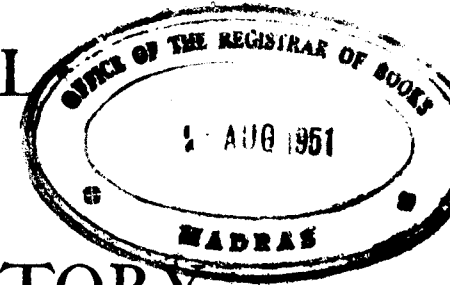


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The Raushania Movement and the Mughuls

BY

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INTRODUCTION

During the reigns of Akbar, Jahangir and Shah Jahan the Afghans and the Pathans living in the region between Kabul and the Indus, specially around the Khaibar Pass, showed considerable religio-socio-political activity and rebelled many a time against the authority and government of Delhi. These Afghans and Pathans gathered around their religious leaders in large numbers and took up arms and defied the Mughuls in a fit of quasi-national enthusiasm. The Raushanias, as these people were called, became a source of danger and constant worry for Akbar, Jahangir and even to Shah Jahan and the imperial generals and viceroys of the North.

BAYAZID ANSARI

The Birth of the Movement

The Raushania movement started as a socio-religious movement under the leadership of Miyan Bayazid Ansari who was born at Jalandar (Panjab) in 1525,¹ a year before the final invasion of Babar. Miyan Bayazid's father, Shaikh Abdullah, like the father of the great Sur leader, Sher Shah, had neglected his son,² divorced his wife and married another younger woman. Thus Bayazid's childhood was not happy. He never went to school and his education, if at all, was meagre. It was probably due to this reason that he became a sceptic and inquisitive to know about the true faith and Truth. He developed this tendency as he had to make his way to life. As a young man he is claimed to have said: "I can see alright the earth and the sky, but where is the God you talk of?"³ Bayazid seems to have been a precocious

1. Dabistan-i-Mazhab, p. 247.

2. Dabistan, Ibid.

3. Dabistan, Ibid.

youth, for as early as at the age of eighteen he had become so popular that he had gathered around him some disciples and followers.⁴ Though their number was small, it shows a bit of his popularity and affability.

These Pathan followers of Bayazid acknowledged him as their social, religious and political leader and submitted to his authority unreservedly. Their leader called himself *Pir-i-Raushan*, the Enlightened Pir. The Akhund Darweza — another Afghan pir and rival — dubbed him in derision as *Pir-i-Tarik*, the Darkened Pir.⁵ The Mughuls adopted this phrase of the Akhund and began calling Bayazid *Tariki* and his followers *Tarikis*.

Bayazid Ansari expounded his ideas and recorded his teachings in the three books⁶ that he wrote in Arabic:

1. Maqṣud-ul-Muminin,
2. Khair-ul-Bayan, and
3. Hal Namah.

The *Khair-ul-Bayan* has been translated into Persian, Urdu and Pushto. It is an epitome of the teachings and ideas of the founder of the Raushania movement, and, therefore, is the most valuable book for and about this movement.

Causes of Popularity

The Raushania movement was more pro-Shia than pro-Sunni, and this was the cause of its popularity among the Afghans. Bayazid attracted the masses by a set of principles benefitting the followers, such as freedom from observing the Shariat, obedience to the authority of the Pir only and none else,

1. Shariat — Following the Law.
2. Tariqat — Following the mystic path.
3. Haqiqat — Remembering God.
4. Marifat — Perceiving God everywhere and in every thing.
5. Qurbat — Knowing and understanding God.
6. Waslat — Renunciation of worldly things.
7. Tawhid — Uniting oneself with God.
8. Sakunat — Acquiring the power of radiating the virtues of God.

This was the highest stage of perfection that any human being could reach. It was equal to *nirwan* and the attainment of Godhood.

Mr. Amir Ali has given the following summary of the chief traits of the Raushania movement, of course in his own light :

“He (Bayazid) taught that God is all-pervading, and that all existing objects are only forms of the Deity ; that the Pirs or religious teachers were the great manifestations of the Divinity ; that the sole test of right and wrong was to follow the path pointed out by the Pir who is the representative of the Divinity ; that the ordinances of the law have, therefore, a mystical meaning and are ordained only as the means of acquiring religious perfection ; and that the mystic sense of the law is only attainable by religious exercises and the instructions of a Pir ; it is the source of religious perfection, and this perfection being attained, the exterior ordinances of the law cease to be binding, and are virtually annulled.”¹¹

JALALA ANSARI

The Movement at its Climax

Bayazid died in 1581 at the age of 56. He had reached

became a menace to the peace and order in the north-western region, and threw a challenge to the government of Akbar. They blocked the passage of Mirza Shah Rukh when he was on his way to the court of Akbar in 1584 to seek asylum there. His life was endangered by the Afghans and it was with great difficulty that he could escape to Daka and Badakhshan. He could be saved and brought over to India only when Akbar's help went to him.¹⁶ Again, when Mirza Hakim's sons were *en route* to Akbar's court, in 1585, after their father's death, the Khaibar Pass was blocked by the Raushanias. The party reached India only after the Khaibar Pass was opened by force with the aid of the Mughul arms.¹⁷

A Menace to Peace

By the year 1586 the Raushanias had become a constant menace to the Mughul government and the peace and order in the frontier regions. They had closed both the roads between Kabul and the Indus and besieged Peshawar as well.¹⁸ The result of this event was that the Mughuls were completely cut off from Central Asia, a situation more dangerous than the one when Kamran Mirza was in possession of those regions. The Mughul hold on these parts became precarious and it was feared that all these parts will be lost. It was in the face of this danger and such dark prospects that Akbar appointed Raja Man Singh governor of Kabul and entrusted him with the task of crushing the Raushanias. Shortly after him, Zain Khan Koka, Sayyid Khan Gakkhar, Hakim Abdul Fatah and Raja Bir Bal were sent to co-operate with Raja Man Singh in suppressing Jalal-ud-din Ansari.¹⁹ The combined action of all these generals compelled the Raushanias to raise the siege of Peshawar and retire to the hills. Raja Man Singh was specially expected to civilise the people of that hilly tract by meeting out justice to them. "An order was given to

Raja Man Singh was relieved of the governorship of Kabul and the post of governor was once again given to Zain Khan Koka. The Raja was entrusted with the work of crushing the Raushanias, as he had shown uncommon ability in crushing Jalal Ansari.²⁷

In 1587 an army was sent to the Bangash region under the command of Abdul Muttalib Khan. One day Jalal plundered the imperialist van under Beg Nuri Khan and Salim Khan, and took away considerable property. But soon after, with the assistance of Muhammad Quli Khan, Muttalib Khan defeated the Afghans and routed them. At the battle of Dar Samand alone 550 of the enemy's soldiers fell in the field and about 1,000 were killed during their flight.²⁸ Jalal-ud-din escaped²⁹ to the mountainous region of Terah, after great difficulty and danger to his life, through the pass of which Ismail Quli was in-charge. By 1588 Raja Man Singh had made a hell of the life of Jalal Ansari. "Every day he went about with his *qabila* (followers) and fell into a hundred troubles."³⁰ At last he was compelled to run away to Abdullah Khan Uzbek of Badakhshan (Turan) *via* Kanigram, and seek shelter at his court. In the early part of October the same year (1588) the Afghans delivered up his family to the Mughuls.³¹ The Raushania Movement was, under these circumstances, considered to have been crushed and it seemed that the Mughuls had succeeded in bringing peace and order to the north-western frontier. Akbar recalled his victorious army to the plains below and rewarded his generals for their valour and achievements.

Abdullah Khan of Turan, however, was more diplomatic and

Jahangir throughout his reign, it seems that their strength and numbers had declined considerably. During his reign we have a mention of them only as late as 1611 when they attacked Kabul. This raid, too, seems to be more of a plundering raid than a political move. The governor of Kabul, Khan Dauran, was away in the district of Ningnahr.³⁷ The Raushanias tried to take advantage of his absence and attacked the town. But their ambitions were not fulfilled, as they were beaten back by the commandant of the town, Muizz-ul-mulk, with the assistance of the citizens of Kabul who collected a big militia and "barricaded the streets and fortified their houses."³⁸ Arrows were showered upon the Afghan raiders from the tops of the houses and about 800 Raushanias fell victim, including a prominent lieutenant of Ahdad, named Bargi. Khan Dauran was degraded from his post of the governor on the charge of negligence of duty and was sent to Peshawar to watch and report about the movements and action of the Raushanias. Qulij Khan was appointed new governor of Kabul.³⁹

Ahdad Ansari got his chance of attacking the Mughuls when, in 1613, Qulij Khan died at Peshawar as a result of over-work and age (He was 80 then). Ahdad swooped down upon Kot Terah, about sixteen miles from Jalalabad, with his 4,000 to 5,000 followers⁴⁰ and plundered many villages. It was with some difficulty that Khan Dauran and Motaqid Khan routed him with a loss of 1,500 men and leaving behind 500 horses along with many a cattle and lots of baggage. After their success the Mughuls raised a pyramid of the skulls of the Afghans after the tradition of Taimur, the Mongol.⁴¹ Ahdad, however, escaped and again rose in revolt after he had collected a force. This time he was pursued and driven into the fortress of Charakh, which was besieged by Khan Dauran. At last the secret passes to the fortress were discovered and the Mughuls attacked it. The fortress was compelled to surrender.^{42</}

and after that date we hear only of some disconnected and ill-planned risings of the dissatisfied Afghans.⁴⁵

KARIMDAD

Abdul Qadir's successor to the leadership of the Raushanias was Karimdad. Karimdad led the last Raushania-cum-Bangash revolt in 1638. The Mughuls, however, put the rebels with a severe hand and Karimdad was killed in action.

The End of the Movement

The death of Karimdad put an end to the political aspirations of the Raushanias. They were reduced to a mere religious sect with no political ambitions and no military activity. The suppression of the revolt of 1638 proved to be the death-knell of the Raushania movement. For many years in future the Afghans and the Pathans of the north-western frontier region did not dream of freedom and of establishing an independent state for themselves. Even to-day we have some solitary Raushania preachers in those regions. Late Dr. D. S. Margoliouth was of opinion in 1936 that some relics of this community still exist in the Bangash region, reminding us of their glorious past. But now their activities are confined to religious and social work only: the Mughuls, it seems, permanently damped their political ambitions.

Causes of Failure

The Raushania movement failed in achieving its object for a number of reasons. Though a hardy people, dauntless warriors and good fighters, the Raushania Afghans and Pathans did not succeed in their contest for power and

and thoughtful person, for he offered to his followers the three of the most powerful allurements and promised them :

1. Riches from plunder,
2. National liberation, and
3. Religious salvation.

So long as these three allurements attracted the Afghans, they flocked to him in great numbers. His son, Jalala, tried to give them the first two of these. The movement could be crushed only after the Mughuls decided to resort to the principle of Divide and Rule and admitted the Raushania deserters on a footing of equality with the other members of the Mughul imperial service. Monetary gain, national liberation and religious salvation were the three ties that had kept the Raushanias united, and the moment that tie was broken, the movement fell with a mighty crash.

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Anglo-Russian Commercial Rivalry in 1812 A.D.*

BY

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In the context of our newly won independence India's relations with her Asiatic neighbours have assumed a new significance. From time immemorial her commercial transactions with other Asiatic countries have been occupying a very important place in her economic system. A comprehensive account of our trade with our neighbours

adventurous General Bogle, "a gentleman of distinguished ability and remarkable equanimity of temper," was the first European who visited Bhutan on behalf of the E. I. Co. and signed a treaty of Commerce in 1775.³ Curiously enough, exactly a decade after, (1785) Capt. Samuel Turner, who led the second mission to Bhutan, proudly claimed that "most certainly Mr. Saunders and myself enjoyed the distinction of having been *the first* of our nation that ever signalled themselves by skating in Tibet."⁴ Shortly after (1788) George Forster, a civilian of the East India Company, undertook a journey from Bengal to England through the northern parts of India, Kashmir, Afghanistan and Persia into Russia by the Caspian Sea.⁵ According to H. H. Wilson, Mr. William Moorcroft was "the first European to cross the Himalayas and reach the Chinese Tartary."⁶

The ostensible purpose of Mr. Moorcroft's penetration into Turkistan was to study the country for the superior breed of the horses which it was his "great ambition to domesticate in India" though his real motive was to collect valuable historical, geographical and statistical data to secure a permanent commercial intercourse with the Trans-Himalayan districts for the benefit of the Company. It should, however, be borne in mind that besides the natural difficulties of the way, he had to elude the strict vigilance of the turbulent and hostile Nepalese,⁷ the master of the Himalayas, who were then encroaching upon the British territories. His first attempt to achieve this object was made in 1812 when he was extremely surprised to find that the Russians had already anticipated the British in these regions.

Starting from Bareilly (March, 1812), this adventurous English itinerant entered a portion of the Chinese Tartary (Tibet)⁸

3. Turner: An Account of the Embassy to the court of Teshoo-Lama in Tibet, (1800) p. 376. Dr. Rennie: Story of the Bh

of Georgia from the crown of Persia. In 1809, Subhan Kulof, an officer of the Bashkir force, was despatched by the Russian government as commissioner of trade to settle the Bokharan's demand of an extra-rate of duty from the Russian merchants.¹⁷ This resulted in frequent visits of the Russians to those parts for commercial or political purposes. Thus by 1812 they "were endeavouring to secure her frontier by pushing them forward to that snow-slapped summit of the Himalayas, the natural conterminous boundary of England and Russia."¹⁸

The diary of this shrewd sojourner is full of interesting commercial details. He first visited Dhapa¹⁹ (Deba), a frontier town of the Oondes (Undes), held in jagir by the Grand Lama²⁰ (Dalai Lama) from the Chinese which touches the territories of Ladakh²¹ in the west. Here he was surprised to see the Russian articles e.g., a dazzling fork knife, a fair skin leather and two pieces of attractive woollen cloth; one sky blue, and the other purple inscribed with the words "Drap trees fin" in letters of gold leaf. Mr. Moorcroft was so deeply interested in the Russian woollen pieces that he procured them in exchange of Co's superfine green cloth and presented them as specimen to Lord Minto. "These clothes appear to be of French fabric and the blue one has the letter "A" upon one corner to denote, having been made at "Abbeville" which was reputed ever since the ministry of Colbert for the manufacture of woollen goods. The freshness and unbroken state of the letters show that the clothes had lately come into the country."²²

Mr. Moorcroft then proceeded to Gortope (Garo or Gardok)²³ where he saw an admirable sword with Russian character engra-

17. Capt. Venuikof. Ibid., p. 409.

strife afforded an excellent opportunity to the foreign invader to fish in the troubled waters and to exploit the situation to her best interest.³⁸

(7) As to the inadequate Russian military force it was urged that a handful of ambitious and aspiring Russian General would be enough to raise, recruit, drill and train or discipline local militia whose intimate knowledge of the country would enormously facilitate the contemplated Russian offensive.

Small wonder, therefore, that the Russophobe contemporary traveller, Moorcroft wrote in 1812, to Lord Minto that the "continuance of Russian trade, whether stationary or progressive, will interfere with the British commerce" and "will give them an acquaintance with the state of the tract and afford them facilities for attempting an invasion of India."³⁹ The bugbear of Russian invasion so alarmed the sojourner that he was constrained to draw the attention of the then Governor-General of India, "to the vigorous trade carried on by the Russians in the neighbourhood of the Co's territories which is highly prejudicial to the Co's commercial interest which, if not timely counteracted, will probably lead to events that may disturb the tranquillity and endanger the safety of the Co's provinces contiguous to the North Western and Northern frontiers of British India."⁴⁰

CONCLUSION

After a careful perusal of all available sources of unimpeachable documentary character, an impartial student of Indo-British history stands convinced that consistent with the pacific policy of Home Government, Lord Minto laboured assiduously to preserve peace in India, particularly on the northern frontiers. True he adhered strictly to the policy of neutrality and noninterference but unfortunately "he carried it too far for national interest no less than for national honour."⁴¹ In reality, his policy was chargeable with regard to the frontier regions with dilatoriness, if not with timidity. Lord Minto, says Beveridge, encouraged future insolence and aggression and left the necessary punishment of the turbulent elements as a burdensome legacy to his successor

A Little Known Event in the History of Travancore: The Quilon Plot

BY

B. N. MEHTA, M.A., PH.D.

Professor of History and Politics, Balwant Rajput College, Agra

On May 23, 1812 a daring conspiracy to assassinate the British Resident in Travancore with all the European officers of the subsidiary force stationed at Quilon was disclosed by one Venkata Ramaiah of the 2nd battalion of the 14th regiment to a Jamadar, Jalloo, of the same battalion who reported the disclosure to his adjutant Lt. Cox. It was given out that two havaldars and about 30 sepoys of the 18th had engaged in the conspiracy, the rest of the troops being entirely ignorant of it. A number of discharged sepoys, some merchants of the bazar and some of the police peons had also joined the plot. The plan was to rush upon and assassinate the European officers when all of them were assembled at a dinner and to set fire to the barracks and huts of the sepoys to distract their attention. The conspirators expected to be joined, when they proceeded to act, by two or three hundred men from every corps. They hoped in this way to throw the whole force into such a state of terror and confusion as would enable them to overpower it without any difficulty. They had expectations of French cooperation also in the attempt. A Fakir living with Jamadar Shaikh Hussain of the 14th had hatched the plan in concert with one Pyche Raja. The 22nd of May had been fixed for the act but the plot failed to materialise since some men did not turn up in time.¹

Alarmed at this sensational disclosure, the Resident and Col. Hall, the officer commanding the subsidiary force, paraded the troops on the afternoon of the 25th of May and Shaikh Hussain was taken out with his accomplices and put in irons. The Fakir and some other men were also arrested. An examination of these people disclosed that Womana Thampi, an ex-Dewan of Travancore, was also implicated in the plot.² Later reports showed that the spirit of disaffection was quite widely spread in the force. A

The Chronology of the Chand Dynasty and the Mediaeval Monuments of Kumāon

BY

H. GOETZ,
Baroda

The political and archaeological history of Kumāon and Garhwāl has so far found scant attention. Excellent pioneer work was done by Edwin T. Atkinson in "The Himalayan Districts of the North-Western Provinces of India", vols. II and III (Gazetteer of the North-Western Provinces, Vols. 11 and 12, Allahabad 1884-86). Unfortunately the later edition of the Gazetteer (1928) reduced Atkinson's study to a mere extract, in which process not only his very tentative reconstruction became an account of seemingly ascertained facts, but in which also all the historical evidence on which it had been built up, and likewise the majority of the archaeological informations were dropped. Führer's "Monumental Antiquities and Inscriptions of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh", vol. II (1891), though adding hardly any new archaeological data, enriched our knowledge by many important inscriptions; yet it is hardly more than a first survey, many readings appear to be erroneous, or the plates spurious; transcriptions and translations are not given, nor historical conclusions drawn. Up to the present day neither copies nor estempages, nor photos of most of these documents have been taken. Later, however, Pt. Nitya Nand Misra, T. D. Gairola and J. C. Powell-Price again took up research work,¹ which includes also the publication of five more copperplate grants of the Chand Dynasty. And likewise attention has been paid to the study and conservation of a number of ruins, especially at Dwārahāt, Jageśwar and Champāvat.² However, another systematic survey has not yet been undertaken. The chronological conclusions of Atkinson, Hargreaves and

1. All published in the Journal of the U.P. Historical Society, IV, 1930; VI, 1933; VIII, 1935; XI, 1938; XV, 1942; XVI, 1943; XVIII, 1945

Whether the stories about Bīṇa Chand's cruelty are true, may be left undecided. Though in their later form they have been reduced to the level of standard folk tales it is well possible that Bīṇa Chand, like Harsha of Kashmīr (A.D. 1089-1101), had been driven to the application of terror measures against his unruly nobles. And in this case we have to search for another reason for the fall of the earlier Chand kingdom. This probably was another invasion of armed refugee bands into the Champāvat kingdom, so near to the plains, as a result of the collapse of Rājya-pāla Pratihāra of Kanauj under the double attack by Mahmūd of Ghaznī, and of the Chandelas and their allies. But as Mahmūd's campaigns were mere raids, most of the refugees were absorbed by the rising Rāshtrakūta, Chauhān and Chandela kingdoms, and these bands merely weakened Chand rule so much that the Katyūris could overthrow it.

The temple groups of Dwārahāt¹⁶ would then have been the victory monument of the then most successful branch of the restored Katyūri dynasties. The chronology of these temples has given occasion to the most differing opinions. The only dates so far known which can be connected with any temples are that of A.D. 1084 for the Badrināth Temple, mentioning a rājā Sadhu-varadeva as builder, and two others nearby, A.D. 1083 and 1085, referring to unidentified monuments. All other inscriptions are connected with sculptures only, the style history of which is hitherto largely unknown. Now the Badrināth represents the preponderating temple type of the second Katyūri period all over Kumāon, and thus presents no special difficulty. But almost all other temples of Dwārahāt are in a very different, degenerated and rather ossified style. Hargreaves, therefore, believed that they could not be earlier than the 14th century. Sahnī was prepared to place at least the Ratan Deo group so late though it does not differ much from the average Dwārahāt type.

However, on a comparison with Jageśwar and Katārmal, the problem of the Dw

and similar pentroofs appear also in Mān Singh's (A.D. 1486-1518) palace in Gwālīor Fort. Finally, the very exact and neat workmanship of the masonry, the almost cubic form of the buildings, the very developed shape of the niche arches, the playful arrangement of the upper wall niches suggesting a suspension from the cornice, the degeneration of certain ornaments and the complete stiffness and misproportion of the figures which is never to be found even in works of the 15th century, permit only an attribution to the 16th century. Their builder may have been rājā Rudra Chand who has left an inscription in the Ratneśvar temple²⁷ and "reestablished Maheśvar worship" at the Balīśvar shrine. It seems that the sanctuaries had been desecrated during the invasion of Husain Khān Tukriya, the Mughal governor of Lucknow, and that the temples were erected to placate the wrath of gods of the deserted capital since the court had in A.D. 1560 moved to Almora.

We cannot here follow the later history of temple architecture in Kumāon and Garhwāl. In the latter state first Mān Śāh had in A.D. 1547 endowed the temple of Ekāsur at Pāṭal (Mandarsyūn). But Garhwāl architecture has unfortunately not yet been explored, notwithstanding the valuable reference collected by Atkinson for both the latter and Kumāon. For our purpose it would be important to know which links in later architecture connect the Jageśwar (and Bhāgeśwar?) temples with the temples erected in Kulū by Jagat Singh. Shrines like the Bhīmeśvar at Bhīmtāl²⁸ built by Bāz Bahādur Chand (A.D. 1638-78), or the Lakhamandal Temple in the Dehrā Dūn District²⁹ may well have played such a role. For Bāz Bahādur Chand as well as his successor Udyot Chand (A.D. 1678-98), a fervent temple builder, have been contemporaries of Jagat Singh (A.D. 1637-72) and Bidhi Singh (A.D. 1672-88), the originators of most śikhara shrines in Kulū, and of Chatar Singh (A.D. 1664-90) who

Annals of Old Madras

JUDGES : SIR WILLIAM BURTON

BY

K. NARASIMHACHARI, M.A.

Here is an only instance of a Madras judge who overshot the Biblical three score and ten by a good margin by living upto the ripe old age of 94. Another judge who lived anywhere near to his age was Sir Philip Hutchins. Octagenarians among Madras judges are but few. The only one of our countrymen among them was Dr. S. Subramania Aiyar. The Earl of Halsbury had well-nigh completed his century before he passed away. Lord Dunedin and Mr. Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes of the United States of America are other instances that occur to our mind.

Leading men at the Bar and on the Bench in other countries are usually long lived. They share this distinction with clergymen and farmers. This does not appear to be true of our judges. Seldom have they reached even an almost patriarchal age.

This judge and his Chief Sir Edward Gambier, though born in the same year, could little have dreamt that they were destined to function as colleagues and contemporaries at Madras. The former rose to eminence after retirement while the latter made a name before he was elevated to the Bench. They were born in different shires, Northampton and Essex, educated at different schools, Winchester and Eton, and called to the bar at different Inns of Court, namely, Inner Temple and Lincoln's Inn.

William Westbrooke Burton was born in 1794. He was the fifth son of Mr. Edmund Burton of Daventry, Northamptonshire by his marriage with Elizabeth, the only daughter of Rev. John Mather of Chorley, Lancashire. He was educated at Winchester. He was a Latin scholar. He served for a short time as a midshipman in the Royal Navy and took part in the attack on New Orleans in 1814.

Reviews

SELECTIONS FROM THE NAGPUR RESIDENCY RECORDS,
Volume I, (1799-1806), by Dr. H. N. Sinha, M.A., Ph.D.
(Lond.), Nagpur — Government Printing — 1950 (pp. XXXII
and 555) — price Rs. 12/-.

It is a pleasure to see that the First Volume of the Selections from the Old Residency Records of the Central Provinces (Madhya Pradesh) Secretariat has been edited by Dr. H. N. Sinha, than whom, in the words of the veteran Provincial Premier, Sri. R. Shukla, "a better choice could not have been made". The plan is to publish seven volumes of Selections from the Nagpur Residency Records, which will contain documents of historical value selected over a period of over sixty years from 1799 to about 1861. The analysis that Dr. Sinha gives of the five categories of the existing Records is instructive, as also the skeleton basis of the present Volume of Selections which includes most valuable letters from H. T. Colebrooke, the first permanent Resident at Nagpur, about the state of affairs in the Bhonsla dominions, and Elphinstone's extensive and comprehensive correspondence comprising documents of diplomatic and other import, concerning the Bhonsla and other states of the time.

British relations with the Bhonsla state are traced in the Introduction from the days of Warren Hastings to the stage when a permanent Resident at the Nagpur court became essential. The period 1799-1806 is shown to fall into two divisions, so far as the character of the political relations of the Company and the Nagpur court is concerned — viz., (a) the first period terminating with the recall of Colebrooke in which the relations were based, in the clear language of the Editor, upon "an equality of status and mutual respect"; and (b) the second stage that began with the arrival of Elphinstone when the status which had previously enabled the Bhonsla to be the arbitrator among the powers of Hindustan was lost and he could continue to be a merely respectable power, and that only if he should implement the articles of peace and perform the normal duties of friendship due to the English.

Also, a considerable amount of clarity marks the division of the letters selected under various headings, for each of which a prefatory and explanatory, historical note is given.

