend to another-British India to Persia,'⁵⁰ and accordingly Meer Ghoolam Ali Khan, who occupied the Sindh *masnad* at this time, sent a Vakeel to Bombay with a view to seek the renewal of the former commercial connection with Sindh. During this short period of four years, 1800-1803, the Ameers had kept up correspondence with the British, specially with Nathan Crowe, the former British Resident in Sindh. This correspondence bears testimony to the anxiety of the Ameers to keep up a friendly connection with the English.⁵¹ But the English were smarting under pain and they wanted an opportunity to hit back. The Sindh Vakeel arrived at Bombay but he could hardly have received a very cordial reception. However, negotiations were started and the English put forth a tall claim for Rs. 1,09,760 as the loss suffered by them in the 'Sindh Adventure' of 1799. The Sindh Vakeel of course was not authorized to entertain any such claims and accordingly he presented some arguments, specially against the amount regarding the presents distributed among the Sindh Ameers, but all were brushed aside and the claim remained. The Vakeel returned disappointed after a pretty long stay at Bombay.⁵²

The visit of a Vakeel on behalf of the Ameers of Sindh was yet fresh in the minds of the British authorities in India, when they became alarmed at the prospect of a French invasion, through Persia, of their territories in India. Since the offensive and defensive Treaty with Persia by Malcolm in the last year of the 18th century, to counteract the evil designs of Zaman Shah, the Kabul monarch, on the British possessions in India, the British-Indian Government had gone to sleep, in spite of repeated requisitions from Persia for help against its enemies. Russia had been harassing the Persian Shah and annexing Persian dominion piece by piece to its increasing possessions, to partly fulfill the ambitious designs conceived by the capacious mind of Peter the great, for founding an empire in the East. The Persians never expected that the British Indian Government would forsake them in the hour of their peril. But the British had realized quite early the blunder of their having committed themselves to help the Persians against their enemies, and once they realized that the danger of an Afghan invasion existed no more, they paid no heed to the Persian demands for help. The British Indian Government,' writes Kaye, 'was either too busy or too indifferent to him' – the Persian Shah.⁵³ The

⁴⁹ Kalich Beg-Mirza, *History of Sindh*, Vol. II, p. 209.

⁵⁰ Mill and Wilson, *op.cit.*, Vol. VII, p. 186.

⁵¹ India Office Records, *op.cit.*, Vol. 175, p. 58.

⁵² Selections, *op.cit.*, S. File 203, pp. 320-25.

⁵³ Kaye, *The History of the War in Afghanistan*, Vol. 1. p. 45.

Shah of Persia was in a fix. Relying on the British word he had unequivocally rejected the overtures of the French for an alliance to launch a combined Franco-Persian attack on India, when in 1799, the British Envoy visited Tehran for contracting a friendly treaty. The Persian Shah had gone to the length of pointing out to the French emissaries that if Napoleon appeared in person in Tehran, he would be denied admission to the centre of the Universe. The French emissaries did not, however, sit quiet in spite of such a blunt reply and continued to offer overtures to the Persian Shah for a friendly alliance. 'The energetic liberality of the French indeed contrasted favorably with British supineness.'⁵⁴

The Shah of Persia could wait no longer. He was afraid of Russian chastisement. Georgia had been fleeced from Persia by the Russians in 1800. This had disturbed the Shah greatly and he in his fury got the Russian Governor-General of Georgia murdered. New forfeitures of dominion seemed inevitable, the righteous result of an act of such perfidy. He therefore sought the aid of the French before the year 1805 was out. The French were ever anxious to have Persia as their ally, as Napoleon at that time was attacking Russia and he thought it worthwhile to lead a combined attack of Frenchmen and Persians against this common enemy – Russia. He found Persian overtures quite opportune and so sent a Mission under General Gardanne to Tehran. A treaty was soon drafted, which was meant to annihilate their common enemy. French experts lost no time in training up the Persian soldiery in the latest methods of fighting. This extraordinary French activity in Persia roused both the Home and Indian Government from their, lethargy. The mission of General Gardanne was supposed to have suggested a combined Indian expedition and the British were out to counteract this aggression. There is hardly any evidence to show that Napoleon ever contemplated an Indian campaign. His aim in conquering Egypt was to divert the channel of commerce between Europe and India and thus bring to an end one of the chief sources of British prosperity. It is indeed discreditable to the great General to believe, that he intended to project so impossible a scheme as that of sending 60,000 troops upon camels across the dreary Arabian desert and the barren wastes of Baluchistan to the banks of the Indus.⁵⁵ The meteoric career of Napoleon had really unnerved all Europe. Napoleon had conquered Egypt. His mission to Persia had succeeded. It was therefore felt that it would not be difficult for a combined Franco-Persian force to cross Baluchistan and the Indus and attack British dominion in India. Thus external circumstances made it appear that a French invasion of India was imminent. The British Government at home and in India busied themselves in taking precautionary measures against the coming menace. But as time passed matters became more complicated. The peril which seemed to threaten the English beyond the Indus, assumed a more complicated and perplexing character.⁵⁶ In July 1807 a compromise was effected between Napoleon and Alexander of Russia and the treaty which was agreed upon was said to have included a joint invasion of India –

⁵⁴ Kaye, *op.cit.*, Vol. I, p: 145.

⁵⁵ Milland Wilson, *op.cit.*, Vol. VII, p, 145.

⁵⁶ Kaye, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 3.

"*Contre les possession de la Compaquie des Indes.*" So now Russia also became an active enemy of the British. And it was suspected that it might seek an alliance with Afghanistan. The danger of an invasion from the Afghans due to their religious zeal was quite an intelligible affair, but when an intrigue of a more remote and insidious character was suspected, it greatly alarmed the Calcutta Council Chamber. The state of affairs in Central Asia was regarded with increased anxiety and their management demanded greater wisdom and address.⁵⁷ It was now no longer a question of facing a single foe in a straight combat. The Afghan ruler as the possible invader of Hindoostan, had lost much of his prestige due to the successful risings of his kinsmen against him, 'but as a willing agent of a hostile confederacy he appeared a more formidable opponent'.⁵⁸ It thus became imperative that some suitable alliances be contracted to counteract the new danger. 'To baffle European intrigue and to stem the tide of European invasion, it appeared expedient to the British-Indian Government to embrace in one great network of diplomacy all the States lying between the frontier of India and the eastern points of the Russian Empire.'⁵⁹ Lord Minto, the Governor-General of India, contemplated the creation of two sets of buffer States to check the progress of the French towards British possessions in India. The inner set was to consist of the States bordering on the Indus, namely, Sindh and the Punjab and the external set included Persia and Afghanistan. It was anticipated that Persia would now be agreeable to have an alliance with the British, as she also stood in mortal peril in case the Franco-Russian plan for the Indian invasion took shape, because the combined force would force its way through the Persian territories.

So, the Governor General of India thought of sending Missions to Sindh, the Punjab, Kabul and Persia. The first Mission so fitted out was to be sent to Sindh. Captain David Seton was appointed envoy to Sindh. The treaty with Sindh was meant to afford to the British the same 'means of watching its—Sind's—proceedings and of obtaining authentic information concerning the designs of our enemies,'⁶⁰ as was the purpose of Crowe's Mission in 1799. The envoy set out for the Sindh Court and arrived there in July 1808.⁶¹ Negotiations were immediately started, and within a few days' time a draft treaty of seven articles was agreed upon by the Ameers and the British envoy and sent to Calcutta for final ratification. The treaty provided that the British-Indian Government shall drop their claim on account of the loss suffered by the English in their 'adventure' of 1799.⁶² The chief clause of the treaty however bound the British Government to help the Ameers, specially when it was known that the Ameers wanted to use this clause to shake off the Afghan yoke, when the British-Indian Government contemplated conciliating the Afghan ruler as well. The only way out of the embarrassing position lay

⁵⁷ *Ibid, op.cit.*, Vol. I, p. 4.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ *Ibid*, Vol. I. p. 53.

⁶⁰ Minto Countess of, Lord Minto in India, p. 178.

⁶¹ *Journal Sindh Historical Society*, Vol. II, part 3, p. 8.

⁶² Aitchison, C. U., *Treaties. Enactments and Sanads*, Fourth Edition, Vol. VII, p. 53 f.n.

in annulling the treaty and forming a fresh alliance which would be less binding and yet would serve the same purpose. So Seton was recalled in September 1808 and a new envoy appointed to do the needful.

It is necessary to consider the fairness of this step taken by the English towards the Sindh Ameers. It is contended by the supporters of British policy that the English envoy was so obsessed by the idea of a French invasion that when he found Persian and French ambassadors at the Sindh capital negotiating an alliance, when he arrived with his Mission at Hyderabad, that he lost sight of his instructions and contracted an alliance—offensive and defensive—which his Government had never contemplated. Thus the English envoy had gone beyond his instructions and hence his recall justified the annulment of the treaty he had contracted. No records are forthcoming to show that the envoy had really overstepped the instructions. Further, it is to be observed that the aim of Seton's Mission was to contract an alliance against Afghanistan. Baroness Minto observes in this connection: — "Captain Seton was empowered to treat for the admission of a Resident-Agent of the British Government, as a preliminary step to all further transactions. This measure is necessarily preliminary to the accomplishment of our ultimate purpose, that of withholding or detaching the Government of Sindh from connections with our enemies, as well as the more proximate purpose of securing an authentic channel of information and intelligence on points of the utmost importance to our interests."⁶³ Of course the two possible enemies of the British were Persia and Afghanistan, backed by Russia and France. But the Treaty of Tilsit made Persia friendly to the British, hence Afghanistan was the enemy to be carefully watched. If the British were anxious to make Sindh one of their outposts to obtain authentic information of their enemies, were not the Ameers justified in hoping to obtain their aid against their enemies? Reciprocity is but a fair thing and so in a way the English envoy to Sindh did not go beyond his instructions, if he sought an alliance with the Ameers on a basis of reciprocity. But this did not suit British diplomatic tactics and hence the annulment of Seton's treaty. It is argued by some writers that the envoy to Sindh really overstepped his instructions, for it was impossible for the British Government to help the subordinate State of Sindh against its suzerain—Kabul Even this argument is untenable. When the British Government sent a Mission to Sindh it did not conceive the relationship of Sindh and Kabul as that of a subordinate kingdom to its sovereign power. If they treated Sindh as a subordinate State, how could the British Government send out a Mission to a subordinate State without the knowledge or consent of the Paramount Power? By sending Captain Seton to the court of the Ameers, the British-Indian Government virtually recognized the claim of the Ameers to independence. But they became conscious of this blunder when they thought of conciliating Kabul also. Really speaking the British-Indian Government is responsible for Seton's Treaty and not Captain Seton himself. It was hardly justifiable for the British-Indian Government to annul a treaty entered into by their accredited envoy.

⁶³ Minto, *op.cit.*, p. 178.

The new envoy, Mr. Nicholas Hankey Smith, received his instructions regarding his Mission to Sindh. He was instructed to contract no extensive engagements with the Ameers and yet the treaty to be contracted must afford facilities to the English of watching and counteracting the intrigues of their enemies in that and neighboring States. But by the time the Mission left Bombay it was evident that there was hardly a possibility of a French invasion of India, as the French were too much engrossed in their own affairs at home to bother themselves about a far off land like India. Hence the British were emboldened to direct their new envoy to Sindh to so frighten the Sindh Ameers that they should respect the English. The instructions to the envoy show that Captain Seton had been treated by the Ameers in a manner that was not at all warranted by the relative rank of the two powers and hence Mr. Smith received pointed orders to repress every attempt at similar impropriety and to be scrupulously exact in resenting any omission of the respect due to the British power in India as well as any superiority claimed by the rulers of Scinde.⁶⁴ The ways of diplomacy are indeed strange. So long as the British were under the sway of the French 'scare' they were prepared to waive their monetary claim on Sindh in 1803; but once they found that the danger to their empire no longer existed, they began to think of dignity and honor. Further it may be observed that the student of history is afforded no evidence regarding the ill-treatment of the English envoy to Sindh. It may be, he might not have been a welcome visitor. For that the Ameers had a reason. The British-Indian Government had paid no heed to their Vakeel sent only a few years back; why then need they worry now about a British alliance, specially when the French and Persian emissaries were ready to offer favorable terms to them. As is evident from Mr. Smith's Mission, most likely, a misunderstanding seems to have arisen regarding Captain Seton's treatment, on account of the peculiar court customs followed in Sindh.

It may be observed here that some eminent writers of Indian History have mixed up the events regarding the British connection with Sindh. Writers like Mill and Wilson assert that the Sindh Ameers sent their Vakeel to Bombay to negotiate the renewal of British commercial connection which existed between the two States in 1799, in order to overawe the Afghan ruler, who had been harassing them, having taken up the claim of Mian Abdul Nabi, the last Kalhora chief, to the Sindh *Masnad*. The Vakeel was cordially received and the visit of the Sindh Vakeel was returned when Seton was sent on a Mission to Sindh in 1808.⁶⁵ This is not warranted by facts. The Sindh Vakeel visited Bombay in 1803 for the purpose explained in an earlier paragraph. He came back disappointed in 1804, because the British were agreeable to renewing the connection only when the Sindh Government made good the loss suffered by them in 1799. It was full four years later that the British-Indian Government dispatched their envoy to Sindh because of special circumstances, which arose due to the probability of a French

⁶⁴ Pottinger, Col. Henry, *Travels in Beloochistan and Scinde*, p. 335.

⁶⁵ Mill and Wilson, *op. cit.*, Vol. VII, p. 156.

invasion of India. If, as Mill and Wilson⁶⁶ assert, Captain Seton was returning a cordial visit of the Sindh Vakeel, it is hardly understandable how he could have been made to suffer indignities at the court of the Sindh Ameers, who according to the above writers had friendly connections with the English.

Mr. Smith, the new British envoy to Sindh, left Bombay with his suite of six-3 assistants, one escort, one surgeon and a marine surveyor – on 27th April 1800 in the *Maria*, a hired Indian ship attended by the H.C.'s cruiser, the *Prince of Wales* and two armed gallivants.⁶⁷ The Mission anchored off the Manora point on the 9th of the following month. The escort, Mr. Maxwell, went on shore and announced the arrival of the Mission to the Governor of Karachi and asked for pilots to bring the ships safe over the bar. The Governor demurred to allowing Englishmen into the port before orders arrived from Hyderabad and hence the envoy did not land earlier than the 16th, under a salute of 16 Guns fired from the two vessels. All sorts of impediments were put in the way of the movements of the Mission, while at Karachi. But the Governor was quite cordial in his treatment of the Mission. At long last the Ameers informed the Mission that they need not take the trouble of going to the capital, but that they should negotiate with their representative, Akhund Mohmed Bukka Khan, who was to meet the Mission at Karachi. But because the British envoy was out to uphold British honor, he found in every act of the Ameers and their officers an attempt to insult the Mission and hence he took offence. When it was found that the British envoy would not negotiate with anyone except with the Ameers themselves, the Ameers agreed to receive the Mission and it left for Tatta *en route* to Hyderabad on 10th June and arrived there after five marches. Here the Mission took up their quarters in the old English Factory House. At Tatta a letter was received by the envoy from the Ameers informing him about the dispatch of a State barge to Tatta for bringing the Mission to the capital. While the Mission was at Tatta, once again every attempt had been made to dissuade the envoy from proceeding to the capital, but without any favorable result. For a number of natural causes the Mission had a long halt at Tatta. When the royal *Jumpte* arrived, it was found to be too small for the whole party and hence some proceeded by land and some by water. Both parties arrived at the capital on the 8th of August 1809. Their reception at the Sindh Durbar was more than anything that could be desired, though there had been some difference of opinion regarding the mode of reception and the seating arrangements for the members of the Mission.⁶⁸

It is necessary to advert here to the reasons why the Ameers and their officers had impeded the passage of the Mission to the capital. Col. Henry Pottinger, the third assistant to the envoy, correctly points out the reason for the peculiar conduct of the Ameers when he writes: – "The Ameers entertained the utmost apprehensions of our

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ *Journal Sindh Historical Society*; Vol. II, part 3, p. 10.

⁶⁸ Pottinger, *op.cit.*, p. 344.

designs on their territories".⁶⁹ They believed that the British coveted their land which they had come to spy and therefore they did not like the Mission to go as far inland as Hyderabad. And here they were not very wrong in their surmise. Col. Pottinger himself confesses that it had been previously decided that some plausible excuse should be fabricated to enable the gentlemen of the Mission to proceed to Court by two routes and thereby acquire the utmost geographical knowledge of the country.⁷⁰ So, the English had come to evaluate the Sindhian dominions and negotiating a treaty was a mere farce. Moreover the behavior of the envoy to Sindh can hardly be pronounced as commendable. He was out to insult the Ameers and used all sorts of threats to carry his point. He refused to attend to the contents of the letter of the Ameers received by trim at Karachi as a reply to one of his, as its style and language, according to him, were in that strain of arrogance and superiority which he was out to check in its infancy.⁷¹ He omitted to address the Ameer as Huzoor in his letters, and he demanded that the Ameers must stand up and receive the Mission. The Ameers through fear of the English put up with these insults and their inordinate demands.

The morning after the Mission's reception by the Ameers, the British envoy dispatched the presents which he had brought for them from his Government. They consisted of mirrors, gold watches, clocks, fowling pieces, telescopes, pistols, velvets and chints.⁷² The Ameers who were known for their excellent taste, specially in the selection of cloths for their dress, took objection to the inclusion of such cheap stuff as chints. They threatened to return all the presents on that account, as it was below their dignity to accept such trifling articles as presents, but did not do so, as their declining to take them would amount to disrespect shown to the donor, which they wanted to avoid.⁷³

As the envoy proceeded with his work the Ameers found themselves in an awkward position. They were informed by the envoy that they would not receive any aid from the English for opposing the Afghans; but that on the contrary the Kabul Chief would get English aid to suppress them, if they grew to be rebellious. At the same time they were frightened into the belief that British wrath would befall them, if they carried on any intrigues with the enemies of the English. Finding their situation hopeless, the Ameers agreed to the new treaty, as suggested by the British envoy, whereby 'eternal friendship' was contracted by the parties and the Ameers agreed to keep out the French from their territories. The treaty was signed by the Ameers on 22nd August, 1809, and ratified by the Governor-General on 16th November.⁷⁴ This Treaty was merely an eyewash, as neither of the parties was anxious to maintain it. It is hardly credible that the British and the Beloochee could ever be bed-fellows. And so, 'eternal friendship' was

⁶⁹ Pottinger, *op. cit.*, p. 344.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ Pottinger, *op.cit.* p. 371.

⁷⁴ Aitchison, *op.cit.* Vol. VII, pp. 351-52.

a big farce, which continued to be played for the next three decades. Since the apprehensions of a French invasion of India were dying out there was really no motive of weight for the English to cultivate the friendship of the Ameers, who in their estimation, were no more than a set of semi-barbarous and arrogant people. The Ameers were equally disinclined to maintain an intimate intercourse with a Power which they feared and with which they thought they had reason to be dissatisfied on account of the annulment of Seton's Treaty. At the same time they felt that by a connection with the British their expansion south-eastwards into the State of Cutch would be impeded, as the English were acquiring great influence in that region. So, the new treaty was hardly of any use. Nevertheless, the two Missions to Sindh had fulfilled their purpose in that Sindh was kept in check by threats from intriguing with the enemies of the British, during the period the English feared a French invasion of their Indian possessions. The Sindh Missions were directed against an exigency which had ceased to exist. Nevertheless had it existed, the British would have been fully rewarded for their efforts in Sindh. The British Missions to Sindh served another purpose also. By annulling Seton's Treaty the British Government convinced the Kabul monarch that they had saved the Afghan Empire, or else Persian and French forces would have helped the Ameers to throw off the Afghan yoke.⁷⁵ This gesture was to some extent responsible for the ultimate success of the Kabul Mission. But the Smith Mission of 1809 is important because of some other reasons as well. For the first time the English were afforded firsthand knowledge of the land and its rulers. Col. Henry Pottinger's "Travels in Beloochistan and Scinde," chronicles his experiences as the third assistant to Mr. Smith, the English envoy to Sindh, and this forms an important chapter in the knowledge regarding Sindh that the British people could boast of. The Smith Mission also revealed a technique for the success of future Missions to Sindh. It was found that the Ameers yielded to force quite easily. And hence in future British envoys must stick to what they proposed, whether right or wrong, if they wished to promote British interests in Sindh. Col. Pottinger had been a witness to the success of that policy and when he was appointed as the Governor General's Agent for the Affairs of Sindh in 1832, he was ready to put the above principle into practice. Not only that, but he asked his assistants in the Sindh Residency to do likewise and wrote to Government also on the success of this mode of action at the Sindh Court. Col. Pottinger in spite of his aggressive policy towards Sindh was respected by the Ameers, who considered him as a devoted friend of theirs.

As has been noted earlier the Smith Mission contracted a treaty with the Ameers of Sindh which had already lost its importance. There hardly remained any active British

⁷⁵ For, as Kaye points out, there was present at the time of Seton's visit to Sindh Court, a Persian Ambassador, who had been authorized to enter into an alliance with the Sindh chief 'subversive of the tributary relations of the latter to the State of Caubul' (Kaye, *op.cit.*, Vol. I, p. 53) in avoiding which Seton contracted his treaty, to which the Ameers had agreed, with the Intention of soliciting British aid, to shake off the Afghan yoke, which the English as friends of the Afghan Government would not agree to on which account they sought the annulment of Seton's Treaty, through the mission of Hankey Smith in 1809.

interest in Sindh up to 1820. By the final defeat of the Mahratta Confederacy in 1818, British influence in Cutch had increased. In 1816 a British Residency was established at Bhooj, as the small Cutch States had accepted British protection. Thus British influence had come to the very borders of the Ameers' dominions. And this fact agitated the minds of the Ameers greatly. They had been planning since long to annex these States one by one, to their dominions, but they found themselves forestalled by the British. Finding the English more than a match for them, the Ameers had to remain quiet. The district of Parkur had become notorious for its plundering inhabitants. The Khosas in particular, residing in the Sindhian territories, used to make plundering raids into the adjoining Cutch States and then return to Parkur. Now that British influence was being actively exercised in Cutch, British outposts on the Cutch borders were created, to keep the plunderers in check. The British Government called on the Ameers of Sindh to do their duty unto their 'eternal friends, by sending their forces to keep the Parkur plunderers in check. The Ameers agreed to help in checking this nuisance. They actually dispatched a force against the Khosas. This force was stationed within the Sindh territories, opposite to the British encampment. It appeared to the Commander of the British force, Lt.-Col. Barclay, that the Sindhian force was out to protect the Khosas instead of expelling them. This was evident from the fact that a band of these predatory tribes was stationed near the Sindhian camp, with impunity. Lt.-Col. Barclay's force thought of attacking the Khosas at night and when that night they carried out their attack they killed some of the Sindhian soldiers also, as they could not be distinguished from the Khosas. The Sindhian force retired from the frontier and its commander made a grievance of the British attack. The Ameers seem to have taken offence at the British detachment having entered the Sindh territories, in violation of the treaty and dispatched a strong force against Cutch. The Sindh army suddenly entered Cutch, took Loona, a town 50 miles from Bhooj, and laid waste the country all round. Soon news reached the British head-quarters regarding the entry of the Sindhian force into Cutch. Lt.-Col. Stanhope with a strong detachment was sent to repel the aggressor. The Sindhian force perceiving the superiority of the British soldiery had retired before the British force arrived on the scene. The Bombay Government immediately demanded a reparation for the mischief done. They held out a threat of ordering the advance of their Division, if their demands were not complied with. The Ameers however disowned the outrage and dispatched envoys to Bhooj and Bombay, to conciliate British authorities. The Supreme Government did not wish to push matters too far.⁷⁶ A Mission was sent to Sindh in 1820, consisting of Captain Sadlier, Mr. W. Simon, Dr. Hall and Major Woodhouse, to settle matters amicably. The Mission contracted a new treaty with the Ameers, which was ratified by the Supreme Government on 10th February, 1821. The British Government was satisfied by the Ameers promising to restrain the Khosas in future and by their liberation of prisoners.⁷⁷

⁷⁶ Mill and Wilson, *op.cit.*, Vol. VIII, P. 316.

⁷⁷ Eastwick, *Speeches on the Scinde Question*, P. 74.

It is interesting to find, that in spite of the British Commander holding out the bait of the conquest of the Sindhian dominion, when he was pursuing the retreating Sindhian force, the Supreme Government did not wish for the annexation of Sindh. This was not the first occasion of an offer made to the British for the conquest of Sindh. A certain Bhatia Khimji Doongerssee had suggested to the Governor of Bombay, Hon. Jonathan Duncan, in 1800, that if the English desired to annex Sindh it would not be difficult and he was prepared to help them. But the offer bore no fruit. Again Elphinstone, the youthful envoy to Kabul in 1809, was bartering for the British, cession of Sindh, in lieu of some money payments to Shah Shuja, the Kabul Chief.⁷⁸ The suggestion was however scouted at Calcutta. A third opportunity of annexation arose in 1820, but this time also the British were not anxious to have Sindh.⁷⁹ The reason is not far to seek. The British-Indian Government had not much knowledge of Sindh and they thought Sindh to be a country hardly worth coveting. At the same time they feared that the annexation of Sindh would involve them in the politics of the Powers beyond the Indus, which they wanted to avoid. This is what the Supreme Government wrote: – "Few things would be more impolitic than a war with Sindh, as its successful prosecution would not only be unprofitable, but an evil. The country is not worth possessing and its occupation would involve us in all the intrigues and wars and incalculable embarrassments of the countries beyond the Indus. Hostilities might become unavoidable hereafter, but it is wise to defer their occurrence as long as possible."⁸⁰

The above is in brief the sketch of British policy towards Sindh for the first twenty years of the 19th century. It is quite evident from the above that the English had no active interest in Sindh during the period. They did not covet the land of the Ameers. The policy of the British-Indian Government during this period was to keep aloof, as far as possible, from dabbling in the politics of Central Asia. But within a few years time events took a new turn. The new heads of the Indian Government found the policy of their predecessors too slack and therefore took on themselves to chalk out a more aggressive and advantageous plan for the future, with peculiar results.

⁷⁸ India Office Records, *op.cit.*, Vol. 474, pp. 143-70.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ Mill and Wilson, *op.cit.*, Vol. VIII, p. 316.

COMMERCIAL NAVIGATION OF THE INDUS 1821-1832.

The 18th century saw the establishment of the British Empire in India and by the time the century was out, the British had successfully become the masters of the major portion of the Indian sub-continent. But their territorial acquisitions in India roused the anxious jealousy of Powers, both Asiatic and European. By the time the new century had dawned, the dread of a foreign aggression on the British Empire in India was like the Sword of Damocles hanging over the heads of British administrators in India. Though different men at the helm of Indian affairs tried to keep off the sword in different ways, there was an underlying uniformity in the diverse policies pursued by different Governors General. An active British interest in the countries beyond the Indus was the main feature of the policy, to stem the tide of foreign aggression. Till the coming of Lord William Bentinck as the Governor General of India, a policy of active watchfulness was pursued. But Bentinck found the policy of his predecessors unsuited for the task and hence initiated a more progressive policy, with peculiar and far-reaching results. His policy necessitated a prior prying into the affairs of others' dominions, which finally resulted in some concrete good, for safeguarding British interests in India. One such result was the opening of the Indus for purposes of commercial navigation, with ulterior political motives. And the cooperation of In this the Court of Sindh was an important factor in this direction. essay an attempt will be made to trace the incidents leading to the Ameers of Sindh agreeing to throw open the Indus for purposes of commerce.

In spite of the two treaties of eternal friendship between the British Government and the Ameers of Sindh in 1809 and 1820 respectively, there had been practically a complete lull in the political relationship of the two Powers. Both of them were anxious to treat the treaties as a dead letter the day they were signed. The English never wished to cultivate friendship with the semi-barbarous rulers of Sindh, as no useful purpose could be served by their continued friendship. The Ameers on the other hand were ever anxious to shake off the friendship of the Feringee, as he was known for his encroaching aptitude. Mere exigencies of circumstances had compelled both sides to enter into friendly alliances. Upto 1820 the British had never paid much attention to Sindh, whether from the point of view of their north-west frontier policy or its importance as a source of wealth. Hence they ever avoided hostility against Sindh,⁸¹ as that might entail its conquest and subsequent management. Sindh was considered a barren land, incapable of yielding profit. But border raids had compelled the British to collect armed forces on the Cutch frontier, to over-awe the Ameers into orderly behavior, specially during the time the British were occupied in Bhurtpore and Burma operations in 1825.⁸²

⁸¹ Burnes, Dr. James, *A Narrative of a Visit to the Court of Scinde*, p. 18.

⁸² Burnes, Dr. James, *A Narrative of a Visit to the Court of Scinde*, p. 18.

It was during the period of this lull that on a fine morning in October 1827 the British Resident in Cutch received a pressing requisition from the Ameers of Sindh for a Doctor to attend on the ailing Ameer, Moorad Ali Khan.⁸³ Private reports did not represent the disease of His Highness as dangerous. And therefore every one began to speculate regarding the motive behind the immediate summons. Some at the Residency maintained that as the Russians had entered Persia, the Ameers had taken this mode of prudently making friendly advances to the British Government.⁸⁴ But that was the British point of view. The British themselves were alarmed at the news of Persia joining Russia in an unholy alliance, which was likely to affect their interests in India. In spite of the British professing friendship with Persia through treaties, they had failed to aid their ally against its enemy, Russia, though there was a definite provision for this kind of emergency in the treaty. This non-compliance was the result of the diplomatic policy pursued by the British at home. When in 1826 Russia attacked Persia, the British did not help the Persians, as they did not like to antagonize the Russians. Help to Persia would have had an adverse effect on them in the Greek question, which was pending. The Persians, having learnt a lesson from past experience, decided to make up with their arch enemy on any terms. It was a war for the annihilation of Persia, which the Persians sought to avoid. Hence the dread to British India from the west by the combined forces of Russia and Persia. And the English thought that the danger to their dominions in India from this combined effort must affect the Ameers of Sindh first. But there is no evidence that the British surmise was correct. In reality the Ameers had an enemy nearer home, who had been threatening them. Maharaja Ranjitsing of the Punjab had an eye on Sindh and on the trade-mart of Shikarpur in particular. By 1809 the British had put a stop to the expansion of territory towards the Jumna by the Maharaja, by taking the Cis-Sutlej States under their protection. Soon after, it appeared to the Sikh Maharaja that the only fruitful acquisition which remained worth coveting, under the peculiar circumstances due to effective British interference in his policy of expansion eastward and the sudden rise of Sayed Ahmed in the north against him, was the territory of the Sindh Ameers. "Sindh was indeed the only direction in which the territories, of the ambitious Sikh monarch could possibly be extended".⁸⁵ His regular contact with Sindh began after his conquest of Mooltan in 1818.⁸⁶ The connection began with the usual exchange of presents and civilities annually. The Ameers at first were not conscious of the coming danger. It was only when the Mallaraja came as far down as Sultan Shahr and sent Allard and Ventura to Mithan-Kote in 1823, that it became a point of anxious concern for the Sindh rulers to check the advance of the Sikh Chief. During the latter part of the same year and the next two years, Ranjitsing was engaged in making extensive military preparations, under the guidance of the French Officers he had recently employed under him. The object of these preparations in the opinion of Captain Wade, the British Agent at Ludhiana was the conquest of Upper Sindh and

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ Burnes, Dr. James, *A Narrative of a Visit to the Court of Scinde*, p. 11.

⁸⁵ Khera, P.N., *British Policy towards Sindh*, p. 17 f.n.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

Shikarpur.⁸⁷ The ostensible reason assigned for this expedition against the Ameers of Sindh was to punish the Beloochee tribes of Upper Sindh for attacking Sikh troops near Mooltan. Though the Maharaja had advanced towards Sindh in right earnest in 1825, he had had to defer his conquest of the territory due to the occurrence of scarcity in Sindh.⁸⁸ The next year – 1826 – provided Ranjitsing with a fresh pretext for falling on the territories of the Sindh rulers. During this year he made a demand on the Vakils of the Ameers at his Court for the tribute which Sindh formerly paid to Kabul, since he had succeeded to the rights of the major portion of the Afghan Empire in India. As was natural, the Ameers' Vakils disputed the demand, though there had been a precedent for such a claim only recently.⁸⁹ The British had claimed such a right in the Cis-Sutlej territory as the successors of the Mahrattas. Yet Ranjitsing kept quiet and did not force the demand on the Ameers, due to a political exigency. The fanatic Sayed Ahmed had once again started his armed interference in the direction of Peshawar, in the Sikh territory and Ranjitsing felt that it was expedient not to rouse the Ameers from their quietitude. The information regarding the demand for the tribute made by the Sikh ruler, supplied by their Vakils to the Ameers of Sindh, made them nervous, though no actual hostilities had yet taken place. And the only solution for the Ameers lay in reviving their active friendship with the British. On the other hand, the British felt that the opportunity afforded by the Ameers' invitation, must be utilized fully, to obtain an insight into the Ameers' dominions as it would facilitate the furtherance of their frontier policy against the fear of Russian aggression. At the same time compliance with the wishes of the Ameers would, to a great extent, minimize the doubts the Sindh rulers entertained about the English.

So Doctor James Burnes, Surgeon to the Residency at Bhooj, got ready to proceed to the Sindh Court. He was rather anxious to see the classic river – the Indus – and the people inhabiting its valley. He left Bhooj on 25th October 1827 along with Gopaldas, the Ameers' Vakil at the Cutch Residency, with an escort provided by a small detachment of the 21st N.I., a few troopers of the Poona Auxiliary Horse and a dozen horsemen of H.H. the Rao of Cutch, the choicest of Indian soldiers.⁹⁰

The party crossed into the Sindh territory on 3rd November. At Rurree, the Doctor was received by two special officers appointed by the Ameers, namely, Nawab Hyderkhan Lagharee, the Governor of Jattee and nephew of the Chief Vazier of the Hyderabad Court and Bahadur Khan. Fifty camels were sent by the Ameers to be in attendance on the party and the honorable guest and his men were to receive everything free of all cost thence forward, None of them was even allowed to set foot on bare ground. The party received the best of treatment in every respect. The Ameers' nominees fully catered to the needs of the Doctor and his party. Nothing in fact seemed to be spared

⁸⁷ *Ibid*, p. 7.

⁸⁸ Khera, *op.cit.*, p. 7.

⁸⁹ *Ibid*.

⁹⁰ Burnes, *op.cit.*, p. 11.

that could add to the Doctor's comfort or that of his followers. This is how Burnes himself describes the treatment he received from the Ameers' Officers. "Nothing could exceed the attention I experienced on the route from my Mihmandars, who themselves frequently sat up to watch me during the night. A large cotton mattress, covered with crimson silk, was always carried near me in case I should feel disposed to alight; flagons of cooled sherbet and other luxuries were also liberally supplied. The Ameers had sent several hawks, which afforded an attractive sport on the road and supplied my table with every species of winged game."⁹¹ When the Doctor was nearing the capital, he was met by the Chief Vazier of the Hyderabad Court, Nawab Wullee Mahomed Khan Lagharee himself, being deputed by his masters as an additional mark of respect to the honorable guest. The Doctor had been met by Mahomed Khan Thora, a relative of the Ameers and Moosa Cabitan, an officer of rank, only 30 miles from Hyderabad, to compliment him on his safe arrival. At long last the Doctor and his retinue reached Hyderabad on 10th November, early in the morning.⁹² All this extraordinary treatment to Doctor Burnes, an Englishman, stood in contrast to the one meted out to the British Missions to Sindh in 1808, 1809 and 1820. The reason for this extraordinary hospitality is not far to seek. Mahomed Khan Thora had made known to Doctor Burnes the reason why unusual preparations were being made for his reception at the capital. It was because other Europeans had come into Sindh on their own affairs, but he had come by an express invitation from the Ameers themselves and would therefore be made welcome in a different manner from them.⁹³ He was very cordially received by the Ameers at Court and he was much impressed by the scene before him. The Chief Vazier was appointed the host to Doctor Burnes so long as he was in Sindh. After the first interview was over the Doctor proceeded to his camp, situated a quarter of a mile from the town, in a shady grove. His camp was indeed a haven of repose. He was the recipient of the best hospitality. For his breakfast alone came a dozen silver dishes filled with prepared viands of different descriptions, all ornamented with gold leaf; other trays with baked meats were meant for his Muslim servants and yet others bearing profusion of fruits, sweetmeats and articles of food for his Hindu followers.⁹⁴ A lot of waste was occasioned due to this super-abundance. The Doctor remonstrated with his host on the point and to please the honorable guest this extravagance was partially discontinued.

On the evening of the day of his arrival, Doctor Burnes was summoned to a private interview with the Ameers. Meer Moorad Ali's illness was the main topic discussed on this occasion. The Ameer had been ailing for the last five months and all Sindhian medical-men had been consulted, till now the Ameer had himself despaired of recovery and had even made his will. The Doctor examined his patient and prescribed medicine. And lo! within ten days all the dangerous symptoms of the disease had disappeared.

⁹¹ Burnes J. *op.cit.*, p. 40.

⁹² *Ibid*, p. 42.

⁹³ Burnes J., *op.cit.*, p. 52.

⁹⁴ *Ibid*, p. 51.

This was mainly effected through the benign effects of the sulphate of quinine.⁹⁵ As a result of this sudden recovery of Moorad Ali, Burnes secured a confidence of the Ameers which no Englishman could ever secure at their Court. Many more of royal blood sought his advice for their own ailments, apart from the hundreds of common men he cured. But he did not succeed in all cases. Meer Noor Mahomed, son of Meer Moorad Ali, was disappointed, for writes Burnes, "I did not possess the lamp of Alladin or the wand of Prospero to transform his mean and contemptible figure into the stately form of his brother Nusseerkhan."⁹⁶ Though Moorad Ali was out of danger in so short a time, he did not regain his health perfectly till January 1828. And so, Doctor Burnes had to be at the Sindh Court for nearly three months. During this period he utilized his time in studying the rulers of the land, without prejudice. He studied their temperaments and abilities, their tastes and aptitudes, their character in general and above all, their attitude towards the British. He also paid attention to the organization of the Sindh Court and the administration of the country, the wealth of the rulers and the lot of the common man, He was afforded the best opportunity to study Sindh, since he enjoyed the utmost confidence of its chiefs. Hence his account of the country, its people and the men at the helm of affairs is as sympathetic as it is correct. All other foreign, writers were greatly prejudiced, as they could only gain a partial view of the actual state of affairs, due to their limited opportunities, for studying their subject. When, for example, Doctor. Barnes explains the main defect of Talpur administration, as lying in their ignorance of the true notions of policy and their being misled by the delusions of prejudice, than by their being wantonly cruel and iniquitous in their proceedings, he shows an insight into the affairs of Sindh at this period of its history, which makes it evident that all other writers were drawing conclusions from the things as they stood on the surface and could not probe sufficiently deep into the matter; to know the exact state of affairs.⁹⁷ At long last, after much reluctance, the Ameers gave Doctor Burnes his audience of leave on 21st January; 1828 and he flowed down the Indus in a State – barge full with the, many worthy presents he had received. The Doctor proceeded by land from Tatta and reached the Cutch territory on 28th January.⁹⁸ By the visit of Doctor Burnes to the Court of Sindh, the British were not only afforded a pleasant and realistic account of Sindh, but at the same time they won that confidence of the rulers of the land, which was of the most importance to them in their exploits in the land of the Indus under-taken during the following few years.

This favorable account of Sindh was preceded by a favorable opinion of the Indus as a channel of commerce. The commercial advantages of the Indus⁹⁹ had been brought out prominently by the famous traveler Moorcroft and they had sounded so well that the Government of India were induced to ascertain for themselves the commercial value of

⁹⁵ *Ibid*, p. 53.

⁹⁶ Burnes J. *op.cit.*, p. 56.

⁹⁷ *Ibid*, p. 76.

⁹⁸ *Ibid*. p. 121.

⁹⁹ Cunningham, *History of the Sikhs*, First Edition, p. 205.

the classic stream. But it was not mere trade that lured the English to estimate its usefulness. It was something more. The British Empire in India was threatened from the north-west, as has been noticed earlier. An English army could easily go up the Indus and check the oncoming enemy, only if the Indus were really navigable. The Sikh ruler had been casting covetous eyes on the lower valley of the Indus. The English administrators in India felt that at some time it would be necessary to oppose the foe at the north-west frontier of India. And in case Sindh became a part of Sikh territory, British troops would never be allowed to proceed north by the Indus. The Sikh Chief was bound to actively oppose the advance of a British army through his territory. So, if now the capabilities of the Indus could be ascertained, the Sindhian territory could be annexed and all would be well. So the ball was set rolling. Moorcroft suggested commerce and Malcolm, the Governor of Bombay, thought of defence. The suggestion of Moorcroft could easily answer Malcolm's desire as well. At Malcolm's suggestion the "Memoranda on the north-west frontier of British India and on the importance of the river Indus as connected with its defence," were drawn up. The Memoranda clearly hinted at the annexation of Sindh.¹⁰⁰ And it was favorably considered both at home and in India. The Home Government were highly enamored of the scheme. But Charles Metcalfe, a member of the Governor General's Council, deprecated the steps to be taken, rather vehemently. He wrote, "it is stated in a late dispatch from the Secret Committee that we must not permit the rulers to obstruct our measures, in other words, that we are to go to war with them to compel submission to our wishes. With deference I should remark that such an assumption does not seem to be warranted by the law of nations. But the assumption an amplification of what I have often observed in our conduct towards the Native States, and what appears to me the greatest blot in the character of our Indian policy. However much we may profess moderation and non-interference when we have no particular interests of our own concerned, the moment we discover an object of pursuit we become impatient and over-bearing, insist on what we require and cannot brook denial or hesitation. We disregard the rights of others and think only of our own convenience. Submission or war is the alternative which the other party has to choose. Thus at the present time we have taken alarm at the supposed designs of Russia. It would seem we are to compel the intermediate States to enter into our views and submit to our projects, although they cannot comprehend them and instead of entertaining any apprehension of Russian designs, are more apprehensive of our own, our character for encroachment being worse than that of the Russians, because the States concerned have a more proximate sense of it, from the result which they see in actual operation among the realm of India."¹⁰¹ Metcalfe honestly felt that the Russian aggression was yet remote and vague, and therefore urged a policy of wait and watch, for 'there is nothing that we can do in our present blind state that would be of any certain benefit on the approach of that event'.¹⁰² He suggested the cultivation of a friendly disposition with the intermediary States rather than antagonizing them. The

¹⁰⁰ Basu-Major B.D., *The Rise of Christian Power in India*, One Volume, pp. 784-85.

¹⁰¹ Basu *op.cit.*, pp. 784-85.

¹⁰² Pottinger, Capt. W., *Memoir on Sindh*, 1832, Imperial Record Department.

suggestion of Malcolm, in spite of the opposition of Metcalfe, particularly impressed Lord William Bentinck, the Governor General. "The obvious advantages which Great Britain would derive from an extension of her commercial relations in the hitherto almost unknown regions in the vicinity of the Indus, and also the opening which it offered of cultivating friendly feelings with the different nations in this quarter, and which might hereafter be of importance to our interests, could not escape the observation of the eminent individual at the head of the Supreme Government". He wanted to initiate a progressive policy of saving the British Empire in India, even if it involved armed interference. 'For this purpose a survey of the Indus and a knowledge of the countries contiguous to that noble stream were vitally important; indeed more important than any other acquisition.'

So the Indus was to be surveyed. But under what pretext? Such a pretext was ready at hand. His Gracious Majesty the King of Great Britain was greatly pleased with the friendly overtures of the Punjab Ruler, who had sent a Shawl-tent as a present to His Majesty in 1818, through Lord Amherst.¹⁰³ And he wanted to present the Sikh rule with one stallion and four mares of the Suffolk cart-horse breed, in the erroneous belief that Ranjitsing was a great horse breeder.¹⁰⁴ The horses accordingly arrived at Bombay. Lt. Col. Henry Pottinger suggested that it might allay the fears of the Sindh Government if a large carriage were sent along with the horses, as the size and bulk of it would render it obvious that the Mission could then only proceed by water.¹⁰⁵ And Sir John Malcolm, the Governor of Bombay, came forward to further the cause of his Government by giving his highly ornamented carriage, which he had received as a present from Lord Minto in 1810, for the purpose.¹⁰⁶ Thus an ostensible reason at hand to undertake the navigation of the Indus. Some demur was anticipated on the part of the rulers of Sindh to allow this passage through their territories, but it was assumed that the Ameers, situated as they were, to Ranjitsing on the one hand and the British Government on the other, would not readily incur the risk of offending both Powers. Alexander Burnes, brother of Doctor James Burnes, who was at the time in the Bhooj Residency, was appointed to undertake the journey. Upto 1830 the knowledge which the Europeans possessed of the Indus was 'vague and unsatisfactory'.¹⁰⁷ And so Burnes was expected to acquire full and complete information regarding the river. A better color to the forthcoming venture was given by deputing Burnes on a Political Mission to the Sindh Courts—those of Hyderabad and Khairpur—also, though a Mission to these Courts was hardly called for. Once again Metcalfe differed from the proposed scheme, for cogent reasons, He wrote out a spirited note of dissent and earnestly appealed to the Government to consider fully the consequences of the scheme before launching it. He wrote, "the Scheme of surveying the Indus under the pretence of sending a present to

¹⁰³ Pottinger, Capt. W., *op.cit.*

¹⁰⁴ Prinsep, *Origin of the Sikh Power in the Punjab*, p. 152.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ Burnes, *Sir Alexander, Travels to Bokhara*, Vol. I. pp. 2-8.

¹⁰⁷ Prinsep, *op.cit.*, p. 54.

Raja Ranjitsingh seems to me highly objectionable. It is a trick ... unworthy of our Government which cannot fail, when detected, as most probably it will be, to excite the jealousy and indignation of the powers on whom we play it. It is just such a trick as we are often falsely suspected and accused of, by the Native powers of India and this confirmation of their suspicions generally unjust, will do us more injury by furnishing the ground of merited reproach, than any advantage to be gained by the measure can compensate. It must be remembered that the survey of the Indus or any part of the country may give us the power to injure that State, may even assist in conquering it and in the course of events is as likely to be turned to use for that purpose as any other. The rulers of Sindh, therefore, have the same right to be jealous of our surveys of their river and their territories that any power of Europe has, to protect its fortresses from the inspection of foreign engineers."¹⁰⁸ This was however disregarded.

All preliminaries were over and the British envoy received his final instructions and left Mandvi on the 21st of January, 1831, along with his little party comprising Ensign J. D. Leckie of the 22nd N. I., a Surveyor, a Native Doctor and a suitable establishment of servants.¹⁰⁹ Burnes and his party reached the Koree or the eastern-most mouth of the Indus on the 24th and surveyed the Sindh coast for the next four days, without being detected.¹¹⁰ On the 28th instant the party cast anchor in the Pittee or western mouth of the river. No intimation had been sent by the British authorities to the Ameers of Sindh, lest they should reasonably and flatly refused permission for the advance of the Mission, as it was violating the treaties which affirmed that no white-man would be allowed to pass through their territories. But if an envoy of their "eternal friends" had arrived within the Ameers' dominions, they would have to deal with the matter differently. Therefore, Burnes apprised the Ameers' officers, at the Indus delta port at Daraje, of his plans, when he had anchored some thirty miles up from the sea.¹¹¹ Here the impalements to the advance of the Mission begun. The situation was hard to bear as the Ameers' officers would not allow the Mission to move forward without their receiving express orders to that effect from their masters. So, Burnes was compelled to get back to sea and inform Pottinger of his fate. But, soon he received a friendly letter from the Ameers, who as usual, could not oppose the entry of a guest, however unwelcome, but made the guest conscious of the impracticability of his plans. They enumerated the impossibilities of navigating the great river. They said, "the boats, are so small that only four or five men can embark in one of them; their progress is likewise slow; they have neither masts nor sails; and the depth of water in the Indus is likewise so variable as not to reach in some places the knee or waist of a man."¹¹² This formidable enumeration of the physical obstacles was coupled with no refusal from the rulers in allowing Burnes to undertake the journey. So, Burnes made a second bid for the Indus

¹⁰⁸ Basu, *op.cit.*, pp. 784-85.

¹⁰⁹ Burnes A., *op.cit.*, Vol. I, p. 5.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid*, Vol. I, p. 7.

¹¹¹ Burnes A., *op.cit.*, Vol. I, p. 13.

¹¹² *Ibid*, Vol. I, pp. 17-18.

on the 10th of February, but due to some natural causes he was detained from entering the river for about five days. He now entered the Piteanee mouth and addressed the Ameers' agent at Daraje, blaming him for treating them in an uncivil manner, but that officer had been removed from his office and the new man, knowing his doom if he encouraged the English to enter the Indus, refused the party not only landing, but food and water as well. Once again the Mission moved back to Mandvi Road. It was evident that the Ameers' conduct was unfriendly, from the British point of view, and yet they did not betray their feelings in their letters. The Ameers had merely magnified the difficulties of navigating the Indus and arrayed its rocks, quick-sands, whirl-pools and shallows against the proposal and wound up by stressing the fact that the voyage to Lahore had never been performed in the memory of man.¹¹³ The Ameers were alarmed. They felt that this Mission was the precursor of an army and therefore no permission could be granted to the English, to enter the Sindh dominions. The foreigners had known everything about Sindh, excepting the Indus and its navigability, and that they had never used the Ameers' territories for the passage, of their army was due to their lack of knowledge about the river. Once the Feringee had known the Indus, Sindh would be a country lost to the Ameers. Col. Pottinger, having received news from Burnes, had remonstrated with the Ameers for refusing 'so moderate a request'¹¹⁴ and had apprised the Sikh ruler, through the British agent, of the dispatch of the dray horses for his capital, by the Indus. The delay caused had created doubts in the minds of the Maharaja and he asked the British agent the cause thereof, who at once narrated in the usual high flown language the impertinence of the Ameers of Sindh in refusing passage to the Mission. Ranjitsing was roused. He interrogated the Ameers' Vakils, who apprised him of the purpose behind this pretext of conveying his present. They pointed out that the carriage, which was supposed to be bringing the horses for him, was really full of gold muhars for his enemy – Sayed Ahmed – and the Ameers were collecting a lac of men, to oppose the advance of this mischievous Mission. But the Maharaja felt that the Ameers were insulting, him by refusing, a passage for his presents and at the same time their conduct was likely to injure British fooling, who might launch an offensive against Sindh and annex the territory which he so much coveted. He, therefore, ordered his French Commander, Ventura, to make a demonstration from the frontier of Dera Ghazi Khan against the Ameers.¹¹⁵ By that time the Ameers had conciliated the British Resident in Cutch and assured him that the passage could not be allowed as it was in violation of the existing treaties between them and the British, but if the British Resident gave an assurance that this passage would not be taken as a precedent; Burnes might well pass. Pottinger gave the required understanding.¹¹⁶ The Ameers certainly did not desire to antagonize the Sikh ruler. Se both powers were informed that Burnes was permitted to go up the Indus, to deliver the presents from the Royalty of Great Britain to Maharaja Ranjitsing of the Punjab. On 40th March, Burnes

¹¹³ *Ibid*, Vol. I, p. 20.

¹¹⁴ Khera, *op.cit.*, p. 44.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid*, p. 12.

¹¹⁶ *Selections from the Records of the Commissioner in Sindh*, S. File 301, p. 119.

and his party once again set sail for the Indus and now ascended the Hujamree, one of the central mouths of the Indus and after some higgly haggly, the Ameers' orders granting a full and unqualified sanction to advance by water were put into force. The party proceeded to the capital, Hyderabad, on 12th April.¹¹⁷ "Our fleet consisted of six flat bottomed vessels and a small English-built pinnace", which he had brought from Cutch.¹¹⁸ As the little fleet went up the stream it was heartily cheered by the people. At one spot a Sayed, gazing astonishingly at the new-comers, shrewdly remarked, "alas! Sindh is now gone since the English have seen the river, which is the road to its conquest".¹¹⁹ The utterance was indeed prophetic. Within barely a dozen years the British flag was seen flying on the Ameers' dominion. The fleet moored opposite Hyderabad on 18th April. On the way the members of the Mission saw the fishing of the Pallah, the palatable dish of the Sindhis. The Mission was very cordially received at the capital and the son of the Chief Minister, in his father's absence, was appointed the Mehmandar to the Mission. The Mission visited the Court and found that its old grandeur had faded. Meer Nusseer Khan, the second son of Meer Moorad Ali, the reigning Chief, assured Burnes that he was a loyal friend of the English and it was he, who finally got sanction for his Mission to proceed by the Indus. Meer Moorad Ali, the Chief Ameer, spoke in eulogizing terms and welcomed the envoy.¹²⁰ The interview was followed by the British envoy sending some presents to the Ameers, sent by his Government, consisting of a gun, a brace of pistols, a gold watch, two telescopes, a clock, English shawls and cloths, two pairs of elegant cut-glass candles and shades, some Persian works of Bombay Litho and maps of the World and India.¹²¹ The Ameer, on receiving the presents, sent the moderate request that the clock and candle-sticks may well be exchanged for something else, but it was rudely turned down. A second interview wound up the Mission's stay at Hyderabad. On his departure, the British envoy was the recipient of a handsome Damascus sword with a red velvet scabbard, amended with gold, from Meer Nusseer Khan, the Chief Ameer sending a purse containing Rs. 1,500, since he had no mounted blade to present the envoy with.¹²² On 23rd April, the State-barge carried the party due north. The Mission reached Sehwan on 1st May and stayed there for three days. A day after quitting Sehwan the party met the agent of the Ameer of Khairpur, Mahomed Gohur, who came to compliment the Mission on its safe arrival. Meer Rustom's hospitality began on the day his agent met the Mission. The Mission reached Bukkur within ten days and went to pay a visit to the ruler of Khairpur. The Chief Vazier, Fateh Khan Ghoree, came to receive them and conducted them to the Court.¹²³ The envoy presented the Ameer with a watch, a brace

¹¹⁷ Burnes A., *op.cit.*, Vol. I, p. 25.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid*, Vol. I, pp. 32-33.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid*.

¹²⁰ *Ibid*, Vol. I, p. 39.

¹²¹ *Ibid*, Vol. I pp. 40-41.

¹²² Burnes A., *op.cit.* Vol. I, p. 42.

¹²³ *Ibid*, Vol. I, P. 57.

of pistols, and a kaleidoscope, along with various articles of European manufacture.¹²⁴ The Ameer was highly delighted to receive these tokens of friendship. "There was so much mildness in what the Ameer said that I could not believe we were in & Beloochee Court," wrote Burnes.¹²⁵ The Ameer requested the Mission to tarry longer in his dominion and accept his 'poor hospitality' so long as they stayed. This hospitality consisted of eight to ten sheep, with all sorts of provisions for 159 people daily.¹²⁶ While the Mission was at Khairpur the Ameer sent, twice a day, a meal of seventy-two dishes, consisting of Pillaos and other viands of the richest cookery. The Mission however could not extend their stay at Khairpur and soon proceeded north-wards. On the Mission's departure Burnes received from the Ameer two daggers and two beautiful swords with gold ornamented belts, many cloths and Sind—silks and a purse containing a thousand rupees.¹²⁷ By this time the Mission had had a good experience of Sindh beggars. The British envoy complains of them in the following terms:— "the beggars of Sindh are the most importunate and troublesome. They practice all manner of persuasion to succeed in their suit for alms; tear up grass and bushes with their mouth and chew sand and mud to excite compassion."¹²⁸ Before reaching Bukkur the Mission had met the Chief Vazier of the Hyderabad Court, Nawab Wullee Mahomed Khan Lagharee, who had hastened his departure from Shikarpur to meet the Mission. He assured the envoy that his master had had evil counsel and so had unnecessarily detained them at the mouths of the river and on hearing this news he had urgently solicited the Ameer not to commit themselves to such a rude conduct. The English envoy was greatly impressed by the noble bearing of the Vazier and the grandeur of his retinue. 'He came with a splendid equipage of tents and carpets accompanied by three palanquins and 400 men. A set of dancing girls was also in his suite.'¹²⁹ On 21st May the Mission left Bukkur and arrived at Lahore on 17th July 1831.¹³⁰ In spite of his cordial reception at the Sindh Courts, Burnes had little to commend the Ameer for. He felt that the Talpurs were tyrannous rulers and were very unpopular with the people. And as he points out, 'he heard the people say that they—the English—were the forerunners of conquest.' In due course Burnes made out his report and expressed a favorable opinion regarding the navigability of the Indus.

Now it remained for the Government of India to take suitable steps in the matter. Though the Malcolm Memoranda had recommended the annexation of Sindh, the political situation in the country made the step suicidal at the moment. It was deemed expedient for the time being that the Indus be opened for the purpose of commerce and through that commerce to the north-west, specially to the Kabul dominion, the British

¹²⁴ *Ibid*, Vol. I, P. 59.

¹²⁵ *Ibid*.

¹²⁶ *Ibid*, Vol. I, p. 60.

¹²⁷ *Ibid*.

¹²⁸ *Ibid*, Vol. I, p. 54.

¹²⁹ Burnes A., *op.cit*, Vol. 1, p. 67.

¹³⁰ *Ibid*.

must substitute their influence for that exercised by Russia. Such indeed was the 'desire of the Secret Committee of the Court of Directors of the East India Company in London.¹³¹ An immediate annexation would not only draw the British into the politics of Central Asia, which they wanted to avoid as long as was expedient, but it would also annoy their old ally Ranjitsing, who was so keen to have Sindh, that after being free from the imbroglio of Sayed Ahmed, he had been concentrating his attention on the conquest of Sindh and had gone to the length of inviting the English to join in the expedition against the Ameers, over which proposal the English in their own interests wisely slept.¹³² The British felt that if they could secure the necessary influence in the north-west through commerce and on the same score obtain free navigation of the Indus, their purpose would be served, without a single life being lost. What they really wanted was a passage for troops to the north-west, which they would secure through commercial navigation. If ships of commerce could ply on the Indus regularly, it would not be difficult for the English to sail ships of war on the same stream in an emergency, with the power they enjoyed in India. The Ameers of Sindh would be easily over-awed by British might. Such indeed were the views of Lord William Bentinck, the Governor General of India. And accordingly Missions were to be dispatched to the Courts of Lahore, Bahawalpore, Khairpur and Hyderabad, to sue their rulers for 'natural justice.' Opposition was anticipated only from the Lahore and Hyderabad Courts, the rest being subordinate Courts. But it was believed that the Lahore Court could be managed and hence there remained the Court of Hyderabad, whose policy it had been to enjoy a secure existence by the exclusion of all foreigners from its dominions. Apart from the above policy, it had been brought to the notice of the British-Indian Government that the Ameers of Hyderabad were seeking a marriage alliance with Persia and this it was feared, might develop into a political one, to the detriment of British interests. The Governor General writing to Col. Pottinger, the prospective envoy to Sindh, brought to his notice the fact that 'matrimonial alliance might have been suggested by Russia, with a view to a future political alliance and to the establishment of an immediate relationship through Persia with an Indian State, by means of which, whether for intrigue or for actual attack, a ready access would be afforded to our Indian Empire.'¹³³ Even the British envoy at Tehran advised the Governor General to avert the alliance between Sindh and Persia, as by such an attempt the Sindh ruler could solicit Persian protection against any measure that the coming events, however unforeseen, may compel the English to adopt against Sindh. So the Governor General of India had to send an experienced envoy to Sindh, to fulfill 'an altruistic Mission,' to open the Indus for commercial purposes. The British had for once realized that a petty kingdom had no right whatever to shut up commerce by imposition of heavy duties or by any other impediments, simply because the passage of the channel of commerce lay through the territories of that insignificant autocracy. The British chose as their envoy to Sindh, the British Resident in Cutch, Col. Henry Pottinger, who had much previous knowledge of

¹³¹ Khera, *op.cit.*, p. 16.

¹³² Khera, *op.cit.*, p. 14.

¹³³ *Ibid*, p. 18.

the Sindh Court. The choice was indeed wise. The Governor General informed Col. Pottinger of his intentions and suggested an outline of the way he had to argue out his case at the Ameers' Court. In case the Ameers objected to the opening of the Indus for commercial purposes, by charging a fixed and moderate toll, under the superintendence of the British-Indian Government, the British envoy was to question the right of Sindh in this respect, by having recourse to the Principles of International Law and Practice and prove to the Ameers the falsity of their stand, that they or any other State possessing only a portion of a stream had a right either by prohibition or what is tantamount to it, by the imposition of excessive duties or by connivance at a system of plunder by their subjects on the trader, to deprive all the other people and States of an advantage which nature had offered to all and to show to the Ameers of Sindh that they could not rightly assert that they alone had the right to seal hermetically the mouths of the Indus, to arrogate the sole and exclusive dominion of its navigation and to deny the right of an innocent use of the passage of this great natural channel of commercial intercourse. At the same time the envoy was also instructed – to beguile the Beloochee Chiefs of Sindh into an agreement by the enumeration of the advantages they would derive by the new scheme.¹³⁴ In case these cajoling proved ineffective, the British envoy was to make most and bring home to the Ameers of the right possessed by the Powers whose dominions bordered on the Indus to use this channel of commerce, but 'nothing like menace', was to accompany the admirable exposition of natural rights. And in case the Ameers asked for certain conditions under which they may agree to the British demand, like protection against their avowed enemies etc., they were to be told that 'when there exists a natural right and power to enforce it, both justice and reason reject all title to concession or compensation.'¹³⁵ How modest indeed were the British demands! The English had conceived and taken on themselves by their own free will, this humanitarian work of encouraging commerce in Asia. And 'nothing like menace' was to be resorted to, though it was within British power and 'natural right' to do so, against the parties involved, who were to come to a unanimous verdict in favours of the scheme. How grand a conception only if, what was being proposed, had no political motive behind it!

The preliminaries being over, on 10th December 1831, Colonel Henry Pottinger apprised the Ameers of Hyderabad of his intention to visit their Court, with letters from the Governor General for them.¹³⁶ In this letter Pottinger requested the Ameers for an officer of theirs to receive his Mission in the Sindh territory. He also apprised the Ameers that 'as a part of the luggage which I have with me is of that heavy nature that renders its transportation by land extremely difficult', they should authorize this part of the luggage to come by water, via the delta port of Daraje. By the end of the month the Ameers had replied and welcomed the English 'friend' to their Court. They appointed

¹³⁴ Khera, *op.cit.*, pp. 18-21.

¹³⁵ Khera, *op.cit.*, pp. 19-21.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

Mahomed Khan and Dost Ali Khan to meet the Mission on the Sindh Border.¹³⁷ The Mission was to consist of the following gentlemen:

| | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Lt. Col. Henry Pottinger | Envoy |
| P. Scott, Esq., | 1st Assistant |
| Captain W. Pottinger, | 2nd Assistant |
| Asst. Surgeon I. A. Sinclair, | Surgeon |
| Lt. J. Morris, | Commanding the Escort |
| And E. P. Del Hoste, Esq., | Surveyor and Draftsman. ¹³⁸ |

The Mission was provided with an escort by the 24th N. I.¹³⁹ The whole party made up a goodly number. "We mustered upwards of 400 souls," writes Del Hoste.¹⁴⁰ The envoy carried with him the following stationery,¹⁴¹ for the use of the Mission to Sindh: —

| | |
|---|-----------------|
| Foolscap Paper | Two Reams |
| Pott or King's Arm, in lieu of Foolscap | One Ream |
| Demy or 3rd sort | 10 qrs. |
| Thin post paper | 10 qrs. |
| Portuguese paper | 8 Reams |
| Letter paper | 2 Reams |
| Cartridge paper | 5 qrs. |
| Blotting paper | 5 qrs. |
| Quills | 500 |
| Pen-knives | 2 |
| Black Ink-powder | 2 dozen Bundles |
| Red Ink-powder | 3 dozen Bundles |
| Wafers | 4 Boxes. |
| Sealing Wax | 2 lbs. |
| Pencils | 6 |

The Mission was also furnished with medicines, instruments etc., worth Rs. 911-2-0 . So fully saddled, the Sindh Mission, reached Lackpat Bunder on 10th January 1832.¹⁴² Del Hoste was specially appointed on the personnel of the Sindh Mission for collecting geographical information regarding Sindh.¹⁴³ The Mission crossed into Sindh on the next day and in just ten stages arrived at the Ameers' capital, on the 25th of the same

¹³⁷ *Selections, op.cit.*, S. File 301, pp. 11-12.

¹³⁸ Del Hoste B., *Printed Selections from the Pre-Mutiny Records of the Commissioner in Sindh*, p. 188.

¹³⁹ *Selections, op.cit.*, S. File 300, p. 300.

¹⁴⁰ Del Hoste E., *Memoir on Sindh*, Imperial Record, Department. *Selections op.cit.*, S. File 300, p. 115.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid*, S. File 300, p. 409.

¹⁴² Del Hoste E., *Printed Selections op.cit.*, p. 188

¹⁴³ *Ibid*. p. 201.

month.¹⁴⁴ It is necessary to advert here to the ready welcome accorded to the British Mission by Meer Moorad All Khan, who had formerly been so suspicious about Englishmen entering his territory. The Ameer seemed to think that the purpose of the Mission was to settle the Parkur affairs.¹⁴⁵ Parkur plunderers had so much inconvenienced the subjects of Cutch, under British protection, that the Ameers had been warned several times and it seemed that now a final settlement was to be effected and a policy was to be chalked out, for rooting out this menace. In fact the question of Parkur plunderers was of so minor an importance in the present instance, that the Governor General had left it to the discretion of Pottinger to move the matter or not; for the main object of Indus Navigation was not to be jeopardized under any circumstances.¹⁴⁶ But soon after the welcome letter had been dispatched, the Ameers were informed by a brother of Ismail Shah, a Minister of the Hyderabad Court, then at Bombay on a private mission, that the Mission's main object was to seek permission for the passage of troops to oppose Russians in the north-west of India, as also for the establishment of three political agencies in Sindh, at Tatta, Hyderabad and Shikarpore respectively, besides an English envoy at Khairpore.¹⁴⁷ And hence the Ameer dispatched Mirza Zynulabdin, son of Ismail Shah, to know in advance the real object of the English. In the meantime some other Talpur officers also met the Mission, like Hyderkhan Laghari, the Governor of Jatee Pargana and nephew to the Chief Minister; Mahomed Khan Talpur, brother-in-law of the Chief Minister; and Akhund Baka-ul-Shah, all men of rank.¹⁴⁸ The last named person sent word to the Ameer that the boats carrying the heavy luggage of the Mission were really laden with military stores.¹⁴⁹ On hearing this the Ameer grew thoughtful and forthwith dispatched Kechee Khidmatgar to ascertain the truth.¹⁵⁰ It was on this account that the heavy luggage arrived five days later than the Mission at the capital, having been detained in the delta at Daraje for nine days. The Ameers' officers referred to above as also two confidential servants of Meer Moorad Ali, Chotta Khidmatgar and Mirza Baki Georgian, met the Mission on the second stage of the march and very warmly welcomed them on behalf of their master. These officers proposed to pay Rs. 100 a day to Pottinger as Mehmandari charges, as ordered by the Ameer. Col. Pottinger felt that this was not fair and after much discussion with the Ameers' officers agreed to accept fire-wood and forage free.¹⁵¹ The Mehmandars also communicated to the British envoy the desire of Meer Moorad Ali to allow him to follow the "Belloch" system of hospitality, by furnishing the Mission with ready dressed victuals, on the arrival of the Mission at the capital. Pottinger found it inexpedient to refuse everything and therefore accepted this invitation. On the whole

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁵ Selections, op.cit., S. File 301, p. 25.

¹⁴⁶ Selections, op.cit., S. File 300, p. 89.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, S. File 301, p. 37.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, S. File 301. p. 37.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, S. File 301, p. 54.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁵¹ Selections, op. cit. S. File 301, p. 28.

the reception of the Mission, while it was still on its way to the capital, was very hearty. "Nothing could have been more attentive and friendly than Meer Moorad Ali Khan's conduct to the Mission upto this hour," wrote Col. Pottinger to Government.¹⁵² On their way the Mission passed through fertile lands growing rice, tobacco, barley and sugar-cane in great abundance.¹⁵³ Near Shahkapoor the Mission came across an extensive fort, said to have been the residence of Dodo, a Summa Chief. The ruins were of *pucca* brick of enormous dimensions. At Bulrey the Mission visited the tomb of Shah Kareem, the great-grand-father of Shah Abdul Latif, the Sindhian Shakespeare.¹⁵⁴ "The tomb is a beautiful building covered with lacquered tiles of various colors, which at a short distance appear like porcelain. There is a large *melah* held here in March every year, which lasts for three days; goods coming to the *melah* pay no duty."¹⁵⁵ But all was not pleasant for the Mission on the road, The beggars of Sindh greatly disturbed them. Del Hoste complains of begging as a terrible nuisance in Sindh. Captain W. Pottinger corroborates what Del Hoste asserts regarding Sindh beggars, when he points out:— "Those who have no property or means of subsistence, live by begging or rather demanding alms and there is nothing wonderful to see well-dressed and respectable-looking men, sometimes on horse-back, with swords and shields, asking for charity and if denied, they give vent to the most violent and abusive language."¹⁵⁶

The Mission duly arrived at the capital and encamped at a special camping ground situated nearly south-west of the city. The British. camp was marked out facing south, thus having the City and Fort on its left, the Indus on the right at a distance of 2½ miles, at its rear the Nalla having wells to supply water, beyond which, on a rising ground, stood the Tanda of Wullee Mahomed Khan Lagharee.¹⁵⁷

The situation of the English camp was not very pleasant, but it had the advantage of being free from the annoyance of beggars.¹⁵⁸ The camp was provided with a Sindhian Guard to keep off the civilian population, who would otherwise disturb the peace and quiet of the place. However, out of curiosity, many Sindhis came to visit the camp.¹⁵⁹ The larger Durbar tent in particular was an object which appeared to strike the visitors as being wonderful—the chicks at the tent doors also appeared to amuse them very much and they were often heard having disputes among them as to what they were composed of.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵² Selections, op. cit. S. File 301, p. 28.

¹⁵³ Ibid, S. File 301, pp. 26-34.

¹⁵⁴ Del Hoste, Printed Selections, op. cit. Pp. 194-95.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid p. 197.

¹⁵⁶ Pottinger W, op.cit., Memoir in Sindh, Imperial Record Department.

¹⁵⁷ Del Hoste, Printed Selections op.cit., p. 200.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid, p. 201.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Selections, op.cit., S. File 301, p. 71.

So now the Mission was ready to start on its errand, in right earnest. The first visit to the Ameers' Court by the Mission was fixed for the morning of the 28th January.¹⁶¹ By this time the British camp had been visited by the protégés of every Chief, enquiring after the welfare of the members of the Mission and bringing presents of fruits. A little after sunrise, on the morning of the 28th, a deputation consisting of Ahmed Khan Laghari, the eldest son of the Prime Minister; Mahomed Khan Nizamani; Dost Ali Khan Talpur; Mahomed Khan Talpur and others conducted the members of the Mission to the Durbar. The Durbar had nothing in particular to commend itself except noise, if noise could ever be commendable. "Nothing could be less decorous or worse arranged than the whole scene; one could hardly find room to sit, as the people came squeezing into the Durbar, shouting, howling, and calling to each other, all the time."¹⁶² All the old grandeur seemed to have passed away, except for the personal decoration and decorum of the Ameers themselves. Captain W. Pottinger gives a realistic and animating account of the reception of the Mission at the Ameers' Court. He writes, "The reception of the Mission was most distinguished, but the Court and the style of everything connected with it gave us much disappointment. The dresses of the Ameers were alone handsome and the jewels costly. The Baloch system of hospitality was followed towards us and for some days, until the envoy peremptorily declined to receive any further contribution, supplies of every sort and in the greatest abundance . were served out daily to all the followers and a ready cooked dinner of 150 dishes sent daily for the gentlemen, accompanied with Cabool fruits, sherbet, sweets, etc."¹⁶³ After polite enquiries of welfare, the visit terminated within twenty minutes and the Englishmen returned to their camp.

After the first interview, intercourse with the Ameers became frequent as the purpose of the Mission became known to the Ameers, through the envoy. Meer Moorad Ali Khan, when he was made aware of the contents of the letter from the Governor-General, objected to Englishmen entering his dominions as merchants, because, the Beloochees knew them as soldiers and under no circumstances would they be able to discern their commercial purpose.¹⁶⁴ This was an objection to which the Ameers' officers clung for long, as they felt that it constituted a dangerous step by them. Col. Henry Pottinger, explaining the point to the Governor General, wrote:— "To be in the most remote degree engaged in trade is looked upon by the Belooches of Sindh as the most complete degradation and when the envoy on the discussion of the treaty mentioned that British merchants were often amongst the most respectable people of their country, the Chiefs who were present seemed quite astonished and hardly gave credit to the fact."¹⁶⁵ At the same time they pointed out that the entry of Englishmen in Sindh was a violation of the understanding recorded on paper and given by Pottinger himself, that the British

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ Pottinger W., op.cit.

¹⁶⁴ Selections, op.cit., S. File 301.

¹⁶⁵ Pottinger W., op.cit.

Government would not again trouble that of Sindh with a similar request, as the one made for the passage of Alexander Burnes by the Indus in 1831.¹⁶⁶ This, the British envoy easily countered, by saying that the Indus Navigation as proposed now was quite different from the deputation of Burnes and at the same time pointed out that he had informed Zynulabdin, the receiver of the note, that the stipulations contained in the note were not binding on the British Government, as he had no authority to give such an understanding, but hoped that his Government would accept the conditions agreed to by him.¹⁶⁷ This argumentation needs comment. If Col. Henry Pottinger had no final authority of his Government to settle the passage for Burnes, by the Indus, he had no business to entertain the Ameers' officer deputed for the purpose. He should rightly have sent him to the proper authority. Zynulabdin would never have accepted the terms from Pottinger, had he the slightest doubt that Pottinger's proposals would be rejected by his Government. He acted on good faith and yet his good faith was paid back by the enumeration of a technical flaw in the document given to him. Indeed the ways of political friendship are varied and variable.

After a few day's preliminary exchange of views on the subject, Moonshee Khooshiram on behalf of the Ameers' Government, proposed a treaty of nine articles.¹⁶⁸ The first two articles referred to mutual and eternal friendship, the third debarred all Europeans from entering Sindh, the fourth provided for the entry of non-European merchants by the Indus. The fifth article referred to Shikarpore. It was stipulated that on no account would Shikarpore be seized by the British. The sixth one made the friends and enemies of the one as those of the other, the seventh stipulated that the Ameers would provide a large force on British requisition within 100 miles of Hyderabad, the eighth article referred to fixing and regularizing payment of river dues, and the last one contemplated compensation to the Ameers for the above benefits. The British Government was expected to compel those of Kabul and the Punjab to treat Sindh as an independent Power, like the British and cast no covetous eyes on it. Col. Pottinger having heard the Ameers' proposals, read out to him, refused to accept the terms.¹⁶⁹ He felt that so many articles in the proposed treaty were uncalled for. But in order to expedite the Mission's work, he himself sent a draft treaty to the Ameers on 2nd February, consisting of four articles.¹⁷⁰ The first referred to friendship. The second stipulated that the navigation of the Indus be made free and as the Ameers had many doubts against Englishmen, it was provided that no Englishman was to settle in Sindh and no armed vessel was to enter the river without the previous sanction of the Ameers. The third article referred to the fixing of the river toll and the last one referred to the other articles of the previous treaties in a modified form. The Ameers conveyed their objections to Pottinger's

¹⁶⁶ Selections, op.cit., S. File 301, pp. 119-120.

¹⁶⁷ Selections, op.cit., S. File 301, pp. 119-120.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid, S. File 301, p. 92.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ Selections, op.cit., S. File 301, p. 176.

proposals, through their minister, Sayed Ismail Shah,¹⁷¹ who pointed out to the English envoy that the Ameers under no circumstances were prepared to allow Englishmen to visit their dominions freely and frequently, even on commercial errands. The Ameers, it was pointed out, may allow a few Englishmen in their dominions, but they must return as soon as their goods were sold and would be allowed entrance only once a month. After Sayed Ismail Shah had argued on behalf of his masters, Col. Pottinger presented the point of view of his Government. He pointed out to the Ameers' Minister that it looked rather strange that a treaty of friendship was to debar one of the parties from entering the dominion of the other. After some hesitation the Ameers instead of accepting Pottinger's draft submitted another draft for his consideration.¹⁷² In this draft great stress was laid against the seizure of Shikarpore by the English. This was ridiculed by Pottinger for being included in a treaty of friendship. The new draft made no mention of Military Stores coming up the Indus. Pottinger felt that a clause referring to it should be included and it was to be stipulated that it depended upon the Ameers to grant permission for the same or not. This was indeed a clever ruse to commit the Ameers on paper, for once the English thought of bringing troops, they would do so and in case of refusal of permission a forcible entry could be made, when once such a permission was allowable by the treaty. The draft fixed a period for the residence of English merchants in Sindh, which was easily combated by the British envoy, with the argument that none could tell when one's goods would be sold out and a stipulation fixing the period of stay of English merchants would act so adversely against them, that it would deter them from coming to Sindh. However Pottinger assured the Ameers that he was sending their draft to the Governor General for his sanction and hoped that the final terms of the treaty would be based on their stipulations, as far as possible. The officers connected with the negotiations on the part of the Ameers of Hyderabad were Moonshee Khooshiram, Sayed Zulfikar Shah, Sayed Ismail Shah, Ahmed Khan Laghari, Mirza Zynulabdin and others. While the Mission was at Hyderabad news was received on 16th February that Kharaksing had proceeded to join General Ventura to settle the affairs of Derajat, but in reality to attack Shikarpore. The Ameers made hot preparations for opposing the enemy. But the news soon arrived of Kharaksing having retired to Mooltan. This greatly relieved the Ameers and set their mind at rest.¹⁷³

Col. Henry Pottinger had already on his arrival expressed his intention of going to the Khairpore Durbar on the same errand as had brought him to Hyderabad, but it was strongly opposed by the Hyderabad Ameers.¹⁷⁴ The Ameers said that the Khairpore Meers were their subordinates and it was really not necessary to take the trouble of going thither. They even proposed that Pottinger may settle the Khairpore treaty with Meer Mubarak, the brother of Meer Rustom, who was at Hyderabad, on the occasion of the marriage of Shahdad Khan, son of Noor Mohamed and grandson of Meer Moorad

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² Ibid, p. 180.

¹⁷³ Selections, op.cit., S. File 301, p. 283.

¹⁷⁴ Pottinger W., op.cit.

Ali—a Hyderabad Ameer. But Pottinger preferred to go to Khairpore, since he had heard of the friendly overtures of Meer Rustom to Alexander Burnes. The reason why the Hyderabad Chiefs did not like that the British Mission should proceed north was their fear of the English capturing Shikarpore, 'the apple of their eye.' But soon their fears were allayed and Pottinger was allowed to proceed to Khairpore.¹⁷⁵ Pottinger had sent Del Hoste in advance to Khairpore, to get a reply from the Ameer to his letters. The Ameer at once sent a suitable reply to Pottinger, who accordingly left Hyderabad on 21st February for Khairpore, where he arrived on 21st March.¹⁷⁶ He was very cordially received at the Khairpore Court, where he found more regularity and order than at Hyderabad. The people here were very civil. Here the negotiations did not take long. Pottinger found that the Ameers of Hyderabad were correct in denominating this Court as their subordinate. He sent—in his draft of four articles stipulating friendship, free navigation, equitable duties on the river and mutual visit of Vakils. After some higgledy haggledy the draft was accepted. On the night previous to their departure, the Mission was favored with several sets of dancing girls. The Ameer also supplied the Mission with his dogs and hunts-men to provide some sport for the party before it started on its return voyage on 11th April. The Mission arrived at Hyderabad on 16th April. The officers connected with the negotiations at Khairpore, were Dewans Dulpatrai and Lakhmichand, as also Fateh Mahomed Ghoree and Gohar Ali. The Mission was not detained for long at Hyderabad and left the Sindh capital in State-barges on 20th April, reaching Moghurbee on 5th May. Then the Mission proceeded by land to Lakhpat, where it arrived on the 11th instant.¹⁷⁷

The general tone of the negotiations at the Sindh Courts had been conciliatory on the part of the Ameers. There was hardly any stiffness of the type experienced by earlier British Missions to Sindh. This was due to the peculiar position in which the Ameers stood. The British wanted only the commercial navigation of the Indus. The Ameers knew the proximity and power of the British in India. If they opposed the English demands, they were threatened to be left to the tender mercy of Ranjitsing. But if they assented, British authority was a sufficient guarantee against any invasion of their country. So, the Ameers consented to the British plan of opening up the Indus for purposes of navigation, simply because they were the weaker party and knew fully well the consequences of a refusal. But the Chiefs of Sindh were shrewd enough to take advantage of the cartload of good they were doing to the British, by asking for a little pittance. It is significant that almost all the princes of the ruling family vied with one another in establishing a good reputation in the British camp. The reason was not far to seek. Meer Moorad Ali Khan was the last of the four brothers who initiated Talpur rule in Sindh, at Hyderabad. At his demise a fight for the *Masnad* was inevitable. Meer Moorad Ali had two grown-up sons, each of whom sought the throne, Noor Mahomed by the right of being the eldest son and Nusseer Khan by being the favorite of his father.

¹⁷⁵ Pottinger W., op.cit.

¹⁷⁶ Selections, op.cit., S. File 301.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

Meer Sobdar, the son of the eldest of the Charyars, felt that the most legitimate opportunity for him to bid for the throne would be on the demise of Meer Moorad Ali, he being the son of the eldest brother. Similar designs were uppermost in the mind of Meer Mahomed Khan, the son and survivor of the second brother of the Charyars. Meer Moorad Ali went to the extent of opening the topic of succession to the Hyderabad throne with the British envoy, but the envoy was clever enough to evade any definite reply and switched on to another topic.¹⁷⁸ It was clear even to the members of the British Mission, that if Meer Moorad Ali had been nice and good to them, it was mainly because he wanted the British to intervene in the Sindh succession on behalf of his choice, Nusseer Khan. Even at Khairpore a similar state of affairs was noticeable. There, Meer Ali Moorad wanted to supersede his elder brothers, He made frantic efforts to alienate the English envoy against his brothers, but met with ill success. All his overtures met a cold and non-committal reply from Col. Pottinger, who found Ali Moorad quite a dangerous party to deal with. Hence the changed attitude of the Ameers and their acceptance of the British offer, thus recognizing the virtual superiority of the British,

It would not be out of place to refer here to the presents sent by the Governor General to the Ameers and the return presents given to the British envoy. As usual, Col. Pottinger had brought some presents for the Ameers. And the Ameers also expected them, so much so, that the Chief Ameer of Hyderabad, before the British envoy had even thrown a hint regarding them, informed him that 'he should not make any presents to any of his children, nephews, relations or Sardars, as they would only excite more jealousy and ill-will than at present existed among them'.¹⁷⁹ Though his behavior was contrary to etiquette, the Ameer was justified in his action by the fact that there really existed bitter jealousies among the princes. But that was not all. Meer Moorad Ali in anticipation of receiving presents, informed the English envoy, through his minister Ismail Shah, that he had learnt that he was going to receive some chandeliers and a clock along with other presents and requested Pottinger not to send the articles enumerated above, as 'the former were calculated to be for boys and men of sensual pleasures, to hang upon in their apartments and the clock got soon out of order and cost more than it's worth in sending it for repairs to Bombay'. This was indeed too childish a request and was hardly expected from a ruling Chief. Col. Pottinger sent to the Ameer a suitable reply to his request. He addressed Ismail Shah thus, "I am perfectly lost in amazement at this message, that whatever presents I had for Moorad Ali were not sent to him by the Governor General on account of their value, but as tokens of His Lordship's regard, that it would have been only becoming in His Highness to have received them as they were meant, that he might have disposed of part or all of them amongst his children, relations or servants."¹⁸⁰ For, Col. Pottinger himself wrote to Government to sell off some of the presents received by him from the Ameers, as they

¹⁷⁸ Selections, op.cit., S. File 301.

¹⁷⁹ Selections, op.cit., S. Pile 301, P. 77.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid, pp. 171-72.

would not serve any useful purpose.¹⁸¹ Col. Henry Pottinger was hardly pleased by the progress of the negotiations at Hyderabad, but he could not detain sending the presents to the Ameers much longer, as he did not wish the Ameers to imbibe the impression that he was keeping them back from doubts as to the success of his Mission. So Moorad Ali received presents worth Rs. 7,100, consisting of mirrors, chandeliers and other glass-ware, along with cloths of English manufacture and some guns and fowling pieces. The Ameer hardly liked the glass-ware and asked his minister, Ismail Shah, to get the glassware exchanged, but the minister failed in his mission. In a conversation with Col. Pottinger, the Ameer referred to the fondness of the English in presenting articles of glass. To this Pottinger replied that the English rejoiced in making presents of articles of English manufacture and since Englishmen excelled in this manufacture, glass-ware stood prominent in their presents at all Indian Courts. But the Ameer had liked the guns and rifles sent to him and he showed his appreciation to Pottinger for them. The envoy also made presents to Meer Noor Mahomed, the eldest son of Meer Moorad Ali, worth Rs. 550. To Nusseer Khan, the second son of the same Ameer, he sent a flannel piece worth Rs. 30. To Hyder Khan Laghari, the Governor of Jatee, he gave presents valued at Rs. 192, while Nawab Mahomed Khan Laghari, the Chief Mehmandar of the Mission, received presents amounting to Rs. 165. Thus the Mission bestowed Rs. 8,037 worth of presents on the Hyderabad Court. The Khairpore Court was not left behind by the British envoy. Meer Rustom Khan received from the envoy presents valued at Rs. 7,670, consisting of clocks, watches, guns, pistols, chandeliers, mirrors, etc. The Ameer was extremely pleased with this courtesy. Meer Mubarak, his brother, also received presents worth Rs. 777, whereas the Chief Minister of Khairpore, Fateh Mahomed Ghoree, got presents of the value of Rs. 300. Thus the Khairpore Durbar received English presents worth Rs. 8,747.¹⁸² The Khairpore Ameer sent to the envoy, a horse and a camel with gold and silver trappings, matchlocks and swords, Kashmir shawls and cloths of Sindh, 'as some trifling green leaves of friendship, to add to the verdure of the garden of amity, between the Governor General and himself.'¹⁸³ And the Hyderabad Ameers also did not lag behind in this respect. From the Hyderabad Court the Mission received nine horses, one riding camel, two couples of Sindh dogs, one very valuable sword with bejeweled belt and the best blade—originally received by Meer Moorad Ali Khan from the Shah of Persia, as a present—12 pieces of silk, cloths of Punjab and Sindh, some Sindh loongees, four richly mounted matchlocks, two saddles and two bridles mounted with gold, silver and turquoises.¹⁸⁴

Upto this time the knowledge of the English, about the Ameers of Sindh, was so limited that they were considered semi-barbarian. But on this occasion, most of the members of the Mission had enough opportunities to see how shrewd the ruling Chief of Hyderabad was. The British envoy himself must have been impressed by the Ameer's

¹⁸¹ Ibid, pp. 143-44.

¹⁸² Selections, op.cit., S. File 301, pp. 143-44.

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¹⁸⁴ Selections, op.cit., S. File 301.

ready wit, when on one occasion the Ameer asked him what was the purpose of the British opening communications with all the neighboring States. In answer the envoy replied that the British undertook these Missions for mutual benefit and friendship. To this the Ameer returned a quick rejoinder that the English had taken the whole of India by mere negotiation.¹⁸⁵ Del Hoste and William Pottinger also record their opinion of the Ameer. Captain W. Pottinger while referring to Meer Moorad Ali remarks, "He is by far the most sensible and ablest man in Sindh,"¹⁸⁶ to which Del Hoste adds, "Meer Moorad Ali Khan is decidedly a shrewd and sensible man. As a proof of his quickness, I may here mention, that previous to his signing the treaty, he read it over twice most carefully, pondering on the sense of each phrase and word. At last he came to the word 'Resident', at which he stopped and begged to have the meaning of it explained to him fully. This was done, after which he sealed the Treaty ... Any one witnessing the scene would have at once decided that His Highness was a man of business."¹⁸⁷

Thus, at long last, by the Treaties dated 19th June, 1832 and 4th April, 1832, with supplementary articles, between the East India Company and the Ameer of Sindh, as also by similar Treaties with Bahawalpore and Lahore Governments, the Indus was opened for commercial navigation, at a fixed and reasonable river-toll, to be collected under the superintendence of British agents—a Native agent at the mouths of the Indus and an Englishman stationed at Mithankote. The toll was fixed at Rs. 570 per boat, whatever the nature and weight of the cargo, of which Rs. 240 were to be given to the Sindh Ameer, Rs. 160 to Hyderabad and Rs. 80 to Khairpore, and the rest was to be divided proportionately among the other parties.¹⁸⁸ Navigation passports were provided, without which no boat could either enter or leave the Indus. And since there was a likelihood of further intercourse with Sindh, Col. Henry Pottinger was appointed Agent on the part of the Governor General for the Affairs of Sindh, in addition to his duties as Resident in Cutch.¹⁸⁹ So now the Indus was opened to commerce and both commerce and politics came to thrive by it, to the great detriment of the Ameer of Sindh.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid, p. 235.

¹⁸⁶ Pottinger W., op.cit.

¹⁸⁷ Del Hoste, Memoir on Sindh, 1832.

¹⁸⁸ Khera, op.cit.

¹⁸⁹ Selections, op.cit., S. File 301.

THE AMEERS OF SIND



**Meer Fateh Ali Khan
of Hyderabad.**

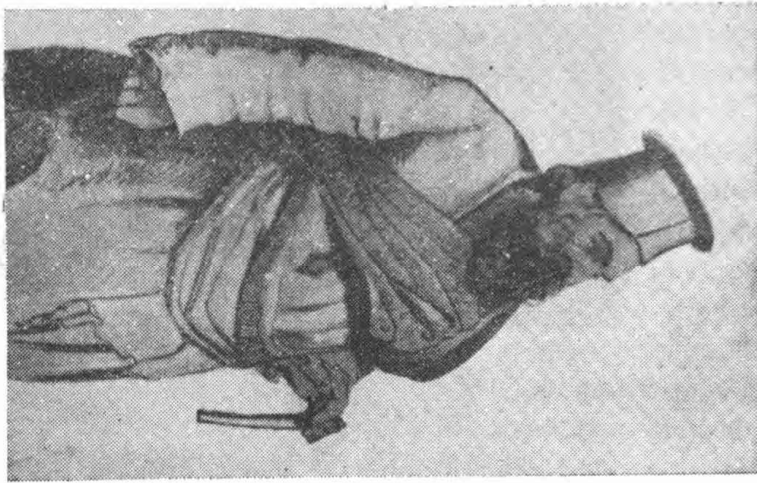


**Meer Rustam Khan
of Khairpur.**

THE AMEERS OF HYDERABAD, SIND



Meer Sobdar Khan



Meer Mahomed Khan



Meer Nusseer Khan

SINDH AND THE RUSSIAN SCARE 1833-1838.

By the time Alexander Burnes came home after exploring the Indus and the regions of Central Asia, the possibility of a Russian invasion of India had gained definite ground in England and was gathering momentum every hour. Before the year 1833 had run out, the King of England, his Prime Minister and assistants, as also the head of the British-Indian Government began viewing with anxiety every Russian move, "You are entrusted with fearful information, you must take care what you publish", pointed out H. M. King William IV to Burnes at his interview and went further, "my Ministers have been speaking of you to me, in particular Lord Grey. You will tell His Lordship and Mr. Grant all the conversation you have had with me, and you will tell them what I think upon the ambition of Russia. I think Sir, that your suggestions and those of Lord William Bentinck are most profound."¹⁹⁰ But that was not all. As time went on the fears not only multiplied, but came to be substantiated. It is only now, when we look back at those events and incidents, that we begin to attach any amount of folly to those who were getting alarmed. Their's was considered 'an excessive political prevision,' when no less a person than the British Minister to Persia drew attention to the fact, in 1836, that "a Russian Regiment at the farthest post on the western shores of the Caspian, has as great a distance to march back to Moscow as onward to Attock, on the Indus, and is actually farther from St. Petersburg than from Lahore, the capital of the Sikhs,"¹⁹¹ since covering of long distances by numerous troops was not an easy task then, specially this, a distance of over a thousand miles between Russian out-posts and the Indian frontier. But considering the Russian influence at the Court of Tehran and the dispatch of emissaries to the Court of Kabul, any amount of suspicion was created regarding Russian designs in Asia. Russia had humbled Persia and in that struggle the British had not aided their ally—Persia—not withstanding stipulations in the treaties with that country. Hereafter Russia could easily mould Persian policy and the Persian siege of Herat in 1837-98 is said to have been directed by Russia. "There was a deeply ingrained conviction in the minds of the politicians of the day that the mere fall of Herat, both for political and geographical reasons, would irretrievably damage British prestige in India itself."¹⁹² Kabul in 1836, found the Russian envoy, Burnes, when he went to Vickovitch, prepared to win over Dost Mahomed, the Kabul Chief, to his side at any price.¹⁹³ It is true that the Russian officer on his return to St. Petersburg was discredited, since Russian policy had changed. All the same, the presence of an emissary, who made frantic efforts to seek an alliance with a shrewd and powerful Chief like Dost Mahomed,

¹⁹⁰ Kaye Sir J. W., *Lives of Indian Officers*, 1880, Vol. II, p. 38.

¹⁹¹ Roberts, P. R., *History of British India under the Company and the Crown*, p. 313.

¹⁹² Roberts, *op. cit.* p. 314.

¹⁹³ *British India from Queen Elizabeth to Lord Reading*, p. 135.

with whose aid it was possible to invade India, was sufficient cause to alarm any the most placid statesman. To counteract these influences, both in Afghanistan and Persia, became the chief task of the British-Indian Government, which culminated in the First Afghan War. British policy towards Sindh during 1833-1838 was merely a part of the larger North-West Frontier Policy. In this essay will be detailed the policy that entirely changed the character of British influence in Sindh.

Lord William Bentinck was the first Governor General of India who was called upon to make suitable provision against the Russian invasion of India. Russia could enter Hindustan through Afghanistan, either directly or through a Persian alliance. Accordingly, in the words of his biographer, the main object of his policy in this quarter was, "to convert the Indus into the ditch of British India" – as it had been considered the ditch of Delhi by the great Akbar – "to associate the Sikhs and the Sindh Valley with us in its defence and to create a friendly Afghanistan as a buffer State between India and any possible invader."¹⁹⁴ There was no immediate danger of the invasion and hence no active political interference in the affairs of the States bordering the banks of the Indus was necessary. All that was considered desirable was to replace Russian influence by the British in Central Asia, particularly in Afghanistan, through commerce and utilize that influence for political purposes, when occasion so demanded. "Lt. Burnes' observations convinced Lord William Bentinck of the superiority of the Indus over the Ganges. There also seemed, in His Lordship's opinion, good reason to believe that the great western valley had at one time been as populous as that of the east and it was thought that the judicious exercise of the paramount influence of the British Government might remove those political obstacles which had banished commerce from the rivers of Alexander."¹⁹⁵ It was therefore resolved, in the current language of the day, to open 'the Indus to the navigation of the world.'¹⁹⁶ With that view the English induced the rulers of the countries bordering on the river to open the Indus to navigation. Treaties were accordingly entered into, by the British Government on the one hand and the Ameers of Sindh, the Chief of Bahawalpore and the Sikh Ruler on the other, in 1832 for the purpose. Both Ranjitsing and the Sindh Ameers were suspicious of the ulterior motives of this new British move, each from his personal stand-point – the Sikh believing that the British thus wanted to check him from adding any further fruitful acquisitions to his possessions and the Ameers feeling that once the English came as commercial agents, they would soon annex their dominions to their empire, as the English had by this time become notorious for their grabbing propensities. It was under the stress of circumstances that both agreed to British proposals, for opening the Indus to commerce, but the Ameers were careful enough to safeguard their interests, as far as a treaty of the times would admit. The jealousy of the Ameers is distinctly evidenced by the conditions which they attached to the privilege of navigating the

¹⁹⁴ Boulger D. C., Lord William Bentinck, Rulers of India Series, p. 171.

¹⁹⁵ Cunningham, op.cit., p. 204.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid-P. 205. "It is admitted that the Mission or Scheme of opening the Indus to navigation had a political purpose, it had a reference to Russia; but the Governor General would not avow his motives.

river,¹⁹⁷ under British auspices and these are particularly significant in reference to what followed in the next few years. Article III of the Treaty with Hyderabad prohibited: —

1. Conveyance of Military Stores by the river,
2. Plying of Armed Vessels on the Indus,
3. The settlement of English Merchants in Sindh.¹⁹⁸

But though the British envoy succeeded in his enterprise early in 1832, merchants could not freely navigate the Indus, until the toll on the Indus had been fixed, a provision for which had been made in the Treaty. The object of a fixed toll on the river was to obviate any pretence for the detention of the boats on the river.¹⁹⁹ It was also decided to fix the residence of the British Agent—an Englishman—at Mithan Kote, to supervise the navigation, as this place was centrally situated, the nearest place to the spot where the territories of Sindh, Punjab and Bahawalpore came together and where the Indus and the Punjab rivers met. At the mouths of the Indus was to be stationed a British Native Agent, to collect the toll from the boats entering the river and a similar Agent was to be stationed at Harike near Ferozapore for like duties, on boats coming down the Indus. Agha Azeemooddeen Hussun of the United Provinces was appointed British Native Agent at the mouths of the river on a monthly salary of Rs. 250, in the early part of 1835.²⁰⁰ Moonshee Jethanand, the British Native Agent at Hyderabad, appointed in 1832-33 on Rs. 150 p.m., was asked to do additional duty with regard to Indus Navigation. And Lt. Mackeson was posted at Mithan Kote, to whom both the British Native Agents were to be subordinate.²⁰¹

¹⁹⁷ Thornton E., History of the British Empire in India, Vol. VI, p. 396.

¹⁹⁸ Aitchison C. U., op.cit.

¹⁹⁹ Selections, op.cit., S. File 303. Pottinger to Macheson, (P to M), 10th October 1835,

Notice the following remarks on the provision to fix the toll on the Indus by Thornton, - "A supplementary Treaty promised that the table of duties to be levied by the Ameers should be examined by the Officers of the British Government, versed in the affairs of traffic and if it appeared to them too high, the Government of Hyderabad, on a representation to that effect, was to reduce the duties. This was certainly one of the most extraordinary stipulations ever inserted in a Commercial Treaty. It virtually gave to the British Government the power of fixing the duties, to be levied by the Government of Hyderabad, on foreign goods passing through their territories. The concession of such a power evinces great confidence or great fear". Thornton, op.cit.—Vol. VI, P. 399.

Apart from the fixed toll for the whole of the journey from the mouths of the Indus to the Punjab, duties for part journeys in the dominions of the Ameers of Sindh also came to be fixed as under:-

From Mithan Kote to Shikarpore or Bukkur at $\frac{1}{4}$ of the whole at Rs. 240 .. Rs. 60

From Mithan Kote to Sehwan, $\frac{1}{2}$ of the whole at Rs. 240 .. Rs. 120

From Mithan Kote to Hyderabad $\frac{3}{4}$ of the whole at Rs. 240 .. Rs. 180

From Mithan Kote to the Bunder at the Indus mouth Rs. 240 .. Rs. 240

²⁰⁰ Selections, op.cit., S. File 303, (P to M) 13th August 1835.

²⁰¹ Selections, op. cit. S. File 303, (1 to M) 17th February 1835.

Detailed instructions were issued to the British Native Agent at the mouths of the Indus by Col. Pottinger on his appointment. The Native Agent was to stay temporarily at Shah Bunder till his abode was finally fixed. He had to charge Rs. 240 for every boat that entered the river and had to hand over the amount to the Ameers' Agent

As soon as the arrangements for Indus Navigation were complete, announcement to that effect was made in the British dominions in Hindustan; the Bombay Government Gazette in particular published the announcement in English, Persian and Gujrati.²⁰² The merchants were not slow to realize the advantages of Indus Navigation under British auspices, and as early as May 1835, Mahomed Raheem Shirazee, a Persian merchant of Bombay, applied to the British Government, for a passport and facilities to trade with Sindh, by the Indus.²⁰³ His agent, Mahomed Tahir, sailed for Sindh in the following month and was cordially received at the Court of Hyderabad.²⁰⁴ He was afforded all facilities, including one of opening a Kothi at Hyderabad or any other place in the Ameers' dominions.²⁰⁵ Other merchants followed suit. Boats from 20 to 100 tons burthen began to ply between Sindh and Bombay. They came to Karachi usually, but some of them went to Shah Bunder, the port of the Indus, at the time. Thus Indus Navigation, as contemplated in the Treaty of 1832, came into force in 1835. There was however still one more hurdle to be crossed in Indus Navigation, namely, surveying the Indus, particularly its delta and the seaboard of Sindh. But this matter had to be postponed in order to allay the fears and suspicions of the Chiefs of Sindh. As early as December 1833, the Bombay Government submitted to Col. Pottinger, the Governor General's Agent for the Affairs of Sindh, 'an admirable plan for the Indus survey,' but Col. Pottinger felt that 'the time was not ripe for it.'²⁰⁶ Even in 1835, surveying the Indus was not feasible, since the Ameers suspected that the merchants that came to Sindh were in reality the agents of the English. In particular in regard to Mahomed Raheem Shirazee doubts had been created by the Ameers' Vakil at Bombay. Hussain Shah, the Ameers' agent, had reported to his masters at Hyderabad that the said Persian merchant real object was to obtain the farm of the revenue of Shikarpore for the British Government, on whose behalf he was trading in disguise.²⁰⁷ And credence had been

stationed there. In the passport for the boats certain definite entries had to be made by the British Native Agent on ascertaining the facts, namely, the name and burthen of the boat, her destination, the name of the Tindal and by whom hired. He was also expected to obtain a list of the cargo in each boat and its estimated value and was to attach this information also to the passport. Apart from this, he was expected to settle disputes arising amongst merchants, coolies, servants etc., at the Bunder. He was strictly enjoined not to demand or accept any presents. Any reference to Hyderabad to be made through the British Native Agent there. However all matters had to be reported to Lt. Mackeson at Mithan Kote and his orders were to be obeyed. The British Native Agent was to maintain a diary of daily transactions. A copy of the same he was expected to forward to Col. Pottinger every month. The British Native Agent at Hyderabad was likewise instructed. He was expected to see that no boats were detained or molested on river and in case of accidents he was enjoined to render assistance personally. He was also expected to obey the orders of Lt. Mackeson pertaining to matters of Indus Navigation. He was to maintain a journal and was to accept no presents.

²⁰² Selections, op.cit., S. File 303.

²⁰³ Ibid, Pottinger to Bombay Government (P to B G), 25th May 1835.

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

²⁰⁵ Ibid-(P to BG), 14th July 1835.

²⁰⁶ Ibid, Pottinger to Burnes (P to BG), 13th June 1835.

²⁰⁷ Ibid (P to B), 15th October 1835. The same Vakil avowed that even prior to Mr. Crowe's Commercial Residency, the British used to trade with Sindh, through a Mogul Merchant.

given to the above by the Ameers. All the same Col. Pottinger and his assistants in Sindh showed no signs of interference or undue interest in the navigation of the Indus and their behavior soon convinced the Ameers that their suspicions were ill-founded. Towards the end of 1835, the Ameers of Sindh were in a proper frame of mind, to receive and accept the proposal of surveying the Indus. At this time occurred boat-accidents at the mouths of the Indus, which gave added importance to the necessity of Indus survey. A boat bound for Cutch from Bombay was forced by the weather to seek shelter in the mouths of the Indus, where it eventually struck against a sand-bank and was seized by the Sindhians.²⁰⁸ This accident, in the opinion of Col. Pottinger, enhanced the necessity of surveying the Indus. Accordingly when Lt. Alexander Burnes went on a Mission to the Hyderabad Court in October 1835, Indus Survey was one of the topics to be dealt with by him.²⁰⁹ At the same time the Bombay Government dispatched a party for surveying the Indus and providing the Ameers with a medical-man for whom they had put forth a requisition. This party was to consist of Dr. Heddle, Lt.s Wood and Carless of the Indian Navy and others.²¹⁰ They were asked to contact Tindal Oomar of Cutch, on reaching the Indus at Vikkur, as 'he would be found very helpful.'²¹¹ The Ameers consented to a survey of the Indus and deputed their officers to meet the British Survey Party and afford them necessary assistance.²¹² The Shirazee merchant, Mahomed Raheem, resident in Bombay, took the opportunity of sending his steam-boat to ply on the Indus, 'with a view to outstripping all competitors and reaping largely of the profits in this field of commercial enterprise,' under the guidance of the Indus Survey Party.²¹³ At the owner's request and with the concurrence of the Bombay Government, Lt. Wood of the Indian Navy took command of the vessel and on Saturday 31st October, 1835, he and Dr. Heddle had the proud satisfaction of unfurling the British flag on the Indus, from the first steam-boat that ever floated upon its celebrated waters.²¹⁴ The boat was christened after the river on which it was to ply. and was only of ten horse-power.²¹⁵ By March 1836, Lt. Wood had gone six times up and down between the sea and Hyderabad and Lt. Carless had by then examined the mouths of the Indus for over six weeks. Lt. Carless returned to Bombay in March, but Lt. Wood remained in Sindh, to watch the progress of the inundation, its effects on the face of the country, the river and its branches and such other phenomena as were worthy of recording.²¹⁶ For this purpose Lt. Wood needed special surveying instruments for which he put in a requisition and the Bombay Government immediately

²⁰⁸ Selections, op. cit S. File 303, (P to 13), 13th June 1835.

²⁰⁹ Ibid, (P to B), 15th October 1835.

²¹⁰ Ibid.

²¹¹ Ibid, Burnes to Carless (B to C), 4th January 1836. He had proved useful to Burnes on his Voyage to Lahore in 1831. Tindal Oomar received Rs. 50-15-10 for his services in Indus Survey from 15th December 1835 to 1st March 1836.

²¹² Ibid (P to BG), 23rd December 1835.

²¹³ Wood Lt. John, Personal Narrative of a Journey to the Source of the Oxus, p. 1.

²¹⁴ Wood, op.cit., p. 1.

²¹⁵ Ibid.

²¹⁶ Selections op.cit., S. File 303, (B to C), 11th March 1836.

complied with it.²¹⁷ Towards the end of autumn, Wood went down to the mouths of the river, to examine whether its channels had been altered by the late floods. The climate of the delta was hardly suited for a continuous stay, with the result that even the robust constitution of Lt. Wood gave way before it. Living among the inundated rice fields in the most noxious season of the year, dysentery undermined his health and he was obliged to return to Bombay.²¹⁸ All the same the British Survey Party, with the assistance of the officers deputed by the Ameers for the purpose, for which aid Col. Pottinger thanked the Ameers.²¹⁹ had acquired useful geographical and political information. Able reports of their observations were submitted to Government by Dr. Heddle, Lt. Carless and Lt. Wood, which furnished authentic information to the British Government regarding Sindh.²²⁰ Lt. Carless in particular, drew up an excellent map of the mouths of the Indus, which proved of much value to the Army of the Indus in 1839. Still the information bearing on the commerce of the Indus was not complete. It is true that the British-Indian Government had never relaxed its efforts to procure the fullest details of the Indus and its adjacent streams, since the voyage of Lt. Burneston Lahore in 1831,²²¹ still there had remained significant gaps in the information before Government, since a lot of information had been secured clandestinely and therefore was not very reliable. On that account, once again, a Commercial Mission, this time to go right upto Kabul, was conceived, both for commercial and political purposes. The Mission, which was to consist of Lt. Burnes, Lt. Wood, Dr. Lord and others, left Bombay on 26th November, 1836.²²² To facilitate the examination of the Indus, once again on this occasion, the Government of Bombay, at the suggestion of Sir Charles Malcolin, Superintendent of the Indian Navy, had caused a six-oared Cutter and Punt—a small boat sharp at the ends—built on a plan that promised to be useful in such a river as the Indus was then understood to be.²²³ The first, on subsequent trial, answered admirably, but the last, from the fineness of her lines, was never of much use upon the river.²²⁴ This

²¹⁷ Ibid (B to C) 18th May 1836.

²¹⁸ Wood op. cit.

²¹⁹ Selections, op.cit., S. File 303, Pottinger to Noor Mahomed (P to N), March 1836.

²²⁰ Selections from the Records of the Bombay Government relating to Sindh, Vol. XVII. New Series. Asstt. Surgeon, J. P. Heddle wrote a Memoir on the River Indus. Lt. Carless submitted two reports, one on the Bay, Harbor and Trade of Karachi and another on some portions of the river Indus, while Lt. Wood furnished a report on the Indus, complete with charts.

²²¹ Wood, op.cit., p. 1.

²²² Ibid, p. 3.

²²³ Ibid, p. 6.

²²⁴ Ibid, pp. 7– 9. For details, notice the following instructions issued to Lt. Wood by Lt. Burnes, the head of the Mission: "You are aware that one of the objects of this expedition is to ascend the Indus from its mouths to Attock, that a more perfect knowledge of the river may be procured, as well as for purposes of commerce as of war and this important examination, I am instructed by the Government of India, to entrust entirely to you. It is unnecessary for me to state in detail the particular nature of your duty, but besides the minutest enquiry into the state of the Indus as a navigable river, it will be expected from efficient supply of time-keepers and other surveying instruments, the latitudes and longitudes throughout should be carefully fix. The instructions which I have received from the Government of India draw my attention to the facility which the country in the neighborhood of the river affords for the supply of coal as the most important point, which I also beg you will keep in view. In addition to this it would be desirable for you to note everywhere the nature of the wooden fuel procurable on the banks, or within

Mission also submitted its reports, thus completing the British record on the Indus and the lands bordering on it.

Thus was the Indus surveyed and its sea-board minutely examined, buoys placed to guide vessels, in 1837, under the Treaty of November 1836, and beacons erected at the Hujamree and Keddawaree mouths of the Indus for the guidance of the navigators.²²⁵

All was therefore well on the Commercial front in Sindh. But it was not so well on the Political front. Soon after the signing of the Treaty, 'opening the Indus to the navigation of the world,' Meer Moorad Ali Khan, the last of the Char-Yars, the four joint rulers of Hyderabad, died. His demise was marked by the disintegration of the Talpur power in Sindh. So far there had been unanimity among the three Talpur branches of Hyderabad, Khairpur and Mirpur. On all matters of general policy they took concerted action, e.g. wresting Shikarpur and its dependencies from the Afghans; even the Treaty of 1832 was agreed to after mutual consent. But this goodwill disappeared with the passing away of Meer Moorad Ali. For, as early as 1835, the Khairpur Chief sent a Vakil with presents to Col. Pottinger, the British Agent for the Affairs of Sindh, stationed at Bhooj, the main object of whose visit was to request him on behalf of his master for a separate treaty. So far the Indus Navigation Treaty was concerned it was joint. But circumstances had changed, which warranted the new request. The chief reason for a separate treaty with Khairpur was that in the time of Meer Moorad Ali and prior to it, everything was done after mutual consultation; but after his death, his sons and nephews were following a policy that would have been positively repugnant to his views, had he been alive.²²⁶ But that was not all. Even those who succeeded to the Hyderabad *Masnad*, on Meer Moorad Ali's demise, did not agree among themselves. After the passing away of the last of the Char-Yars, their sons formed another quad of Chiefs, viz., Meers Noor Mahomed and Nusseer Khan, sons of Moorad Ali Khan; Meer Sobdar Khan son of Fateh Ali Khan; and Meer Mahomed Khan son of Ghulam Ali Khan. That there were bound to be differences among them was known even to Meer Moorad Ali. He was anxious that his second son, Meer Nusseer Khan, should succeed him, or at least should be declared one of those occupying the Masnad, and he had persuaded Col. Pottinger to intervene in the succession at his death, as the British had done in the succession of several Princes in various other parts of Hindustan.²²⁷ But Col. Pottinger was not agreeable. Meer Nusseer

an available distance; the quantity and quality of it; what descriptions of it are best adapted to the use of steam-boats; and finally to give the result of your enquiry, that, if coal were not procurable in the valley of the Indus, steamers might rely upon the wooden fuel procurable on it, or, if not, what means present themselves to you of obviating this inconvenience. I have confined myself to sketching out the general nature of your duties, but you will of course note particularly the breadth and depth of the stream, the strength of its current, the means of crossing it by boats; the number which may be found on it and its canals etc. But besides these there are many subjects of interest in a country that is in part so little explored, to which you might direct your attention with advantage."

²²⁵ Selections, op.cit., S. File 287, pp. 1–40.

²²⁶ Selections, op.cit., S. File 303, Pottinger to Governor General (P to GG), 12th October 1835.

²²⁷ Selections, op.cit., S. Files 300 and 301.

Khan stood no chance, since only the eldest sons of the Char-Yars could be associated in the Government. But somehow Nusseer Khan succeeded in his enterprise, which created a practically permanent antipathy in Meer Sobdar Khan and Meer Mahomed Khan, against the sons of Meer Moorad Ali. Apart from this, the nephews of Meer Moorad Ali Khan had received hardly any cordial treatment at the hands of their uncle, particularly Meer Sobdar, and they were marking time to avenge the wrongs done to them. Above all, Meer Noor Mahomed Khan could not rightly claim to be the head of the new set of Princes, since Meer Sobdar Khan and Meer Mahomed Khan were the sons of elder brothers. And yet he wanted to be the Chief Ameer of Hyderabad. But Meer Mahomed Khan was manageable, as he belonged to the same faith as Meers Noor Mahomed and Nusseer Khan and had not very much to complain against his dead uncle. But Meer Sobdar Khan could never be brought round. He was a Sunni by faith and he harbored a permanent grudge against his cousins. He held a separate Durbar from the others, who met jointly under the headship of Meer Noor Mahomed Khan. This disruption among the Talpur Chiefs became evident when they made a demand that the names of all of them should be incorporated in the Treaty with the British. A long-drawn-out correspondence ensued on the subject and at last as a matter of courtesy the names of all the Chiefs of Hyderabad, namely, Noor Mahomed Khan, Nusseer Khan, Mahomed Khan and Sobdar Khan, were inserted in the treaty.²²⁸ That Sobdar Khan was out to create trouble and demand the division of territory is clear from the letter of the British Native Agent at Hyderabad, Moonshee Jethanand, to Col. Pottinger dated 18th August 1834. He apprised his chief of the quarrel picked up by Meer Sobdar Khan, demanding one-fourth of the land as his share. But Noor Mahomed Khan was putting him off by suggesting all sorts of divisions, like keeping the country on the far-side of the river for himself and his brother Nusseer Khan and assigning the near side lands to Sobdar Khan and Mahomed Khan; or else, dividing the country into twelve divisions and assigning three to each Ameer.²²⁹ It was Meer Noor Mahomed's desire to let matters stand as on the demise of Meer Moorad Ali Khan—a joint holding—but matters came to such a pass, reported the British Native Agent, that on the pretence of paying their troops, each Chief had summoned his men to the capital.²³⁰ This antagonizing among the Princes of Sindh continued and was in evidence during the visit of Col. Pottinger to the Sindh Court in November 1836 and in 1838.²³¹ The gulf between the Princes went on widening since Meer Sobdar Khan was out to give trouble. He opposed all the proposals of the other three and incited the ignorant Baluchi Chiefs against them. The Baluchis were ever suspicious of the designs of the British in Sindh and so, when Col. Pottinger came to Sindh for settling the terms under which the British

²²⁸ Selections, op.cit., S. File 302, Pottinger to Native Agent (P to NA), 24th May 1834.

²²⁹ Ibid, S. File 302, (NA to P) 18th August 1834.

²³⁰ Ibid.

²³¹ Parliamentary Papers relating to Sindh, 1838-43 p. 27. Col. Pottinger reports to the Governor General on 26th December 1836 as follows:- "I was requested by Mirza Bakar - the confidant of Meer Noor Mahomed Khan to keep it a secret that I was going to Hyderabad on invitation This shows that the Family differences were still acute." Selections, op.cit., S. File 302, (P to GG), 25th December 1836.

would mediate between Ranjitsing and the Ameers, one of which being the establishment of a British Residency in Sindh, he opposed the move and instigated the Baluchi Chiefs against his three cousins, so much so that after Col. Pottinger had retired to Bhooj, there were possibilities of a rebellion in the Sindhian army.²³² The enmity that had set-in among the cousins enjoying the Hyderabad Masnad certainly foreboded their ruin, for now a foreign Power could easily usurp their territories by playing one against the others. The local proverb, "who ruined the Talpur House, the princes themselves," was in the process of making. The internal discord had been so heightened by Meer Sobdar Khan that the Chief Ameer, Noor Mahomed, found himself in a very precarious condition, out of which he could extricate himself only by furthering his connection with the British. And the best way of attaining that end was to have a permanent British Resident in Sindh. With a Feringee near him, none dare challenge or undermine his position.

The Talpur House, divided as it was against itself, was being harassed by an outside aggressor. The restless Sikh Chief, having brought under his sway a large slice of territory of the Afghan Empire, had been casting covetous eyes on the dominions of the Ameers of Sindh, for long. He had been averse to opening the Indus for commercial purposes also on that account, as that scheme was also likely to afford the English any amount of influence in Sindh and as such it would be impossible for him to march against it. When Lord William Bentinck and Ranjitsing met at Roopar in 1831, the Sikh Chief drew the attention of the Head of the British Indian Government to his own schemes against Sindh and observed that the Ameers had no efficient troops, and that they could not be well-disposed towards the English, as they had thrown impediments in the way of Lt. Burnes' progress.²³³ All this was done to lure the Governor General to give his assent to the scheme of the Sikh ruler, who was not prepared for a rupture with his powerful allies—the English—who had allowed him to extend his territories so long. The Governor General however quietly evaded the topic. But Ranjitsing, who had his fondest hopes in Sindh, could not sit idle. In 1833 Shah Shuja made one more attempt to win back his throne and accordingly marched to Shikarpore. At this point Ranjitsing intended to forestall the exiled Afghan ruler and annex Shikarpore, but he was anxious to obtain the consent of the English in his enterprise. His Vakeel hinted about this to the British Resident at Delhi, which resulted in the following reply from the British Government:— "To advance upon Shikarpore, the country of a friendly Power, merely on the ground of the Shah having proceeded thither, would hardly seem to be reconcilable with those principles by which the conduct of nations is ordinarily governed."²³⁴ Ranjitsing could not quite understand the English attitude. He was an ally of the English. They had no personal designs of their own in Sindh at the time, or else the Governor General would never have turned down the proposal of Mr. W. Fraser, of obtaining the cession of Bukkur from the Ameers through Shah Shuja. Then why was

²³² Selections, op.cit., S. File 302, Azeemoodeen to Pottinger (A to P), 15th April 1837.

²³³ Cunningham op.cit., p. 206.

²³⁴ Khera, op.cit., p. 26.

he being thwarted in his designs against Sindh? The British position was however quite clear. They had a definite interest in Sind-politico-commercial. Through commerce they were to keep watch on the political movements in the northward. Shikarpore was the gate of Khorrasan. How could they allow Ranjitsing to annex it! For, then it would be no easy task to acquire the requisite facility for keeping political watch, since Ranjitsing was a jealous monarch; while Shikarpore under the Ameer—weaklings offered all conveniences. But still Ranjitsing did not lose heart. He never completely lost hope. His observations regarding the inefficiency of the Talpur forces proved to be correct, as the Sindhians were routed by the forces of Shah Shuja in 1833, while he was on his way to win back his throne. This defeat of the Sindhians raised some more hopes in Ranjitsing and once again he wanted to ascertain the opinion of the British Government regarding his designs on Sindh, under the changed circumstances. Goojarsingh Majeethea, the Sikh Ambassador, proceeded to Calcutta in 1834, but came back after a stay of a year and a half, without having attained his object.²³⁵ Ranjitsing in the meantime had fortified his position. He had by now cogent reasons for marching against Sindh. He had taken up the cause of the successor of Sarfraz Khan Kalhora, who had been deprived of his power by the Talpurs, and who was now living as a pensioner on the Sikh Chief's bounty at Rajenpoor beyond the Indus, which he had secured as a Jagir from Kabul.²³⁶ In addition to all this, the Sikh Ruler had a serious complaint against the Ameers of Sindh, who were aiding and abetting the Mazaree free-booters—Baluchi tribes-men living in the tract between the Sikh territory and that of the Ameers of Sindh. The Mazarees made incursions into Sikh territory and after looting the people, retired to Sindh. Ranjitsing had remonstrated with the Sindh Chiefs, but nothing had come out of it. The only way for the Sikh, to put an end to these Mazaree forays, was to march against them and annex their territory. Incidentally he could enter Sindh too and acquire, the apple of the Ameers' eye, Shikarpore.²³⁷ Accordingly Prince Naunihalasing was dispatched to Mithankote and from there he made a demand on the Sindh Chiefs to pay the Maharaja the tribute which they had formerly paid to the Afghan monarch or else Shikarpore would be occupied.²³⁸ The Ameers of course refused to pay and the Sikhs marched into the Mazaree country and occupied the capital, Rojhan. A truce was declared on the Ameers making themselves answerable for any future losses.²³⁹ But this was a temporary arrangement, the Ameers never meant to stand by it. They merely

²³⁵ Cunningham, *op.cit.*, p. 213

²³⁶ Cunningham, *op.cit.*, p. 214.

²³⁷ Ranjitsing could have obtained Shikarpore without any, hostilities against the Sindhian chiefs. In fact a proposal to that effect had been made by the Chief Ameer himself. Meer Nor Mahomed Khan on behalf of his Government promised to hand-over Shikarpore to the Sikh Chief, provided he undertook to check any attempts of Shah Shuja, the ex-Kabul Chief, against Sindhian territories. But the Sikh Chief paid no heed to the proposal, it seems, as he did not trust the Sindh Chiefs.

²³⁸ Selections, *op.cit.*, S. File 303, (P to GG.) 23rd May 1835, Col. Pottinger in his letter to the Governor General of 23rd May 1835, while conveying the news sent by the British Native Agent at Hyderabad, reported:- "Ranjeetsing has called on the Ameers to deliver him up the City of Shikarpore and its dependencies as a part of the Afghan Monarchy, but of course nothing of the sort will be done."

²³⁹ *Ibid*, p. 214.

needed time to adjust themselves to the situation. The records of the year 1835 abound in intelligence of the Sikhs marching against Sindh. Col. Pottinger, reporting to the Governor General the items of intelligence on 25th February, 1835, states, "the Khyrpoor Ameers have sent a force to watch Dewan Saloolsingh, who had approached the Sindh territory in pursuit of the Mazarees and other robbers."²⁴⁰ Once again reporting to the Governor General on 10th September the news items from Hyderabad, the British Agent for Sindh spoke of the tribulation of the Ameers at Ranjitsing's coming to the southern portion of his kingdom, with ulterior designs on Shikarpore.²⁴¹ And again, on November 11th, 1835 Pottinger informed the Governor General, that the news-writer at Hyderabad had reported the arrival of Naunihalsing at Mooltan, awaiting further orders, on which account the Ameers were greatly disturbed, but as yet no line of action had been decided upon. These successive campaigns of the Sikhs against the Sindhians made the Ameers rather nervous. They could think of no other way out of the difficulty, except that of seeking an alliance with the English, against their enemies.

The Ameers deputed Moonshee Jethanand, the British Native Agent at Hyderabad, to wait on Col. Pottinger at Bhooj with a scheme in which the British were to join hands with the Ameers. When the Ameers decided to seek British help against Ranjitsing, naturally arose the question as to how to obtain the required aid – under what pretext? For this purpose they framed an ambitious scheme, which they thought would lure the British to side the Sindhians. Moonshee Jethanand arrived at Bhooj on 1st October 1835 and placed the following scheme before the British Resident on behalf of the Ameers: – "That the British Government shall join with that of Sindh in the conquest of Derajat – the Districts belonging to Ranjitsing on the right bank of the Indus, south of Attock the country of Brakooees – Belochistan – and the small principality of Lus, including the seaport of Sonmeanee. That in the event of the British condescending to this proposal, the two States shall enjoy their conquests in equal proportions and that the Ameers will be prepared to establish an English Residency at Hyderabad or any other place the English might prefer in their dominions."²⁴² To make the scheme further acceptable to the English, the Ameers assured them that not much military aid from them would be demanded in the campaign.²⁴³ However nice the scheme of the Ameers might have been, it could not be accepted by the British, as it would involve them in hostilities against the Powers with whom they had contracted friendly treaties. And yet there was something in the proposals that was worthwhile, something to be striven for – a British Residency in Sindh. How desirous the A. G. G. for Sindh had been of one since 1832! Under no circumstances was this opportunity to be lost; so no negative reply was sent to the Ameers. Such a reply would not only rule out the establishment of a British

²⁴⁰ Selections, op.cit., S. File 303, (P to GG) 25th February 1835.

²⁴¹ Ibid-S. File 303, (1 to. GG) 10th September 1835.

²⁴² Ibid, S. File 303, (P to GG) 2nd October 1835.

²⁴³ Selections op.cit., S. File 303, (P to GG), 2nd October 1835. Commenting on the above scheme, Col. Pottinger writes, "these proposuis are the result of the impending on - rush of the Sikhs under Naunihalsing supported by Kharaksing."

Residency in the Ameers' dominion, but it was bound to impede the scheme of Indus survey, that was being proposed to the Ameers at this time. Accordingly, Col. Pottinger deputed his political assistant, Lt. Alexander Burnes, to visit Hyderabad and settle the matter personally and amicably. Under the escort of the 25th Irregular Horse, Lt. Burnes proceeded to the Court of the Ameers in October 1835.²⁴⁴ In the instructions issued to him on the occasion by Col. Pottinger, the following points were stressed:— 1. To bringing home to the Ameers the inability of the English to join hands with them against those who were as much the friends of the English as they. 2. To remove all suspicions in the uninds of the Sindh Chiefs regarding English designs against their territories. 3. To impress on the Ameers, the unfairness of furnishing them with copies of their Treaties with Ranjitsing, but printed copies could be shown them as a matter of courtesy—to allay their suspicions regarding British complicity with Ranjitsing in his aggressive designs against Sindh.²⁴⁵

Lt. Burnes was very cordially received by the Ameers of Hyderabad and he soon sent to Col. Pottinger a secret dispatch incorporating the overtures of the Ameers of Sindh. The main proposal of the Ameers was the establishment of a British Residency in Sindh, on the condition that the British shall prevent and oppose Sikh, Afghan or any other people's encroachment on the Sindhian territories.²⁴⁶ The proposal for an English Residency had been agreed to by the Governor General in his letter to Pottinger forwarding the Toll Treaty of 1834,²⁴⁷ but the British Agent to the Governor General for the Affairs of Sindh had so far made no use of that sanction. From the point of view of Meer Noor Mahomed Khan, the head of the Hyderabad Government, a British Residency was to serve a personal purpose. With the presence of an English Resident in Sindh, his clamorous cousins would be quietened, who had otherwise been harassing him and pressing him for the division of the kingdom, which he did not desire, as they were conscious of the very cordial relations that had subsisted between him and Col. Pottinger and which were likely to grow better with a British Resident residing in their dominions. Col. Pottinger was personally highly pleased when this proposal for a Residency in Sindh had emanated from the Ameers themselves. Though he had realized the necessity of a British Residency in Sindh since long, recent events dictated its immediate establishment. He accordingly addressed the Governor General on the subject, detailing out afresh the desirability of establishing an English Residency in Sindh, particularly under the new *aus pices*. Commenting on Burnes' Secret Dispatch from the Sindh Court, Col. Pottinger wrote: "I have so repeatedly had occasion to record my opinion as to the advantage of a European Agent being stationed in Sinde, that it is needless to say more here than that opinion remains unchanged, but has been greatly strengthened by the events of the last 18 months." This would be 'the best means of our establishing a political influence throughout the whole course of the Indus.' But why

²⁴⁴ Ibid.

²⁴⁵ Ibid, (P to B), 31st October 1835.

²⁴⁶ Selections, op.cit., S. File 303, (N A to P) 13th April 1836.

²⁴⁷ Ibid. (P to GG), 25th December 1835.

this political influence on the Indus? Any fear of a Russian invasion? None whatsoever, in the mind of the British A.G.G. for Sindh, for continuing he wrote:—"I am one of those persons who deem the successful invasion of India, by a European Power coming by land, a chimera and in fact I believe that any attempt at it—unless conducted by such gradual steps as no creature now living should see perfected—would prove an utter failure, even before we should have to repel it by our arms."²⁴⁸ His sentiments were influenced by the growth of the Sikh power, which was likely to have adverse repercussions on the British Empire in India. He felt that a British Residency in Sindh would check the Sikh advance in that direction. He was of the opinion that the Indus must remain a ditch for British India, bordered by friendly and not too-strong Powers. He wrote: "I have always deprecated hostilities with Sindh or the other States bordering on the Indus. I have ever held that it is highly desirable to strengthen our alliances and extend our influence in that quarter and I now conceive that we have an opportunity of doing so, with the smallest degree of political embarrassment that could possibly be hoped for."²⁴⁹ Regarding the Sikh Power he wrote:—"It appears to me that any extension of the Sikh power towards the south would be objectionable, because His Highness has already more territory than he can well manage with all his personal energy and talent, because it is very unlikely that his successor will be gifted with the qualifications for governing an unsettled or turbulent kingdom and because even an effective attempt against Sindh would have the certain effect of throwing that and neighboring provinces into a ferment of anarchy and tumult which would, supposing the Sikh to be able to retain what he had gained, require many years to subside and which would probably oblige us to take measures during the whole of that indefinite period to protect our own or our allies' frontiers from inroads and insult." The Ameers' overtures, offering as they did exceptional political opportunities with far-reaching consequences, could not be refused, though the proposals might not have been very palatable. In return for a British Residency in Sindh, the Ameers had merely demanded that the English should intervene and check the aggression of outsiders, particularly the Sikhs, against their territories, which the British A. G. G. felt, they were morally bound to do under the existing treaties. He wrote:—"Although the word 'guarantee' cannot perhaps be strictly applicable to the terms of the first article of the Treaty of April 1832, yet I look on it that in the most improbable event of Ranjitsing or his successors turning their views to the conquest of Sindh, we should be bound both by good faith and policy to interpose, at least with our mediation."²⁵⁰ Ranjitsing could be quietened, the A. G. G. thought, by the British avowing the responsibility of the maintenance of peace and tranquility in the valley of the Indus, to resuscitate the Indus as a highway of commerce.²⁵¹ The main reason of his aggressive attitude against Sindh was the nefarious activities of the Mazaree free-booters in his territories, at the instigation of the Ameers of Sindh. If British mediation occurred in the Treaty with Ranjitsing, the British

²⁴⁸ Selections, op.cit., S. File 303, (P to GG), 25th December 1835.

²⁴⁹ Ibid, (P to GG), 8th March 1836.

²⁵⁰ Selections, op.cit., S. File 303, (P to GG), 8th March 1836.

²⁵¹ Ibid.

A.G.G. was sure to compel the Ameers to give up this enterprise of instigating Mazarees and he was sure they would comply with his demand. Under no circumstances, in the opinion of the British A. G. G., was it desirable to refuse the overtures from Sindh, for "it would be tantamount to rejecting the only really sincere and cordial advances we have ever had from that country, as well as finally shutting the door against that friendly intercourse we have so long desired and taken so much pains to bring about," – the refusal of a proposal that is above all so very favorable. "It strikes inc," wrote Col. Pottinger, "that whilst we do no injustice to either party and preserve their existing relation, our paramountcy gives us, though only at the solicitation of one of them, the fullest and most undeniable right to assume the office of mediator, specially where our own interests and the well-being of the States concerned, point to our doing so even were the Ameers' proposals less exceptionable than they appear to me to be." So the Ameers, through their overtures, to Lt. Burnes, were seeking British subordination, of their own free-will and there was no reason why the British should decline the offer. The sovereignty of the Sindh Chiefs was passing into the hands of the British and the Ameers were doing it of their own accord. Indeed, the Ameers of Sindh more than deserved the uncomplimentary epithets applied to them by the British diplomats, when they suggested a step that was suicidal to their interests. They had openly preferred subordination. They had exposed their utterly weak position and the English were not slow in utilizing it.

Soon after sending the Secret Dispatch, incorporating the Ameers' proposals, Lt. Burnes, having created a wholesome and friendly atmosphere at the Court of Hyderabad, returned to Bhoj on 22nd December 1835, his deputation having thus come to an end, which cost the Honorable the East India Company the fair sum of Rs. 2,430-10-0 only. The negotiations on this occasion, for incorporating the Ameers' proposals, proved to be too protracted and the new treaty was not finally ratified before April 1838, presumably because the British thought that there was no immediate danger to Sindh from the Sikhs. They were certain that before Ranjitsing finally and decidedly resolved to attack Sindh, he would ascertain the British attitude regarding his campaign and by the delaying tactics, they – the English – thought, they could maximize their gains, promising nothing to the Ameers, who they thought, in their very straitened political circumstances would cling to any vague allusions which promised to keep them on the *Masnad*. For, in reply to the Ameers' overtures, Col. Pottinger after ascertaining the Governor General's views, informed the Sindh Chiefs, in March 1836, that the British Government were desirous of having a new treaty with them providing a British Resident to stay in Sindh, under the garb of an Agent for the Indus Affairs, who would not interfere in their administration; but the Governor General regretted that in the new treaty it would be unfair to state that the British would check Afghan or Sikh advance in Sindh, since they had alliances of friendship with these States.²⁵² This was strange logic indeed! To save a friend from the aggressive designs of one who is also a friend could,

²⁵² Selections, op.cit., S. File 303, (P to N), 8th March 1836.

by no stretch of the imagination, be assumed to be unfair. The truth was that the English wanted to enjoy political influence in the Indus Valley without disturbing, however so slightly, their cordial relations with the Sikhs. They were certain that the Sikh Chief would cease hostilities against Sindh as soon as he learnt of the establishment of a British Residency in that region and thus the Ameers' purpose would be served; as such, there was no necessity of binding the British-Indian Government to a guarantee that they would check foreign advances into the territories of the Ameers of Sindh. Meer Noor Mahomed Khan may have understood the true significance of the establishment of a British Residency in Sindh and how it would automatically guarantee non-interference of other Powers in their dominion, but the other Ameers could hardly see the harm if it was stated in the new treaty that the British would safeguard Sindhian interests. Accordingly, Meer Noor Mahomed Khan instructed the British Native Agent at Hyderabad to inform his master how anxious he was to have the clause of the British averting Sikh, Afghan or other people's encroachment in the Sindhian territory.²⁵³ And he assigned his reason for this being done "only to quieten the clamorous kinsmen, who would otherwise object to an Englishman's agency in Sindh. He was not afraid of any neighbors. Ranjitsing had tried his best for the last 25 years and had done nothing. He dare not. So also the Afghans, but the kinsmen have somehow to be palliated."²⁵⁴ The Ameers also did not hurry matters, as they had patched up the quarrel with the Sikhs for a time, by declaring themselves responsible for any future raids of the Mazarees in the Sikh territory. This promise they did not keep and in August 1836 Ranjitsing was found moving his troops towards Sindh, in spite of inclement weather, being afraid lest he be thwarted in his projects by the acceptance by Shah Shuja of the Ameers' invitation to come to Sindh.²⁵⁵ Once again Rojhan, the capital of the Mazaree region, was occupied by the Sikhs. But Ranjitsing was still afraid of taking a step which might annoy the English. Sometime back, to know the mind of his Feringee friends, he had made a request for importing fire-arms by way of the Indus, to which of course he received an emphatic "no" from the English, since that would infringe Article III of the Treaty of 1832, with Sindh, prohibiting the transit of firearms by the river.²⁵⁶ In addition, the Governor General having realized the danger to British dominions in India by the Sikh advance into Sindh, referred to by Col. Pottinger in his letter of 25th December 1835, sent the Maharaja a hint that he must not proceed against Sindh, as such a step on his part would disturb the tranquility so essential for the promotion of commerce by the Indus, which they—the English—had taken so much pains to foster. At the same time the Sikh Chief could not expect to receive any support, moral or material, from the British in his enterprise against Sindh, as the Chiefs of that country were their friends. On the contrary the Ameers of Sindh, in such circumstances, would invariably be treated by them—the British—with kindness

²⁵³ Selections, op.cit., S. File 303, N A to P, 13th April, 1836.

²⁵⁴ Ibid.

²⁵⁵ Khera, op.cit. p. 28.

²⁵⁶ Khera, op.cit. p. 28.

and consideration.²⁵⁷ 'But Ranjitsing was not affected by these hints. He was bent upon carrying out the campaign. He requested for a British Doctor, who was to accompany him on this campaign, thus pretending to show to the Ameers that the British were supporting him in this enterprise. The Sikh Chief even quietened Shah Shuja by promising him sufficient support to restore him to the throne of Kabul. But British policy had by this time taken definite shape. The covering letter, which Col. Pottinger wrote to the Governor General, on the proposals of the Ameers of Sindh, sent per Lt. Burnes, placed before the head of the British Indian Government in the clearest possible terms, the consequences of the extension of Sikh power to the delta of the Indus. He therefore realized that British interposition in behalf of the Ameers against Ranjitsing was immediately called for, as otherwise 'our Bombay Government' would be seriously affected. The Secretary to the Governor General was repeating the views of Col. Pottinger himself when he informed him that, "His Lordship in Council entertains the conviction that the Government of India is bound by the strongest considerations of political interest to prevent the extension of the Sikh power along the whole course of the Indus."²⁵⁸ But the Sikh Chief had justified his march against Sindh on the basis of the Ameers having supported the Mazarees to carry out plundering raids in the Sikh territory. This must cease before the English could rightly compel Ranjitsing to put a stop to his incursions in the Sindhian territories. And accordingly, 'the Ameers were informed that the English looked to them to restrain the Mazarees so as to deprive Ranjitsing of all pretext for interference.'²⁵⁹ At the same time the Governor General directed Captain Wade, the British Agent in that region, to dissuade the Maharaja from hostilities against the Ameers and if need be, he may proceed to Lahore to discuss the matters personally. Captain Wade was authorized to "use every means in his power, short of actual menace, to keep His Highness at Lahore and prevent further advance of his army."²⁶⁰ But that was not all. Captain Wade was also instructed that if the Maharaja proceeded on his expedition, in spite of knowing the express wishes of the British Government, he was to withdraw himself from his Court. But, before withdrawing, he was to inform the Maharaja that the Sindh Ameers had placed themselves under British protection and the British Government was ready to resolve equitably the differences that had cropped up between the Governments of Sindh and the Punjab. And in case Ranjitsing still maintained an adamant attitude, Col. Pottinger was authorized to requisition troops from Bombay, to check Sikh advance into Sindh.²⁶¹ The British were prepared to go the whole hog with the Ameers, for there lay the interests of their empire in India.

On the other hand the Governor General directed his A.G.G. for the Affairs of Sindh to comply with the wish of Meer Noor Mahomed Khan and visit the Sindh Court, to

²⁵⁷ Ibid, p. 29.

²⁵⁸ Khera, op.cit., p. 31.

²⁵⁹ Cunningham, op.cit., p. 216.

²⁶⁰ Khera, op.cit., p. 33.

²⁶¹ Ibid.

finally settle the terms of the new treaty for English interposition with the Sikhs and the establishment of a British Residency in Sindh. This visit was to serve a definite purpose. Meer Noor Mahomed Khan was being hard pressed at home by his cousins, particularly Meer Sobdar Khan and he was over-anxious to have Col. Pottinger as the British Resident in Sindh immediately. He had therefore written to him an express letter to visit him, requesting him not to give out that he was visiting the Sindh Court on invitation, as that would further enrage the other Ameers.²⁶² The Governor General was desirous of Col. Pottinger visiting the Sindh Court on another score. His greed had grown. We was anxious to reduce the Sindh Chiefs to a state of subordination to the British. In their overtures to Lt. Burnes, the Ameers had themselves suggested a British Residency in Sindh. That was what they were prepared to do of their own accord. Something more was necessary. The Ameers needed to be coerced into the belief that the political situation, in which they then stood, made it essential that they should receive a body of British troops, to be stationed in their dominions, the expenses of the detachment being borne by the Sindh Government, as that would readily give effect to British mediation.²⁶³ So the Wellesleyan policy of Subsidiary Alliance was to be applied to Sindh. But this demand had not to be pushed too far, lest the Ameers in a rage refuse even to implement their original proposal of a British Residency in Sindh. That had to be secured at all costs. Its political importance could no longer be lost sight of. So, armed with these instructions, Col. Henry Pottinger proceeded to the Court of Hyderabad in November 1836. He arrived at the Ameers' capital on 21st November.²⁶⁴ The treatment that the British Resident received on his way to Hyderabad left nothing to be desired. As he himself reported to the Governor General, "there was everything which hospitality and respect could dictate." On his arrival in the Sindhian territories, at the port of Vikkur-Ghorabari, he was received by persons of high rank, Mahomed Abid, Kardar and ex-officio Nawab of Tatta, on behalf of Noor Mahomed Khan; and Hyder Khan Laghares, Governor of Mughurbee and Jattee, representing Meer Mahomed Khan.²⁶⁵ State barges – Jumptees – carried Col. Pottinger and suite to Tatta, where, he was told, other officers were waiting to receive him. The Ameers' officers from the very start persisted in the courtesy of provisioning the A.G.G. and suite from the Meers' Commissariat-boats attached to the jumptees, but at long last a compromise was effected and Pottinger agreed that thirty of his men may be provisioned by the Ameers' officers. At Tatta the English party was received by Mirza Bakar Georgian, the principal treasurer, secretary and bosom friend of Meer Noor Mahomed Khan; Mahomed Yoosuf Khizmatgar, on behalf of Meer Mahomed Khan and Ahmed Khan Nizamani, on the part of Meer Nusseer Khan. These were to be the Mehmandars of the Mission. All the way, till the Mission reached Hyderabad, the British A.G.G. received messengers from the Ameers, enquiring "about our welfare, bringing fruits, sweets etc."²⁶⁶ All this

²⁶² Selections, op.cit., S. File 302, (P to GG), 25th December 1836.

²⁶³ Cambridge History of India, Vol. V, p. 524, (GG to P), 26th September, 1836.

²⁶⁴ Selections, op.cit., S. File 302, (P to GG,) 25th December, 1836.

²⁶⁵ Ibid.

²⁶⁶ Selections, op.cit., S. File 302, (P to GG), 25th December, 1836.

cordiality was crowned by the signal honor conferred on the British A.G.G. when no less a person than the son of the maternal uncle of Meer Noor Mahomed Khan, Ahmed Khan Talpur, was sent to escort the Mission to their tents on their arrival—'this was an unprecedented mark of respect and attention even for one who had been sent on a Mission by a Crowned Head,' Col. Pottinger subsequently learnt.²⁶⁷

Even at Hyderabad the English party continued to receive provisions from the Ameers till on account of the persistent objection raised against it by Col. Pottinger, it was discontinued, when it was agreed that the British A.G.G. and Doctor Hathorn will be provisioned by Meers Noor Mahomed and Nusseer Khan for three days each. For this purpose the Ameers sent a regular establishment of domestics and cooks etc. who pitched tents in the rear of the English Camp and provided the Mission twice a day at their normal meal-times—with sumptuous repasts sufficient for thirty people, which were served on plate and glass.

It was on the 23rd November that the Mission received its first audience. On his way to the Fort it appeared to Col. Pottinger that Hyderabad had extended in every direction since his visit, in 1831-2. On arrival the Mission entered the Durbar Hall with, bare feet, the shoes having been taken off.²⁶⁸ They were very cordially received by the Ameers. Col. Pottinger was offered a velvet chair placed next to Noor Mahomed Khan, which raised the A.G.G. higher than their Highnesses. The style of the Durbar had greatly improved since the time of Meer Moorad Ali Khan.²⁶⁹ The couch on which the Ameers sat, as well as the pillows at their back, were covered with beautiful brocade and the whole room was richly carpeted.²⁷⁰ The room was nearly filled with well-dressed Chiefs. The three Ameers, Noor Mahomed Khan, Nusseer Khan and Meer Shahdad—Noor Mahomed Khan's eldest son,—Meer Mahomed Khan being ill was not present,—rose on Col. Pottinger's entrance into the hall, came forward a step or two and shook hands with him. Their Highnesses were appareled in white vests with a profusion of precious stones and pearls on their dresses, swords and shields, which had an imposing effect. This was a formal visit.²⁷¹

The Mission visited the Ameers' Court on the following day, "when there was less crowding and none of the indecorous excitement we yesterday witnessed". The Ameers sat on a beautiful flowered silk-cloth spread on the carpet and held down by large golden weights. Col. Pottinger was charged with two duties mainly. He had to settle certain points regarding the navigation of the Indus, as also the conditions under which the British consented to mediate with Ranjitsing in their behalf. So there were to be two settlements, one commercial and the other political. By 28th November 1836 the

²⁶⁷ Ibid.

²⁶⁸ Selections, op.cit., S. File 302, (P to GG), 25th December, 1836.

²⁶⁹ Ibid.

²⁷⁰ Ibid.

²⁷¹ Ibid.

Commercial Treaty was sent to Col. Pottinger with the seals of the three Ameers, Noor Mahomed, Nusseer Khan and Mahomed Khan affixed to it, since there was nothing controversial in it; Meer Sobdar Khan refused even to look at it. This Commercial engagement sanctioned beacons and buoys at the mouths of the river to guide the navigator; all aid to be afforded to the English to survey the sea-board of Sind; a reasonable anchorage fee; housing of goods at Vikkur in the off-season; holding of fairs in Sindh for commercial purposes; restraining the Mazarees and clearing the banks of the river of jungle, without affecting the hunting grounds of the Ameers.²⁷² During his stay at Hyderabad Col. Pottinger was visited by many merchants. From the Shikarpore merchants he learnt that the trade of that city had suffered heavily, due to a dread of the Sikhs. It was practically a deserted city. They requested Col. Pottinger to move the British-Indian Government to interpose and restore peace and resuscitate commerce by the Indus. From the Punjab merchants the British A.G.G. gathered that a large profit was possible in iron, steel, hardware of all sorts, calico, chintz etc., as they commanded a ready and advantageous sale in Sindh and the countries to the northward.²⁷³

As soon as the Commercial agreement had been finally settled, the British A.G.G. brought before the Ameers his proposals for a political alliance and after some higgledy haggled the following points were agreed to, by the Beloochee Chiefs of Sindh: –

1. That a British Resident shall reside at Shikarpore and be the medium of communication between the Governments of Hyderabad and Lahore.
2. Ranjitsing would withdraw his troops from the Sindh frontier on hearing of a political agreement having been arrived at by the British A.G.G. with the Ameers of Sindh. Hence there would be no necessity of a British army coming to Sindh. Should Ranjitsing refuse to withdraw his troops or desist in his designs against

²⁷² Selections, op.cit., S. File 302, (P to GG), 25th December, 1836.

The Amcor had their own reason for the establishment of the British Residency at Shikarpore and the British A.G.G. had his own, The Ameers were in favors of Shikarpore because, A) the presence of an Englishman at Shikarpore in their opinion, would terrorize the northern marauders and restore confidence among the merchants, B) the Ameers could not establish the Residency at Hyderabad, since it was the joint possession of all the four Ameers and since Meer Sobdar differed from the rest, he would foment trouble for the rest, if the British Residency was fixed at Hyderabad, whereas no such trouble was likely to arise if it was established at Shikarpore, since this city belonged to Noor Mahomed and Nusseer Khan, who were both agreeable. Col. Pottinger had his own reason for preferring Shikarpore as the seat of the British Residency in Sindh. He stressed the commercial importance of the city and its geographical situation from a political point of view. He wrote, "in a political point of view I esteem it to be equally, if not more, important. It is unique in that it is the key to Sindh and the establishment of an Agency there will not only inspire confidence among the traders, but will enable us to watch and awe the Mazarees and other troublesome tribes, to indirectly support and guide the imbecile Government of Shikarpore and to gradually introduce the germ and maxim of good order and a fostering rule, which cannot fail in due time to extend their influence to all classes and imperceptibly to ameliorate the degraded condition of the people at large, in conjunction with the certainty of our objects being attained." Selections, op.cit., S. File 302, (P to GG), 25th December 1836.

²⁷³ Ibid.

Sindh, the British Government would then take steps to extend its protection to Sindh and that the latter State shall pay such portion of the expenses as may be necessary. The number of troops and the description of them shall depend upon the judgment of the Governor General of India and the Ameers shall assign a place for their being cantoned at or near Shikarpore and afford all facilities in procuring supplies for the troops. All supplies that may be sent from India to Sindh, for the British troops, shall be allowed to pass free of all toll and other duties.

3. As soon as the treaty based on the above terms is ratified by both States, Meer Noor Mahomed Khan will recall his Vakils from Lahore and keep no communication with the Sikh Chief except through English Officers.

4. Meer Noor Mahomed Khan offers to cede one-fourth share of Shikarpore revenue for the expenses of the British Agent and the troops that may come with him.

5. The acceptance of otherwise of the above offers of the Ameers of Sindh depend upon the pleasure of His Lordship the Governor General.²⁷⁴

With these overtures the Political Mission of Col. Pottinger came to an end. Mirza Bakar and Mirza Khusroo Beg carried on the negotiations on behalf of the Ameers of Sindh.

It is interesting to recount some of the incidents that occurred. during the several interviews the British A.G.G. had with the Ameers. On one occasion Col. Pottinger presented the Ameers with some very beautifully finished razors and pen-knives, made from the iron-work taken off the piles of the old London Bridge and a piece of Indian rubber-cloth. The idea of iron having been worked up to such perfection, after it had been five centuries and a half under water, seemed to the Ameers hardly credible. But the Ameers were even more astonished at the Indian rubber-cloth and honestly confessed that they would not have believed it possible had they not seen it. They were amused like children and called-in different Beloochee Chiefs to come and stretch the cloth and avowed that the English were a wonderful people.²⁷⁵ It is also interesting to record that on one occasion, when Col. Pottinger used the word Chemistry in his conversation with the Ameers, they eagerly enquired of the British A.G.G. if it was possible to transmute any of the base metals into gold and exulted very much when Col. Pottinger replied in the negative. The British A.G.G. found that it was a favorite pursuit of several of the relations of the Ameers to experiment on the conversion of base metals into gold and they were glad to get Col. Pottinger's testimony in favors of their own opinion, that it was not to be done. Meer Noor Mahomed Khan said, "You are

²⁷⁴ Selections, op.cit., S. File 302, (P to GG), 25th December, 1836.

²⁷⁵ Selections, op.cit., S. File 302, (P to GG), 25th December, 1886.

perfectly right when you call your country-men's science, Chemistry. It is the real art. Your medical-men, for instance, prescribe to a patient an atom of medicine, which has more effect and does more good than a pound or quart of what our doctors stuff down our throats and which is as likely to poison as to cure. That one fact shows your skill and yet our fools talk of making gold and whenever they fail they allege as an excuse that they forgot one little ingredient, which they will introduce in the next experiment," –how simple were the Ameers and yet how appreciative!

On the occasion of this visit the British A.G.G. received two horses with saddles and bridles complete, mounted with gold; two rifle-guns mounted with gold and two gold-mounted swords, as presents from the Ameers of Sindh. But these were return presents to those sent by Col. Pottinger to the Ameers on his arrival and the two Durbar tents of the British A.G.G., which the Ameers had admired from the battlements of the Fort and which they had asked Col. Pottinger to spare them, if he conveniently could.²⁷⁶

Furnished with beautiful and costly presents and favorable political and commercial proposals from the Ameers, the British Mission quitted Hyderabad on 5th December, being looked after by Dewan Javharmal, on behalf of Nusseer Khan; Dost Mahomed Khizmatgar, on the part of Mahomed Khan and Mirza Bakar on behalf of Noor Mahomed Khan, on their return journey.²⁷⁷

But the political matters discussed by Col. Pottinger with the Ameers of Hyderabad on his visit of November 1836 were not finally adjusted till April 1838. All this time was taken up to settle the terms of the Political Treaty. In April 1837 Col. Pottinger sent a draft treaty to the Ameers and asked Agha Azeemoodin Hussun, the British Native Agent at the mouths of the Indus, to proceed to Hyderabad, "to fully explain the implications of the British proposals that no mediation was feasible without the appointment of a British Resident etc."²⁷⁸ Col. Pottinger informed the Agha that what passed on between Captain Wade and the Maharaja rendered his agreement no longer applicable.²⁷⁹ The one major objection, which the British A.G.G. felt that the Ameers were likely to raise, was why Ranjitsing had not yet removed his forces from Rojhan, as promised by Pottinger—it was to be a preliminary measure to the arbitration, so Pottinger had said. But this situation, Col. Pottinger asked the Agha to explain to the Ameers thus: – "By asking the Khalsa to leave Rojhan, the English would be asking him to take one step already before the arbitration took place, and on that account Ranjitsing may, with propriety and justice, demand a similar step on the part of the Ameers of Sindh, namely, to pay him the expenses incurred by him in bringing his armies to punish the Mazarees. But the British as the friends of the Ameers did not desire this step to be taken before it was proved that the Sikh came to punish the Mazarees or he

²⁷⁶ Selections, op.cit., S. File 302, (P to GG), 25th December, 1886.

²⁷⁷ Ibid.

²⁷⁸ Selections, op.cit. S. File 302, (A to P), 11th & 12th May, 1836.

²⁷⁹ Ibid, S. File 302, (A to P), 2nd April, 1837.

came as an aggressor, he would not be entitled to any payment whatever. Why should, argued Pottinger; a step be taken in which the Ameers of Sindh may have to make a payment which was not really called for.²⁸⁰ On the other hand the Agha was asked to impress on the Ameers the boon conferred on them by the Governor General, when he agreed to interpose in their behalf with Ranjitsing. They should have been conscious of it, for otherwise by this time Shikarpore would have been safely annexed by the Sikh. "It is useless to disguise that the Sindh Government is not able to cope with that of Lahore and His Lordship the Governor General's renewed offer of undertaking the task of mediating the differences, whilst he declines the Ameers' offer of a part of the revenues of Shikarpore, is the strongest proof of friendly feelings and having no other object beyond the one so repeatedly avowed, of preserving peace and amity along the whole course of the Indus." So a friendly gesture was made by the British to cajole the Ameers to accept the now treaty when the Maharaja had already agreed to withdraw his troops from the Sindh frontier on account of the remonstrance of Captain Wade. Since the English had shown the proofs of their friendship to the Ameers, they also advised them in a friendly manner not to miss this opportunity of coming under their protection, or else, the British pointed out, they would repent at leisure.²⁸¹

Agha Azeemoodin was visited by Mirza Bakar on the part of the Ameers to whom the British Native Agent explained the implications of the Governor General's offer and emphasized the advantages of accepting the proposals and the Mirza was satisfied. But he knew that his masters had certain points to be cleared before they accepted the draft treaty. The main thing to which the Ameers drew the attention of the Agha was, if the British would help the Ameers with swords and guns to root out the rebellion that was brewing in their army, since Sobdar Khan, who was opposed to a British alliance and Mahomed Khan who was yet undecided, were fomenting quarrels and forming a conspiracy and had given out to the infatuated Belooch Chiefs and the army that Meers Noor Mahomed and Nusseer Khan had given up the country to the British.²⁸² The second thing which was emphasized by the Ameers was that a specific mention need be made in the treaty that the British Government shall defend the Ameers of Sindh against the Afghans and the Sikhs. It was pointed out to the Ameers, by the Agha, that under no circumstances could the English interfere in their family-quarrels and as regards a specific mention of protection against the Afghans or the Sikhs, it was hardly necessary, since the treaty provided defence against all external enemies.²⁸³ By 20th April 1837 the Agha informed Col. Pottinger that the Ameers were agreeable to accepting the British proposals.²⁸⁴ And yet, in the final treaty ratified by the Governor General in April 1838, no provision was made with regard to defence against all external enemies of the Ameers of Sindh and still the British Residency was to be

²⁸⁰ Selections, op.cit., S. File 302, (A to P), 2nd April 1837.

²⁸¹ Khera, op.cit., p. 39.

²⁸² Selections, op.cit., S. File 302, (A to P), 11th & 12th May 1837.

²⁸³ Ibid, (A to P), 15th April 1837.

²⁸⁴ Ibid.

established in the dominions of the Ameers, merely for the British agreeing to mediate in their differences with the Sikhs.²⁸⁵ The commitments of the Ameers were out of all proportion to their gains under the treaty. Out of the four demands made by the Ameers, viz. (1) British interposition, (2) British Residency at Shikarpore, (3) Defence against all foreign aggressor, and (4) Supply of arms to suppress a mutiny in the Sindhian Army, only the first was accepted and the rest rejected; whereas all the British proposals were forced on the Ameers, because they were in a tight corner. The British Resident was not only to reside in Sindh, but he was to be his own master in choosing any place in the Ameers' dominions and could change that place at his sweet will and the Ameers like subordinates were to carry out his wishes.

At last Meer Sobdar Khan also agreed to accept the British proposals, for he knew that he could not escape accepting them, as the British Resident would coerce him into that mood.²⁸⁶

The deputation of Col. Pottinger to the Sindh Court and his transactions. there, convinced the Sikh Chief of the futility of his designs against Sindh, when the British were opposed to them and therefore he yielded to the demands of Captain Wade.

Thus, by their own folly the Ameers of Sindh relapsed into subordination with a slight difference of accepting the English as their suzerain instead of the Afghans, when they themselves proposed a British Residency in Sindh, in order to save their dominions from being over-run by Ranjitsing. If the Ameers of Sindh had requested for British aid to dissuade Ranjitsing from making incursions into their territories, without suggesting a British Residency in Sindh, the British would have been agreeable, since their own interests necessitated that step. Did not Col. Pottinger point out to the Governor General that it was absolutely necessary to check the forward march of the Sikh Chief to the ocean? And by the existing treaties the British were morally bound to support the demand of their eternal friends—the Ameers of Sind—against the unprovoked aggression of Ranjitsing. But that was not to be. The Ameers of Sindh in a moment of weakness sought British aid at a tremendous price. The British now knew how weak the Ameers were due to internal dissensions,²⁸⁷ which they could easily exploit in their favors. And this they actually did very soon.

²⁸⁵ Aitchison, *op.cit.*, Vol. VII.

²⁸⁶ Selections, *op.cit.*, S. File 302, (P to GG), 26th December, 1836.

²⁸⁷ Col. Pottinger in his letter to the Governor General of 25th December 1836, wrote, "I told Mirza Bakar of the weak state of Sindh due to family differences and emphasized the advantages of the Governor General's offer."

BRITISH RESIDENT FOR THE AFFAIRS OF SIND



**Col. Henry Pottinger
&
His Political Assistant**



Lt. Alexander Burnes

1ST AFGHAN WAR PERSONALITIES



Lord Auckland



Dost Mahomed



Shah Shuja-ul-Mulk



Maharaja Ranjitsing

SINDH AND THE FIRST AFGHAN WAR 1839

By the end of the 18th century the British had brought under their sway the best portion of India. They were just consolidating their newly acquired empire when they became conscious of a mortal enemy. Russia became the bugbear of British policy in India for the next hundred years. In order to check Russian advance towards India, all British administrators of the period were untiring in their efforts to keep friendly relationship with the Powers bordering on the N. W. Frontier of British India. And Lord Auckland, like the rest, spared no pains in this direction. It appeared to him that the safety of the British empire in India lay in the preservation of the independence of Afghanistan and the cementing of a friendly alliance with that State. And when Burnes failed in his overtures to bring round Dost Mahomed—the Afghan Chief—to the British side in 1837, Lord Auckland, being assailed by disturbing hints and dangerous promptings from all quarters, urging him to adopt vigorous measures, reluctantly entered upon defensive plans of a dubious character.²⁸⁸ He was made to feel that the best course, under the circumstances, was to install a puppet ruler on the Afghan throne—one who would be ever ready to dance to the British tune. And the Governor General found a ready choice in Shah Shuja—the exiled Afghan ruler living in Lodhiana on British bounty. For erecting a friendly State in Afghanistan three Powers combined to reinstate Shah Shuja on the Kabul throne—the ever-willing but ill-fated and exiled Afghan ruler himself, Maharaja Ranjitsing of the Punjab and the British. Under the final settlement of the Tripartite Treaty signed on 26th June 1838 the Maharaja was to wait and watch the situation, and to march forward only in an absolute emergency, while a mighty force under Shah Shuja, with the help of a powerful British force, was to proceed north for his reinstatement.²⁸⁹ The Maharaja was fully financed for his aid. He was to receive for his duty of watch and ward Rupees Fifteen Lacs, in addition to the recognition of his sovereignty over the tracts of the former Afghan empire, which he had conquered.²⁹⁰ Shah Shuja was expected to foot the bill. But he was a penniless refugee living on British bounty. And, under the existing state of their finances, the East India Company could not lend him a helping hand in this respect.²⁹¹ The Afghan Chief was a bit disconsolate over this, when Lord Auckland came to his rescue. On this occasion he proposed to fleece the Ameers of Sindh, his 'eternal allies.' The money payment from the Ameers could be easily obtained, argued Auckland, by reviving the defunct claim of the Shah for the arrears of tribute due to him from the Sindh Chiefs, as the ruler of the Afghan empire, of which the Ameers' territories formed a part—of course formally. Shah Shuja

²⁸⁸ Kaye, History of the War in Afghanistan, Vol. I, p. 317.

²⁸⁹ Thompson and Garrat, Rise and Fulfillment of British Rule in India, P. 336.

²⁹⁰ Thompson, op.cit., p. 336.

²⁹¹ Ibid.

was doubtful of the success of his enterprise, but when he was assured by the Governor General that the British would press his claim, he became sure of his success. Lord Auckland had heard of the hoarded wealth of the Ameers and he felt fully justified in putting to use the shy capital of an 'eternal' ally for the benefit of the whole Indian sub-continent, even if it was to be without their consent. The noble Lord wanted Sindh to be a party in this 'big game' without consulting its chiefs. It was assumed that an 'eternal' friend could by the right of friendship accept a partnership in an extremely humane expedition. At the same time the British army had to seek a passage from the Indian provinces, through non-Sikh territory, to face the Shah's enemies. And here too Sindh came handy. The British force could well pass through Sindh, though for this purpose it was necessary to tear to shreds the Treaty of 1832 – by which the Indus could not be utilized for military operations by the British.²⁹² So the British Resident for the Affairs of Sindh was intimated to sound the Ameers regarding the price they had to pay for their alliance with the British. The Governor General was so fully convinced of the justice of his demands that he advised the Resident to coerce the Ameers into an accepting mood. Col. Pottinger, the British Resident for Sindh, was informed that those "who display an unwillingness to aid us in the just and necessary undertaking in which we are engaged must be displaced and give way to others on whose friendship and cooperation we may be able implicitly to rely". And to this, Kaye offers fitting rejoinder: –

Earth is sick
And Heaven weary of the hollow words
Which States and Kingdoms utter when they talk Of Truth and Justice.²⁹³

The 'dragooning' system was to be carried out in Sindh too. In 1836 the British vouchsafed an amicable settlement of dispute, between the Ameers and Ranjitsing. And now without their asking, the British assured the Ameers that the arrears of tribute due to Shah Shuja by them on account of Shikarpore would be reasonably settled by the British and the Ameers would have to pay only a paltry sum – which remained undefined – to the defunct monarch. The Ameers were also apprised that as they were the 'eternal' allies of the British and the British were in a great difficulty of sending troops to aid Shah Shuja, it was but fair for them to demand a passage for British troops through their territories and at the same time it was reasonable to expect the Sindh Chiefs to allow stationing of a British Reserve Force in Sindh for any emergency. All these demands were however placed before the Ameers grandiloquently. The British Resident in his Memo of 27th September 1838 apprised the Ameers that "His Lordship is of the opinion that it is now necessary that the real friends of the British Government should unequivocally stand forward to evince their friendly feelings by assisting in the measures which the Governor General may consider requisite to frustrate and render

²⁹² Kaye, op.cit., Vol. I, p. 398.

²⁹³ Kaye, op.cit., Vol. I, p. 398. At one time the Governor-General issued definite instructions to the Resident to occupy Sindh with the help of Meer Sobdar Khan or any other Chief willing to side the British -Parliamentary Papers relating to Sindh 1838-43, p. 37.

null the cohabitation which the Governments to the westward of India are known to have formed with the object of disturbing and injuring the possessions of the British Government and with them those of their allies and tributaries."²⁹⁴ And then followed the contribution Sindh had to make in this great enterprise.. On receiving the Resident's Memo, and the demands made on them therein, the Ameers could hardly fathom the responsibilities of friendship—they being mere 'crafty barbarians' in the eyes of the English. They protested against the arbitrary claims of the British on behalf of Shah Shuja, when they held receipts of the liquidation of the Shah's dues on the leaves of the Holy Writ. 'That the Ameers should have demurred to the payment of money, claimed by an exile of thirty years' standing,²⁹⁵ does not excite any wonder. The Ameers were at the same time left wondering how the British dared to violate their own Treaties, whereby they had debarred themselves from carrying any military stores leaving aside 'any actual Force', by the Indus. Indeed the demands made 'on the forbearance of the Ameers of Sindh were of an oppressive and irritating character'. Their money was to be taken, their country to be occupied, their Treaties to be set aside—all this amidst a shower of hypocritical expressions of friendship and good-will.²⁹⁶ All attempts at procrastination by the Ameers were of no avail. The Sindh Chiefs finding themselves in a tight corner did not tender any definite reply to the British demands, but remained profuse in their professions of friendship to the British. The Ameers could not appreciate the unwarranted British interference and therefore without the knowledge of the British, entered into correspondence with the Shah of Persia for help. The letters were however intercepted and their contents convinced Pottinger that 'our chief tie on the Ameers hereafter must be through their fears'. He accordingly informed the Governor General of his plan of placing the requisite treaty before the Ameers only when the British Force had set foot on the Sindhian soil, as such preparations alone, according to him, "would oblige the Ameers to be amenable to our demands."²⁹⁷ A system of universal coercion and intimidation was to be resorted to, in demanding cooperation, which the British could not command in Sindh. Accordingly the British Resident postponed the placing of the new Treaty before the Ameers, till the Army of the Indus had landed in Sindh.

The British Force arrived at Bunder Vikkur—Ghorabari—towards the end of November 1838.²⁹⁸ The Force however could not move forward for want of pack-animals and provisions. The Ameers had not cooperated with the British, in spite of their professions of loyalty. Through their officers they made it impossible for the British agents in Sindh, like Seth Naomal Bhojwani of Karachi, to collect the necessary provisions and pack-animals for the Army, though the Ameers had issued Parwanas in their—British

²⁹⁴ Parliamentary Papers, op.cit., p. 23.

²⁹⁵ Kaye, op.cit., Vol. I, p. 397.

²⁹⁶ Ibid, Vol. I. pp. 400-401.

²⁹⁷ Parliamentary Papers, op.cit., p. 14. He even suggested the occupation of Sindh as a last resort and the Governor General accepted his views. (P.P. Page 22.)

²⁹⁸ Kennedy, Campaign of the Army of the Indus, Vol. 1, p. 20.

Agents – favor after much prevarication. The Meer of Mirpur obstructed the passage of camels sent from Cutch for the use of British troops in Sindh.²⁹⁹ However after some protestations at the Ameers' Court, the British Resident succeeded in making it tolerable for the Army to march forward. But still it was doubtful if the Ameers would remain loyal to the last, as even now rumors of a hostile nature were afloat in the country. To smoothen matters for the British, Col. Pottinger felt that the Reserve Force should proceed to Karachi and take possession of that place, about the time he presented the new Treaty to the Ameers. He accordingly addressed the Bombay Government in this connection, so that they could keep the Reserve Force ready.³⁰⁰ With the passage of time, hostile rumors multiplied in number and intensity. Major Outram of the 23rd N. I. and Honorary Aide-de-Camp to the Commander of the British Army in Sindh, writes as follows in his diary bearing date Tatta 19th December 1838: – The hostile preparations of the Ameers, who whilst they continue to profess the utmost friendship for us, are levying en masse their fighting men, bringing their guns from Larkana to Hyderabad, render it imperative that the communication of our Army should be maintained by a strong force stationed in Sindh.³⁰¹ And accordingly Pottinger dispatched an express requisition for the Reserve Force to land at Karachi and then be conveniently stationed in lower Sindh.³⁰²

The Bombay Government, hearing of the impending active hostility of the Ameers, issued orders for the immediate dispatch of the *Corps de Reserve* to Sindh, which was already ready for service. H. M. S. Wellesley, under the flag of H. E. Sir Fredrick Maitland, the Captor of Nepean in 1815, the H. C.'s Transport Hannah and H. C. S. Syren were ordered to carry the Reserve Force to Karachi.³⁰³ The ships left Bombay with the 2nd Bombay N. I. Grenadiers under Major Forbes on board for Mandvie, where the rest of the Force was to embark. The main body of the Reserve Force was to consist of H. M. 40th Foot (2nd Somerset). The 40th on their arrival at the Cutch port from Deesa, where they were stationed, on 27th January 1839 found that a company of European Artillery (Bombay) under the command of Captain W. Brett from Bhooj had already arrived. The whole Force now came under the command of Col. Valiant, K. H. The commandant of the Reserve had received the latest news of the Sindhian affairs a few marches from Mandvie, while leading the 40th to the port from Deesa, wherefrom it appeared that the landing of the Reserve Force was likely to be contested at Karachi. He was further informed that as the occupation of that port (Karachi) would much facilitate and expedite the operations of the *Corps de Armee*, he must move the Reserve forward as quickly as possible.³⁰⁴ So the full Force set sail for the Hujamree mouth of the Indus, where they soon arrived. Here they were joined by H. M. the Algerine and H. C. S. the

²⁹⁹ Sindhian World Vol. 1, No. 1, P. 34.

³⁰⁰ Parliamentary Papers, op.cit., p. 90.

³⁰¹ Sindhian World, op.cit., Vol. I, p. 34; also Parliamentary Papers op.cit., p. 41.

³⁰² Ibid.

³⁰³ Neill J. M. B., Recollections of Four Years Service in the East with H. M. 40th Regiment, p. 14.

³⁰⁴ Ibid, p. 12.

Constance from the Indus port, whither they had carried the force, now marching through Sindh.³⁰⁵ On 31st January the commandant of the Reserve Force received his instructions, short and crisp, 'Proceed to Kurrachee and take it.'³⁰⁶

It is necessary to know what had compelled the English Resident to open hostilities at Karachi. Rumors of active opposition of the Ameers, noticed above, had been partly confirmed, by the Ameers impeding the advance of the British Army by making foodgrains and camels scarce. News had also been received that the provisions stored at Kotri by Assistant Resident Leckie had been burnt by the Beloches at the instigation of the Ameers.³⁰⁷ At the same time by 24th January it had become evident that the Ameers had declined to accept the new treaty. Lt. Eastwick, who along with Major Outram and others, had been sent to place the treaty before the Ameers, wrote as follows in his letter dated 21st January – "I deem it my duty to report that I consider affairs at this capital have assumed a decidedly hostile aspect and that there is very little chance of the present negotiations being brought to a favorable conclusion."³⁰⁸ Finally there were rumors that the Ameers had issued definite instructions to their officers at Karachi to actively oppose the landing of the Reserve Force.³⁰⁹ The hostile attitude of the Ameers exasperated the British Resident, who sought to over-awe them by the immediate capture of Karachi.

The members of the Reserve were all conscious of what was in store for them before they left the Indus – mouth on 31st January and the members of the 40th Regiment in particular were overjoyed by the prospect, as they had lain inactive for too long. Next evening the Reserve arrived within 700 to 800 yards of the Fort, perched on the Manora Cliff, guarding the entrance to the harbor of Karachi. It was indeed a daring feat on the part of the Reserve Force to anchor in such dangerous proximity to a stronghold which was believed to be hostile to them.

The fort on the promontory at Manora was built about the year 1801 A.D. by the orders of Meer Fateh Ali Khan Talpur.³¹⁰ It stood on the rocky cape, a strong stone construction, with a round tower near it, and constituted the only defenses of the

³⁰⁵ Ibid, p. 16.

³⁰⁶ Ibid, p. 17. The British Resident in his letter dated Jerruck, January 28th to the Naval Commander-in-Chief, now in charge of the Wellesley, after describing the exact state of affairs in Sindh wrote as follows:- "Under these circumstances a Force must of course go to Kurrachee and take possession of that place, which I trust will be effected peaceably, but it is needless to tell you that all opposition must be put down."

³⁰⁷ Kennedy, op.cit.

³⁰⁸ Parliamentary Papers, op.cit., p. 127.

³⁰⁹ Selections, op.cit., S. File 106, Letter No. 93 of 1839 dated 30th January 1839 and Parliamentary Papers, op.cit., p. 129.

³¹⁰ India Office Records relating to Sindh. Agha Abul Hasan, a Bushire merchant, in the employ of the E. I. Co, notices the erection of the Manora Fort in his letter to the Hon. Jonathan Duncan, Governor of Bombay dated Muscat 9th March 1801 as follows: "From Sindh it appears that Meer Fateh Alykhan has ordered fortifications to be erected on the hill of Manoora for the purpose of defending Kerachy."

harbor. It was square in form with five bastions, one at each angle and one on the side looking inland. On the land side, the fort had a half circle added to that face for its better protection. It was entered by a gateway with very strong double doors between the bastions which led into the half-moon, from which there was another gateway of the same description, leading into the centre of a square. In the square was situated a small magazine with an arched roof and a small wooden tank. The Fort boasted a parapet running round it, with numerous loopholes for musketry. The walls of the square part of the Fort were about 16-18 ft. thick and 15 ft. high, on which rested a parapet of 9-10 ft. On the walls of the Fort were mounted about 11 guns-six and nine pounders. The fort could not effectively command the entrance to the harbor for which purpose it was erected, as it was built too far from the edge of the cliffs to offer any serious opposition to a vessel entering the port. The round tower had its separate quota of three to four guns.³¹¹

Immediately after anchoring, some members of the Force got busy preventing all communication with the port, as some boats from the port were seen approaching the English ships. While engaged in this self-ordained task, shots were fired from the fort, which the English thought were aimed at them, though none hit them.³¹² This was taken as a sign of the opening of hostilities, but as the day was nearly done the Reserve reserved its opening the campaign for the morrow. All therefore eagerly awaited the dawning of the new day. Let one of the Reserve describe the scene of the next morning. "Morning at length broke and the sun burst forth in all that glorious effulgence which can only be witnessed in the tropics; there was not a breath to ripple the sea or disturb the vast uniform brightness of its glassy surface. The white walls of the little Fort, perched on its rocky cliffs, stood erect, and the city of Kurrachee in the far distance, with its long chain of bold but sterile hills in the back-ground, all contributed to form a picture of no ordinary grandeur!"³¹³

Thus all were on the brink of a great expectation. The calmness of the scene had to be broken quite early, to prepare for the coming event. The soldiers and marines quietly busied themselves in surveying their flints and ammunition. At about eight in the morning began the British 'amusements'. A Flag of Truce under Lt. Jenkins was sent on shore to demand an unconditional surrender of the Fort.³¹⁴ The Killadar refused this 'modest' British request and therefore four Companies of the 40th were ordered to land along with the artillery, on the western side of the Fort, under cover of H.M.S. the

³¹¹ The description of the Manora Fort is gleaned from:-

1. Selections from the Records of the Bombay Government relating to Sindh - New Series, No. XVII.
2. Neill-op. cit.
3. Baillie-Kurrachee-Past, Present and Future,
4. Parliamentary Papers-op. cit.-P. 141.

³¹² Neill, op.cit., p. 18.

³¹³ Neill, op.cit., p. 18.

³¹⁴ Captain Gray of the 40th Foot accompanied the party as interpreter. Neill, Ibid, p. 18.

Algerine and H.C.S. the Constance. Once again a Flag of Truce was sent, but this too did not achieve the object. The Killadar admitted the superior prowess of the British, but he could not on that account hand over the Fort without the orders of the Governor of Karachi. He however volunteered to send a man down to Karachi and he was sure that the Governor would readily acquiesce.³¹⁵ The old Admiral did not favor this proposal and allowed fifteen minutes time for the surrender of the Fort. On the expiry of that period, the Beloch being still 'adamant', the Fort was again requested with "true British humanity"³¹⁶ to open its gates. The Killadar reiterated what he had said before, upon which the Wellesley opened her broad-side and hit the Fort with admirable precision. Soon another Division of the 40th, consisting of the rest of the Regiment, under Major Hibbert, was ordered to land. But by the time they had landed, the British Ensign was seen waving over the breach, which had been effected in the wall of the Fort, the southern face having been blown away. "We had gained a bloodless victory," writes an English Officer of the Force, "at the expense of some 500-600 pounds of powder and a proportionate number of 32 lb shot."³¹⁷ The Killadar and his comrades had forsaken their charge after 'the fourth or fifth round and hid themselves in the crevices of the rock', from where they were soon secured. In the words of J.M.B. Neill 'the whole affair was a pretty thing or to use the expression a brilliant field-day'. Doubtless the garrison would have favored their guests with many specimens of their prowess in the art of gunnery, but unfortunately, this gratification was placed beyond their attainment by the obstinacy and incapability of their guns-one which had no carriage, another had jumped off from its carriage, which it had destroyed in its violent effort for freedom, while the only remaining one had evidently resisted every attempt to make it serviceable in the defence of the Fortress and had positively declined going off.³¹⁸

The firing of the Wellesley was followed by a dust storm. The people of Karachi had been greatly alarmed by the firing resorted to by the Flag-ship and had begun leaving the town. They felt that the cause of 'the change of daylight into a night' by a thick cloud of smoke, was the result of heavy firing. Under such circumstances, the officers of the Talpur Government at Karachi, Nawab Khair Mahomed, a Nizamani Beloch; Haji Allah Rakhia and other minor officials, all waited on Seth Pritamdas, the elder brother of Seth Naomal Bhojwani who was at the time in the employ of Col. Pottinger, and represented to him that the smoke had begun to suffocate the people, that they had no power to oppose the English and that steps should be taken to stop the firing of the cannon. By this time, Captain Gray and Lt. Jenkins came on shore to offer their terms of peace. They were cordially received at the gate by the Ameers' officers and all proceeded to the Kothi of Seth Naomal to settle the terms. After informal talks, it was decided that a deputation on behalf of the Karachi officers should wait on Admiral Maitland and Col. Valiant on the morrow and sign the treaty for the surrender of

³¹⁵ Parliamentary Papers, op.cit., p. 204.

³¹⁶ Neill, op.cit., p. 20.

³¹⁷ Neill, op.cit., pp. 20-21.

³¹⁸ Memoirs of Seth Naomal Hotchand Bhojwani of Karachi, p. 74.

Karachi. The British Force, it was decided, was not to land till the treaty had been signed.³¹⁹ In the evening, the Brigadier and the Admiral visited the scene of their triumph. Next day—3rd February—Hassan ben Butcha, the Commandant of the Manora Fort, on behalf of Khair Mahomed, the Military Governor of Karachi and Sanah Khan on behalf of the Civil Governor, Allah Rakhia, waited on the British officers and soon drew up the terms of the treaty, which surrendered the town of Karachi, on the condition, that no molestation or looting of the population was to take place and that the civil administration was to remain in the hands of the Ameer's officers, who guaranteed to provide boats, camels and supply all other requirements of the British troops, at the prevailing prices.³²⁰

The landing of the Force therefore began on the following day at 11 o'clock sharp, after a Company of the 2nd Grenadier Regiment had been put in charge of the Manora Fort. The ships moved towards the port into the channel, but soon found that the water was shallow. Hence the troops got into Bateloes and subsequently into the Machwas. Finally, all were compelled to bestride the damp backs of brawny Sindhis or to walk with legs *au naturel* and the nether garments slung over the shoulders, through nearly a mile of mud and water, averaging two feet deep and overlying a strata of sharp shells and aquatic roots, which admirably performed the office of mantraps.³²¹

The distant scene of Karachi had bewitched the British soldiers. They thought they were entering a land of promise, where plenty reigned supreme. But it could not come up to their vain expectations, since Karachi was an oriental city. At the time of the conquest, the town occupied roughly an area of 35 acres. It was surrounded by mud fortifications. The fort evidently had once been a strong one, with bastions on all sides, so as to command all round. Guns of various sizes, which were once mounted on the bastions, were now lying on the ground and seemed to have been there for some years past. The walls of the fort were built on an artificial bank about 16 feet high and were strengthened by a parapet 10 feet above it. At the time of the conquest the fort was in a ruinous state and at certain points the inhabitants could pass out or come inside the fort without much inconvenience. The fort had two gateways—Mitha Darwaza, leading to the sweet waters of the Lyari bed and Khara Darwaza, leading to the brackish waters of the sea. The gates were imposing in appearance and were guarded by Belochee guards, who were soon replaced by a European non-commissioned officer and a sepoy after the British conquest, to prevent the soldiers from entering the town without due permits.³²² The interior of the town may better be described by an eye-witness of the scene, though his account is unsympathetic. "The town of Kurrachee is exceedingly dirty and the inhabitants generally are a most squalid set of wretches about 10,000 in number. The great majority are Hindoos. The houses are generally mud-built and flat-roofed. On the

³¹⁹ Neill, *op.cit.*, p. 25.

³²⁰ Parliamentary Papers, *op.cit.*, pp. 144-5.

³²¹ Burton, *Sindh Revisited*, Vol. I, p. 32.

³²² Parliamentary Papers, *op.cit.*, pp. 141-2.

top of them are wicker-ventilators facing the sea, which perform the double duty of wind-sail and sky-light. The streets are narrow and incommodious. The bazaar is covered over with matting to prevent the rays of the sun penetrating, but which also precluding a free current of air, adds much to the *desagremens* of those frequenting it. The principal portion of the better description of houses are in the centre of the town, but there are no public buildings worthy of notice. For the preparation of hides Kurrachee has a great celebrity. It carries on an extensive trade with Bombay, Daman, Mandavie, Malabar Coast, Mascat, etc. Its principal exports are fleece, wool, sharkfins, dried fruits, dyes, leather, silk goods, its chief imports being sugar, spices, British cloths, grains, wood, brass, steel, tin, etc."³²³

The Reserve Force erected its camping ground on the plain now known as the Artillery Maidan. The troops were soon settling down to rest when the British Office proceeded to the Central Police Station and hoisted the British flag. They also put up notices regarding the British conquest of the city and stationed a few non-commissioned officers and sepoy to patrol the streets to prevent any irregularity on the part of the soldiers.³²⁴ The 'amusements' of the day ended with a dinner organized in honor of the 'victors' by Seth Pritamdas Bhojwani. The Chief guests came attended by a Company of soldiers, with the band playing and colors flying and were treated to a sumptuous dinner.³²⁵

But the above account of the conquest of Karachi is hardly creditable to the brave Belochees, who fought so fiercely and nearly successfully against Napier and his English Forces a few years after the Karachi Affair, at Miani and Dubba. None of the accounts of the eye-witnesses ever adduces any preparedness on the part of the Killadar and his men to oppose the entry of the English. From the details of the contest between the British and the Belochees at Karachi, it is evident that the men who manned the Manora Fort were hardly a few – at the most thirty on the most liberal computation³²⁶ – and hence they could neither have had the will nor the orders to oppose the English. In case of definite orders from the Ameers, not to allow the British to enter the harbor, reinforcements would either have been sent to them from the capital or the Karachi officers would have been instructed to raise an independent force of their own, the evidence for none of which is forthcoming. It was natural for the Ameers to put up a good show for the defence of a fortress, the occupation of which by the British was, according to Sir John Keane, the Commander-in-Chief of the Army of the Indus, a matter of the greatest importance.³²⁷ It therefore appears that the Karachi Affair was a one-sided on, and was hardly a glorious victory that it was considered to be. A different version of the Karachi episode was furnished by the Ameers to the British Resident,

³²³ Neill, *op.cit.*, pp. 28-29.

³²⁴ Parliamentary Papers, *op.cit.*, p. 142.

³²⁵ Memoirs of Seth Naomial, *op.cit.*, p. 92.

³²⁶ Neill, *op.cit.*, p. 21.

³²⁷ Parliamentary Papers, *op. cit.*, p. 139.

which the latter officer verified by personal investigation to his satisfaction and he was forced to admit that there had been more than a little 'sharp practice' at Karachi, on the British side.³²⁸

To a great extent circumstances conspired to make the 'sharp practice' a necessity at Karachi. The Reserve Force had been excited to the highest pitch and the members of the Force were certain of opposition before reaching their destination. So any the least action on the part of the Killadar, which could by stretch of imagination be conceived as a sign of hostility, was good enough to commence the campaign. So when a gun was fired immediately after the anchorage of the British ships and while some of the English officers were engaged in preventing all communication with the port, it was considered more than a signal for a fight by the Admiral of the little English fleet, though it was fired when the day had been done—hardly the hour to initiate auspiciously any hostilities. It was in reality a signal apprising the townsmen of Karachi of the arrival of some ships. This was customary. And the prevalence of the custom was known even to the British Resident.³²⁹ A misunderstanding cropped up when the Flag of Truce was sent on shore. The Killadar explained to the English officers, as well as he could, that he could not surrender the Fort without the knowledge and orders of the Military Governor of Karachi, whose subordinate he was. That this assertion of the Killadar was correct, was ascertained by Pottinger on an independent authority. And yet the English thought that the Commander of the Fort was 'hum-bugging' them. And when the Killadar, of his own accord, proposed to send a man to the Nawab for orders, which he assured the English officers would be in their favor, the Admiral thought that he was playing the usual Belochee trick! The loud intonation of the Balochee's voice, in his best efforts to convince the British officers that he was speaking the truth, also wrought its own damage, being misconstrued.

Lastly it is worthwhile to look into the actual state of preparedness in the Manora Fort at the time of the arrival of the Reserve. In this connection the British Resident in Sindh, Col. Henry Pottinger, cross-examined the Karachi officers independently and they corroborated the statements of each other, without knowing if the others had met Pottinger. Hassan ben Butcha, the Killadar of the fort at Manora, assured the Resident that he and his men had no orders whatever to oppose the English and accordingly they were absolutely unprepared. And the Resident believed him, for as he put it before the Governor-General, "the young Jam—the Killadar—had no wish to disguise or even qualify anything I asked him about."³³⁰ The Killadar further informed the Resident that at the time of the arrival of the English Force the garrison consisted of the usual number

³²⁸ Baillie, *Kurrachee, Past, Present and Future*, p. 7.

³²⁹ Parliamentary Papers, *op. cit.* p. 203. "I had always been aware", writes Pottinger to the G. G. "that it was usual to fire a gun at the mouth of the harbor when a square-rigged vessel came in sight of or approached the place. This I had myself witnessed when I went to that port in 1809 and I likewise know that it was done when H. M. Frigate, the Challenger, anchored off it in 1830."

³³⁰ Parliamentary Papers, *op. cit.*, p. 204.

of men –16– with not even a sword for each one of them and the Fort was practically devoid of ammunition. There was not a single ball in the Fort and the whole supply of gunpowder amounted to about six lbs, kept in an earthen pot.³³¹ What a state of preparedness! The Nawab of Karachi made a like statement before the English Resident. He affirmed that not a single man had been added to the troops either in the town or the Fort and that they did not altogether muster, at the moment, beyond 80 men, who were always kept for fiscal and political duties.³³² Above all, the Beloochees in charge of the Manora Fort hardly expected the firing from the Wellesley after they had put their case in clear terms before the English officers. Accordingly, after the departure of the English deputation, they all came out to admire the Wellesley, when to their horror and surprise the Flagship started emitting fire. When the balls came rolling in quick succession the only way out of the difficulty for the garrison was to fly for life into the crevices of the rocks, wherefrom they were subsequently secured. It adds absolutely a different color to the whole affair when the Nawab of Karachi affirmed before the English Resident that he had received last minute advices from the Ameers to afford all facility to the English Force.³³³ So through a number of miscalculations the Beloochees were forced into an unequal and one-sided conflict, which was in favor of the British from the very start. Even the British Resident, after ascertaining the facts, did not hesitate to report to the Governor General that the conflict might have been advantageously avoided.³³⁴ But that was not to be, and so Karachi was ceded to the British empire, the first place after the accession of Her Gracious Majesty Queen Victoria, with the exception of Aden, added a fortnight earlier.³³⁵

But this is not all. The British officers seem to have been a bit high-handed in their treatment of the Ameers' officers who surrendered Karachi to them. The members of the Manora garrison were not only deprived of their arms but also of their personal accoutrements, which were later sold off.³³⁶ The Ameers' officers at Karachi were made to suffer any amount of humiliation. They were deprived of their attendants and were not allowed to carry even a knife with them when visiting the British Camp.³³⁷ What a fine way of executing the obligations of the recently contracted Treaty! Col. Pottinger was greatly surprised when he interviewed the Nawab of Karachi in the British Camp. "He came like a common menial without arms or attendants," reported Pottinger to the Imperial Government and added, "I refrain from enlarging on the evil and cruelty of degrading men of any class by such a system. It seems to me to be calculated to excite disgust and hatred in not only those towards whom it is immediately practiced but in

³³¹ Ibid.

³³² Ibid.

³³³ Ibid, p. 203.

³³⁴ Parliamentary Papers, op.cit., p. 203.

³³⁵ Baillie, op.cit., p. 31.

³³⁶ Parliamentary Papers, op.cit., pp. 203-4.

³³⁷ Ibid, p. 204.

the breast of every chief and man, in the province and to be equally impolitic and dangerous.³³⁸

Thus Karachi was permanently occupied by the English in spite of the Ameers' frantic efforts at getting the Karachi Treaty annulled, and within four years it became the capital of the British Province of Sindh.

³³⁸ Ibid.