NINETEENTH CENTURY INDIAN HISTORICAL WRITING IN ENGLISH : THE WORK OF SIR WILLIAM WILSON HUNTER, HENRY BEVERIDGE AND HENRY FERDINAND BLOCHMANN

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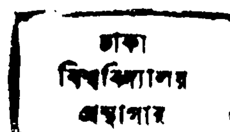

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CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	i
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	ii
ABBREVIATIONS	iii
INTRODUCTION	1 - 11
CHAPTER I : W.W. HUNTER	12 - 76
CHAPTER II : H. BEVERIDGE	77 - 133
CHAPTER III : H.F. BLOCHMANN	134 - 188
CONCLUSION	189 - 197
BIBLIOGRAPHY	198 - 218

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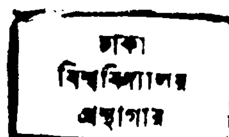

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ABSTRACT

This monograph is a study of nineteenth century Indian historical writing in English, analysing particularly the work of Sir William Wilson Hunter, Henry Beveridge and Henry Ferdinand Blochmann.

In the introduction a general background of the nineteenth century Indian historiography is given. Here it is shown that the development of Indian historical writings of this period were closely related to the Europo-centric thought currents. Chapter I depicts Hunter as a romantic, a utilitarian and an imperialist. How did his romantic vein express itself in an attempt to be the chronicler of the 'silent millions' of the Indian people, how was his commitment to utilitarianism made him eager for the general welfare of the peoples of India and how as an imperialist was he working in a way to make India 'flesh' and 'bone' of Britain are discussed in this chapter. In chapter II an analysis of the writings of Beveridge have been made in the light of his radical outlook. Thus, according to Beveridge, the British occupation of India was an 'usurpation' and the execution of Moharaja Nanda Kumar a 'judicial murder'. Why then he did not want the outright withdrawal of the British from India is explained in this chapter. In the final chapter the scholarly pursuits of another outstanding historian, Blochmann, are analysed. His views are quite distinct and different from those of other Anglo-Indian historian. He is found here to conduct his researches from a purely scholarly point of view devoid of any ulterior motive.

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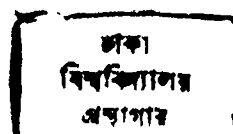

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Abbreviations

A.S.B.	:	Asiatic Society of Bengal.
D.N.B.	:	Dictionary of National Biography.
I.O.L.	:	India Office Library.
I.O.R.	:	India Office Records.
J.A.S.B.	:	Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal.
	:	Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh.
J.R.A.S.	:	Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland.
P.R.O.	:	Public Record Office.

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INTRODUCTION

The nineteenth century constitutes a distinct epoch in the history of historiography. Historical research assumed a new dimension; the scope of history had widened till it came to include every aspect of human life. History was no longer a 'biography of states' or 'past politics'. The growth of nations and empires, the achievements of men of action, the rise and fall of dynasties and parties still constituted the most engrossing themes of the historian. But as Gooch has observed, 'the influence of nature, the pressure of economic factors, the origin and transformation of ideas and ideals, the contribution of science and art, religion and philosophy, literature and law, the material conditions of life, the fortunes of masses now claim his attention in no less degree. He must see life steadily and see it whole'.[1]

The nineteenth century is also characterised by numerous inventions and discoveries. Archaeology, epigraphy and numismatics made the historian's search for truth wider, more precise and relevant, more authentic and scientific. Besides, various currents of thought swayed historical thinking and writing. The philosophies of what is loosely termed Romanticism, Positivism, Evangelicalism, Utilitarianism, Socialism, Liberalism, Nationalism and Imperialism gave depth and dimension to the interpretation of historical events.

However, this all-comprehensive idea of history had mainly originated and flourished in Europe. It was subsequently disseminated to the rest of the world by European scholars. The spread of the Europocentric concept of history was closely connected with the expansion of Europe over non-European parts of the world. This process of European expansion started with the geographical discoveries in the fifteenth

and sixteenth centuries. It reached its climax in the nineteenth and early part of the twentieth centuries when the establishment of the European commercial, political and intellectual supremacy was complete in different parts of the habitable globe.

The discovery, exploration and conquest of the non-European parts of the world by the maritime nations of Europe transformed the character of the European writings of those regions. The Europeans began to be interested in the history and culture of the conquered peoples in order to know them fully and with a view to administering them effectively because, 'nothing is more costly to a Government than ignorance'.[2] Consequently, greater and more diversified flow of work started coming. The underlying dominant attitudes in these writings were politically motivated and were 'derived from the growth of the idea of progress in Europe'.[3] This idea of progress soon became identified with the extenstion of western influence throughout the world, and this Europo-centric view became a general characteristic of all the western historians irrespective of their field of investigation.

Moreover, as the emphasis on Europe's relations with non-European regions passed from trade to conqeust, the writers, particularly the historians, no longer remained content with general descriptions of places and peoples. They rather sought 'to influence government policy by publishing work of a politically didactic character'.[4] As a result, historical writings became the media of expressing views and attitudes. Consequently, various schools of thought such as Conservatism, Liberalism, Imperialism tended to emerge. Protagonists of each of these schools took for granted European supremacy and the colonial

system. They only differed from each other on the policy and method of government within the system. Their 'criticism had served, not to challenge, but to support the empire'.[5]

During the long-drawn scramble for colonies and empires among European nations, India fell to the lot of the English. Therefore, nineteenth-century Indian historiography developed and flourished in the above setting. It began with the East India Company's initial attempts at administering the country. The English, at the beginning, tried to rule India according to the traditional native usages. Therefore, the first step towards that direction was to ascertain what those usages were. To this end instructions were issued in 1772 directing all local officers to institute inquiries with a view to collecting information and reporting them to authority.[6] Side by side, historical texts in the Indian languages started to be collected, compiled, published and translated into English unabated[7] till it reached its peak with the Bibliotheca Indica Series in the second half of the nineteenth century.[8] Besides, the Archaeological[9] and Statistical Survey of India[10] stood in good stead in the direction of collecting data on Indian history.

The result of these diverse activities had been the collection of mass of materials on the history of India. Apart from helping the imperial government to formulate a administrative policy, these sources gave an opportunity to the administrators and scholars alike to write on the history and culture of the country. They wrote on India from a diverse point of view. The inter-action between the experience of the British Indian administrators and the pre-suppositions of the people at home gave rise to the various views of India 'which have remained to perplex all students of her affairs since'.[11]

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In fact, historical writings during this period became the media of expressing particular views and attitudes. Accordingly, some depicted India as a land of plenty that existed only to produce 'pagoda trees for shaking' (Clive and his school). There was also the 'sentimental view' of India as a seat of profound wisdom and idyllic life (Jones and others). Morally, India was considered as a venue of deplorable customs to be reformed and of misguided persons to be improved (Evangelicals). The romantics viewed India 'as the land of ivory palaces with bejewelled princes riding on cloth-of-gold clad elephants'. The economists saw India as 'a land of potential industrial wealth and actual poverty and misery'.[12]

Therefore, the European, particularly the English historians took one or the other of the above views and wrote accordingly. Many of them wrote to fulfil their ambition, and publication was very useful to a career.[13] Most of their historical works were written during their years of retirement in Britain. Their writings were no doubt vigorous but these were avowedly intended to arouse public interest in Britain's Indian Empire or to defend it against the misrepresentations of 'sentimental liberalism'.[14] In their writings the didactic elements were also very prominent. All of them tended to use their subject to inculcate some practical lesson. For them India was a great stage where the English character could assume its most heroic form.[15] In brief, the Europo-centric ideas and ideals were given full play through their writings and they thereby tried to influence the British Indian administrative policy. However, apart from these historians, there were other writers who wrote purely from scholarly point of view and remained silent on political views.[16]

Another general characteristic of the Europo-centric historians of India had been that they were divided in their approach to her history. Sir William Jones pioneered the intellectual appreciation of the Hindu India.[17] Thomas Maurice,[18] William Robertson,[19] and others were influenced by him. To them 'India was essentially Hindu and its greatness too was essentially Hindu'.[20] On the contrary, Edward Gibbon[21] revealed the significance of Muslim achievements in the realm of civilization.[22] Alexander Dow was influenced by him and projected his ideas through his writings on India.[23] Subsequently David Price[24] and James Mill[25] in their approach to the history of India were influenced by the intellectual appreciation of the Islamic civilization by Gibbon and Dow. The analysis of Indian history from these two angles of vision generally continued throughout the period under review.

Therefore, a study of the nineteenth century Indian historical writings in English would enable us to have a deeper insight into the historian's underlying assumptions, predilections and prejudices, their interpretation of source materials and treatment of the subject matter. Moreover, the growing awareness that the modes of historical research and interpretation largely reflect the historian's own intellectual and cultural environment and also his ideas and ideals, has greatly influenced historiographical studies in modern times. The volume of such works in recent years on Indian historiography reflects the interest of the intellectual world in the subject.[26]

It would, however, appear that these studies did not make a comprehensive appraisal of the works of historians like William Wilson Hunter, Henry Beveridge and Henry Ferdinand Blochmann. Each of these historians represents the views of a specific school of thought and deserves to be treated separately.

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Taking into consideration the central attitudes towards the history of India as revealed in their writings, the historians of India have often been subjected to classification as Romantics, utilitarians, Administrators, Missionaries, and the like.[27] In this context, Hunter and Beveridge were administrators and belonged to the covenanted civil service. They would be found generally liberal in outlook but would differ in degree and spirit. A study of their works can bring out these differences in clear perspective. Blochmann, on the other hand, cannot be put in any of these groups. He was a German and was never to be found involved with the problems of the empire and the imperial administration. He can be said to be a pure scholar, pursuing knowledge for the sake of knowledge, discovering the lost threads of Indian history and trying dispassionately to reconstruct them with the available source materials. In a positivistic spirit, he set to work with enthusiasm to ascertain all the facts relating to his field of investigation.

The proposed study on the works of Sir William Wilson Hunter, Henry Beveridge and Henry Ferdinand Blochmann would, therefore, reveal a triangular view of the nineteenth century historiography of India. An analysis of the writings of Hunter and Beveridge would reflect the bias and views of the two groups of administrator historians. Generally speaking, both of them were liberal in outlook but they greatly differed in the attitude and application of liberalism. Hunter's was 'a liberalism of the intellect'. He and his group stood 'for the application of trained intelligence to society'.[28] He was in favour of strong government directed by high intelligence and governing by means of scientific laws fearlessly and efficiently administered. The themes of 'Paternalism',

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'trusteeship', 'civilising mission', 'rather than pride in conquest and dominion' were the underlying tones in his writings.[29] The happiness, not the liberty, of the Indians was his aim.

To Beveridge, the establishment of British power in India was an usurpation. He and his school (Cobden, Bright, Gladstone and others) considered that British rule 'was founded in violence and crime and was maintained by a fearful and intolerable concentration of power'.[30] They were in favour of breaking up the strong central authority and to practise 'a policy of self-effacement until the English could safely surrender their empire and so expiate their original crime.[31]

A way from both the schools of thought,a review of the writings of Blochmann would help us to be acquainted with a kind of historiography which was unique in the sense that it was non-partisan.

The proposed thesis seeks to undertake a comprehensive and analytical study of the works of Hunter, Beveridge and Blochmann. It may be considered to be a further development, elaboration, and systematisation of my earlier work entitled A Study of Nineteenth Century Historical Work on Muslim Rule in Bengal : Charles Stewart to Henry Beveridge'.[32] In it I had analysed the work of five historians inclusive of the three included in the present programme. The other two historians were Charles Stewart (1764-1837) and John Clark Marshman (1794-1877). The historians of the present study were treated there from the narrow perspective of the Muslim rule in Bengal though their major interests pervaded the history of India in general. Consequently, many of the materials that I had collected and views that occurred in my mind in the course of the earlier study, could not be used and projected in that

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thesis. Therefore, the present research pursuit is an attempt to develop and project their view points in the background of a wider canvas.

The source materials used in the present monograph are principally the writings of the historians included in the study. Besides, their official and personal papers have been extensively explored wherever available. In addition, published works relevant to the field of investigation have been duly consulted.

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CHAPTER ONE

SIR WILLIAM WILSON HUNTER
(1840 - 1900)

Sir William Wilson Hunter had a career of extraordinary performance and, to the very end, of remarkable promise. He was a man of many parts : a distinguished Anglo-Indian administrator, a great statistician and compiler, a philosophic historian[1], and a man of letters with a wide range of interests in race, religion, philology, politics, history, diplomacy and journalism.

Hunter was drawn to Indian career by hereditary association. His maternal uncle James Wilson (1805-1860) was the first Financial Member of the Viceroy's Council in 1859[2]. He was charged with the task of reorganising the finances of British India which was reduced to chaos by the Mutiny of 1857. He left an enduring mark on the monetary system of India but died in Calcutta in less than a year from over work in an uncongenial climate.Hunter took to heart the lesson taught by his illustrious uncle's vigorous life and took his drive as a model for his own career. 'All really clever men speak well of my uncle, Mr. James Wilson. That is the reputation I should like'[3].

Moreover, Hunter's habit of strenuous and systematic work, his gifts of literary power and mental vigour,and his early attraction to literature can reasonably be traced to his connection with the

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Wilson family. His mother Isabella Wilson was an accomplished lady. She had keen interest in the education of her children. She even learnt herself both Greek and Latin in order to help them in their studies[4]. His uncle James Wilson, apart from being an economist, was endowed with rare mental gifts and wrote with unusual acumen on political economy and finance. He established the Economist newspaper in 1843. The Wilson family also connected Hunter with another literary figure, Walter Bagehot (1826-1877)[5]. He was the son-in-law of James Wilson, and edited the Economist newspaper for seventeen years(1860-1876). Therefore, many of Hunter's rare qualities, particularly his possession of 'a considerable amount of literary ability' may be attributed to his family connection[6].

Hunter was born at Glasgow on 15 July, 1840. His father Andrew Hunter was a manufacturer[7]. He was the second of his parents' three sons[8]. Of his boyhood there are but few memories. However, his well-documented biography by Skrine provides some data on his family background and educational training before he went to India as a civilian in 1862[9].

Hunter's academic life began in 1854. His parents made available to him all possible facilities that used to enable a boy of the time to enjoy 'the best training which Scotland and the continent could bestow'[10]. His school and university education was so thorough that it developed and stimulated his great natural abilities.

Hunter was first sent to a Quaker seminary at Queenswood in Hampshire[11]. His home training was very sound and he was directly

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enrolled in the second class, taking a place above much elder boys. This distinction he did maintain by his never-failing attention to the studies. At Queenswood seminary emphasis was put on practical work such as carpentry, printing and agricultural science. Hunter spent a profitable year at this school. Afterwards he joined the Glasgow Academy and subsequently the University of Glasgow. His father wanted him to be a practical chemist, and help him in the manufacture of alkali. Accordingly, he took up practical chemistry and was doing good.[12] But the natural bent of his mind ultimately led him to prefer humanities. He took up logic in the first session under Robert Buchanan (1802-1875), one of the leading lights in the Scottish Philosophical World[13]. He soon became his favourite student. In the next session he joined the junior Latin class under Professor Ramsay (1800-71)[14]. Here he proved his proficiency in the language, and won a prize with an encomium from his teacher[15]. The study of Greek was taken in the following session and Professor E.S. Lushington was his teacher. Here also he received prizes for excellent performance in the language. His teacher considered him to be the "most excellent student" in the class[16]. The last session of his unviersity career was 1859-60. He devoted it to the study of Mathematics, Moral Philosophy and Ethics. After successfully completing the courses he obtained the degree of Bachelor of Arts in April, 1860.

A man is generally known by the company he keeps. Therefore, the character of Hunter's friends at school and university may cast some light on his own. He was shy and this shyness clung to him until it was banished by his early contact with the world of affairs. He

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associated but little with his class-fellows. However, the few with whom he met constituted 'a coteric of kindred spirits who sharpened their wits by contests on Knotty points in literature, finance, and morals, and found solace from the labours of the classroom in indulging the quiet humour which shines so brightly in the Scottish race'.[17] Death made grievous inroads in this little circle of friends and a few survived him. They were considerably above the average men of intellect, and some even possessed the 'divine spark of genius'. Many of his friends ended their career as a Sheriff, Professor, Hellenic and classical scholars[18]. Of them only Hunter distinguished himself as a great historian.

Hunter had great respect for his home university. He always acknowledged the great practical worth of the Glasgow curriculum and the fatherly care shown him by his distinguished teachers. 'My lonely education has left some benefits behind it which the nobler training of the English public school and university does not always afford'.[19] However, his examination result cannot be said to have been commensurate with his talent. He obtained a simple pass degree and could not qualify for the honours. His biographer found out an execuse for this. 'The honours he did not aspire, for his mind was already fixed on higher things than the attainment of academic laurels'.[20] Setting aside the academic pursuit he now wholeheartedly concentrated on taking a decision as to his future career. Before finally embarking on a career, however, he spent a few months in studying abroad at Paris and Bonn, and it was during this time that he picked up the knowledge of Sanskrit which subsequently became very useful to him[21].

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The necessity for supplementing the family income required Hunter to look for a job. This had been caused by his father's failure in business[22]. In choosing a career he faltered for sometime and found it to be difficult in arriving at a firm decision. His natural inclinations favoured a literary career but he hesitated to pursue it because of its financial uncertainty. '......... A literary man's struggles and rewards, hard and poorly paid labour for eyes and brain, no wife, no home that was what I had then to look forward to'-he said[23].

At some stage Hunter appeared to have contemplated to take holy orders[24]. He was attracted by the church of England. The majesty of its past and its vigorous life satisfied his instincts. But the necessity of having a financially secure job led him elsewhere to find out a career.

In this context Hunter's acquaintance with the Murrays proved to be very significant. Dr. Thomas Murray (1792-1872) was a friend of his father. He was a great scholar. He took literature as a profession and wrote several books of considerable value[25]. He used to assist Hunter with books and advice. This academic connection proved to be very fruitful. In fact, Dr. Murray became very impressed by young Hunter. 'You 'll hear of that youngman in ten years' - he confidently remarked to his wife[26]. At the same time Hunter's susceptible mind was greatly fascinated by Jessie, elder daughter of Dr. Murray. Their courtship continued and developed into an engagement.

As the question of choosing a career reached an acute stage, it was quite natural on the part of Hunter to seek the guidance and advice of his would be father-in-law on the matter. In the meantime

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Dr. Murray saw an official advertisement that proclaimed the advantages of the Indian Civil Service. It convinced him that no career gave equal promise of fame and fortune than this one. Hitherto the lucrative Indian posts were the 'close preserve for the scions of the honourable Company's Directors and their friends'.[27] The introduction of the system of recruitment through competitive examination to the covenanted Indian posts threw open to the youths of the Empire the opportunity to try their luck.[28] He, therefore, urged Hunter to prepare himself for the competitive examination of 1861. Hunter wholeheartedly accepted the suggestion and set to work seriously on the curriculum prescribed for the examination. He prepared himself so well that he passed into the Indian Civil Service in 1862 as the first man of the year[29]. The Indian career provided Hunter with both fame and fortune[30].

However, Hunter took to Indian career only as a means towards giving him an opportunity of becoming an independent man of letters. He made an elaborate plan to this effect which is revealed in his correspondence with Jessie, his fiancee[31]. He was convinced from his early boyhood that literature was his natural career. But financial hazards associated with such a career temporarily dissuaded him from undertaking it. He now planned to serve five years in India and then to retire on about £ 400/- a year. If the retirement was to be on the ground of illhealth, the pension could be raised upto £ 600/- a year. After retirement, he was to spent first four years alternately at home and in the continent, particularly his idea was to pass the gloomy autumns and winters abroad among the vineyards and picture galleries of Germany and noble old Italian cities. This would add to his qualifications as a man of letters. In that case he would be

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in possession of an education and training such as were given to very few. He would have the advantages of an academic career, five years' administrative experiences in India, a sound knowledge of several Eastern languages, and an acquaintance with the literature of the Latin races during his planned sojourn in the continent. All these would equip him so well that he even visualized that very few men in England would have a better chance of succeeding as an author than himself. As a writer he did not want to be a mere chronicler or a searching logician. With the virtues of a chronicler and a logician he was eager to add an attractive style which he deemed to be the first quality of a standard writer. He also intended to make his books pay something into his domestic exchequer, and he believed, 'if a book is to be remunerative it must be written in an attractive style'[32]. It would be seen subsequently that this point had always been a subject of close study in almost each of his literary undertakings. As to his major literary theme, he perceived it at the very outset of his Indian career. His great pleasure would be to do justice to the fallen Indian race 'and to vindicate the conduct of England in her dealings with India'[33]. Subsequent analysis of his works might establish such an assertion in a truer perspective.

Now it may sound relevant to give a brief sketch of Hunter's career as a preliminary to the specific analysis of his work as a historian who voluntarily undertook to do justice to the fallen Indian races' and to vindicate British-Indian policy. He arrived in Bengal on 10 November, 1862. After he had passed the qualifying language examination, he was in December, 1863 appointed assistant

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magistrate and collector in the district of Birbhum. In July 1865 he was posted to Kushtia as superintendent of labour transport. Then he was on deputation for compiling a history of Birbhum district in March, 1866. From May 1866 he officiated as inspector of schools. In December 1868, he was appointed officiating superintendent of stamps and stationery[34].

Hunter's service was then transferred to the Government of India, and in July 1869 he was appointed as the compiler of the 'Bengal Gazetteer'. Subsequently in January 1871, he became the compiler of the 'Gazetteer of India'. From February 1871, he officiated as under - secretary to the Government of India in the home department. In the meantime the post of the Director-General of Statistics to the Government of India was created for him, and he joined it in September 1871. From 1875 to 1881 he spent more than half of every year in England for the purpose of compiling the Statistical Account of Bengal and the Imperial Gazetteer of India.

On Hunter's return to India in December 1881, he was taken as an additional member of the Viceroy's Council. His tenure was twice renewed. From February 1882 to November 1883 he was the President of the Education Committee which submitted a report to the Government on the subject. At the same time he also became Vice-Chancellor of the University of Calcutta. In May 1884 he was deputed to England to give evidence before the Committee of the House of Commons on Indian Railways. In February 1886, he was appointed a member of the Finance Committee, the last appointment of his service career. He resigned the service in September 1887[35]. As a recognition of his meritorious services

Dhaka University Institutional Repository

he was made Companion of the Indian Empire, Commander of the Star of India, and finally Knight Commander of the Star of India[36].

As has been noted that when Hunter came to India he was fully aware of his literary ability, and initially his intention was to attain economic solvency with a view to devoting himself fully to the literary pursuits. However, the necessity of supplementing his regular income drew him to literary labours before long. He was betrothed and was to be married very soon. Besides,his earlier plan of living with James Gibb, uncle by marriage, during the probationary period and to save much of his salary did not materialize. James Gibb had to go back to England because of sickness. Hunter considered it to be a blow to his prospects[37]. After marriage, his pecuniary condition became more pressing. At that time his income was less than £ 500/- a year, and the prospect of speedily increasing it was somewhat uncertain[38]. In the circumstances, his thrilling energy and great literary gifts afforded him a noble area in the Anglo-Indian journalism to augment his income. He found him there through a curious train of circumstances.

J.O.B. Saunders was the proprietor of the Englishman. Hunter became acquainted with him. This acquaintance later on led to an agreement between them whereby Hunter agreed to contribute three articles a week to the Englishman on a monthly remuneration of Rs.250[39]. His literary labour therefore started with his journalistic articles that he contributed to the Englishman. In these articles he handled with rare vigour 'Commerce, legislation, currency, military and social events'[40]. Of these articles, his 'Country Sketches' constituted an admirable series. Many of them had been incorporated in the Annals of Rural Bengal, his first publication.

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Hunter's deputation for compiling a history of Birbhum district in March 1866 may be considered to be a turning point in his literary career.[41] This helped him to tap unexplored sources which, he thought, gave a new interpretation to Indian history[42]. Throughout his subsequent career he amassed and interpreted these sources with a view to, what he believed to be, doing justice to 'the fallen Indian races' and 'vindicating the conduct of England in her dealings with India'[43]. There then followed a spree of publications that earned a title for his books as 'Chips from an Anglo-Indian Workshop'.[44]

Hunter was a prolife writer and wrote on a variety of subjects. His first work, The Annals of Rural Bengal, Vol. I, was published in April 1868. He had planned to complete it in three volumes. The remaining two volumes were published later. His second work, A Comparative Dictionary of the Languages of India and High Asia with a Dissertation was published in November 1868. In 1866 he had gone on sick furlough. He seized the opportunity of this brief respite from official duty to publish these two works[45]. He considered them to be the 'imperial present from England to the scholars of the whole world'[46], and the response, both academic and financial, was immediate. Through these publications Hunter made his debut into the intellectual world as a philosophic historian and investigator. According to a contemporary journal, 'The grace and ease and the steady flow of the writing almost make us forget, when reading, the surpassing severity and the value of the author's labours'[47].

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Hunter's Annals and the Comparative Dictionary cost him between one and two thousand pounds, besides his 'unpaid labour and ruined health'[48]. Of these expenses the Bengal Government paid him hundred pounds and the Government of India made him a grant of two thousand pounds for the 'distinguished services'[49]. This financial gain together with the scholarly recognition most probally led him to change his earlier plan of retirement after five years' service in India to devote himself exclusively to writings. Instead he now rather found it very congenial and convenient to be in service and at the same time to show his mantle as a gifted writer. His continuation in service and the opportunities he got for the collection of materials and publication of his other works testify this view.

It was during this time that the Imperial Government was going ahead with the plan of a statistical survey of India and was looking out for a capable person to organise it. The prominent writer of the Annals and the Comparative Dictionary drew the attention of Lord Mayo, the Viceroy, who took Hunter out from Bengal service and in 1869 deputed him to devise and superintend a scheme for carrying out a complete statistical survey of British India. Two years later a post of Director General of Statistics was created and Hunter was appointed to it[50]. Hunter devoted twelve years of his official life to this gigantic task. During these fruitful years he published a number of edited volumes and other works, and above all, amassed huge source materials that were profitably used by him during the rest of his life.

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Hunter's new work, A Guide to the Orthography of Indian Proper Names, with a list showing the true spelling of all post towns and villages in India was published in 1871. It standardized the spelling of Indian place names about which there had been much confusions. While his gigantic work, the compilation of the Gazetteer was in progress his creative mind could also find time for other literary undertakings. One of the burning questions that had confronted the Indian Government during the eighteen sixties and early seventies was the so-called Wahabi disturbances throughout India. These disturbances also provided a popular theme for the Anglo-Indian writers, and as such Hunter wrote a few articles in the Calcutta Review and the Englishman anonymously analysing the nature of the Wahabi creed. This attracted, as Skrine tells us, the attention of Lord Mayo, the then Viceroy, who requested Hunter to write a book explaining the grounds of the Muslim dissatisfaction in the subcontinent. He 'entered into the Viceroy's designs with a zeal that recognized no obstacle'[51]. The outcome of such an endeavour was The Indian Musalmans : Are they bound in conscience to rebel against the Queen ? It was published in 1871. It is said that Hunter completed this work in less than a month and 'did the actual writing in thirteen days'[52].

The remaining volumes of Hunter's Rural Annals appeared in 1872, entitled as Orissa : the Vicissitudes of an Indian Province under Native and British Rule in two volumes. His Famine Aspects of Bengal Districts was published in 1873. All the while he was very

busy in the compilation of the Statistical Account ot Bengal and with the direction of all the other Gazetteers throughout India. Still his manifold energies could make time for his other publications. He was approached by F. Wyllie who asked him to edit the essays on the external policy of India, written by John Wyllie, a member of the Indian Civil Service. John Wyllie was sometime acting foreign secretary to the government of India, and he died a premature death. Hunter under took the task and the edited version of Wyllie's Essays on the External Policy of India appeared in printed form in 1875. Lord Mayo's sudden death also provoked Hunter to vindicate Mayo's ideas and policy in the shape of a biography. He owed a great deal to him for his career, and therefore produced in two volumes a life of his patron, the Earl of Mayo in 1875 as a 'labour of love'.

The results of the statistical survey of India were embodied in 128 volumes, of which Hunter himself contributed 22 volumes. In addition to supervising the vastly complicated machinery of the whole survey and drawing up the scheme of the Imperial Gazetteer, he took upon himself Bengal and Assam. The Statistical Account of Bengal was published in 20 volumes between 1875 and 1877. The Statistical Account of Assam was published in two volumes in 1879. The other 106 volumes of local gazetteers representing the districts of the remaining provinces of India appeared in 1880. Hunter's plan to condense the enormous mass of materials contained in 128 volumes of district gazetteers into the Imperial Gazetteer of India was going on apace. However, he could again make time for another kind of publication. This was published early in 1881, entitled England's Work in India. He completed

Dhaka University Institutional Repository

the compilation of the Imperial Gazetteer of India in nine volumes in 1881. He gave the substance of the Imperial Gazetteer in various forms. Thus he published a volume called Indian Empire : Its People, History and Products, and another named as A Brief History of the Indian People in 1882. He took a positive attitude towards the famous Ilbert Bill controversy. His speech on the Bill was published in 1883, entitled Mr. W.W. Hunter's Speech On the Bill for giving a limited criminal jurisdiction over Europeans to native magistrates and judges. Meanwhile, he was also vigorously at work on the second edition of the Imperial Gazetteer. This was finally published between 1885 and 1887 in 14 volumes, incorporating the latest statistics and the results of the census of 1881.

The successful publication of the second edition of the Imperial Gazetteer in 1887 brought to an end Hunter's special appointment as Director General of Statistics, a post which he held for seventeen years[53]. The success of the Imperial Gazetteer had raised him to the apogee of his literary glory. 'As to the literary merits of the Gazetteer, there can, we believe, be no manner of doubt. This is a point on which the verdict of the public press and learned societies of Europe may without hesitation be accepted'[54]. However, he now became inclined to attain similar distinction in the ordinary administrative work - a Chief Commissionership or a Lieutenant Governorship was his goal. His 'desire was, if possible, to attain one of the great posts which led ot the Lieutenant - Governorship of Bengal'[55]. But his want of administrative experience and the literary bent of

Dhaka University Institutional Repository

his genius deprived him of such a distinction. Lord Dufferin appreciated the justness of his claims, recognised his abilities, and sympathised with him for his being 'in a backwater'[56]. But for all that he did not see his 'way to giving him [Hunter] such administrative employment as would be suitable to his rank and seniority, as his want of administrative experience, on the one hand, would jeopardize his success as a Commissioner; while, on the other, the natural bent of his genius evidently fitted him rather for literary than political pursuits'[57].

Thus all prospects of Hunter's remaining in the service became very bleak and he had to resign. But before that he put forward a proposal to Dufferin for another special appointment to write a history of British rule in India on a grand scale. 'I [Hunter] have, during 20 years, been collecting materials for a history of our rule in India, and perhaps the cessation of my duties there may, in the end, prove to have been a necessary condition for the completion of this task'[58]. He even became inclined to give his plan of history writing 'the dimension of Statistical Survey and Gazetteer writing'[59]. But his grand plan fell through. Dufferin accorded a cold reception to his enthusiastic plan[60]. At last he tendered his resignation in September 1887[61].

The years intervening Hunter's retirement (1887) and his death (1900) were in a literary sense extraordinarily productive. He very judiciously harmonized his own initiatives with the private and Government patronages. One of the first things that he did after

Dhaka University Institutional Repository

retirement was to arrange with the Clarendon Press, Oxford, for the publication of a series of little volumes called the Rulers of India. He opened the series, which in all consisted of 28 volumes, with a model memoir on the administration of Lord Dalhousie in 1890, and followed it up with Lord Mayo in 1891, condensed from a full - length biography which he had previously written in two volumes[62].

Up till now Hunter's publications had stamped him as a great organiser of research and a great historical commentator. But the publication of the Old Missionary in 1890 at once established him as a great man of letters. 'It is in truth a tale of tender and idyllic pathos, which few can have read unmoved'[63]. The Thackerays in India and some Calcutta Graves was published in 1897. This is another production from the pen of Hunter in the line of the Old Missionary that marked him out as a genuine man of letters.

Hunter's research and knowledge on Indian history began to gain universal recognition. Any writing bearing his name was considered as authoritative. Therefore James Samuclson[64] and an anonymous writer[65] secured from him a bibliography and an introduction for their respective book as a guarantee of the comprehensiveness and authority of their publications.

Hunter's School History and Geography of Northern India was published in 1891. This little book was followed in 1892 by his Bombay, 1885 to 1890, A Study in Indian Administration. His four volumes of Bengal Ms. Records With an Historical Dissertation on Land Tenure in Bengal were published in 1894. Another work, the Life of Brian Houghton Hodgson, British Resident at the Court of Nepal, was published in 1895.

Dhaka University Institutional Repository

Simultaneous with these publications, Hunter was bent on executing his plan to write a history of India, which he had formed long ago during his first years of service in Bengal[66]. His original plan was to write a history of India from the earliest ages. But the loss by shipwreck (the Nepal) of mass of priceless manuscripts compelled him to reduce his canvas, and he abandoned the early period of Hindu and Muslim dynasties. He now devoted himself to tracing the growth of British dominion in India in five volumes. Only one volume of the History of British India appeared during his life-time in March 1899. He left seven chapters of volume II in proof, and an eighth in manuscript before he died on 7 February 1900. The book was posthumously published by his able assistant P.E. Roberts in November 1900[67].

This does not however exhaust the works of Sir William Wilson Hunter. Besides being a historian, he was also an ardent journalist, and contributed incessantly to the various journals of India and Great Britain. While in India he regularly contributed to the Englishman, the Calcutta Review, and the Pall Mall Gazette[68]. After his retirement, besides occasional contributions to various jounals, he became a regular feature writer in The Times. From 1888 to a week before his death, he wrote a weekly feature on 'Indian Affairs' in the Times. His 'Country Sketches' in the Englishman were mostly incorporated in the Annals of Rural Bengal[69]. His articles written anonymously in the Calcutta Review and the Englishman analysing the nature of the Wahabi creed were included in The Indian Musalmans : Are they bound in conscience to rebel against the Queen ? His principal articles that appeared in The Times were published in The India

Dhaka University Institutional Repository

of the Queen and other Essays (Longmans Green & Co., London, 1903). It was edited by Lady Hunter and its introduction was written by F.H. Skrine.

In the history of historiography the nineteenth century constitutes an important land mark. Archacology, numismatics, philology, and various political, social, economic and racial theories were combined together to revolutionize historical writing of this period. Various thought currents such as Enlightenment, Romanticism, Utilitarianism, Evangelicalism, Positivism, Socialism, Liberalism, Radicalism, Nationalism and Imperialism swayed the 19th century historical thinking in Europe. Hunter was a typical product of this century. Therefore the prevailing ideas in the intellectual world did determine the trend and nature of his assumptions and attitudes, and his analysis and interpretation of historical events. Accordingly, it would be of interest to analyse his historical writings on India in terms of probable relationship with major movements in European and British intellectual life.

Thematically, Romanticism seems to be the first influence on Hunter. The Romantics had an inclination to see a positive value and interest in civilizations very different from that of their own time. They widened the horizon of history 'through a sympathetic investigation of those past ages which the Enlightenment had treated as unenlightened or barbaric and left in obscurity'[70]. Rousseau was the father of the Romantic movement and it had its early anticipations in his 'back to nature' philosophy and his doctrine of man's natural

Dhaka University Institutional Repository

goodness. The Napoleonic wars quickened Romantic nationalism, and throughout Europe there was a trend to return to local cultural origins. Sir Walter Scott's historical novels that glorified Scotland's national past, had much influence on this movement. Soon every European nation had its Scott.

Hunter desired, at least he pretended, to be the 'Scott' of the Indians. He viewed the earlier writings on India by the English as the 'eloquent and elaborate narratives' of the English Government, or biographies of the English governors of India, and never the histories of the Indian people. 'The silent millions who bear our yoke have found no annalist'[71] The absence of such writings containing the past history of Indian races was due not to the paucity of source materials. On the contrary sources were found in abundance. 'Each field, indeed, has its annals' - Hunter asserted[72]. But there was no history written on the basis of these sources because of the lack of patriotic feeling among the landed gentry of India. But he saw an exception in his own society. English history owed much of its value to the stores of private documents which the English gentry had bequeathed. Unfortunately for the Indians, 'one rural generation dreams out its existence after another, and all are forgotten'[73]. He was therefore astonished to see that whereas every county , almost every parish in Britain had its annals, in India, vast provinces, greater in extent than the British Isles had no individual history whatever[74]. Here all the weightier matters of rural history such as the bygone joys and sorrows, memorable vicissitudes, remarkable men, the decline of old form of industry and the rise of new, were forgotten[75]. As a

Dhaka University Institutional Repository

result he resolved to make up this deficiency in the historiography of India. He categorily declared that his pages would have little to say touching the governing race, the English. His business was to be with the Indian people and their past[76].

Hunter's fancy to be a historian of India's past had been demonstrated in his Annals of Rural Bengal, A Comparative Dictionary of the Languages of India and High Asia, The Imperial Gazetteer of India, The Indian Empire ;Its Peoples, History, and Products; and A Brief history of the Indian People. His researches found the Indians as the emigrants belonging to 'that prolific race which, under the title of Aryans, literally noble, radiated from Central Asia to the extremities of the ancient world'[77]. The Aryan emigrants also built up civilizations on the borders of China, in Persia, Greece, Rome, Spain, and 'the earliest glimpses we get at our own England disclose an Aryan settlement, fishing in its willow canoes and working in the mines of Cornwall'[78]. He, thereby, established a racial affinity of the Indians with the ruling English race. He traced that India, like any European country, had a past.

The history of the non-Aryan tribes and peoples also interested Hunter. He endeavoured to know their language, religion and political destiny. His book 'for the first time in the history of India, places the governing race in direct communication with eighty millions of its non-Aryan subjects and neighbours'[79]. He even evaluated the histories written by the Indians themselves. To his surprise he found them wanting on many points. He considered them no more than a record of conquet and crime. He, therefore, sought for the real

Dhaka University Institutional Repository

history of India among the people themselves. He got the unique opportunity to collect valuable historical materials as the Director-General of the Statistical Survey of India. The compilation and analysis of these sources revealed to him that every Indian district had its own history. 'I have therefore tried to put together, from original sources, a brief narrative of what I believe to be the true history of the Indian people[80].

Hunter thus tried to attach some value and importance to India's past. He even put the Indians on a par in the scale of civilization with the Europeans in the remote past. 'At a very early period we catch sight of a nobler race from the north-west, forcing its way in among the primitive peoples of India. This race belonged to the splendid Aryan or Indo-Germanic stock, from which the Brahman, the Rajput, and the Englishman alike descend'[81].

Utilitarianism or the belief in 'the greatest happiness of the greatest number' had its influence on Hunter. The fundamental principle of Utilitarianism, a tradition in ethics stemming from the late 18th and 19th century English philosophers and economists Jeremy Bentham (1748-1831), James Mill (1773-1836), and John Stuart Mill (1806-1873), is that an action is right if it tends to promote happiness and wrong if it tends to produce the reverse of happiness - not just the happiness of the performer of the action but that of every one affected by it[82]. In pursuance of the 'greatest happiness' principles, the Utilitarians favoured free enterprise, representative government, universal suffrage, parliamentary reforms, state-supported education, freedom of speech and expression, and the non-interference of government or society in individual behaviour that did not harm any one else[83].

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Hunter, however, did not want the realization of all utilitarian principles in India. But as to the general welfare of the Indian peoples he was very much insistent. He had the view that 'no government has a right to exist which does not exist in the interests of the governed. The test of British rule in India is not what it has done for ourselves, but what it has done for the Indian people. By this test our work in the East must stand or fall[84]. He was to judge the wealth of a nation not by the splendour of individuals, but by the prosperity of the people. He found that in India there existed the misery of the many beneath the extravagance of the few under the native dynasties. The common lot in India was a very wretched one. He expected that British rule, by the application of enlightened policy, would obliterate the traces of oppression and rural servitude from the lot of the millions. Already 'two fifths of the people of British India enjoy a prosperity unknown under native rule; other two-fifths earn a fair but diminishing subsistence; but the remaining fifth, or 40 millions, go through life on insufficient food. It is these underfed 40 millions who form the problem of over-population in India. The difficulty of solving it is intensified by the fact, that in spite of the hard struggle for life, their numbers rapidly increase'[85]. According to him, over-population in India was the direct product of British rule. Under the native rulers there had been natural checks on population in the shape of famine, pestilence, and epidemic. He claimed that the rigours of those havocs had been greatly minimised by the British. Hence over-population was the creation of 'civilised rule' and Hunter was bent upon to solve this problem 'by the resources of civilization'. He

Dhaka University Institutional Repository

suggested three-fold remidies, - first, by withdrawing large numbers to non-agricultural industries; second, by distributing the pressure over new or under-populated tracts; third, by increasing the produce of the existing area of cultivation[86]. Thus 'the greatest happiness of the greatest number; had been one of Hunter's major themes. He considered Queen's proclamation of 1858 as the best guarantee of the general welfare of India's teeming millions[87].

The theme of Positivism also seems to have influenced Hunter to some extent. August Comte (1798-1857) was the originator of this doctrine. According to the principle of Positivism science consisted of two things - ascertaining facts and framing laws. In keeping with the first part of the positivist programme, historians set to work with enthusiasm to ascertain all the facts that they could. The result was a vast increase of detailed historical knowledge, based greatly on accurate and critical examination of evidence. Its fundamental principle was 'to separate the wheat from the chaff' in the midst of mass-materials[88]. The second emphasis in the positivist programme gave birth to a new science called sociology, which was to begin by discovering the facts about human life and then go on to discover the causal connections between these facts.

The first part of the positivist principle seems to have influenced Hunter most. He became convinced that to draw up a faithful account of India demanded 'a union of philosophical reflection with minute local research'. He found in the statistical survey of India a direction to that end. As the Director-General of the statistical survey and the Editor-General of the Imperial Gazetteer of

Dhaka University Institutional Repository

India, he caused the collection of mass materials on Indian history. He was of the opinion that nothing was more costly to a government than its ignorance of the country it governed. He conducted the statistical survey as a crusade against such ignorance. 'I believe that, in spite of all its defects, this work will prove a memorable episode in the long battle against ignorance; a breakwater against the tide of prejudice and false opinions flowing down upon us from the past; and a foundation for a truer and wider knowledge of India in time to come'[89]. He got an opportunity to find out the truth about India and to tell it honestly. He used that opportunity in a worthy spirit.

In the late nineteenth century Imperialism also appeared to be most prominent theme in historical writing, and Hunter was almost overtaken by it. The political philosophy of imperialism according to Stokes, meant 'that political power tended constantly to deposit itself in the hands of a natural aristocracy, that power so deposited was morally valied, that it was not to be tamely surrendered before the claims of abstract democratic ideals, but was to be asserted and exercised with justice and mercy'[90]. Traditionally, imperial power is founded on violence and crime, and is maintained by a fearful and intolerable concentration of power. But some of the 19th century British imperialists in India sought to equate imperialism with 'paternalism', 'trusteeship', and 'civilising mission', and seldom reflected the 'pride in conquest and dominion' in their writings[91]. Hunter's ideal of imperialism was of this category.

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It has been seen earlier that Hunter's romantic vein could establish a racial affinity with the Indians. But at the sametime he was surprised to see that whereas the Aryan races in Europe developed institutions and became the torch-bearer of modern civilization, their counterpart in India remained in an 'arrested' position. In other words, the Aryan institutions in India had a prolonged infancy[92]. Therefore, while accepting the notion of a common Aryan stock Hunter sought to explain why India had never developed strong nationalities like the Aryan races of Europe. He found the explanation in the institution of caste, '........ for two races, the one consisting of masters, the other of slaves, are not easily welded into a single nationality'.[93] This was a lacunae which he made responsible for rendering foreign conquest of India by Muslim and European inevitable.

Hunter traced the successive waves of Aryan migration and showed how combination between the Aryan and aborigines had resulted in mixed castes in India. The refusal of the pure Aryan tribes for any kind of social intercourse with the aborigines and their treatment of them as slaves had rendered the growth of an homogeneous society with a common nationality impossible. By shifting all manual labour on the shoulders of the despised mixed castes the Brahmin class had grown slothful and effeminate and had been unable to resist conquest by successive batches of more vigorous peoples - the Afghans, the Tartars, the Mughals and the English[94]. His emphasis on the importance of nationality most probably sprang up out of the

Dhaka University Institutional Repository

19th - century conviction that the ascendancy of the small island - people of Britain throughout the world was due to the superiority of the British national character[95].

Being imbued with the new brand of imperialism Hunter was keen to imbibe nationalism among the Indians. He thought that the stagnation and stalemate of the Indian society can only be broken by the English - the Aryan brethren of the Indians. '........ the Indian people shall be of one caste, and form one nation .... They have about them the capabilities of a noble people [the English]. What they want is social amalgamation, to be effected, ... by their universal regeneration' through education[96]. This historical view provided for Hunter and his group ('intellectual imperialists') a rational and dispassionate justification for the continued maintenance of British rule in India.[97] In addition, he visualized a permanent union between India and Great Britain. 'The English connection with India has grown with the growth of England, till it now forms flesh of our flesh and bone of our bone' - he stated[98]. The spirit of 'civilizing mission' and the elements of imperialism pervaded all over his writings from the very beginning. His Annals were projected to 'render important service to the Empire',[99] and his mission was 'to do justice to this fallen race and to vindicate the conduct of England in her dealing's with India'.[100] He thought that the panacea to the ills and abuses of pre-British India would be found in 'enlightened government and modern civilization'[101]. He also projected his idea of 'paternalism' and 'trusteeship' in the course of his writing. 'The English found India strewn with the wrecks of Asiatic despotism; and out of the drift-wood which the tempest threw up, they had to build the fabric of a civilized government'[102].

Dhaka University Institutional Repository

Among Hunter's historical writings the following particularly relate to Indian history. The Annals of Rural Bengal, 3 vols.; A Comparative Dictionary of the Languages of India and High Asia; The Indian Musalmans : Are they bound in conscience to rebel against the Queen ?; A Statistical Account of Bengal, 20 vols.; A Statistical Account of Assam, 2 vols.; England's work in India; The Imperial Gazetteer of India, initially 9 volumes, later 14 volumes; The Indian Empire : Its Peoples, History and Products; A Brief History of the Indian People; A School History and Geography of Northern India; Bengal MS. Records with an Historical Dissertation on Land Tenure in Bengal, 4 vols. and A History of British India, 2 vols.

In the Annals Rural Bengal, Vol. I, after a short introduction, Hunter commences the narrative of the state of the country when it passed under British rule. Here he vividly and sympathetically relates the ravages of famine in 1770. This tragic event of Bengal involved 'an aggregate of individual suffering which no European nation has been called upon to contemplate within historic times'[103]. Then an extremely interesting chapter on the ethnical elements of the lowland population of Bengal carries us back into the dim remote past of the Aryans and aborigines, to the civilized world of Manu, to the primitive children of the soil, to the religion and religious rites of their victorious invaders, the Aryans, and the interaction of the two races. A chapter on the aboriginal hill-men of Bhirbhum contains a variety of interesting matters. Here in the black races of Bengal Hunter finds a new field of study. The old childlike beliefs of the Santals are curiously depicted in the pages

Dhaka University Institutional Repository

of his Annals. In a separate chapter, the Company's first attempts at rural administration are described. In another distinct section the Company is depicted in its capacity of rural manufacturer. In these two chapters he describes the Company's efforts at administration, its fiscal, currency, and police system, and its industrial enterprise. In conclusion he viewed that the English failed to develop a well-knit administrative set-up in Bengal till the time of Lord Cornwallis. Though 'Warren Hastings disclosed a deeper sense of the responsibilities of empire', he 'had not the power to carry out what he devised, and the India office records of that period are a narrative of good intentions rather than of actual reforms - an Utopia which, while full of ideas that their author never was able to give effect to, fails to show what he really accomplished'[104]. Had he been endowed with the powers and position of Cornwallis, 'the reforms of 1790-93 would have been ante-dated twenty years'[105].

The other two volumes of the Annals are entitled Orissa and deal with the history of this region. In these volumes Hunter endeavours 'to delineate the inner life of an Indian Province'. He starts with a geographical description of Lower Bengal first. Then the legend of the Chilka Lake follows. Here are included the causes of inundations of the Lake, and conceivable modes of preventing or utilizing them. In the next two chapters he describes the province from the religions side. His description includes the sacred city of Puri, the cult of Vishnu, Jagannath and its history, and the Buddhist rock - temples and caves. Here he also deals with the history of the primitive races.

Dhaka University Institutional Repository

The final volume of the Annals traces the history of the province from the time of the Mughals. This is followed by descriptions of the calamities, the village system and territorial holdings. The remaining part of the volume consists of official statistics, relating to geological and botanical information. Taken together, these two volumes of Orissa exhibits Hunter's 'conception of statiscal and general account of an Indian Province'[107].

Hunter's A Comparative Dictionary of the Languages of India and High Asia with a Dissertation is a compilation. The main body of the vocabularies incorporated in the dictionary were taken from lists printed in the Journals or Proceedings of the Asiatic Societies in Bengal and in England, and in the Records of the government of Bengal - all drawn up by or under the direction of Hodgson[108]. Besides, Hodgson placed at Hunter's disposal two large trunks of manuscripts on the subject. In this book he brings together the languages of the non-Aryan tribes and peoples who lived within or upon the border of British India. For the convenience of European students and of missionaries, he arranged the vocabularies in his dictionary in English, French, German, Russian, and Latin. The five synonyms are placed at the head of each page[109]. Throughout this work Hunter tried to establish that India was partly peopled by races distinct from the Aryan population; that while some of these races had preserved their ethnical identity in isolated wilds, others had merged as helots or low - castes into lowland Hindus; that the English ignorance of the first section brought forth incessant risings and frontier wars, and that their imperfect acquaintance with the second formed a serious blot in British India's internal administration; that these races were

capable of being politically utilized, and by proper measures might be converted from a source of weakness to a source of strength for the empire; that they were also capable of being scientifically investigated and of furnishing trustworthy materials to European Philology; that indications were not wanting that these peoples formed the debris of a widely spread primitive race from the northern shores of the Indian Ocean and the Chinese sea; and there were traces that their ethnical evolutions and the ebb and flow of human speech were far more ancient and on a grander scale than the pre-historic migrations of the Indo-Germanic stock[110].

Hunter's Indian Musalmans : Are they bound in conscience to rebel against the Queen ?[111] Was written on the then touchy issue of Muslim dissatisfactions and the so-called Wahabi disturbances throughout India. He begins with a brief account of the events that led to the formation of the 'Rebel Colony' on the North West Frontier area of British India. Here he also lays before the reader a few of the chronic disasters in which the rebels involved the British power. Then he explains the treasonable organization by which the rebels were drawing unfailing supplies of money and men from the interior districts of India. It followed a theological discussion showing the reasons for and against the responsibility of British Indian Muslims to declare British India as 'Dar-ul-Harb' and to rebel against the British authority. In the final chapter he inquires into the grievances of the Muslims under English rule, points out the real wrongs done to them and recommends remedies[112].

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The twenty two volumes of the Statistical Account of Bengal and Assam by Hunter have proved themselves to be a mine of invaluable information. These volumes contain a mass of materials which would be of immense value to statesmen, administrators and historians alike. Each volume of the Statistical Account deals with a group of districts representing on an average a population of about four million people, and under each district is given a description of its geography, general aspects, and physical features. The people, their occupation, ethnical division and creeds,their material condition and their distribution in town and country, are then described. Then comes an account of the district administration, a comparative historical statement of revenue and expenditure, statistics of police, of education, and of the post-office[112a].

England's Work in India was the compilation of a series of four lectures delivered by Hunter during his stay in Britain in connection with the Gazetteer work. In this brochure he tried to evaluate the achievements of the British administration in India during a century. 'The first two chapters deal with the primary duties of every Government - namely, the protection of its subjects, and the development of the country. The last two chapters treat of what may be called the secondary, but no less important, functions of an Asiatic administration, connected with the food-supply and self-government of the people[113]

Hunter's Imperial Gazetter of India (initially 9 volumes, then 14 volumes) reproduced in condensed form for the general public the information collected for the administration of India in the first statistical survey of the country. One hundred twenty-eight volumes

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of the statistical survey containing voluminous records were reduced to a practical size for general reference in these volumes of the Imperial Gazetter[114]. It claimed to furnish for the first time, an account of India based upon a personal survey of the country, and upon an actual enumeration of the people.'..... in spite of all its defects, this work will prove a memorable episode in the long battle against ignorance; a breakwater against the tide of prejudice and false opinions flowing down upon us from the past; and a foundation for a truer and wider knowledge of India in time to come'[115].

In his Indian Empire : Its Peoples, History, and Products Hunter distils into one volume the essence of the Imperial Gazetteer of India and some of his previous works. It contains mainly his article on India in the Gazetter. However, it was 'carefully revised, re-modelled in chapters, and brought more nearly upto date'[116]. He further condensed the contents of the Imperial Gazetteer in his far more popular work - A Brief History of the Indian People. In this book he tried to exhibit the growth of the Indian people, to show what part they played in the world's progress, and what sufferings they endured from other nations. Here he put together, from original sources, a brief narrative of what he believed to be the true history of the Indian people. 'Those sources have been carefully examined in my larger works. This little book merely states, without discussin, the results arrived at by the labour of twenty years'[117].

In A School History and Geography of Northern India Hunter gives a brief account of Bengal and Northern provinces. He designed it for use of Indian schools[118]. His Bengal MS Records contains a

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selected list of 14, 136 letters in the Board of Revenue, Calcutta, of the years 1782-1807. These letters were enriched with an historical dissertation on land tenure in Bengal and analytical index by the author. Here he indicated 'to historical students, and to the District Officers of Bengal, certain new aspects of the East India Company's rural administration in the last century, the localised incidents of that administration, and the material existing for a more complete study of each territorial division'[119].

A History of British India, Hunter's magnum opus, is devoted to tracing the growth of British Empire in India from the earliest period to 1708 when the Old and New Companies were united 'under the provisions of the Earl of Godolphin's Award'[120]. The first volume related the history of the East India Company from its foundation to the expulsion of its servants from the Spice Archipelago (1623). In the second volume he leaves a complete account of one great section of English history in India - 'the struggle for and attainment of commercial supremacy in the seventeenth century. Speaking generally, this was the achievement of the old London Company'[121]. In a sense it can be stated that he covered the most difficult and most obscure portion of the ground of British efforts for establishing their supremacy in the East, particularly in India.

Among the Luminaries of the 19th century Anglo-Indian historians the name of Hunter figures prominently. He may be said to be an original researcher who always tried to base his study on primary sources. This method of research he almost consistently followed from his first to the last publications. For his Annals he claims to have collected materials as a result 'of four years' re-

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searches in several languages among half a dozen Indian Record Rooms and into the family archives of many of the ancient houses of Bengal'[122]. The discovery of the materials preserved in the district record rooms by Hunter was interesting. While he was serving as a magistrate in the district of Bhirbhum he was once struck with the appearance of an ancient press which 'seemed not to have been opened for many years, and with whose contents none of the native officials was acquainted'[123]. After being broken open, he found it to contain the early records of the district. These documents bear information of surpassing interest and cover the period that borders between the ancient and the British systems of Bengal Government.

The way in which and the motive that worked behind the collection of the said materials give unique reliability and authenticity to them. Hunter informs us that these were collected by the East India Company. When the Company took over the administration of Bengal in 1772, it decided to rule according to the native usages. However, it did not know what those usages were. Moreover, it was immediately confronted with the assessment and realization of revenue. Therefore, the evidence on which to establish ~~establish~~ a permanent arrangement of land revenue was to be collected. 'To this end instructions were repeatedly issued during a period of thirty years directing all local officers to institute inquiries, and even after the formal command was removed the habit of collecting and reporting information continued till 1820' and the result was the collection of huge mass of materials locked up in the district presses[124]. Hunter had the habit of evaluating the source - materials before use. So the sources thus collected found priority with him and he emphasised the importance of these

records as eyewitness accounts. 'Many of them are written in the curt forcible language which men use in moments of excitement or peril; and in spite of the blunders of copyists and the ravages of decay, they have about them that air of real life which proceeds not from literary, but from the fact that their authors' minds were full of the subjects on which they wrote'[125]. In the inquiry no subject of fiscal legislations and agricultural economy of each district could escape attention. In these records were discussed tenures of land, and relations of landlords to tenants; cultivators, their rent, social habits, and even their clothing and occupation; currency and exchange, native police, artisans, and manufacture; cesses, tolls, and all manners of recognised and unrecognised taxation. 'In a word, the whole fabric of the rural life of Bengal, with its joys, sorrows, and manifold oppressions, is dissected and laid bare'[126].

But these invaluable district records were not the only sources that Hunter used in writing his _Annals_. He explored several other spheres 'not attempted before' for such a purpose. He employed learned natives to collect materials for the district histories, and they were induced for the first time to help in the English annals of the province and to open up their family record rooms. The missionaries also helped him, and favoured him with the results of their own researches into the language and habits of the people of the country[127].

Hunter's eagerness to find out and explore original sources on a point of discussion is discernible as he ransacked India Office Library with a view to getting supplementary materials for his _Annals_. The famines of 1770 were to form a brief episode in his proposed _Annals_

but still he was serious that his 'information about them should be comprehensive and exact'[128]. It was with this end in view that he went to England to consult the India Office Records, mainly 'to ascertain the extent to which the records of the Provincial administration are transmitted to England'[129]. He was welcomed there and the librarian of the India Office supplied him with 'a list of the most important additional references'[130]. His tenacity as a researcher and fact finder is further substantiated when he planned' a journey through the Turkish Provinces with a view to enquiring into the analogies which the Mahommedan land tenures in Europe present to our own in India'[131]. He took a pains-taking visit to Turkey and the Danubian provinces. But he could not be benefited by it. He 'found the same uncertainty with regard to the land tenures prevailing throughout the Ottoman dependencies as in Bengal'[132].

This spirit of inquiry and the urge to satisfy the curiosity are seemed to be extant in each of Hunter's publications. The sources that gave him clue to the real history of Bengal in general and Bishnupur and Bhirbhum districts in particular, he became serious to collect those sources for the whole of the country - India. These sources, he believed, contained 'the true history of the Indian people'[133]. He got the opportunity to explore these invaluable sources as the Director-General of the first Statistical Survey of India. The sources thus amassed were thorough, varied, valuable and exhaustive. 'With a view to securing uniformity in the materials, I drew up, under the orders of Government six series of leading questions, illustrating the topographical, ethnical, agricultural, industrial, administrative, medical and other aspects of an Indian district, which might serve as a basis

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for the investigations throughout all India.[134] To secure the certainity of uniform execution of the project, provincial editors were appointed. Each of them was in turn made responsible for getting in the returns from the district officers within the territory assigned to him, supplementing them by information from heads of departments and local sources. In this way the co-operation of the whole body of officers all over 'the two-hundred and twenty-five districts of India was enlisted, the best local knowledge was brought to bear, ...'[135] As a provincial editor of Bengal and Assam, Hunter further supplemented the information by his 'personal researches in the Bengal Districts, and among the manuscript records of the Government at Calcutta, and in the India office, London'[136]. In the course of Statistical Survey sufficient quantity of historical, social and political materials was collected. But 'historical disquisitions, or opinions on the social and economic conditions of the people, were deemed unsuitable in a work' like the Statistical Account[137]. Even a general introductory volume after being set up in type was withdrawn at the instruction of the Government. However, the unused materials extracted from the local records embodying the districts histories of India had been preserved in 'four printed volumes'[138].

Hunter was given a wider scope to use those materials in the Imperial Gazetteer and he did his best to avail himself of the opportunity[139]. As a result, it was revealed for the first time 'that every Indian District has its own history'[140]. In his subsequent publications he principally used these materials. His Indian Empire and A Brief History of the Indian people were written after carefully examining 'those sources'[141]. Materials for the Bengal MS. Records were collected at an early period of his service in Bengal between 1863 and 1866 from 'the manuscript records in the District offices of Bengal'[142]. For

his History of British India, the main source had been 'survey materials'. 'I have, during 20 years, been collecting materials for a history of our rule in India'[143]. Besides, he greatly supplemented these sources by conducting inquiries in 'the archives of England, Portugal and Holland'[144].

Hunter's historiography may be said to have been the outcome of diverse views and ideologies. The influence of Romanticism, Positivism, Utilitarianism, Liberalism and Imperialism is found to be apparent in his writings. These intellectual currents and cross-currents on the one hand and his social and official standing on the other, were likely to make his historiography self-contradictory, and even sometime very pretentious. In other words, his writings reveal his conceptions of the history of India as variously motivated.

In the existing context of Anglo-Indian historiography of Hunter's time, his very first approach to the history of India sounded revolutionary. He discovered that there were indeed a great number of 'eloquent and elaborate' histories on India by the English. But he decried and deplored those histories as 'records of the English government, or biographies of the English governors of India, not histories of the Indian people. The silent millions who bear our yoke found no annalist'[145]. This was a striking realization on his part.

This lacunae in the writings of the English historians which Hunter so rightly pointed out, had been previously discovered by his predecessors in the writings of the Muslim historians of India. Sir Henry Miers Elliot (1808-1853) in his study and scrutiny of the Indo-Muslim historians found them wanting in memorializing the history of the people. To a Muslim historian of India 'a fact, an anecdote, a speech,

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a remark, which would illustrate the condition of the common people, or any rank subordinate to the highest, is considered too insignificant to be suffered to intrude upon a relation which concerns only grandees and ministers, thrones and imperial powers'[146]. So it became difficult for the modern historians of India 'to penetrate below the glittering surface, and observe the practical operation of a despotic Government and rigorous and sanguinary laws, and the effect upon the great body of the nation of these injurious influences and agencies'[147]. This revelation found no immediate annalist to divert the trend of Indian historiography to the people. It was Hunter who took upon himself the responsibility of introducing people oriented historiography. He found the English historians to suffer from the defects of the medieval Muslim historians. So his declared intention in his first publication, the Annals, was to make good this deficiency. In this work he volunteered to be a historian of 'the silent millions'. He planned his work to portray the condition of India, particularly Bengal, when it passed under the British rule. But the book had little to say 'touching the governing race'. His business was to be 'with the people'[148].

In keeping with this resolve Hunter tried to salvage the history of the 'silent millions'. He had the firm belief that the preliminary volume of the rural Annals would be successful in realizing one of his principal aims - 'of interpreting the rural millions of India to the western world'[149]. Within a few years of assumption of the Diwani by the East India Company there occurred in Bengal a terrible famine in 1770 which swept away one third of the population[150]. Till the time of Hunter this tragic event found no chronicler. The other

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English historians treated Indian history 'as a series of struggles about the Company's charter enlivened with startling military exploits, have naturally little to say regarding an occurrence which involved neither a battle nor a parliamentary debate'.[151] Hitherto very little had been known of this event. Mill, with all his accuracy and minuteness, only casually mentioned or slurred over it. He could barely spare five lines for the subject. Even J.C. Marshman, an author on Indian history who wrote immediately before Hunter, dismissed the episode in three lines whereas the disaster 'stands out in the contemporary records in appallening proportions'[152]. It was left for Hunter to give a sympathetic description of that fearful calamity and its effect upon the future condition of the country. 'It forms, indeed, the key to the history of Bengal during the succeeding forty years'[153] - he asserted.

Besides the famine of 1770, Hunter labouriously pieced together and chronicled the ethnical composition of the people of India, causes of their backwardness and subjugation by the foreign invaders; their language, religion, social habits, problems of day-to-day life - almost nothing was left out in his narrative. His research made him convinced that India was not a mere country, it was rather a continent. He, through analysis, dispelled the misconceptions of his countrymen regarding India. 'We are too much accustomed to speak of India as a single country, and of its inhabitants as a single nation; but the truth is, that as regards its history, its extent, and its population, India displays the diversities rather of a continent than of a single state[154].

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The primitive races of India also drew Hunter's attention. He claims that these races remained 'an unclaimed, ignoble horde, of whose origin we know nothing'.[155] He thought that the government of India could no longer remain oblivious of the character, condition, and necessities of the aboriginal hill tribes who everywhere surrounded the frontier of British India, 'and whose ethnical kindred form so important an element of the population on the plains'[156]. As a result of his researches, the aborigines of India became known to the world. In his writings there are meticulous discussions on the religion, language, custom, tradition, economy and mythology of these races. As if the aboriginal peoples of India had been hidden in hill-caves till their history was salvazed by him.[157]

The statistical survey of India under the direction of Hunter 'represents the first organised advance towards a better knowledge of the country'[158]. The volumes containing the results of this survey were greatly helpful to reduce the 'element of unknown, and to render the slowly acquired knowledge of the experienced few, the common property of the administrative body and the public'[159]. Hunter further condensed the voluminous records of the Statistical Survey to a practical size in <u>the Imperial Gazetter</u>[160]. His handling of these primary sources made him convinced that the history of India was more than a record of conquest and crime, and he sought it for among the people themselves[161]. The Gazetteers, in his view, memorialized the history of the people. They were based upon a personal survey of India and upon an actual enumeration of the people. Therefore these volumes transferred many Indian questions from the region of haphazard statement to the jurisdiction of calm knowledge. They

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proved to be 'a memorable episode in the long battle against ignorance; a breakwater against the tide of prejudice and false opinions flowing down upon us from the past; and a foundation for a truer and wider knowledge of India in time to come'.[162] As the Director-General of the Statistical Survey and Editor-General of the Gazetteers Hunter shouldered the responsibility of finding out the truth about the Indian people, and of honestly telling it. He directed his major research and writing in a worthy spirit toward its realization. As a result of his efforts, at least, the first and most difficult stage of British Indian history had been passed.[163]

Hunter, however, was never earnest and serious about the history of the Indian masses. He, in the final analysis of his views, proved himself to be pretentions and hypocritical on this point. He seemed to have taken interest in the history of India as it was necessary to vindicate British conquests, British policies, and the retention of British Empire in India. He took to writing history with two principal motives in mind. His researches were to 'enable the Indian Government to discharge two hitherto neglected duties, the duty which it owes to our own nation, of preserving the only circumstantial memorials of British rule in Bengal, and the duty it owes to other nations, of interpreting the rural millions of India to the western world'.[164] The inner spirit as expressed here had been purely imperialistic though that imperialism was a bit toned down by the themes of 'paternalism and trusteeship rather than pride in conquest and dominion'.[165] In a work where his declared intention was to be the chronicler of the 'silent millions', had 'little to say touching the governing race', and his business was to be with the Indian people only, he at the same time resolved to

to preserve 'the only circumstantial memorials of British rule in Bengal'.[166] This seeming contradiction, no doubt, confuses his readers. But he was throughout consistent with his inner spirit and engaged his time and talents for the cause of the empire. Even his studies of the Indian aborigines were imperially motivated. His researches found that the long series of Indian conquerers - Aryans, Afghans and Mughls - each in turn tried to extirpate the aboriginal races or to control them but in vain. He, therefore, advised the British Indian government not to follow the suit. Instead he urged the government to take a lesson from the history of Britain itself to deal with this specific problem. Here the pointed out how successfully the Hanoverians converted the turbulent Highlanders into those disciplined battalions which reaped honour on every English battle-field. 'The same problem has to be solved for the aboriginal races of India. Their military capacity and energy are undisputed : the only question is, whether this capacity and energy are to be, to England, a source of weakness, or of strength'.[167] To make it a source of strength to England it was necessary to civilize and to understand these tribes. Hunter's work stood in good stead towards that end. In the same vein he compiled the Statistical Account and the Imperial Gazetteer. Through these writings he rather propounded a kind of theory that an empire to be best administered, the problems of the people composing it must be better understood. His publications successfully established a basis for this. That he consciously, deliberately and consistently worked for the cause of the Empire was further attested as he desired to be rewarded as an imperial rather than an Indian historian. So Lord Dufferin noted 'I should have no hesitation in recommending him [Hunter] for K.C.S.I. His own ambition,

however, extends to a K.C.B., on the ground that his work is rather of an Imperial than of a specially Indian character'.[168] The theme of the Empire and imperial problems in Hunter finally expressed itself explicitly in his last work - the History of British India. Here the internal history of India, her diverse races and religion were to constitute as peripheral subjects. But the principal purpose of the book was 'to trace the steps by which the ascendency of England was won in the East; the changes which it has wrought; and the measures by which it is maintained'.[169]

Hunter gave an altogether new interpretation on the origin and expansion of British dominion of India. The prevailing view as to the expansion of British Empire was mainly dominated by the interpretations of the Romantic and Evangelical historians. The Remantics attributed the Indian Empire to the valour and capacity of the individual personalities such as Robert Clive, Warren Hastings, Cornwallis, Wellesley and the like. Whereas to the Evangelicals 'Providence' helped the English imperceptibly in their endeavour to build up an empire. They had the conviction that the English had been involuntarily led, step by step, to the pinnacle of an empire, impelled by influences beyond their control, pursuing a policy they always disapproved of, and fulfilling a destiny against which they were perpetually struggling.[170] But Hunter's sources gave him a new insight and he narrated the history of British India in a new perspective. As a result of this new outlook the vision of the 'Indian Empire as a marvel of destiny, scareely wrought by human hands, faded away. Nor did the vacuum theory, of the inrush of the British power into an Asiatic void, correspond more closely with the facts'.[171]

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Hunter analysed in a broad canvas the circumstances that led to the rise of British power in India. He co-related the British ascendancy with the East-West contest from the remote past. 'It formed the sequel to the immemorial conflict between the East and the West, which dyed red the waves of salamis and brought Zenobia a captive to Rome'.[172] This East-West conflict, he added, took different shape and dimension over centuries. Each phase of the struggle reflected the spirit of the period. It was military and territorial in the ancient world (Graeco -Persian War), military and religions in the middle ages (Crusades), military and mercantile during the Renaissance period (Mercantilism), and finally it developed into the military, commercial and political combinations of the complex modern world (colonialism and new-colonialism). Particularly with mercantilism (from 15th and 16th centuries) one or the other European nation came to the forefront in the contest. In the process Hunter found England as 'the residuary legatee of an inheritance painfully amassed by Europe in Asia during the past four centuries'.[173] Besides, the records within his disposal attested to him the view that the establishment of British Empire in India was neither accidental, nor involuntary, nor providential but the result of 'deliberate civil courage and indomitable will'[174] and British achievements in India were 'no sudden triumph but an indomitable endurance during a century and half of frustration and defeat.[175] He claimed that his sources also impartially retained 'the impress of rare devotion and administrative skill' of his countrymen in building up the Indian Empire.[176] In brief, throughout his writings he emphasised that the British connection with India had never been a strange

and fortuitous accident but an outcome of a long process of preparation intimately connected with Britain's rise to greatness from Elizabethan times 'till it now forms flesh of our flesh and bone of our bone'.[177]

A true historian while analysing the causes of an event does feel a professional compulsion to reduce them into order, to establish some hierarchy among them which would fix their relation to one another in order to decide which cause or which category of causes, should be regarded 'in the last resort' or 'in the final analysis' as the ultimate cause, the cause of all causes.[178] Hunter, in keeping with this spirit, proved himself to be a historian of first order. In the course of his writing he attached a number of causes as to the rise and fall of dynasties and nations. But in the ultimate analysis he identified 'national spirit' as the deciding factor in these affairs. In his study of the Indian history he found her people to be suddued by successive waves of conquerors because they (Afghans, Tartars, Mughals and the Europeans) 'found the Indo-Aryans effeminated by long sloth, divided amongst themselves, and devoid of any spirit of nationality'.[179] He was sure that a strong spirit of nationality could render such conquests impossible and the want of this spirit made 'conquest and national abasement inevitable' in India.[180]

On the other hand, the very presence of this 'national spirit', Hunter showed, lay at the root of English success in the East. 'The national spirit has been the dominant factor alike in our fortunes and in those of our rivals in the East' - he asserted.[181]

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He discovered that the four traits in the British national character - 'a marvellous patience and self-restraint', 'an indomitable persistence' in the projects once entered on, 'an admirable mutual confidence' among the English in time's of trouble and 'the resolute support of the English nation' - helped England to emerge as 'the prize - winner from the long contest of the European nations for India'.[182] In his writings he propounded a pet-theory that the question of questions was not the size of a European nation for establishing spremacy in the East, but what sacrifices each of these nations was willing to make for its position there. No European nation had won the supremacy of the East which did not make it a national concern, and no nation could maintain it without being ready to defend it with its utmost resources. Therefore 'the prize fell successively to States, small in area, but of a great heart'.[183] In this way Hunter tried to substantiate that the history of British rule in India 'stands out as the epic of the British nation - the fibre of its fibre, the express image of its inmost character, of its capacity for external growth and continuous self-rule .... It will make the world understand the British race - adventurous, masterful, patient in defeat and persistent in executing its designs'.[184] England never sacrificed the work of her Indian servants to the exigencies of her diplomacy in Europe. 'The result of that policy, pursued during two and a half centuries, is the British India of to-day'.[185] English national spirit, as Hunter viewed it, made the conquest of India by them inevitable. 'Bengal must have become a British province although on some other field than Plassey, and the Mutiny would assuredly have been put down, even had no Lawrence

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stood in the gap in that great and terrible day of the Lord'.[186] However, as a causation in history, 'inevitability' is not a tenable argument since it 'implies a denial of human free will'.[187]

In another sphere, Hunter discarded a popular notion relating to the conquest of India by the English. The idea was generally in vogue that the Britishers conquered India by deposing and defeating the Muslim rulers. But his findings gave him, to a great extent correctly, a new insight into the event. He found the later Mughals as mere 'pensioners and imperial puppets' who reigned at Delhi wielding power over a numerous seraglio with lofty titles as Akbar II or Alamgir II but their real authority was confined to the palace only. So when the English appeared on the scene, the real sovereignty of India had already passed out of the hands of the Mughals, in fact, the Mughal viceroys who had broke away from the empire, the Marathas, the Sikhs, and the English - were all fighting each other for supremacy in the sub-continent. In this long-drawn and strenuous struggle the British finally came out victorious. Therefore, Hunter logically assumed that his nation did win India from 'the Hindus' and not from the Mughals. 'Our conclusive wars were neither with the Delhi King, nor with his revolted governors, but with the two Hindu confederacies, the Marathas and the Sikhs.[188] Our last Maratha war dates as late as 1818, and the Sikh Confederation was not finally overcome until 1849'.[189]

Hunter is generally known as a serious, systematic and laborious researcher. His Annals, Statistical Accounts, the Imperial Gazetters and quite a few more bear testimony to this effect. However, some of his publications are found to be replete with sweeping generalization and the instances of false pretentions, hypocracy, and even wilful concealment of facts are extant over them.

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Toleration is a commendable trait in an individual as well as in a nation. Whether an individual or a nation is tolerant or not is to be established by analysing their deeds and actions - for individuals, over years, and for the nations, even over centuries. From a single instance it is not proper or scientific to arrive at a general conclusion on the point of tolerance or intolerance. But Hunter indulged in making sweeping generalizations. He related that certain editor of an orthodox Hindu paper (Hindu Patriot) used to write in his columns with a vigorous polemic against christianity entitled 'Christianity Destroyed'. This very editor was stunned at the news of the death of a Christian missionary named Sherring. He published a eulogium dealing in details sherring's 'learning, affability, solidity, piety, benevolence, and business capacity'.[190] This act on the part of an editor at the death of a renowned person could be taken as mere gesture and courtesy and never an expression of his inner feeling. Whereas, Hunter, from this single instance (at least, he did not develop this theme anywhere in his writing) was prompted to conclude, 'The Hindus are among the most tolerant religionists in the world'.[191] In support of this assertion he did not cite the examples of the behavioral patterns of the other religious groups of the world, not even of India.

Elements of shallow research are also found in Hunter when he deals with the history of medieval Bengal. From his narrative it is known that Fakhruddin Mubarak Shah threw off the authority of Delhi in 1340 and set up himself as a sovereign ruler with his capital at Gour .[192] However, by utilising the testimony of the

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of the original sources, specially the coins, Blochmann and others,[193] sucessfully showed that Fakhruddin revolted against Delhi in 1338 and he never conquered Gour or ruled from there. His capital was rather located at Sonargaon near Dhaka. Although it was informed that Hunter took Blochmann as 'a mentor qualified to pilot him',[194] in the event he seemed to have taken no cognigence of the latest research on the history of Bengal.

Further, the proofs of pretention, hypocrisy, distortion and deliberate projection of wrong information are not difficult to discern from the writing of Hunter. These defects are nowhere so glaring as they are in his Indian Musalmans. Ironically enough, this publication made him more distinguished in this part of the sub-continent and endeared his name to the Muslim community. On scrutiny it is found that the very title of the Indian Musalmans is pretentious. Any perspective study of this work leaves the realization that what had passed as an account of the Muslims of India was in practice an account of the Muslims of Bengal. Awareness of this was also very alive in Hunter, and he rightly stated 'that my remarks apply only to Lower Bengal, the Province with which I am best acquinted, and in which, so far as I can learn, the Muhammadans have suffered most severely under British rule'.[195] The book, however, abounds in passages which lead the reader to believe that it is not merely the Bengal Muslims that the author deals with, but the Muslims throughout India.[196] This circumstance can only be explained in terms of Hunter's pretension, and also his ambition to draw attention and create sensation throughout the British Empire by writing on burning

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and broader topics. A book under the title say 'the Musalmans of Bengal' could hardly create an intense emotion as the Indian Musalman did.

Hunter's Indian Musalmans hurled a false awareness throughout the empire and it left an impression on the British minds that the Indian Empire would sink down very soon in an irretrievable ruin because of Wahabi conspiracy. Its appearance was shortly followed by the murders of Chief Justice Norman on the steps of the Calcutta High Court and of Viceroy Lord Mayo in the Andaman Islands by a Muslim fanatic. This coincidence had the effect of turning everybody's attention to Hunter's Wahabees'.[197] His book, for a time at least, became a centre of general discussion, But in reality it was not also a trustworthy account of the Indian Wahabis. The jihad initiated by the Indian Wahabis was directed against the Sikhs and seldom against the English. 'The band of the mutineers at Mulka and Sittana may have given trouble to Government after 1857', but those rebel colonies composed of Hindus as well as of Muslims.[198] They could scarcely be disignated as a 'jihadi' and far less a Wahabi community.

In addition, Hunter built up his so-called facts in the Indian Musalmans on a very weak and superficial foundation. Here he showed little discretion in sifting the chaff from the wheat. Sometimes his narrative took the form of a pure romance. From his account it is gathered that Syed Ahmed and his followers crosed the Indus and ransacked the Punjab. He also depicted Peshawar as the frontier capital of the Punjab.[199] But the evidence at the disposal

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of the historians never confirmed these information. Nothing like these ever took place in the career of Syed Ahmad. He and his followers never crossed the Indus and could not therefore have overrun the Punjab. Again, the Peshawar Valley was not annexed to Ranjit Singh's dominions until three years after the Syed and it is consequently wholly incorrect to speak of Peshawar as at that time the frontier capital of the Punjab. It rather formed, nominally, the frontier capital of the Kabul monarchy, but was really governed by certain Afghan sardars such as Yar Muhammad Khan, Khadi Khan and Muqarrab Khan.[200] This is one of the many mistakes into which Hunter had fallen in writing this book and this circumstance may prove sufficient to show the very small acquaintance which he possessed of the subject at the time he undertook to enlighten the world on Indian Wahabism. In the estimate of the relevant scholars he therefore 'stands convicted either of intentionally misleading the public or of ignorance profound'.[201] In the spirit of his Indian Musalmans, Lord Northbrook could 'find no evidence of anything approaching a Mahomendan or Wahabee conspiracy, and I doubt if the latter are really a political sect. Dr. Hunter's account seems to me to have been exaggerated and highly colored'.[202] From all these it may be assumed that Hunter did bend and adapt his materials to magnify the hovror of Wahabi menace throughout the empire.

Again, it is found that Hunter made a lot of noise about the condition of the ordinary people under the Muslim rule. He lamented 'that a vast population of husbandmen was toiling bare-backed in the heat of summer and in the rain of autumn, in order that a few families in each District might lead lives of luxurious ease' and their sufferings did not touch 'the heart' or move 'the

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consciences' of the Muslim rulers.[203] Hypocritically enough here he ended his findings and never did elaborate this theme into larger discourses. Although he was aware that the cultivators' position had not improved under British rule, he had no word of sympathy for them as he had for their predecessors under Muslim rule. On the contrary, the sympathy that he expressed for the 'bare-backed' peasantry of the earlier period had subsequently been converted into a sympathy for the 'well-born' Muslim families of the country under British rule. The houses of these aristocrats 'swarm with grown-up sons and daughters', with grand children, nephews and nieces, but no one had any prospect to do anything for himself in life because of English administrative policy.[204] His sympathy for them knew no bounds when he stated, 'a hundred and seventy years ago it was almost impossible for a well-born Musalman in Bengal to become poor; at present [1871] it is almost impossible for him to continue rich'.[205]

Further, there are instances in the writing of Hunter that he deliberately projected information in a distorted way with a view to carrying his point and convincing his readers. He, in course of his writing, was keen to show the Hindus that British rule was beneficial to them. To prove this point he drew a glowing picture of British achievements and contrasted it with the dark picture of Indo-Muslim rule. According to him the British rule meant to the Hindus 'order in place of anarchy, protection by the law instead of oppression by the sword'.[206] Again, the Muslim rulers were 'haughty and careless conquerors' and 'managed the subordinate administration by Hindus, but they kept all higher appointments in their own hands'.[207]

He dragged the point a bit more and revealed that even during the 'enlightened' rule of Akbar whom the Hindus much appreciated, of the twelve highest appointments with the title of commander of more than five thousand horses, not a single one was given to a Hindu. In the succeeding grades the number of Hindus was very disproportionate. Out of 252 officers with the title of commander from five thousand to five hundred horses, only 31 were Hindus.[208]

Hunter meticulously produced these statistics in order to convince the Hindus that they were better treated by their English masters who gave them posts and positions commensurate with their number and ability. But here he willfully concealed the position of the Indians in this respect under the British rule. He was correct in showing that the Muslims enjoyed the major share of the higher posts during the pre-British period, yet the non-Muslims had a share of them however insignificant that share might had been. Ironically indeed, while Hunter was thus argueing, the English were still blocking the door of 'Covenanted services' to the Indians and the Ilbert Bill controvercies were still on. The policy of exclusion from higher posts, therefore, found a wider application under the British Indian government, and it now included the Muslims who previously had a monopoly of higher posts in the army, judiciary and administration of imperial taxes. Hunter very carefully held back the statistics of the Indian 'Covenanted Services' and the proportions of the Indians on it from the perview of his readers.

With all these contradictions, false pretentions, hypocracies, or even the deliberate concealment of facts, the name of Hunter

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figures prominently in the Anglo-Indian historiography. With positivistic spirit he collected and consolidated for over thirty-four years the source materials for British-Indian history in India, and in the archieves of England, Portugal, and Holland. He modelled his Statistical Account and the Imperial Gazetter like the Scriptores Rerum Italicarum, the Monumenta Boica, the Recueil des Historiens des Gaules and a hundred other collections of the same kind. As a result his researches have become useful depositories of information and knowledge for the researchers of Indian history. Since then his own labour and deligence and that of the succeeding scholars had extracted, have been extracting and will continue to extract materials for the erection of a better and more solid structure of the Anglo-Indian history. Of course, he did not accomplish all these compilations single handed. He had a number of competent assistants. But his was the mind that planned them. He had the rare capacity of getting the best work out of his assistants who merged themselves in his identity. He exercised, and with wonderful mastery, a great command over able men and over vast materials.

Hunter's political philosophy for alien rule in Asia had been fully expressed in his History of British India. It contains some finely appropriate reflections weighty with thought, and eloquent in expression which have the prospect of remaining, through ages, classical and monumental. Above all, he devoted his life's work, time and talents to unite Britain and India in bonds of knowledge and sympathy for all time to come. This fondest hope of Hunter came to naught as India became separated and independent in the first half of the next century. But his vision of making India

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'better governed because better understood' was greatly realized. For the first time India was brought effectively under one empire by the English, and it was Hunter's literary labour that exhibited before them on a panoramic scale the vastness of their responsibility, and had afforded them the means of performing their 'trust' under the guidance of full knowledge. Indeed, few have done more in spreading a knowledge of India than Hunter.

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Dhaka University Institutional Repository

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Dhaka University Institutional Repository

CHAPTER TWO

HENRY BEVERIDGE
(1837 - 1929)

Henry Beveridge was one of the few administrator historians who studied Indian affairs with radical outlook. During the Vice-Royalty of Lord Ripon (1880-84), 'the influence of Gladstonian Liberalism became a permanent element in the political scene of British India'.[1] Beveridge may be considered the best representative of this spirit. His whole career was characterised by a fearless independence and he had the courage to give unfettered expression to his convictions whenever the interests of justice or truth required him to do so. Therefore, an analysis of his views and assumptions would be useful to our study of the nineteenth century Anglo-Indian historiography.

Beveridge became inclined to go for an Indian career from a practical point of view. His modest middle-class background and pecuniary circumstances of his family held out but little prospect for him in Britain. In this trying situation he was contemplating a career in India. Probably the changes that had been brought about in the system of recruitment for Indian services influenced his thinking. Earlier, the authority of the East India Company had the monopoly of nominations to the Indian Civil Service. But this right had been withdrawn from the Directors of the Company in 1855, and henceforth

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the appointments were thrown open to public competition. The prospect that the door which previously could only be opened by high connections and family influence, and which was the special preserve of the scions of the Directors, could now be reached through sheer merit, most likely attracted Beveridge's attention, 'as it caught so many other boys in the years that followed'.[2] A test of intellectual merit in the shape of a competitive examination leading to an Indian career opened before him the prospect of a surer way to a guaranteed future.

Beveridge had two more special reasons for looking to India. First, one of his mother's intimate friends, Mrs. Howison, was married to a member of the East India Company's medical service. He might have felt encouraged to know the advantages of an Indian career from them. Secondly, it was during this time that his father was absorbed in writing the Comprehensive History of India.[3] The cumulative effect of all these was that 'talk at home turned continually to the East' and greatly influenced his decision.[4]

Beveridge's career in India was not very distinguished. He never rose above the level of a district official and that too in the less prestigious and influential judicial branch of the Indian civil service. Further, he did not find a place in the Dictionary of National Biography. Even his name was not mentioned 'in any of the biographies or personal memoirs of his more distinguished colleagues'.[5] However, his own papers preserved in the India Office Library, his biography written by his son William Beveridge and the India Office List, 1893 help us in bringing out his career in clear perspective. Besides, his literary accomplishments are discernible from the obituary notices that appeared in The Times, Indian Historical Quarterly and The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society.[6]

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Beveridge was born on 9 February 1837, at Inzievar in Scotland. He was the youngest son of Henry Beveridge, advocate (1799-1863), and Jemima Watt(1795-1885). After the successful completion of his education in law at the University of Edinburgh, elder Beveridge began his career as a licentiate of the Church of Scotland and a preacher. But his failure to obtain a regular preaching post led him to abandon the ministry altogether, and to join the Scottish bar as an advocate. Here also he could not succeed. Then he tried to improve his position by engaging himself in business and by exploring the mineral resources of his wife's ancestral estate. This endeavour also ended in a disastrous failure, and resulted in a financial debacle in 1848 that brought the family to the verge of ruin. For living,valuable household goods were disposed of, his boys were removed from the school and the family's beautiful Inzievar house was sold out.

In such adverse circumstances the elder Beveridge proved himself very persevering. To retrieve his financial position he moved from place to place and turned from studying and writing for pleasure to writing for a living. He made contact with a publishing firm of Glasgow named 'Blackie and Sons' for which he did 'much hack work'. As a literary drudge he wrote a large part of the Imperial Gazetteer which 'Blackie' issued in 1855. This kept him engaged for over six years. For a short time he gave up this job and went to Belfast to edit The Banner of Ulster, a Presbyterian paper. This editorship lasted only for a year and he again returned to work for 'Blackie and Sons'. The elder Beveridge's pecuniary circumstances and his attempts to recoup it had their impact on the education and career

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of his children. In the consciousness of the junior Beveridge insolvency remained 'as one of the normal inconveniences of life, always waiting round the corner'.[7] However, younger Beveridge's schooling started smoothly. He was sent to the Royal Circus School at the age of five. He studied there for three years. Then he was passed on to the Academy in Edinburgh where he stayed for about five years. It was during this time the financial crash of the family took place. Consequently he and his elder brother Allie were removed from the academy and their education for the time being remained disrupted. It was, however, resumed in Glasgow when a kind of financial stability returned to the family through his father's 'hack work' for 'Blackie and Sons'. As a result it now became possible for Beveridge and his brother to have full university education. They attended the Glasgow College for about seven years. Beveridge took Arts and Science, and his brother took medicine. Of course, Beveridge completed his formal education at Queen's College, Belfast, where he had entered in 1856 during his father's editorship of <u>The Banner of Ulster.</u>[8]

While at Queen's College, Belfast, Beveridge seriously started searching a job, primarily to ease the acute economic tension of the family. His prospect for a job in Britain was very bleak and he preferred an Indian career for reasons stipulated earlier. Therefore, in July 1857, he appeared at the third of the newly introduced competitive examination, and topped the list of successful candidates. He joined the service on 31 August 1857, sailed for India on 29 September 1857 and reached Calcutta on 20 January 1858.[9] In the same year, his elder brother Allie qualified as a doctor in the Army Medical Corps and was gazetted to the 78th Highlanders under orders for India.

It was a great pleasure for the hardpressed elder Beveridge to see two of his sons established in a secure career. Both of them became pillars of support for the family. They regularly sent remittances home as long as there was need for it.

Beveridge served both in the executive and judicial lines of Bengal service. A brief account of his service career may here be given as a preliminary to the specific discussion of his historical work. His places of posting are important, because they have a direct relevance to his publications.

After his arrival in Bengal, Beveridge successfully completed a course at the probationer's college at Fort William, and was first posted to Mymensingh in January 1859 as Assistant Magistrate and Collector. From Mymensingh he was transferred to Jenaidah in September 1861, to Jessore in January 1862, to Nadia in April 1862, to Midnapur in January 1863, and to Sylhet in February 1863. From November 1863 to November 1864 he was deputed to Foreign Department and was sent to Manipur on special duty. On his return from Manipur, he was posted to Kuch Bihar as Joint Magistrate and Deputy Collector in November 1864, to Dhaka in December 1866, to Noakhali in November 1867, and to Hughli in February 1868.

From Hughli, Beveridge went on furlough for over two years in February 1868. On his return, he was posted to Barisal in March 1870, to Chittagong in March 1871, and again to Barisal in June 1871. At this last station he remained till the beginning of 1875 when he went on a second furlough for about two years in January 1875. It was during this furlough in 1875 that he took an important decision

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as to his future career in India. Hitherto Indian civil servants had been able to serve both in the administrative and the judicial lines. In 1875 the Government decided that these two functions were in future to be separated, and circulated to the members of the covenanted service to make their options. Beveridge made his option and chose the judicial line. What determined his choice cannot be stated with certainty. Most probably his love for tension free leisure to be devoted to literary undertakings influenced his decision, a thing that he never expected to get in the executive line. This assumption may be said to have been substantiated as we would see his unremitting literary labour subsequent to his joining the judiciary.

Consequently on his return from furlough, Beveridge was posted to Rangpur as District and Sessions Judge in December 1876, and served in the same capacity in the districts of Patna, 24 Parganas, Faridpur, Bhirbhum, Hughli, and Murshidabad till he retired on 15 January 1893. On his return to Britain he lived for about thirty-seven years more and he spent his retired life 'in the study of India - its history, languages, rulers and peoples - and in writing about them'.[10] He died on 8 November 1929 at his Campden Hill-road residence in London at the age of ninety two.[11]

Beveridge inherited from both of his parents his strong literary tastes, the habit of voluminus reading, a gift for languages and an unfailing memory. As has been observed earlier, his father though a lawyer and a licentiate of the Church of Scotland, never lived by either of these professions, but by his literary labours. Besides, his father's Comprehensive History of India in three volumes

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most likely to have generated his interest in the history and people of India, a topic on which he was afterwards writing continuously while in India and after his retirement. He also got his aptitude for learning languages other than his mother tongue from his mother who 'was a voracious reader in many languages'.[12] Moreover, his family environment developed in him a zest for reading books on history. From the beginning of his career and on his first journey to India that lasted for about four months 'he took, among other things, for reading on the voyage three quarto volumes of Hallam's Middle Aages and Gibbon's History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire'.[13]

Despite Beveridge's intellectual capacity and literary background, his activities as a writer and historian began much later. His frequent transfers and unsettled domestic circumstances may be said to have been responsible for it. It is observed earlier from the record of his postings that from 1859-1871 he served at twelve different Bengal stations - in average for less than a year in one place, a period too short for a busy executive of those days to devote to literary pursuits concentrating on the history and people of the respective stations. There was every likelihood that Beveridge was eager to have literary undertakings at least to supplement his income in order to enable him to continue his role along with his brother Allie as the main financial support of his family at home, but short-lived sojourns did not allow him to pick up any particular theme. However, any time he was free or stayed long in a particular place, he took to writing.[14] There was one more factor that may be identified as precluding Beveridge from literary undertakings in the early years of his Indian career. This was his lack

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of mental stability and peace of mind. He was born and bred a Presbyterian. But during the early years of his Indian career he started doubting its tenets, and ultimately broke with it completely. Before becoming a heterodox, he 'went on in an unsettled state for many years'.[15] Besides, his late marriage (Though he started his service career in August 1857, he married in September 1871), lonely years, and the death of his first wife and child at Bakarganj deprived him of any peace of mind congenial to an intellectual pursuits.[16]

Of course, circumstances altered for Beveridge in favour of literary undertakings subsequent to 1875. Two developments may be said to have been responsible for this. One was his option to serve in the judicial branch of the administration. Here movement from place to place became less frequent, and moreover, long holidays were an added advantage for literary activities. The other was his second marriage with Annette Susannah Akroyd (1842-1929) on 6 April 1875 that proved to be the stabilising factor in his life. His first wife Jane Howison Goldie (1853-1873) whom Beveridge married in September 1871, died with her first baby in January 1873 at Bakarganj. After the initial shock, he was to find another wife. He first met Miss Annette Akroyd when she came to see off Mrs. Goldie, Beveridge's mother-in-law on her return journey to Britain. Both Annette and Mrs. Goldie had become acquainted with each other as cabin-mates when the latter was coming to India 'to be with her daughter at the daughter's first confinement in the Swamps of Eastern Bengal'.[17] The meeting between Beveridge and Annette soon after the disaster, though very brief, drew sympathy from her, and they continued to write to each other on different subjects in mutual

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admiration for their respective views. Finally, 'they met again and were married two years later, to bring up a family in India and Britain; to study and argue and write together for more than fifty years, till they died in the same year'.[18] He found in her not only a devoted wife but a life-long literary companion. Both were earnestly interested in the study of Indian history. From this time on Beveridge started contributing regularly to the various journals and periodicals. It was also during this time that he was elected an ordinary member of the Asiatic Society of Bengal and proved himself to be a 'pillar of strength' for the institution to the end of his life.[19]

Beveridge made his abvent in the world of literature in 1869 when he wrote an article on 'Christianity in India' in the Theological Review.[20] Early in January 1870 he delivered a lecture under the auspices of the Culross Temperance Society on 'Life and Manners in Bengal'. His curiosity and taste for historical investigation became visible in 1873 when he sent a copper-plate inscription from Bakarganj for decipherment to the Asiatic Society. 'Were Sundarbans inhabited in Ancient Times' ? Was his first article to be published in the Society's Journal, No. I, Pt. I, for 1876. From this time on he was constantly engaged in the intervals of his public duties in writing historical articles which were mainly published in the Calcutta Review, Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, Journal of the Royal Aisatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, and The Asiatic Quarterly Review.

Beveridge's first major work was the District of Bakarganj : Its History and Statistics and it was published in 1876. Between 1876 and 1895 he had published the following articles on different topics namely : 'Warren Hastings in Lower Bengal', Calcutta Review, Vols.

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65, 66 and 68, 1877-79; 'Jean Jacques Rousseau', Calcutta Review, Vol. 66, October 1878; 'The Antiquities of Bagura', JASB, Vol. 47, Pt.I, No. I, 1878; 'The Massacre of Patna', Calcutta Review, Vols. 79-80, 1884-85; 'The Mother of Jahangir', JASB, Vol. 56, Pt. I, No. III, 1887; 'The Era of Lachman Sen', JASB, Vol. 57, Pt. I, No.I, 1888; 'The Administration of Justice in Bengal, I and II', Calcutta Review, 1888-90, Vols. 87 and 89; 'Father Jerome Xavier', JASB, Vol. 57, Pt. I, No. I, 1888; 'Rajah Kans', JASB, Vol. 61, Pt. I, No. I, 1892; 'Old Places in Murshidabad, I and II, Calcutta Review, Vol.94, April 1892 and Vol. 95, October 1892; 'The Site of Karna Suvarna', JASB, Vol. 62, Pt. I, No. 4, 1893; 'Note on Major Franklin's Manuscript description of Gaur', JASB, Vol. 63, Pt.I, No. II, 1894; and 'The Khurshid Jahan Nama of Sayyad Ilahi Bakhsh al Husaini Angrizabadi', JASB, Vol. 64, Pt. I, No. III, 1895.

In addition to the above articles, Beveridge completed during this period his second major work which traversed a controversial ground. This controversy was related to the trial and execution of Nanda Kumar in the time of Warren Hastings. He had attacked the judgement which led to the execution of Nanda Kumar in his article 'Warren Hastings in Lower Bengal'. His view drew a vigorous reply from Sir James F. Stephen who tried to vindicate Impey and Warren Hastings in the matter in his work - The Story of Nuncumar and the Impeachment of Sir Elijah Impey, published in 1885. Beveridge, undeterred and by way of reply, proceeded to make his magazine articles into his second book - The Trial of Maharaja Nanda Kumar, A Narrative of a Judicial Murder, published in 1886. He also contributed a chapter

Dhaka University Institutional Repository

to Martin's Indian Empire on 'the Administration of Warren Hastings' published in 1889. In 1890 he was elected President of the Asiatic Society of Bengal[22] and his annual adress to the society was published separately in 1891.

After retirement in 1893, Beveridge continued his literary labours in a more vigorous way. On the eve of his retirement, he planned to write a history of Bengal in ten years. 'If I retire I may be able to write a good History of Bengal' and 'that will give me occupation for ten years if I live so long',[23] he wrote to his wife. But though he lived long after retirement and remained busy till the end of his life in literary pursuits, we get little or nothing by him on Bengal, not to speak of a good history of the region. Why had the major theme of his intellectual exercises been shifted from Bengal to other area needs to be explained.

On the eve of Beveride's retirement and departure from India he was making many tentative plans, of which, of course, at that time writing a History of Bengal was foremost. 'If I retire I may be able to write a good History of Bengal or to throw light on Indian Criminal Jurisprudence or (if we take a house in the country and pose as public spirited citizens) we may go into Parliament as an Indian Member'.[24]

However, Beveridge's plan of writing a History of Bengal was not preceded by any serious effort on his part to collect relevant materials. His last station in Bengal was Murshidabad and he had collected some historical materials but that he did for journal articles, not for general work. 'All the natives think I am going to write a

history of Murshidabad and are anxious to give me information but I shall not do more than write an article or two'.[25] In a situation like this, should a better apportunity come on his way, it would be easy for him to revise his original plan.

Monetary consideration also influenced Beveridge to change his plan. Just before retirement, he was financiallly embarrassed. 'I really don't mind what part of Bengal I am in, provided that I can economise' - he wrote as early as 1890.[26] After the retirement economy in expenditure became far more necessary 'The expense of transporting and establishing Annette with her brood in England was great, and now school bills began to come in. The rupee exchange was going from bad to worse'.[27] Considering all these he might have felt hesitant about embarking on a literary enterprise at his own cost. His earlier ventures to this effect were not encouraging. His Bakarganj and Nanda-Kumar did not prove economically profitable. They did not sell well and no further edition was issued. Moreover, for his new plan of the History of Bengal no Government patronage was likely to be available. In the circumstances, he was most probably looking for a guaranteed long-term literary pursuit with the prospect of some financial gain. At this juncture, the Asiatic Society of Bengal offered him to undertake the English translation of Persian texts and he gladly accepted it.[28] This decision saved him from any personal financial commitment, rather it ensured him a regular remittance.[29]

Finally, the influence of Beveridge's second wife Annette may also be considered as the determining factor in the shifting of his academic interests from Bengal to Mughal studies. She had developed

Dhaka University Institutional Repository

her interest in Mughal history much earlier. As early as 1884 she had undertaken an English translation of F.A. Von Noer's life of Emperor Akbar from German. It was completed and published in 1890. Then she translated Humayun Nama for the Royal Asiatic Society[30] and Babar-Nama for the Asiatic Society of Bengal.[31] While she was thus busy in Mughal studies, she probably wanted her husband also to join her. As events proved, she succeeded in persuading Beveridge who eventually became a convert to her own field. It fell to Annett's lot to do for Emperor Babar and Humayun what her husband did for Akbar and Jahangir.

Whatever may be the cause of Beveridge's shifting interests, fact remains to be seen that his retired life was very fruitful in literary sense and Bengal figured very little in these writings. During his retirement he translated The Akbarnama[32] and the Maathir-ul-Umara[33] into English and successfully edited the Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri[34] translated by Alexander Rogers. Besides these major works of translation he wrote a large number of articles during this period covering a wider range of topics, namely 'Babar Padshah-Ghazi', Calcutta Review, Vol. CV, 1897; 'The Memoirs of Bayazid (Bajazed) Beyat', JASB, Vol.67, Pt. I, No. 4, 1898; 'Babar's Diamond : was it the Koh-i-Nur ?, Asiatic Quarterly Review, Vol. VII, April 1899; 'The Garden of Climes' (Hadiqa-al-aqalim), Asiatic Quarterly Review, January and April 1900; 'Was Abdu-R-Rahim the translator of Babar's memoirs into Persian ?', Asiatic Quarterly Review, July and October 1900; 'An Afghan Legend', Asiatic Quarterly Review, Vol. XI, 1901; 'Persian Manuscripts in Indian Libraries', JRAS, January 1901; 'The Khojas of Eastern Turkistan', JASB, Vol. 70, Pt. I, No. 1, 1902; 'A short notice of a Persian MS. on Gaur', JASB, Vol. 70, Pt. I, No. 1, 1902; 'The author of the life of Shah Ismail Safavi, JRAS, October 1902; 'A short note on the date of the

Dhaka University Institutional Repository

death of Nur Qutb' Aalam', JASB, Vol. 70, Pt. I, No. 1, 1902; 'The story of Donna Juliana', East and West, June 1903; 'Observasions on General Maclagan's paper on the Jesuit Missions to the Emperor Akbar, JASB for 1896, P. 38', JASB, Vol. 73, 1904; 'On Isa Khan, the ruler of Bhati, in the time of Akbar', JASB, Vol. 73, 1904; 'Qmar Khayyam and the story of the three friends', Calcutta Review, October, 1904; 'Hastivanj', JRAS, April 1904; 'Qmar Khayyam', JRAS, July 1905; 'Akbar's Revenue Settlements', Asiatic Quarterly Review, July 1905; 'The Emperor Babar', JASB, Vol. I (New Series), Pt. I, No. 5, 1905; 'The Nafaisu-L-Maasir', JASB, Vol. I (N.S.), Pt. I, No. 5, 1905, Proceedings, P. 236; 'The Emperor Akbar', The Indian World, October 1905; 'Aurangzeb's Revenues', JRAS, April 1906; 'An old Reference to the Bhotias',JASB, Vol. II (N.S.), Pt. I, No. 7, 1906; 'The Emperor Babar in the Habibu-s-Siyar', Asiatic Quarterly Review,January 1906; 'The Character of Akbar', The Indian magazine and Review, August 1907; 'Sultan Khusrau', JRAS, July 1907; 'Salinu Coins', JASB, Vol. 5 (N.S.), Pt. I, No. 9, 1909; 'A Passage in the Turki Text of the Babarnamah ', JASB, Vol. VI (N.S.), Pt. I, No. 6, 1910; 'The Poet Maili of Herat', JASB, Vol. VI (N.S.), Pt. I, No. 2, 1910, 'The Marsden MSS. in the British Museum', JASB, Vol. VI (N.S.), Pt. I, No. 8, 1910; 'A dubious passage in the Ilminsky edition of the Baburnama', JASB, Vol. VII (N.S.),1911; 'Errata, etc., in the A.S.B. Edition of Abu Turab's History of Gujarat, Calcutta 1909', JASB, Vol. VII (N.S.), 1911; 'Nizami's Khusran and Shirin', Aisatic Quarterly Review, April 1912; 'Preface of the lives of the Apostles, translated from the Persian', JASB, Vol. X (N.S.), 1914; 'The date of the death of Shah Beg Arghun, the

Dhaka University Institutional Repository

ruler of Sind', JASB, Vol.X (N.S.), 1914; 'Notes on Father Monserrate's Mongolicae Legationis Commentarius', JASB, vol. XI (N.S.), 1915; 'Note of the Ta'rikh Salatin Afaghinah', JASB, Vo. XII (N.S.), 1916; 'The Rashahat-i-' Ainal-Hayat', JRAS, January 1916; 'The Rauzat-ut-Tahirin', JASB, Vol. XIV (N.S.), 1918; 'The Sources of the Akbarnama', JASB, Vol XIV (N.S.), 1918; 'A Letter from the Emperor Babur to his son Kamran', JASB, Vol. XV (N.S.), 1920; 'Aziz Koka', JRAS, April 1921; and 'Timur's Apocryphal Memoirs', JASB, Vol. XVII (N.S.), 1922.

Beveridge's first major work, The District of Bakarganj : Its History and Statistics, can be said to be a praiseworthy and successful attempt to piece together a vast quantity of local knowledge and floating anecdotes in the form of a county history. However, he was not a pioneer in the field. Works of this type were 'calculated to be of service to a Government which professes to base legislative and executive action on a complete knowledge of the wants and temper of its subjects'.[35] In this regard Sir John Sinclair (1754-1835) was the pioneer. He started the preparation and development of such studies with a strong statistical base. It was he who first introduced into the language the words 'statistics' and 'statistical'.[36] In 1790 he designed a Statistical Account of Scotland and the result of his inquiries was published in twenty volumes between 1791 and 1799.[37] Most probably the directors of the East India Company who were facing acute administrative problems in Bengal because of the lack of accurate knowledge read and deliberated upon Sinclair's volumes. This might have encouraged them to organise similar surveys on their Bengal dependency. Their despatch of 1807 had, at least, corroborated such a

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view. 'We are of opinion that a Statistical Survey of the country would be attended with much utility. We therefore recommend proper steps to be taken for the execution of the same' - they wrote to the Bengal Government.[38] Accordingly Francis Hamilton Buchanan (1762 - 1829) was deputed 'to take a statistical survey of the presidency of Bengal'.[39] His survey continued for about seven years and its results were forwarded to the East India House in 1816. On the basis of these results a Geographical and Statistical Description of Dinajpur was first published at Calcutta in 1830.

Thus started the beginning of the compilation of district histories. This practice long continued and was greatly augmented by Hunter's Statistical Survey and the Census of 1872. As a result Beveridge felt happy 'to think that so many district histories are now in print[40], and that we are beginning to have for Bengal some such statistical account as the industry and patriotism of Sir John Sinclair caused to be prepared for Scotland'.[41] Consequently Beveridge's Bakarganj was a very relevant publication in the line and he meant it to 'be useful and interesting to the officers of Government and the inhabitants of the district'.[42]

Beverige's plan to write a history of Bakarganj was first mentioned in a letter to Annette, then Miss Ackroyd, in late 1874. 'I have applied for furlough but have not got it yet and even if I do get it I do not intend going home for two or three moths yet. I am trying to write a history of Bakarganj and must therefore stay on here and collect materials'.[43] He proceeded with the plan and almost completed its writing by the end of 1875. 'The History finished all but

the General Remarks' - Mrs. Beveridge recorded in her diary.[44] Afterwards he 'took the History to Printers and left it for printing'.[45] It was published by the Trubner and Co., of Ludgate Hill, London, in 1876.

The District of Bakarganj is divided into three parts consisting of nineteen chapters. In part one he first gives a general account of Bakarganj and describes the parganas, the Sundarbans, the Government estates, various kinds of land tenures and under tenures. In part two he describes the people, the local manufactures and natural products of the district. The last part of his history contains an account of the development of British administration in its various branches such as Revenue and Criminal administration, Police system, the Jail, Education, Roads and Communications. Besides these, it also includes a chapter of General Remarks where he expressed his own views on different topics.

Beveridge's Trial of Maharaja Nanda Kumar, A Narrative of a Judicial Murder[46] is an example of patient and laborious investigation into the records of this great case and is also a solid and valuable contribution to Indian history.[47] As mentioned earlier, this work is mainly a reprint of his two articles published in the Calcutta Review. However, in the light of the 'invaluable documents' subsequently discovered in the Record-room of the Calcutta High Court, he thoroughly altered the previous arrangement and 'made a good many additions and omissions' to it.[48] As to the subject matter of the book, he was very specific and definite. He discussed here the famous trial of Maharaja Nanda Kumar for forgery which was held at Calcutta, in June 1775, before the Supreme Court of Judicature. In doing so the severely criti-

cized the conduct of Warren Hastings, the Governor General and Sir Elijah Impey, the Chief Justice and found them wanting in the exercise of their supreme power. He thereby proved his contention 'that the execution of Nanda Kumar was a judicial murder'.[49] For the conclusive acceptance of his assertion he endeavoured throughout the book with evidence to establish the following points :

1. That the jewels-bond-Exhibit A of the trial - was not a forgery, but was the genuine deed of Bolaqi Das Seth.

2. That no attempt was made to prosecute Nanda Kumar before May 1775.

3. That there is strong circumstantial evidence that Hastings was the real prosecutor.

4. That Kamaladdin Khan, the principal witness in the three trials for conspiracy and forgery, was closely connected in business with Kanta Babu, the banyan of Hastings, Also that Kamaladdin was a man whose word could not be believed, and who had been justly described by Clavering as an infamous creature, and by Mr. Fowke as the 'scum of the earth'.

5. That the trial was unfairly conducted, and that, in particular, the Chief Justice's manner was bad throughout.

6. That the jury was prejudiced and incompetent.

7. That the prosecution entirely failed to prove that the bond was a forgery.

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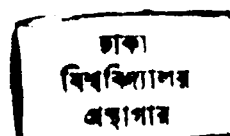
8. That the execution was iniquitous, even on the supposition of Nanda Kumar's guilt, and that it was the result of a plot to stifle inquiry into bribery and corruption.



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9. That Sir J. Stephen, in his book, The Story of Nuncomar and the impeachment of Sir Elijah Impey, partly from the zeal of advocacy and partly from his having approached his subject without adequate preparation, without knowledge of Indian history or of the peculiarities of an Indian record, made grave mistakes in his account of the trial and in his observations thereon.[50]

Beveridge started an English translation of Akbarnama in about 1893. The Persian text of this work commenced publication in 1872[51] by the Asiatic Society of Bengal under the editorship of Maulavi Agha Ahmad Ali of the Calcutta Madrasa.[52] After his death, Maulavi Abdur Rahim of the same institution was entrusted with the editing of the text,[53] and its publication was completed in 1888.[54] In July 1893,the Asiatic Society prepared a short list of eighteen books 'in order of urgency' for publication and in this priority list the English translation of Akbarnama occupied the fourth place. Of course, this gradation list was not to be followed strictly if 'a competent editor and a sufficiency of manuscripts' could not be found for earlier number and next in the list was to be taken up for publication.[55]

In the search for a suitable person to translate the Akbarnama, Dr. A.F.R. Hoernle, philological secretary of the Asiatic Society, ultimately persuaded Beveridge 'to undertake the translation'.[56] A personal element might have also worked in this selection. They were both members of the society. Moreover, when in 1890 Beveridge was elected President of the society, Hoernle became its philological secretary[57] and in those respective acpacities their mutual understanding must have become very close. Hoernle was further re-elected or officiated as philological secretary in subsequent years. Therefore, their early acquaintance

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together with the fact that there were few Persian scholars who could spare time and energy to render the complicated text like Akbarnama into English, Hoarnle's preference naturally went to his friend Beveridge. Other known Anglo-Persian scholars, such as Raverty and Jarrett were busy with their own translation works.[58] They probably desired and deserved a good interval before taking on any further exhausting translation work.

Beveridge completed the English translation of the Akbarnama in over twenty years' time 'with occasional interruptions'[59] in three volumes. However, originally Abul Fazal planned to write the Akbarnama in five volumes.[60] Four of these were to constitute the narrative part, each covering a period of thirty years of Akbar's life. He presumed that Akbar would live one hundred twenty years and that he would survive him in order to be able to complete his account of the Emperor's life. The fifth volume was to be the Ain-i-Akbari or institutes of Akbar and was to constitute the informative part.

But Abul Fazl could not complete the Akbarnama as per his original plan. Neither Akbar lived 120 years nor he survived him. He could only write three volumes - two narrative or historical part and one informative or the Ain-i-Akbari. The first volume covers 'the history of mankind' from Adam to the first 17 years of Akbar's reign and thereby covered one cycle of 30 years of Akbar's life for Akbar was around 13 years of age at the time of his accession to the throne. The second volume brings the narrative to the close of the 46th year of Akbar's reign. In the first half of the 47th year of the reign, Abul Fazl was assassinated and the events of the remaining years of

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Akbar's reign could not be narrated by him. After his death 'the Akbar Nama was continued by one who is most probably known to be Muhibb Ali Khan, who brought the narrative to the end of Akbar's reign'.[61] The third volume, the Ain-i-Akbari had been completed by the end of the 42nd year of the reign.

The two historical volumes of the Akbarnama which Abul Fazl had written were subsequently modified some time after his death. The first volume convering the history from Adam to the first seventeen years of Akbar's reign was split into two - one covering the history up to Humayun's death and the second from Akbar's enthronement to the first seventeen years of his reign. The second volume in the original plan thus came to be regarded as the third.[62] This modified form of the plan had been adopted by the editors while publishing the text in the Bibliotheca Indica Series.

Beveridge translated the historical part the modified version of the Akbarnama. Thus the translated version of his Akbarnama, Vol.I, covers the history from Adam to the death of Humayun; Vol. II covers the history from Akbar's enthronement to the first seventeen years of his reign and vol. III covers the history from the 18th year to the end of Akbar's reign.

Beveridge offered to prepare an English translation of Maathir-ur-Umara for the Asiatic Society of Bengal for publication in the Bibliotheca Indica Series.[63] The Council of the Society in its meeting of November, 1908 agreed to his proposal.[64] He completed the translation of the text by 1921 but it took longer period to complete the publication of the translated version. In the translation he followed the

alphabetical arrangement for the biographies. The printing of the translation work was started in 1911 and three double fascicles of 200 pages each were issued uptil 1914. The printing of the first volume dealing with biographies up to the end of letter 'L' was concluded in 1941. It took another 11 years for the second volume dealing with biographies up to the end of letter 'Z' to be printed. Both the volumes were revised, annotated and completed under the competent editorship of Professor Baini Prashad. These volumes taken together constitute an important biographical dictionary of the Muslim and Hindu officers of the Mughal Emperors of the years between 1500 and 1780.

Beveridge undertook to edit the Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri, or Memoirs of Jahangir, translated into English by Alexander Rogers, an I.C.S. officer. His translated portion of the Tuzuk constituted the first volume of the memoir.[65] Rogers translated the Memoirs from the edition printed by Sir Syed Ahmad Khan in 1863. But this edition often proved to be defective, incorrect, especially in the case of proper names. So Beveridge, while editing the translated version, collated it with the excellent manuscripts found in the India Office Library and the British Museum. He also, with Rogers' permission, revised the translation and added many explanatory notes.[66]

Unlike Blochmann and Hunter Beveridge was explicit and specific in revealing his intellectual posture. He had expressed openly his commitment to or bias for a particular school of thought or his attitude towards the various cross-currents of ideas in the contemporary world. He attributed the formation of his ideas mainly to his membership of a close-Knit family group of parents, brothers and sisters. 'I don't

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think I learned much at school or college and have never, I am sorry to say, felt any strong veneration or regard for any of my teachers or places of instruction. What I learned I got chiefly by myself or from my father and mother. My father was a man of great vigour of mind and of considerable learning and from his conversation I learnt a great deal'.[67] He freely and frankly expressed his shortcomings and deficiencies at school and college. He could not make himself distinguished there and could not have any intimate friend. He was a 'bird-witted'. He did not stick to any one thing and 'hopped about too much from one thing to another'.[68] Though he inherited from his father a great admiration for mathematics he could not master the subject as he 'was deficient in the faculty of attention'.[69] Later in life he was introduced 'to the writings of Tennyson,[70] kingsley[71] and others of the modern school'[72] by his friend and colleague Heeley. Their writings proved to be influential in the development of his subsequent views.

Beveridge was born and bred a Presbyterian but his memories of church-going were not happy. To him they were 'dreary sundays and wearisome sermons'. He had not a single pleasant appreciation of the church congregations. He listened to the sermons very little and even if he listened, he understood them the least.[73]

However, Beveridge stuck to his religious belief up to his adult age. He became especially religious when he was fifteen. At that time he read the Bible a great deal and also prayed much'. He continued such exercises for a good while and was very orthodox when he went out to India.[74] Ironically enough, it was in India that he made a complete break with religion.

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The circumstances in which Beveridge started doubting the religious tenets were interesting. Once while he was at Cuttack, the story of the apple in the garden of Eden was being told. At this his fellow colleague Heeley laughed and challenged its rationality. This shocked him, no doubt, but at the same time, this event germinated doubt in his mind regarding religion and he became mentally very unsettled. He 'went on in an unsettled state for many years'.[75] At last when he was stationed at Mymensingh he exposed his doubt to Glover, the then district judge who suggested him to read 'Newton on the Prophecies'[76] to have a peace of mind. But it was of no avail to him. His restlessness continued. However, he 'had at last got down to the bed-rock in religions matters' by reading in a newspaper an extract from John Stuart Mill's[77] Autobiography where he stated that his father James Mill[78] after many struggles did at last yield 'to the conviction that of the origin of things there was nothing to be known'.[79] This view was after the heart of Beveridge and this gave him rest and peace of mind by rejecting the unbelievable and irrational religious stories such as 'The story of the apple in the garden of Eden'. Here he contrasted his position with that of John Henry Newman[80] who after joining the Catholic religion felt like 'coming to a port out of a rough sea' whereas for Beveridge the coming out from the fold of christianity was but an emancipation. He even ridiculed Newman by saying that after a time he must 'found the port-dues rather heavy'.[81]

Subseqeunt to this realization, Beveridge continued to be an agnostic, one who held that no knowledge beyond material phenomenon

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was possible. This word was frist publicly coined by Thomas Henry Huxley, a British biologist and champion of the Darwinian theory of evolution in 1869 at a meeting of the Metaphysical Society in London. By it he designated an approach to belief that went only as far as the evidence warranted and then recognized the limits of knowledge. It had also something to do with not knowing, particularly to the sphere of religious doctrine.[82] But atheism and agnosticism were not the same. 'The Atheist asserts that there is no God, whereas the Agnostic maintains only that he does not know'.[83] This very aspect of agnosticism was apparent in Beveridge as he said, 'I do not know whether there is a God or not, I do not understand how the world has made itself and think it very probable that some one made it but no one hath seen God at any time. In other words there never has been any Revelation of him. Miracles I do not believe in and I cannot pray as I do not know whom to pray to'.[84] Therefore, when Beveridge and Annettle were married in Calcutta in 1875 both of them declared before the marriage registrar that they were not Christians.[85]

The want of religious belief hardly saddened Beveridge. He would have liked to believe in a further state after death where one could have another chance to make up for the neglects and cruelties that one did commit in this world. But the awkwardnesses that came in the way of believing such an Eden of a future life dissuaded him from it. He and his wife got on without religious convictions and without going to church. Neither of them considered it necessary to teach their children any religion in the ordinary sense of the word .

Religion had a special meaning for them. They thought that virtue and morality were independent of revealed religion, 'at least of such alleged revelations as we have hitherto had.'[86] 'A love of truth in thought, word and deed' was looked upon by them as the main quality to be desired of a person and termed such a quality itself to be a religion.[87] To them the great thing was, to use John Bright's favourite phrase, 'to be just and fear not.'[88]

To be true in thought, word and deed, and to imbibe virtue and morality in mind Beveridge made Stoic Philosophy a favourite study.[89] The ancient Soics were a class he had ' a high veneration for'.[90] Throughout life he was guided by moral scruples. Once while he was a magistrate in Barisal he took upon himself to release some prisoners, being convinced of their innocence, in anticipation of the orders of Government. For this irregularity he was censured, and three Judges of the High Court afterwards opined that 'there was no ground to interfere with the original conviction.'[91] But this censure was not to dissuade him to do the same in the similar circumstances in future. 'I won't say that I was wrong or that I would not do something of the same kind again if I felt called upon to do it' — he asserted. 'It may be a paradox but there are some occasions when you do right and yet deserve punishment. For instance, a man whose child is starving is right to steal for it if he cannot get food for it otherwise. But the judge is also right in punishing him for theft.'[92] To have such a moral frame and strength he urged his children to ' read Marcus Aurelius' Medidations[93] some day and some words on the Stoics in Montesquieu's[94] Spirit of Laws.'[95]

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Beveridge was interested in 'the essence of life' without any exaggeration or colouring. Since novels depict life in a much more stirring way and takes the reader away from the real life, he did not favour reading novels. He was of the opinion that novelists could not be dull and their primary intention was to amuse and entertain the readers. To do so they 'fix their attention on the exceptional occurences of life' and 'dwell on things that may occur once or twice in a lifetime or perhaps never at all'.[96] Thereby they neglect everyday life and Beveridge had termed this lacunae as 'the cardinal evils of novels'. Therefore, though he read 'too many novels' in his youth, he totally gave up this habit subsequently and made history reading his favourite study as it obviously dealt with the facts of life in a truer perspective.[97]

An analysis of Beveridge's works can now be made relevant in the light of his foregoing views and ideals. The District of Bakarganj was his first main general work. In collecting its materials he proved himself very tenatious and painstaking. The work was 'the result of nearly five years' experience in Bakarganj, and of subsequent researches in the India Office and the Library of the British Museum'.[98] He used diverse sources for its compilation. The report on Bakarganj by Sutherland, Jessore by Westland, and 'the disquisition of Professor Blochmann on the geography and history of Bengal' were greatly used by him. For the revenue history of the district, he mainly depended on Grant's Analysis of the Finances of Bengal, 'printed in Appendix No.4 to the Fifth Report of the Committee of the House of Commons, 1812'.[99] In his effort to give the history of the coastal region of Bengal, particularly Sundarbans, he explored the missionary sources and used the early available maps on the region. "By far the

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most interesting account of the Sundarbans is contained in the letters of the Jesuit priests who visited Bakarganj and Jessore in 1599 and 1600. They were addressed to Nicholas Pimenta, a visitor of the order stationed at Goa, and were forwarded by him along with some remarks of his own, to Claude Aquaviva, who was then general of the order'.[100] Besides these, he also used Bengali source-materials. He had 'been assisted by the Bengali account of Bakarganj by Naba Kanth Chattarji, which is a very good little manual.'[101] His use of the local legends, collected with the help of the local officials in reconstructing the past history of the district, was unique.

Beveridge's depiction of the pre-British history of India was diverse – sometimes critical and occasionally appreciative. However, on the question of the utility that had been accrued to the country from the introduction of British administration, he is wholly aligned with other contemporary Anglo-Indian historians. Preceding Muslim rule, according to him, had been characterised by lawlessness and insecurity. The forts of Muslim sovereigns had been projected by him as 'marks of insecurity rather than of prosperity' and under the English 'they do not now exist simply because there is peace in the land, and the Arracanese and the Portuguese pirates are no longer formidable.'[102] On reviewing the history of a single district, Bakarganj, he found that all significant improvements took place in recent times and as to the cause of these improvements he hoped that 'every unprejudiced person must acknowledge that they are mainly due to the introduction of the English Government.'[103] To strengthen his point he further argued that the fundamental changes that

had been wrought in the country took place during the 'last two hundred years [1676-1876]. If, then, the English Government has not been the cause of the improvements which we see, why did they not occur at an earlier period ? If other things were the same then, and the form of government was not worse, why was it that much of the country was a jungle, that the rivers and creeks were full of piratical boats, and that life and property were everywhere insecure ?'[104] Through this inductive process he deduced 'the conclusion that the English provided the country with a well-knit and better administration.

Beveridge's arguments in favour of the beneficial side of the British administration, however, seemed to be inaccurate and inconsistent. The period of British administration was hardly over a century when he wrote about it (1876). The earliest involvement of the Britishers in the administration of the country can be traced back from 1765 as Lord Clive received Dewani of the Suba-Bangala from the Emperor of Delhi. Before the battle of Plassey the English scareely had even any indirect influence on the administration. So when he attributes all the fundamental changes that took place during the 'last two hundred years' to the English, it sounded somewhat amusing. Almost half of this so-called period of development fell to the lot of the Mughals (1676-1765). During this period some of the capable Mughal subadars such as Shaistan Khan, Murshid Quli Khan and Alivardi Khan administered Bengal. Therefore, Beveridge was clearly wrong in his assertion.

Again, Beveridge, in comparison with the British Indian administration, depicted the Muslime rule as an abode of lawlessness and insecurity where 'the rivers and creeks were full of piratical boats, and that life and property were everywhere insecure'.[105] But

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immediately after this, in relating the achievements of the Muslim rulers of Bengal with those of the Hindus, he found a vigour and a power of organisation among the Muslim rulers which were wanting among the Hindu princelings.[106] He elaborated this point by referring to the Portuguese and Aracanese menace that threatened the life and property in medieval Bengal, especially in the eastern and coastal region. The way in which the Muslims suppressed these piratical invasions commanded his appreciation. 'The Hindus were unequal to the contest, and fled under the pretext of avoiding contamination' with the untouchables.[107] 'The Mahomedans, on the other hand, took the more manly course, of grasping their nettle, established themselves at Dacca, where the danger was greatest, raised and maintained a fleet, and swept the rivers and their estuaries clear of the Arracanese and the Portuguese Pirates'.[108] He attributed the protection of the inhabitants of Bengal from the inroads of the Aracanese and the Portuguese exclusively to the measures taken by the Muslim rulers. 'But for the conquest by the Mahomedans of Sandwip and Chittagong, it is probable that much of what is now known as Eastern Bengal would have been a portion, and a deserted and despised portion, of the Kingdom of Arracan or Burmah'.[109] This diverse projection of the achievements of the pre-British Indian rulers appeared to be inconsistent.

Away from the general view that Beveridge cherished (doubtless superiority of the English administration), he even praised the policies of the Muslim rulers of India as 'custodians of people's morals' and opined that in this respect the British Government contrasted 'unfavourrably with that of the Mughals'.[110] According to him the

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Muslim rulers never 'derived profit from an excise on liquor' whereas the English imposed taxes on it and mixed them with the trade. This circumstance, he thought, would prejudise the notion of the people towards the British government. ' .... as natives are apt to believe that it is the duty of Government to teach morality, they may be led to think that Government approves of drinking and this may have a prejudicial effect on their ideas' - he stated.[111] He was also generous enough to find some of the Muslim rulers to be greater builders and philanthropists than the English. These rulers built roads and bridges but 'many of the old Mahomedan roads were made for military purposes, and their usefulness ceased when these purposes had been accomplished' (here, he, however, forgot to mention that the English also built up the roads and highways in the same vein).[112] Of course, he found no Muslim built roads in existence. As to the main cause of the destruction of these roads he attributed to 'the absence of sufficient water-way' (drainage and channels).[113] He was of the view that in medieval Bengal 'lime and skilled labour were scarce, and hence, though large bridges were put up here and there at important places, there were few or no culverts, and the height of the earth-way was the chief thing relied on for resistance to the floods'.[114]

As an agnostic, Beveridge tried to characterise the Bengalis without regard to their religious views. According to him 'the most important things about an individual man is the character of his parents, and about a people the race to which it belongs'.[115] Therefore while he was estimating the Bengalis as a people he attached primary importance to their belonging to a race - having a common origin, living in a common geographical area, subject to the same climatic conditions,

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and above all, facing similar economic, social and political problems. It was in this context he did not think 'that the most important thing about the majority' of the Bengalis 'is whether they are Hindus or Mahomedans. They were Bengalis before they were Hindus or Mahomedans : as regards the world in general, the most important fact about them is that they belong to the Bengali race'.[116]

However, on further analysis Beveridge came to the conclusion that religion did have an impact on the Bengali race and that it was divided into two major communities - Hindus and Muslims, having distinctive characteristics of their own. Moreover, from his writings it becomes apparent that he was somewhat favourably disposed to the achievements of the Muslim sovereigns as against those of the Hindus, and was secptical about the claims of the educated Hindus of his time regarding the glories of their past. He, however, agreed that Hindus should remember the days of their native kings 'when Bakarganj was ruled by a Rajah of Chandradwip, and Jessore had a prince who was powerful and audacious enough to dispute the supremacy of the Emperor of Delhi. But, in sober truth, there seems little reason to regret the extinction of any of the Hindu dynasties. Taken at their best, they seem to have been chiefly beneficial to idle Brahmans, and other unproductive classes'.[117] He could not even find any evidence that any of the native Hindu rajas 'was a man of superior ability or virtue'.[118] He also counselled his 'Hindu friends' not to take too much pride in the achievements of the famous 'twelve sons of Bengal' because 'nine out of the twelve above - mentioned luminaries are described by the Jesuit priests as being Mahomedans'.[119]

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In the same vein, Beveridge even proclaimed that the Muslim conquest of Bengal was popularly acclaimed by the despised and oppressed lower-class Hindus. 'The only genuine inference which we can make, I think, from Muhammad Shah's history is, that he was the hero of a popular rising' against Raja Parsuram who was 'a bigoted tyrant and was killed by those of his subjects who had turned Muhammadans'.[120] He developed this idea further while analysing the causes that led to the rapid spread of Islam in Eastern Bengal. He opposed suggestions that the Hindus were forcibly converted to Islam, and attributed its success to the innate superiority of the Muslim creed. Hinduism 'spread itself chiefly over Western and Central Bengal, and only slightly sprinkled the eastern tracts, which thus became Mahomedan by right of civilization and conquest : by civilization, namely, by the driving out of the wild beasts and by clearing the jungle; and by conquest, in north-east Bengal from the aboriginal tribes of the Koches and the Assamese, and in the south-east from the Burmes and Portuguese'.[121]

Beveridge was perhaps also the first writer to explain the 'excessive preponderance' of the Muslims in Eastern Bengal in the light of a consequence of the food-habits, supertitions and family relationships of the Hindus and Muslims. Though the Muslims did not conquer Sandwip till 1666, he showed that its inhabitants were predominantly Muslims even in 1569,[122] and doubtlessly attributed it to 'colonisation' rather than to 'conversion'. This 'colonisation' was possible for the Muslims because they had 'fewer local superstitions, and no local gods', the joint-family system was unknown to them, and

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'the practice of polygamy' was 'unfavourable to fixity of residence'. Above all, he found the Muslims 'more enterprising than Hindus; and that their more generous diet fits them better to endure an unhealthy climate, and especially the salt air of the eastern districts. Hence we find that the chars and islands are almost exclusively peopled by Mahomedans'.[123]

Beveridge held a sort of subdued contempt for the novelists as they depict life in a stirring way devoid ofthe 'essence' of life. He therefore preferred the job of a historian to deal with the "essence" of life and his writings are replete with such depictions. He was a keen observer and came nearer to the facts of life. However, his observations applied 'very well to the districts in Eastern Bengal, in which' his 'experience has been almost exclusively gained'.[124] He saw the homesteads of the peasantry 'standing like "moated granges" embowered in bamboos, jack fruit and plantain trees, tamarinds and palms , and surrounded by luxuriant rice-fields'.[125] Here the villages were like living walls, 'the bricks and lime being replaced by tree - stems and green - leaves'.[126] He saw people, particularly the manual workers such as boatmen and others to work in the damp, humid, salty and depressing climate from a very close quarter and expressed his sympathy for them. He found them to suffer from cutaneous diseases such as ringworm, itch, etc. which were very common among boatmen and others 'who work in water, the soles of their feet being often drilled with holes like a sponge'.[127] He co-related human activities with the natural environment and realized the rationale of building up high walls of earth around the tanks in southern Bengal. They were built in order to keep out salt and flood water 'and when a breach is made in them they become useless, and whole villages suffer in consequence'.[128]

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Besides, Beveridge explained the numerous under-tenureships and 'Zimbadari' system that prevailed in Barisal district in the light of his practical experience. Leaving aside the popular notion that the under-tenureship was due to the litigious and intriguing character of the inhabitants, he searched 'deeper for the efficient cause of so much sub-infeudation'.[129] His research convinced him that the primary cause of such a situation was 'the physical characteristics of the district' where principal landholders were absentees who threw 'the direct management of the soil into the hands of the under-tenants' who in turn insisted upon the permanency of tenure.[130] Similarly he saw the 'Zimbadari-system' or going to the protection of some one after being suppressed and repressed by the other from within. He compared it with the system of 'commendation' which, during the Middle Ages, denoted 'a personal relation between lord and vassal, resembling that of patron and client in the Roman Republic'.[131] Though he was not very much appreciative of the 'zimba system', he preferred it as the protector of 'the weak against the strong' and recommended its continuation 'as long as the administration of justice is weak, uncertain, and dilatory'.[132] The knowledge that the ryots would, if driven to extremities, accept the protection of a zimbadar, prevented tyrannical landlords from oppressing them too much - Beveridge opined. 'In other districts ryots run away when too much trampled upon; in Bakarganj they go to a zimbadar'.[133]

Beveridge's research further discovered that Bakarganj had been chiefly peopled by emigrants from the rest of Bengal. According to him emigrants were generally bold and enterprising. It was 'the listless and sluggish who remain at home, preferring to bear the ills they

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have than to fly to those they know not of, while the active and enterprising endeavour to better themselves elsewhere'.[134] Here he compared the people of Bakarganj with the Americans who exhibited certain qualities of the English in an exaggerated degree. Similarly the inhabitants of Bakarganj demostrated some Bengali characteristics with 'peculiar prominence' and had developed their character 'more fully and completely'.[135] The people of Bakarganj of his day were very comfortable. They produced plenty of rice, could fish in every ditch, had cocoa-nuts, betelnuts, plantains in their gardens. There was little they needed to buy except salt, clothes, and tobacco. This ideal condition he described in the language of poet long-fellow - 'There the richest is poor, and the poorest lives in abundance' ('Description of Grand Pre').[136] This plenty, together with the feeling of ownership and independence produced by the system of peasant properties, also added 'vigour and energy' to the character of the people. In addition, hardly any fact of ordinary Bengali life could escape his penetrating observation. He could understand the delicate behavioral pattern of a Bengali couple neither of whom uttered each other's name in public. The Bengali husband had a 'delicacy in referring to his wife, and if he has occasion to mention her, generally describes her by some such circumlocution as "the mother of my children" ' - he observed.[137] Even the process of cooking food, dining time, way of taking meal, etc., by a peasant family - he stated in the truer perspective. According to him 'the Bengali eats with his fingers, using the right hand only, and considering it improper to touch his food with the left'.[138] The peasantry also found in him a sympathetic chronicler of their hard work, worries and enjoyments. The transplantation of the paddy plants

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seemed to Beveridge very laborious one. To do this peasants had to stoop for hours amidst mud and water and drench with rain two or three times in the course of the day.[139] The crop so laboriously grown sometimes was often damaged by insects, particularly, 'cloudy weather just before harvest is especially likely to breed insects, and is therefore regarded with great alarm by the ryots'.[140] At last when after overcoming all the hurdles, peasants reap the harvest, they celebrate it in a great festival called 'Navanna' or the new rice. 'It answers to the harvest home or vintage feasts of other countries, and is a time when the scattered members of families and distant friends meet together'.[141]

Beveridge discovered more about facts of life in Bengal. He rejected Macaulay's estimation of the Bengalis as liars and crafty people, and termed it to be incomplete and incorrect. He was of the opinion that since Macaulay was a Scotchman by origin, 'he had to a certain extent the Scottish intellect, which, like the French, is deductive and generalising, and apt to draw large conclusions from a scanty induction of facts'.[142] So Macaulay's estimation of the Bengalis was 'much too neat and epigrammatic to be true, and there are a great many lights and shades of Bengali Character which he has not noticed'.[143] According to Beveridge, 'temperance, frugality, and patience' were the main characteristics of a Bengali, and 'their lying propensities has been exaggerated'.[144] He did not altogether deny 'that lying is the great vice of the oriental character' but his liberal mind took a balanced view and condoned it by citing similar vices prevalent in Western societies. Just as lying, 'harshness and want of feeling are

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probably the most distinctive vices of Westrn nations; and it is possible that in both cases many centuries will elapse before such characteristics be obliterated'.[145] In the same spirit, the thoughtless expenditure of money by the Bengalis in their sons' and daughters' marriages was tacitly defended by him. 'It has always been an oriental custom to spend largely at marriages; and it appears to me that the Bengali who spends his savings upon his son's marriage is not much worse than the man who ruins himself by horse racing or a contested election'.[146] Here Beveridge can be credited with a breadth of outlook through which he looked into an alien society always keeping in mind the virtues and vices of his own one.

Some of Beveridge's remarks regarding the nature of the Bengalis proved to be very tangible. He found the Bengalis to be idealistic who talked too much but acted very little. He was greatly frustrated to see a great gap between idealism and realism professed and acted by the Bengalis. 'The besetting sin of Bengalees is that they will think and talk and talk and think for ever but they will not act.' Whereas if they 'could only act half as well as they talk there would be no need for us westerns to rule over them.'[147] He thoroughly studied the Bengali peasant's psychology and found him to be 'too easily pleased' - Beveridge wanted him 'to have more wants, so that he might be stimulated to greater exertion in order to satisfy them'.[148]

Beveridge's liberal, sympathetic and objective analysis even drove him to challenge the legality of the British occupation of India which classed him with the nineteenth century radicals such as John Bright (1811-89), Richard Cobden (1804-65) and other Gladstonians.

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His dispassionate and objective analysis led him to conclude that the English occupation of India was but an usurpation which 'wrought havoc' in the country.[149] Of the manifold 'havocs' that had been perpetrated on the natives of India, he took up only one such representative event - the case of Moharaja Nanda Kumar who had been executed by the Supreme Court of Judicature,Calcutta, for forgery in 1775. In his Trial of Maharaja Nanda Kumar he successfully attempted to vindicate the reputation of a persecuted Bengali. Here he found a polemic in the person Sir Fitz James Stephen who in his Story of Nuncomar and the Impeachment of Sir Elijah Impey (1885) tried to defend and justify the verdict and thereby to support the conduct of the Chief Justice and the Governor General, that is, Impey and Warren Hastings. Beveridge remained undaunted, took inspiration from the illustrious triumvirate[150] - Burke, Mill, and Macaulay - and assiduously amassed evidence to proof that Nanda Kumar was judicially murdered through a complicity between Impey and Hastings. All along he tried to substantiate Burke's points of view that 'the Raja Nuncomer was, by an insult on everything which India holds respectable and sacred, hanged in the face of all his nation, by Judges you sent to protect that people, hanged for a pretended crime, upon an ex-post facto Act of Parliament, in the midst of his evidence against Mr. Hastings'.[151] In the light of his findings, he became convinced that 'Impey hanged Nanda Kumar in order to support Hastings'.[152] Sir Fitz James' special pleading 'will not wipe out the facts that Nanda Kumar was procecuted for forgery after he had charged Hastings with taking bribes, and that he was hanged while his charges were still under examination.'[153] Therefore, Beveridge concluded 'that Hastings had strong motives for destroying Nanda Kumar. He was the first native who stood forth as his accuser, and he was the last.'[154]

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Besides this, as a radical member of the I.C.S. Beveridge firmly supported the Ilbert Bill, demand for Indian self-government and Indianisation of the civil service.[155] His experience in the covenanted service, both executive and judiciary, for long years convinced him that the Indians were by then quite capable of administering the country on the equal footing with their English counter parts. So he was all out for abolishing all types of discriminations that existed between the native and English civil servants. He was dead against 'the geographical monopoly' and suggested 'the abolition of the system of examinations in England for the Indian Civil Service'.[156] He found it embarrassing to 'have two sets of men working side by side and doing precisely the same work, but on different rules of pay and promotion'.[157] This situation he termed to be the root cause of heartburnings and discontents among the native civilians and it also caused 'needless expense to the state'.[158] He was of the opinion that since India had a sufficient supply of educated youngmen within her borders, she needed no importation of administrators, except for special purposes.[159]

By 'special purposes' Beveridge meant higher executive appointments. Here also there was no dearth of capable and energetic native officers. Government's local self-government scheme implied that natives were fit for executive work. 'For if natives are fit to be Chairman, and Vice-Chairman of municipalities, and to have the handling of large sums of money, they are also fit to be magistrates, and district superintendents of police' - he argued. However, since the English administered India 'in executive matters according to English ideas', he was ready to accept that the administrators should be predominantly English.[160] But, he believed, in judicial matters the English always professed ' to administer the country laws' which could

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which could 'commonly be better understood by Hindus and Mahomedans, than by Englishmen'.[161] He termed it to be a 'scandal' to fill up the important judicial offices by 'minor English boys', and even by 'lads in their teens'. According to him, 'Judgment is a plant of slow growth in a youthful bosom, and however able a man may be, it is no more right to make him a judge before he is twenty-five, than it would be to make him a bishop. The immaturity of our magistrates is a great blot on our administration, but it is an evil inseparable from the present system'.[162] To do away with the then existing anomalies his suggestion was to appoint natives to the judicial offices from the local bars.[163]

In this way Beveridge's outspoken sympathy with Indian aspirations and his uneasiness about British rule in India, put him at odds with the authority, and contributed to block his career. His sympathies for the natives had been best demonstrated during the Ilbert Bill controversy and put him in the opposite camp to his superiors, particularly Sir A.R. Thompson, Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, 1882-87; and J.F. Norris, a judge in Calcutta High Court, 1882-95 and thereby marred his prospect for any further promotion. Such a situation was not wholly unexpected to Beveridge. He did foresee the outcome of his attitude much earlier and gave vent to his apprehension in a letter written to his fiance'e as early as 13 March 1875. He wrote, 'I cannot hold out any promise of a brilliant future to you if you marry me. I don't think I shall ever get much higher in the service than I now am and I shall always I fear be at dagger's drawn with some of my superiors and will always be looked upon as an unsafe man'.[164] While he was thus frustrated in his Indian career, his wife became keen to ecourage him to achieve 'the top stone' of his 'official career'.

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So when he was planning to retire from service in 1884 and proposed to write a History of Bengal, she vehemently opposed it. The History of Bengal seemed to her as 'perfectly immaterial' and she implored her husband to do everything within his power to 'round off' his career.[165] But all his efforts went in vain. In 1886 he saw the practical ending of his hopes of promotion to the High-Court.[166] This year two persons much junior to him had been promoted. As a result he sent a letter of protest to the Lieutenant-Governor to be forwarded to the Viceroy. The reply from the Government was quick to come and it was very frustrating for Beveridge. In the reply Viceroy told the Lieutenant-Governor to convey to him 'that in selecting officers to fill the responsible position of Judges of the Calcutta High Court, the Government of India is guided solely by public considerations, and the Governor-General in Council cannot admit that Mr. Beveridge has any valid ground for complaint in the matter'.[167] Therefore, Beveridge with all his distinctive qualities had to retire, principally because of his radical views, as the District and Sessions Judge after thirty five years of service.

For all that, Beveridge did not want the outright withdrawal of the English from India. He somehow tried to condone the English usurpation of the country by showing its practical achievements. He observed that some of the best Indian sovereigns had been usurpers [168] and he drew similar examples from the history of Great Britain. 'I suppose that the Regent Murray and Cromwell were about the best rulers the people ever had'.[169] But in India, according to him, the usurpers were far more successful. 'Perhaps there is something consoling to

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ourselves in this. The manner in which our Indian Empire has been built up may not be defensible, but the results to the subjects have been at least as beneficial as the usurpation of Husain Shah and Alivardi'.[170] He further added, 'Caesar's unprovoked aggression upon Britain led to the civilization of the country, and Clive and Hastings' spoliations have resulted in British India'.[171] It was almost in tune with Beveridge that a group of Indian historians headed by J.N. Sarkar and others has termed the establishment of British rule as the beginning of 'the Indian Renaissance'.

Therefore, even if Beveridge believed that the British had wrongfully conquered India, he was in favour of the retention of English power in the country. 'Granted that we wrongfully got possession of India, still to abandon her now would be to act like a man-stealer who should kidnap a child, and then in a fit of repentance abandon him in a tiger-jungle' - he argued.[172] This 'tiger-jungle', by implication, he meant what he believed to be the anarchical condition that existed during the Muslim rule. He heartily advocated the continuation of the British Raj till, at least, the clearing of these jungles, and 'to the time when India can be left to herself'.[173] In cherishing such a view he was greatly influenced by the writings of his father who depicted India as if in a bondage in the pre-British period, and implored the British Government to be 'the willing instruments of her emancipation' by providing her with 'the enlightened and generous policy' which would gradually lead her to freedom.[174] Beveridge suggested measures for hastening the fulfilment of such a goal and put emphasis on the Indianisation of the administration. He vehemently abhorred 'the display of that bestial antipathy' that used to plague the British and the native Indian servants .[175]

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The major part of Beveridge's literary career had been spent in the translation of Persian texts into English. In performing this task he proved himself more than a mere translator. Here he worked as an erudite scholar who translated as well as evaluated the author and his work, supplied the wanting information in the light of the latest research, and gave his considered view on ambiguous and controversial subjects after rational analysis. He had a very low opinion of Abul Fazl when he started the translation of Akbarnama. He thought him to be a rhetorician and shameless flatterer who 'unhesitatingly suppressed or distorted facts' with a view to idolising Akbar.[176] But after he had completed the translation, he revised his opinion and became surprised at Abul Fazl's laboriousness and unwearied work. 'His indomitable industry, and his accuracy whenever he was not, from prudential motives, suppressing the truth, have at length overcome me, and I leave him with greater feelings of respect than I began with' - Beveridge confessed.[177] He particularly execused Abul Fazl of his deficiencies considering 'what a blank our knowledge of Akbar's reign would have been, had not Abul Fazl exerted himself during year of strenuous effort to chronicle events and institutions. His work also has the imperishable merit of being a record by a contemporary, and by one who had access to information at first hand'.[178] Above all, he gave utmost importance to Abul Fazle's love for sources - the Quellen of the Germans, and considered it to be far in advance of his age. 'To him we owe not only the Akbarnama but also the Memoirs of Gulbadan Begam, Jauhar the ewer - bearer, Bajazat (Bayazid) Biyat and, perhaps, Nizamu-d-din's history' - he disclosed.[179]

Again, initially Beveridge thought that Akbar had been over praised by Abul Fazl. But in the long last he had to revise his view.

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Taken into consideration the might and majesty of Akbar and vis-a-vis Abul Fazl's position, he even justified such flatteries and found them not quite out of place. 'I believe too that Abul Fazl really thought that the fact of Akbar's ignorance of reading and writing, when combined with his mental gifts, placed him in the category of inspired beings or super-men and placed him on a level with such prodigies as Buddha, Zoroaster and Muhammad, if indeed he was not superior to them'[180]- Beveridge discovered. However, the 'super-man' of Abul Fazl was but a 'ruthless and self-indulgent' savage to him. 'The man who could order a lamp-lighter to be flung over the battlements for the crime of having fallen asleep in an imperial bed, ... was at heart a savage'[181]- he opined. This love of cruelty for its own sake was never exceptional to Akbar. It was a characteristic of the age and race, specially for a Tartar who 'had Cingiz Khan blood in his veins'.[182]

Beveridge was not at all happy with Abul Fazl's style which he found least picturesque, profound or affecting, particularly the later volumes seemed to him 'tortuous and obscure'. This deterioration in the style of Akbarnama he attributed to the death of Faizi, a poet and elder brother of Abul Fazl. According to him, so long Faizi was alive, he revised and improved Abul Fazl's style. After his death, the latter was left alone who 'may have adopted a still more stilted and archaic style.'[183] Moreover, Beveridge found Abul Fazl devoid of the 'Charm of Herodotus' and the 'outspokenness' of Badaoni who was never a good story teller and seldom told a story without spoiling it. For instance, while narrating Akbar's chivalrous rescue of Jodhpur Raja's daughter from a compulsory sati, he forgot to mention her name, or to give other details which could enhance the interest of the narrative.[184]

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The only sensible remark of Abul Fazl which Beveridge got was found 'in the third volume where he says that the accounts of a battle are like the blind men's descriptions of an elephant'.[185]

Beveridge, therefore, emerges as a historian who viewed and analysed events in Indian history with liberal, somewhat radical and sympathetic outlook. He tried to approach Indian historical problems objectively and dispassionately. When there were reasons for appreciating the deeds of the Indian sovereigns, he did it unhesitatingly. At the same time, he never overlooked their short-comings, moral degradation or cruelty, and what he thought to be the low morals of the Indian people. But there was an especiality in the way he depicted such evils. Probably the influence of Agnosticism and Stoicism worked at the root in the formation of such an attitude. He did not, like many of his contemporary historians, narrate the evil deeds exclusively as Indian phenomena. In a parallel way he also drew the attention of his readers to similar phenomena in Britain and other European countries. Along with what he considered to be the 'lying propensities and craftiness' of the Bengalis he did not forget to mention 'the harshness, feelinglessness and gambling habits' of the Europeans.[186] But unfortunately, his ideas could not have a full play in interpreting Indian episodes in any general historical work. In the long list of his publications, his only general work was the District of Bakarganj consisting of a very small portion of south-eastern India where we get glimpses of his attitudes. It has been seen earlier that his plan of writing another general history did not materialize. With all the available materials - literary, numismatic, epigraphic, and archaeological, if he could continue and complete his plan integrating all the diverse sources, we

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could have seen the full play of his genius as a historian : However, Beveridge's English rendering of the source - books on Indian history earned for him a permanent place in the historiography of India. The students of Indian history will always remain indebted to him for his masterly translation of Akbarnama, Maathir-ul-Umara and the effective editing of Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri.

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3. Beveridge, H. (Advocate) : A Comprehensive History of India, Civil, military and social, from the first landing of the British to the suppression of the Sepoy Revolt, 3 vols.(London, 1858-62).

4. Beveridge, W. : Op.cit. P. 17.

5. Ibid, P. 381.

6. The Times, 12 November 1929; Indian Historical Quarterly, Vol. VI, 1930; and JRAS, 1930.

7. Beveridge, W. : Op-cit, P. 14.

8. Here the information is mainly based on a short autobiography by Henry Beveridge for his children. I.O.L. MSS. Eur. C. 176/188.

9. Information gathered from (a) India Office List, 1893, containing an account of the Services of officers in the Indian Service and other information.(b) History of Services, Bengal, 1891-92.

10. Beveridge, W. : Op.cit. P. I.

11. The Times, Nov. 12, 1929.

12. Ibid.

13. Beveridge, W. : Op.cit. P. 37.

14. During his first furlough (February 1868-March 1870) he wrote an article on the 'Christianity in India' and gave a talk on 'Life and Manners in Bengal'. Again, his long stay in Barisal (1871-1875) enabled him to write an article on Sundarbans and The District of Bakarganj, his first major work.

15. I.O.L. : MSS. Eur. C. 176/187 (A short autobiography by Beveridge for his children).
16. Ibid.
17. Beveridge, W. : Op.cit. P. 1.
18. Ibid. (They died in 1929).
19. JASB, Proceedings, Vol. 45, 1876, P. 202.
20. 'Christianity in India', The Theological Review : A Journal of Religious Thought and Life, Vol. VI, No. XXVII, PP. 465-82, October, 1869, London.
21. JASB, Proceedings, Nov. 1873, P. 171.
22. JASB, Proceedings, Vol. 59, February 1890, P. 124.
23. I.O.L. : MSS. Eur. C. 176/28 (Beveridge's letters to his wife Annette, dated 13 and 26 March, 1892).
24. Ibid.
25. Ibid.
26. I.O.L. : MSS. Eur. C. 176/26.
27. Beveridge, W. : Op.cit. P. 338.
28. JASB, Proceedings, Vol. 64, 1895, P. 34.
29. Ibid (From the budget estimate of the 'Bibliotheca Indica' it is seen from 1895 an amount of Rs. 600/- was annually spent for the translation of the Akbarnamah).
30. Beveridge, A.S.(Tr.) : The History of Humayun (Humayun-Nama by Gul-Badan Begam), London, 1902.
31. Beveridge, A.S.(Tr.) : The Babar-Nama being the Autobiography of the Emperor Babar, London, 1905.
32. The Akbarnama of Abu-L-Fazl, Translated from the Persian, Vol. I, 1903; II, 1910; III, 1939.
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35. The Saturday Review, London, August 5, 1876, P. 176.

36. DNB. Vol. XVIII, P. 302, 1917.

37. The first volume appeared in 1791, two further volumes in 1792, five in 1793, four in 1794, three in 1795, two in 1796, one 1797, one in 1798, and the last in 1799.

38. Quoted in Hunter's Statistical Account of Bengal,Vol. I (London, 1875), P. VII(Preface).

39. DNB. Vol. III, P. 186, 1917.

40. Some of the district histories thus published (a) Andrew Stirling, Cuttack, 1821; (b) James Eardley Gastrell, (i) Geographical and Statistical Report of the District of Moorshidabad, 1860; (ii) Geographical and Statistical Report of the District of Bancoorah, 1863; (iii) Geographical and Statistical Report of the Districts of Jessore, Pureedpore and Backergunge, 1868; (c) James Taylor, Dacca, 1840; (d) R. Brown, Tipperah, 1874; (e) Edward George Glazier, A Report on the District of Rangpur, 2 Vols, 1873 and 1876; (f) Sir James Westland, A Report on the District of Jessore : its Antiquities, its History, and its Commerce, 1871.

41. The District of Bakarganj, Preface VII.

42. Ibid.

43. I.O.L. : MSS. Eur. C. 176/1 (Beveridge to A.S. Ackroyd, Barisal, Christmas Day 1874).

44. Ibid. MSS.Eur. C. 176/51 (Diary of Annette Beveridge, 25 December, 1875).

45. Ibid, MSS.Eur.C. 176/52 (Diary of Annette Beveridge, 3 January,1876).

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47. Madras Christian College Magazine, January 1887, P. 538.

48. Beveridge, H. : Op.cit. P. VII (Preface).

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49. Ibid, P. 1.

50. Ibid, PP. 1-2 and 302-35.

51. JASB, Proceedings, Vol. 41, 1872, P. 56.

52. Ibid, Vol. 42, 1873, P. 34.

53. Ibid, Vol. 43, 1874, P. 34.

54. Ibid, Vol. 57, 1888, P. 21.

55. Ibid, Vol. 62, 1893, P. 129.

56. Beveridge, H.(Tr.) : The Akbarnama (Calcutta, 1939), Vol. III, P. IX (Introduction).

57. JASB, Proceedings, Vol. 59, 1890, P. 124.

58. Raverty with the translation of the Tabaqat-i-Nasiri and Jarrett with the remaining part of the Ain-i-Akbari where Blochmann had left.

59. Beveridge, H. : Op.cit. P. IX.

60. Mukhia, H. : Historians and Historiography During the Reign of Akbar (Vikas publishing House Pvt Ltd., New Delhi, 1976), P. 59.

61. Ibid, PP. 59-60.

62. Ibid.

63. The Maathir-ul-Umara Being Biographies of the Muhammadan and Hindu officers of the Timurid sovereigns of India from 1500 to About 1780 A.D. By Nawwab Samsam-ud-Daula Shah Nawaz Khan and his son' Abdul Hayz, Translated by H. Beveridge, B.C.S.(Retd), Calcutta, 1911-52.

64. Ibid, Vol. 1, P. VI.

65. Beveridge, H.(edited), The Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri, or Memoirs of Jahangir (London, 1909), PP. VIII-IX. Emperor Jahangir had written his memoirs for the first twelve years of his reign and made them into a volume, and had a number of copies made and distributed. However, though he reigned for twenty-two years, ill-health and sorrow made him give up the writing of his Memoirs in the seventeenth year of his reign. He then entrusted the task to Mu'tamad Khan, the author of the Iqbal-

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nama, who continued the Memoirs to the beginning of the nineteenth year of the reign. He then dropped writing the Memoirs in the name of the emperor, but continued the narrative of the reign, to Jahangir's death, in his own work, the Iqbal-nama. Afterwards, Muhammad Hadi continued the Memoirs down to Jahangir's death, but his work was little more than an abridgment of the Iqbal-nama.

66. Ibid, P. VII.

67. I.O.L. MSS. Eur. C. 176/188 (A short autobiography by H. Beveridge for his children. Subsequently it would be referred as 'A Short autobiography').

68. Ibid.

69. Ibid.

70. Lord Alfred Tennyson (1809-92) was the poet laureate of England and is often regarded as the chief representative of the Victorian age in poetry. His poetry mainly dealt with the doubts and difficulties of an age in which the old religious sanctions and the tradional assumptions about man's nature and destiny was increasingly called into question (Macropaedia, Vol. 18, PP. 140-42).

71. Charles Kingsley (1819-75) was an Anglican clergyman, teacher and writer. His novels were widely read in the victorian era of reform and influenced social developments in Britain. Written with heat and indignation and passionate sympathy for the poor, his social novels were frankly didactic and were intended to awaken members of his class to their responsibilities to the workers. He advocated adult education, improved sanitation, and the growth of cooperative movement. He was one of the churchmen to support Darwin's theories and to seek a reconciliation between modern science and Christian doctrine. He sought to correct the evils of industrialism through measures based on Christian ethics (Micropaedia, PP. 821-22).

72. A Short Autobiography.

73. Ibid.

74. Ibid.

75. Ibid.

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76. Sir Isaac Newton (1643-1727) was a physicist and mathematician, the culminating figure of the 17th-century scientific revolution and the author of the most important single works in the history of modern science-Opticks, 1704 and the Principia (Eng.) 1729, Micropaedia, VII, P. 305.

77. John Stuart Mill (1806-1873) was a philosopher, political economist and exponent of Utilitarianism. His works - Dissertations and Discussions (1859), A System of Logic (1843) and Principles of Political Economy (1848) contain the major strands of 19th-century philosophy, logic and economic thought, Micropaedia, Vol. VI, P.892. Macropaedia, Vol. 12, P. 197.

78. James Mill (1773-1836) was a philosopher, historian, and economist. He was also prominent as a representative of philosophical radicalism - a school of thought also known as Utilitarianism, emphasing the need for a scientific basis for philosophy as well as a humanist approach to politics and economics, Micopaedia, Vol.VI, P. 892. For further information J.S. Grewal's Muslim Rule in India : The Assessments of British Historians, Calcutta, 1970.

79. A Short Autobiography.

80. John Henry Newman (1801-1890) was one of the most remarkable churchmen and men of letters of the 19th century. He led the Oxford Movement in the Church of England (began in 1833) and later became a cardinal-deacon in the Roman Catholic Church. The Oxford Movement tried to revive High Church ideals and practices in the Church of England, Micropaedia; Vol. VII, P. 298, For further information, Macropaedia, Vol. 13, P. 1.

81. A Short Autobiography.

82. Macropaedia, Vol. 1, P. 311.

83. Ibid.

84. A Short Autobiography.

85. Ibid.

86. Ibid.

87. Ibid.

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88. John Bright (1811-1889) was a reform politician active in the early Victorian campaign for free-trade and internationalism, in the Anti-Corn Law League of 1839-46 (he was a close associate of its Leader Richard Cobden), in the movement against British participation in the Crimean War (1853-56),and in activities favouring parliamentary reforms (1860s). In 1843 he entered parliament. He served there, with brief interruption, for the rest of his life. He served in Gladstone's cabinets (1868-70, 1873-74, 1880-82) and helped to formulate Gladstone's Irish land refors of 1870 and 1881, Micropaedia, Vol. II, P. 270.

89. Stoic's ideal Stoicism is a school of thought that flourished in Greek Roman antiquity. It stressed duty, urged participation in the affairs of men and always believed that 'the goal of all inquiry is to provide man with a mode of conduct characterized by tranquillity of mind and certainty of moral worth'. Macropaedia, Vol. 17, P. 698.

90. A Short Autobiography.

91. I.O.L. MSS. Eur. C. 176/1 (Letter to Miss Akroyd, May 24, 1873).

92. Ibid. (Letter to Miss Akroyd, June 9, 1873).

93. Marcus Aurelius Antoninus (121-180 A.D.) was the Roman emperor from 161 to 180 A.D. He was conscientious and self-sacrificing monarch who carried out in daily practice the precepts of Stoicism that provided a moral justification for a life spent in public service. With the exception of Cicero, he is the only figure of classical antiquity whose individual personality can still be apprehended through his writings - the Meditations or soliloquies that contains the thoughts of a philosopher king. Though they were Marcus' own thoughts, they were not original. They are basically the moral tenets of Stoicism learned from Epictatus, a former slave. The gist of the Meditations is as follows :

The cosmos is a unity governed by an intelligence, and the human soul is a part of that divine intelligence and can therefore stand, if naked and alone, at least pure and undefiled, a midst chaos and futility. Macropaedia, 11, PP. 491-92.

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94. Montesquien (1689-1755) was an outstanding political philosopher of the 18th century whose major work, The Spirit of Laws, was a seminal contribution to political theory, Micropaedia, Vol. VI, P. 1020.

95. A Short Autobiography.

96. Ibid.

97. Beveridge, W. : Op.cit., P. 37.

98. The District of Bakarganj, Preface, P. VII.

99. Ibid, P. 50.

100. Ibid, PP. 173-74. These Jesuit priests were : Fernandez, Sosa, Melchior da Fonseca and Andrew Bowes.

101. Ibid, P. XVI.

102. Ibid, P. 170.

103. Ibid, P. 372.

104. Ibid, PP. 372-73.

105. Ibid, P. 373.

106. Ibid, P. 375.

107. Ibid.

108. Ibid.

109. Ibid.

110. Ibid, P. 232.

111. Ibid.

112. Ibid. PP. 362-63.

113. Ibid.

114. Ibid. P. 363 (Footnote).

115. Ibid. P. 212.

116. Ibid.

117. Ibid. 373.

118. Ibid.

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119. Ibid. (By 'twelve sons of Bengal' Beveridge meant the zamindars of medieval Bengal who opposed the establishment of Mughal supremacy. Isa Khan and Musa Khan were their leaders. They were suppressed by Subadar Islam Khan (1608-13) during the reign of Jahangir.

120. Beveridge, H. : 'The Antiquities of Bagura', JASB, Vol. 47, Pt. 1, No. 1, P. 91.

121. The District of Bakarganj, P. 250.

122. Account of Caesar Frederick, from this Beveridge gathered his information on this point.

123. The District of Bakarganj, P. 254.

124. Ibid, P. 230.

125. Ibid, P. 6.

126. Ibid, P. 7.

127. Ibid, P. 11.

128. Ibid, P. 19.

129. Ibid, P. 172.

130. Ibid, P. 173.

131. Ibid, P. 181.

132. Ibid, P. 185.

133. Ibid.

134. Ibid. PP. 191-92.

135. Ibid.

136. Ibid. P. 193.

137. Ibid, PP. 225-26.

138. Ibid, P. 230.

139. Ibid, P. 247.

140. Ibid, P. 248.

141. Ibid, PP. 249-50.

142. Ibid, P. 217.

Dhaka University Institutional Repository

143. Ibid, P. 214.

144. Ibid, PP. 217-18.

145. Ibid.

146. Ibid. P. 222.

147. I.O.L. : MSS. Eur. C. 176/1 (Letter to Miss Akroyd from Beveridge, 13 March 1873).

148. The District of Bakarganj, P. 221.

149. Ibid, P. 376.

150. The Trial of Maharaja Nanda Kumar, A Narrative of a Judicial Murder, P. 5.

151. Ibid, P. 7.

152. Ibid, P. 136.

153. Ibid, PP. 312-13.

154. Ibid, P. 319.

155. 'The Administrators and Historical Writing on India' by E.T. Stokes, published in Historians of India, Pakistan and Ceylon, edited by C.H. Philips, P. 390.

156. I.O.L. MSS. Eur. C. 176/187 (Beveridge's memorandum to the Secretary, P.S.C., 23 December 1886).

157. Ibid.

158. Ibid.

159. Ibid.

160. Ibid.

161. Ibid.

162. Ibid.

163. Ibid.

164. I.O.L. MSS. Eur. C. 176/4.

165. I.O.L. MSS. Eur. C. 176/17.

166. Beveridge, W. : Op. cit. P. 287.

167. Ibid, P. 288.

168. Of these rulers he mentioned the following : Husain Shah and Alivardi Khan of Bengal; Hyder Ali of Mysore; Sher Shah and Aurangzeb of the Delhi sovereigns.

169. Beveridge, H. : 'Old places in Murshidabad' II, Calcutta Review, Vol. 95, 1892, P. 215.

170. Ibid.

171. Beveridge, H. : 'The Patna Massacre', Calcutta Review, October,1884.

172. The District of Bakarganj, P. 396.

173. Ibid.

174. Ibid, Preface XI.

175. Beveridge, H. : Annual Address to ASB, 1891, P. 48.

176. Beveridge, H.(Tr.) : The Akbarnama, Vol. I, Preface.

177. Ibid, Vol. III (Introduction), P. IX.

178. Ibid, Vol. 1, Preface.

179. Ibid, Vol. III, Introduction, P. XI.

180. Ibid.

181. Ibid, PP. XIII-XIV.

182. Ibid.

183. Ibid, P. IX.

184. Ibid, PP. X-XI.

185. Ibid, P. XI.

186. The District of Bakarganj, P. 222.

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CHAPTER THREE

HENRY FERDINAND BLOCHMANN
(1838 - 1878)

Henry Ferdinand Blochmann devoted his time and talents exclusively to Indian studies during the whole period of his short but vigorous career. In style and intention his study of Indian history was different from the trodden path of the Anglo-Indian historians who harboured some kind of bias while analysing Indian historical events. He was a dispassionate scholar who studied Indian history strictly from a scholarly point of view and engaged himself 'with true German love of hard work' to find out the truth about India.[1] Therefore, an analysis of his works would prove a guide to the understanding of a new aspect of the nineteenth century Indian historiography.

A brief account of Blochmann's career would give a clear perspective to his sincere devotion to scholarship, particularly medieval Indian studies. He was born at Dresden on 7 January,1838.[2] He was the son of Earnest Ehrenfried Blochmann, a printer.[3] However, he was given the opportunity to attend some of the greatest centres of learning in continental Europe. He received his early education at the Kreuzschule, a leading institution of Dresden. Then he joined the University of Leipzig for higher studies. He stayed there from 1855 to 1857 and 'learnt Hebrew and Arabic under Professor Fleischer [1801-1888]'.[4] He afterwards studied for a short time in Paris. While

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at Leipzig he became inflamed with love for oriental studies. 'Some hear the call of the sea; others the call of the everlasting hills. Blochmann felt India beckon him, and he could not resist his intense longing to go to that ancient land - there to dig in its mines of classic learning'.[5]

But Blochmann's intense desire to go to India for scholarly pursuits could not be fulfilled easily. He did not have enough money to undertake the journey and collect the relevant materials. Moreover, British India was at that time threatened by the Sepoy Mutiny. These difficulties could easily thwart an undetermined man. But he overcame these obstacles by dint of his sheer determination. Finding no other avenues for reaching the goal, he decided to go to England to explore further possibilities. There in 1858 he enlisted himself in the British Army as a private, and went out to India as such. He reached Calcutta in September of the same year - 'an obscure soldier on a few shillings a week !'[6]

As a 'private' in the British Army, Blochmann was not supposed to be highly educated. But he could not long conceal his erudition and talents in the guise of an ordinary soldier. To the surprise of the fellow passengers, 'his linguistic and other abilities had, however, became known on the voyage to India'.[7] This circumstance proved to be a boon in his subsequent career. After his arrival in Calcutta he was not given the ordinary duty of a soldier and was set to do official work in Fort William. He was also engaged to give lessons in Persian.

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While thus appointed, Blochmann used to spend 'most of his leisure hours in the garrison library - the only collection of books accessible to him'.[8] His studious habit soon attracted the attention and admiration of his superior officer who, most probably, in order to enable Blochmann to devote more time to studies put him in charge of the library. This was undoubtedly a step towards the realisation of his real aptitude - oriental studies. It would hardly be an exaggeration to say that this position proved for him the 'open - sesame' to oriental learning and medieval Indian studies.

The Garrison Library used to be frequented by scholars of some repute, among whom was William Nassan Lees (1825-1889), a well known oriental and Arabic scholar.[9] He often observed 'Private Blochmann reading in the library'. This developed a curiosity in Lees' mind about the man and the subject matter of his studies. To satisfy this curiosity one day he 'kindly bent over the soldier's shoulder, to see what it was that he was reading. It was an Arabic book. A few enquiries, and a strange discovery - here was a Hebrew, Arabic, and Persian scholar in the uniform of a private. Lees instantly became Blochmann's friend and patron'.[10] Once he became so, Blochmann's placement in another walk of life more congenial to his temperament and aptitude, was soon achieved.

Towards that end, Blochmann's discharge from the army was to be obtained first. The voluntary discharge of privates by purchase was not uncommon in the army of the time provided one could pay the discharge fee.[11] As an army officer himself (42nd Bengal Native Infantry), Lees rather had easy relationship with the fellow officers in the Fort William (77th Foot) and could press for Blochmann's release from there. He finally succeeded in buying him out of the army in the course of about a year after he had been in service.[12]

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Next, Lees looked for a suitable job for Blochmann, and with his wilder connections he secured it easily. He might have thought of taking Blochmann eventually into the Calcutta Madrasah and introducing him to the Asiatic Society of Bengal - the two main repositories for Muslim and oriental studies, but this could not be done instantly. He had to wait for doors to open. To begin with, he 'for a time entered the service of the Peninsular and Oriental Company as an interpreter' through Lees' patronage.[13]

Soon after, in 1860, Lees brought Blochmann into the Madrasah College. He was appointed to a subordinate post[14] of 2nd officiating teacher on a monthly salary of Rs. 100 in the Anglo-Persian department.[15] He left this post at the beginning of 1862, and bettered his position by moving into Doveton College 'to become pro-rector and professor of mathematics'.[16] This appointment he retained till the beginning of 1865 when he returned to the Madrasah as the Assistant Professor of Arabic and Persian[17] on a salary of Rupees 500 hundred per month.[18]

Once Blochmann was firmly put on a career for which he undertook the arduous journey to India and his abilities fitted him, he became ever more eager to increase and consolidate his already acquired knowledge of oriental languages. During the years intervening between his appointment at the Doveton College and his rejoining the Calcutta Madrasah, 'he applied himself with unremitting industry to his higher studies',[19] and in 1865 obtained Master of Arts and Doctor of Laws from the University of Calcutta, choosing Hebrew

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for the subject of his M.A. examination.[20] He also continued unabated his studies in Persian. He did this privately under Agha Ahmad Ali of the Calcutta Madrasah.

In the meantime, Blochmann also became an ordinary member of the Asiatic Society of Bengal. He was proposed by Lees, and seconded by H.F. Blandford on 8 February 1864, and was balloted for and elected ordinary member.[21] His subsequent spheres of activity to the closing days of his career were almost completely confined to this organisation and the Calcutta Madrasah. Besides making some archaeological tours, 'he generally lived quietly in Calcutta, [and] worked hard at Persian and Arabic'.[22]

Blochmann was conspicuous by his activities in every department of the Asiatic Society's affairs. He alternately became member of the Philological, Library, and Audit Committees. For some time he was also appointed General Secretary of the Society. In 1868, he became the Philological Secretary - an office he retained in succession until his death.[23] Again, in 1865 when he returned to the Calcutta Madrasah, Nassau Lees was still the Principal. He retired from the principalship in 1869, and no immediate successor was appointed in his place. An interim arrangement was made 'by which a Committee of Mohammadan gentlemen exercised control over the institution generally, while Mr. Blochmann guided the studies of the various classes'.[24] But the experiment did not work smoothly, and Blochmann 'was appointed to officiate as Principal in 1870 and was made Principal in 1875' - a position which he adorned till his death on 13 July 1878.[25]

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Blochmann's appointment as Principal of the Calcutta Madrasah was significant in two ways - on the one hand it foreshadowed a change of attitude on the part of the Government towards Muslim education, and on the other, it recognised his unrivalled scholarship on the history of India under Muslim rule, 'the subject on which he had probably acquired more knowledge than has ever been attained by any other European or perhaps even by any native of India'.[26]

In the post-Mutiny decade, British policy towards the Muslims tended to be one of repression rather than of reconciliation. 'From the middle of eighteen-sixties there was open British repression of the followers of Saiyid Ahmad of Bareilly'.[27] Further, the assassinations of Chief Justice Norman (1819-71) of the Calcutta High Court and Viceroy Lord Mayo (1822-72) in August 1871 and February 1872 respectively by the Muslim fanatics, 'it began to appear that the British and the Muslims of northern India were on a collision course'.[28] But soon this 'Collision course' was changed for one of conciliation. A group of administrators, including Lord Mayo had begun working to evolve such a policy. They recognised that political persecution of devout Muslims was no way to reduce islamic passions, and in keeping with this spirit the so-called 'Wahhabi' trials that began in 1864 were stopped.[29] The Indian Government now 'began, slowly at first, to offer educational boons to Muslims in the hope that more Muslims would then become qualified to compete successfully for the official and professional employment created by British rule' to gain Muslim support and sympathy.[30] After reviewing the statistics of Muslims attending government or government aided schools, it was found as

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early as 1871 that the then existing system of education was, to a great extent, a failure so far the Muslims were concerned. It not only failed to attract or attach their sympathies and confidence but also caused positive disaffection among them. As a remedy, government 'then proposed measures to attract the Muslim gentleman's son into government schools'.[31] Accordingly 'the government of Bengal issued resolutions reforming the Calcutta Madrasah and providing financial assistance for the foundation of the new madrasas in Bengal and for the education of Muslims in government institutions'.[32]

This changed attitude on the part of the British Government had been reflected in its efforts to reform and re-organise the existing Madrasah education. The Calcutta Madrasah being the premier and oldest institution in this sphere, was taken first for reform and remodelling.[33] Till 1869, an European officer, generally an orientalist from outside, was the executive head of this institution and its internal administration - teaching, curriculum, etc. - were entrusted to a head professor of the Madrasah. The Principals from outside had 'numerous other avocations' which prevented them from taking any active part in the business of teaching. Now the government thought it necessary that the first step to be taken towards the reform of the Calcutta Madrasah was 'the appointment of an effective Principal, instead of one whose supervision of the College is little more than nominal, and who can take no part in actual instruction'.[34] The reformed Madrasah education was to 'cater for the need of giving the Mahomedans an education which, while enabling them to acquire a mastery over the learned languages which they deem essential, will also fit them for public

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employment under the British Government, and place them generally on a footing of equality with the Hindoos who are educated at the Sanscrit College,and with English gentlemen of ordinary university training'.[35]

To give effect to such reforms the Government was looking for a competent man for the post of Principal of the Calcutta Madrasah. A person to be appointed to this post required to 'be a good English and oriental scholar, and a man otherwise capable of remodelling the Institution and making it not only a school of oriental learning but the means of affording the Mahomedan youth of Bengal a liberal education, of which Arabic should be the predominant but not the absorbing element, and which should also comprise a course of English literature and modern science'.[36] Endowed with these qualifications no Muslim was to be found.[37] Therefore, deferring any Muslim appointment government became convinced of Blochmann's competence as the officiating Principal of the College since 1870, and confirmed him in his post in 1875.

Blochmann's appointment as the Principal of the Calcutta Madrasah proved to be a unique success. From the beginning, he created a new atmosphere in the madrasah and new relationship with the students. Government urged him 'that he should reside on the premises', particularly 'for the improvement of the unsatisfactory condition into which the Institution had lapsed'.[38] Some Muslims at first resented this innovation. But such adverse feelings subsided very soon. He used to lecture to the senior classes on Arabic literature, Rhetoric and Philosophy, and his erudition in Arabic really allayed their hostile attitudes and won for him the hearts of the students and their guardians. Henceforward, 'the Government relied upon his advice in all

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matters relating to Mohammedans in Bengal, who in their turn placed implicit confidence in him as one whom they loved for his goodness, and respected for his profound knowledge of their social customs and religious beliefs'.[39] Therefore, it was quite natural that he was also deputed for the post of the superintendent of Madrasahs in Bengal in 1875. This was perhaps the best possible thing which could be done for the purpose, because the Director of Public Instructions had noted, 'the qualifications of Mr. Blochmann for such an appointment are too well known to Government to need any recommendation from me, and I can only say that I believe it to be necessary in order to give completeness to the scheme of Mahomedan Education which has been adopted'.[40]

It is against this background that an appraisal of Blochmann's literary career can be made. With very few exceptions, all his writings appeared in the Journal and Proceedings of the Asiatic Society.[41] It would also be seen subsequently that his long remaining the Philological Secretary of the Society had a direct bearing on his writings. In this capacity, all records concerning the history of India - manuscripts, inscriptions and coins - 'have been noticed by him frequently and fully in the Journal and Proceedings of the Society'.[42] Of the outcome of his articles he himself stated as 'a series of essays which I intend to write from copious notes collected by me on the Arabic and Persian editions of our Bibliotheca Indica'.[43] Again, his service career in the Calcutta Madrasah gave him an opportunity to have direct communinon with the Muslim community, and study its history from true perspective. His intimacy with the educated and urban based Muslim elites grew closer.[44] Above all, in the course of his serving in various capacities in the Madrasah, his direct understanding and

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appreciation of Muslim history had generally expanded. As a result, it would be no exaggeration to say that all his literary undertakings were concentrated on and around Muslim subjects, the fact of which he himself said, 'with whose dialect and mode of thinking I am more familiar'.[45]

From the preceding discussion Blochmann has been found to be enamoured of the oriental and Muslim studies. But it did not necessarily mean that he was required to come to India for such studies. Then why despite all the other openings in Europe for scholarly work in the oriental field that presented themselves in his time, did he decide to go to India for such studies ? At the time when he left Leipzig in 1857, and was for a few months continuing his studies in Paris, oriental and Arabic studies were already being well grounded in France and Germany, and edited versions of Arabic texts were being steadily published.[46] There was in existence The Societe Asiatique de Paris. The Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes (Journal for the Sciences of the Orient) appeared in 1837. A German Oriental Society, modelled after the Societe Asiatique and The Royal Asiatic Society, was established in 1845. Professor Fleischer, his teacher, became 'the soul of the association' and remained so till he resigned from its governing body in 1880. So he might have easily associated himself in some way with these organisations in order to satisfy his urge for oriental research. But he did not do that, and instead, turned to India for the purpose.

We cannot attribute Blochmann's longing for India to any family affiliation or lust for wealth, a characteristic shared by

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many of the Anglo-Indian historians. Any possible explanation of his turning to India for oriental research, to my mind, lies elsewhere. Later in life, in 1869, while writing on Badaoni and his works, he expressed his view as to how and where oriental manuscripts were to be translated. He opined that any and every manuscript should be studied in and around the place of its origin, otherwise full and accurate translation could not be attained. 'In some works the geographical difficulties are so great, that they could not be well overcome by a translation in England; in others the allusions are so pointed that without some familiarity with the people, and some instruction and assistance from good native teachers, it would be almost impossible to write a fuithful translation'.[47] Reasonably Blochmann was already convinced of the necessity for a familiarity derived from personal intercourse while he was pursuing oriental studies in Leipzig and Paris, and therefore decided to continue oriental studies in an oriental country. As there was no notable institution then in existence for researches in Western Asia, it was quite natural that he was attracted to India where some sustained studies in various oriental subjects were being pursued through the Asiatic Society of Bengal and similar other branches.[48] Consequently, he might have become 'eager to visit India and to study the eastern languages in situ'.[49]

The time of Blochmann's coming to India proved to be very auspicious. It was during this period the Asiatic Society of Bengal was publishing Muslim historical texts of Indian origin in the Bibliotheca Indica Series. As has been seen earlier that his talen and aptitude soon associated him with this organisation and as a member and secretary of the Philotogical Committee he exercised a general

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superintendence over the Semitic group of the Bibliotheca Indica.[50] Over and above, the society 'made arrangements for the publication of a new and carefully collated edition of the A'yin-i-Akbary in the new series of the Bibliotheca Indica'[51] and it was also resolved that 'it will be edited by Mr. H. Blochmann, under the superintendence of the Philological Committee'.[52] Soon 'the Council's recommendation for the publication of an English translation of the 'Ain-i-Akbari in the Bibliotheca Indica was adopted' and this additional responsibility also fell upon Blochmann.[53] It is to be noted here that he attached much importance to the English translation of the historical texts in the Bibliotheca Indica about which he opined, 'The more texts the Asiatic Society prints, the more necessary will it become to translate the work. This is of great importance for our historical texts : as long as we have no translations, the Historians of the Bibliotheca Indica will be a treasure under lock and seal'.[54]

Blochmann appears to have made his literary début in the Proceedings of the Asiatic Society's Journal in September 1865. On this occasion he 'submitted to the meeting a few queries on the Palaeography of India'.[55] In 1867 he wrote his first article, 'Notes on Sirājuddaulah and the town of Murshidābād, taken from a Persian Manuscript of the Tarikh-i-Mancūrī'.[56] In 1868 appeared his 'Contributions to Persian Lexicography'.[57] In 1869 he wrote an article on 'Badáoni and his works'.[58] His articles 'Facsimiles of Autographs of Jahangir, Shājahan, and Prince Dārā Shikoh, with notes on the literary character, and the Capture and Death of Dara Shikoh';[59] 'Notes on the Arabic and Persian Inscriptions in the Hūgli District';[60] 'Notes from Muhammadan Historians on Chutiā Nāgpūr, Pachet, and Palāman';[61] 'Notes on several

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Arabic and Persian Inscriptions (Bardwān, Gaur, Atak, The Mārgalah Pass, Majherah, Murzuffarnagar, N.W.P. and Bareli)';[62] 'Koch Béhār, Koch Hājo, and A'sām, in the 16th and 17th centuries, according to the Akbarnāmah, the Pādishāhnāmah, and the Fathiyah i'[63] Ibriyah'; 'Notes on Arabic and Persian Inscriptions, No. II'[64]; 'On a new King of Bengal ('Alauddīn Fīrūz Shāh), and notes on the Husaini Kings of Bengal and their conquest of Chātgāon (Chittagong)';[65] and finally his 'Contributions to the Geography and History of Bengal, Nos.1, II and III' appeared successively in the Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal.[66] It is to be noted here that the fourth instalment of Blochmann's 'Contributions to the Geography and History of Bengal' appeared in abstract form in the Proceedings of the Society's Journal of December 1877. But it was never published as an article.

Blochmann, however, never wrote a general history. He perhaps did not live long enough to put together the diverse threads which he had drawn from the various sources of Muslim India's history to be one of its general historians. But he is very much remembered for his English translation of the Ain-i-Akbari,[67] one of the most important source books of medieval India. Unfortunately he did not live to complete more than the first volume of its translation. This volume contains Book I and Book II of the Ain.[68] Another of his important works was The Prosody of the Persians according to Saifi, Jami, and other writers which was published in 1872. He also wrote a few books of general interests for the Calcutta School Book Society. Romanized School Dictionary, English and Urdu (1867) and School Geography of India and British Burmah (1873) belong to this group. In addition, he

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wrote a paper on Calcutta, entitled 'Calcutta During Last [18th] Century'. It was published in Calcutta in 1868. His valuable articles - 'Contributions to the Geography and History of Bengal' had been re-issued by the Asiatic Society of Bengal in book form in 1968.

The contents of Blochmann's articles and translation had always been supplementary, interpretative, and corrective. His 'Notes on Sirajuddaulah and the town of Murshidābād' was but extracts from a Persian manuscript of the Tarikh-i-Mansūrī. On scrutiny he found the book to be a compilation made from Ferishtah, the Siyar-i-Mutaakharin, the Riyasus-satatin, and others. However, it contained some original matter obtained by the author from the inhabitants of Murshidabad. So in this article he extracted the greater part of that which was new and supplemented it with his own observation 'regarding the celebration of the Muharram in Murshidābād' and 'the raft of Khiszr'.[69] The 'Contributions to Persian Lexicography' was an extract of his larger work of the same title. In it he compared 'the Persian Dictionaries written by natives', and corrected 'various lexicographical MSS'.[70] His dissertation on 'Badaoni and his works' supplied prefaces and introductions to the Semitic works of which merely texts had been printed, gave biographical information of the authors and remarked on the style of their productions. Here he also gave 'translations of new and interesting passages, and thus' prepared 'the way for systematic translations'.[71] His 'Notes on the Arabic and Persian Inscriptions in the Hūglī District' brought into clear perspective 'Shamsuddin Abul Muzaffar Fīrūz Shah Sultan' who was not mentioned in the Tabaqāt-i-Akbari or by Firishta. In this article he showed, with the help of inscriptions from 'Tribenī, Mullā Simlā, Satgānw, Panduah, and Dīnānath', that Firuz Shah had

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'been firmly established in Wester Bengal'.[72] His 'Notes from Muhammadan Historians on Chutiā Nāgpur, Pachet, and Palāmau' dealt with the conquest of this region by the Mughals. He showed in this article that prior to the Mughal period the local rajas of the area enjoyed independence. However, 'when further conqeusts in the East were impracticable', the Mughal governors of Bengal and Behar 'turned their attention to the territories of the independent Rajahs to the south of their Province.'[73] In piecing together the story of the conquest, he quoted from the Akbarnāmah, Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri, Padishānāmah and Alamgirnamah. In the 'Notes on several Arabic and Persian Inscriptions' he translated into English the text of the inscriptions collected from Bardwan, Gaur, Atak, the Margalah Pass, Majherah, Muzaffarnagar, N.W. Province and Bareli with explanatory notes and interpretations. He thought it to 'be of some interest for Indian readers'.[74] In his 'Koch Bihār, Koch Hājo, and A'sām, in the 16th and 17th centuries, according to the Akbarnāmah, the Padishanāmah, and the Fathiyah i' Ibriyah' he narrated the exploits of Mir Jumla and Shaista Khan in their attempts to 'extend the imperial dominions in the north along the Brahmanputra, and in the south along the eastern shores of the Bay of Bengal' during the reign of Aurangzib.[75] In the 'Notes on Arabic and Persian Inscriptions' he put together the inscriptions sent to the Asiatic Society from Dinajpur, Dhaka, Dhamrai, North of Dhaka, Badaon, and Alapur, east of Badaon and added to them 'a few notes and extracts from the letters which accompanied the rubbings'.[76] In the article 'On a new King of Bengal' he proved the existence of a new king (Alauddin Firuz Shah) and corrected the history of the Husain Shahi Dynasty to the death of Nusrat Shah.

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With the help of inscriptions he also appended here 'a few notes on the chronology of the reigns of Husain Shah and his descendants'.[77] In his final series of article entitled 'Contributions to the Geography and History of Bengal' he found out the gaps in the history of Bengal, pieced together the threads of information from the texts of the Delhi historians, coins and inscriptions to bridge over these gaps, and reconstructed the history of Bengal and delimited its geographical boundary during the medieval period.[78]

Blochmann's English translation of the Ain-i-Akbari constitutes one volume containing book I and book II of the original.[79] Book I deals with the imperial establishment. The account here includes the descriptions of the various departments of the imperial household, the imperial mint, prices of foodstuffs and manufactures, the art of calligraphy and painting, the royal arsenal, guns, and the royal stables. The price of building materials and wages of labourers are also given here in detail. Book II deals with the institution of the army, its various divisions, and rules of payment, etc. There is one section on the grants of land and allowances in charity, another on the regulations regarding marriage and a third regarding education. Some of the royal amusements have been dealt with separately. Finally, there is a list of mansabdars holding the ranks from 10,000 to 200 and a list of pious men, scholars, poets and musicians of the time.[80]

Blochmann's intellectual bias and his devotion to oriental learning may conveniently be appreciated against the background of the general intellectual atmosphere of Germany. It is claimed that 'Historical science as we know it was born at Berlin a hundred years

Dhaka University Institutional Repository

ago', and it was 'perhaps the best of the results of the overthrow of Prussia by Napoleon'.[81] It was asserted that the Germans should 'recover in the spiritual field what they had lost on the material plane'.[82] Accordingly, the University of Berlin was established in 1810, 'and some of the greatest scholars then living in the other states of Germany were invited to adorn it'.[83] Studies in Roman, German, Greek, and Teutonic institutions were continued with rare enthusiasm. This upsurge in intellectual activities had been evaluated as 'the Second Renaissance, not indeed so glittering and creative as the Italian Renaissance of the fifteenth century, but producing not less profound effects on the mentality and outlook of the civilised mankind'.[84] Inscriptions, coins, archaeology, and philology entered into the arena of historical research, and started to be largely utilised in reconstructing and rewriting the history of the past.

While 'in every direction the opening decades of the century [19th] witnessed a new and deeper insight into the life and thought of the mother of European culture [Graeco-Roman]', studies of similar culture abroad were taken in real earnest.[85] 'One of the most sensational events of the nineteenth century is the resurrection of the Ancient East'.[86] The discovery of ancient civilisations in the East changed the whole perspective of historical knowledge. 'The ancient world ceases to be merely the vestibule to Christian Europe, and becomes in point of duration the larger part of human history'.[87] Egyptologists, Assyriologists, Indologists, etc., made their advent. The systematic study of oriental languages - Sanskrit, Arabic, Hebrew, Persian, Turkish, and others - began. Germany and France took the lead in such studies, and universities in these countries vied with one another in specialising in various aspects of orientalism.

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With this growing enthusiasm for oriental learning by 1836 'Arabic and Mohammadan studies had begun to flourish in all parts of Germany'.[88] Here it may be suggested that the emphasis on the Arabic language was associated with the origin of semitic civilisation, and 'the application of critical methods to the Jewish Scriptures'.[89] 'It was the Arabian inscriptions which revealed a great civilisation for a thousand years before Christ'.[90] Johann Gottfried Eichhorn (1752-1827) was 'one of the first commentators to make a scientific comparison between the biblical books and other semitic writings'.[91] He asserted that the books of the Old Testament possessed a definitely oriental character, and needed to be interpreted in the light of semitic ideas. Thus a great impetus was given to the study of semitic languages.

Of the French and German universities, Leipzig occupied a prominent place in oriental research. Its Professor Hermann[92] was the exponent of scientific philology, and 'believed linguistic studies to be the kernel of philology, for other problems could only be approached through linguistic interpretation'.[93] He led a school where members contended that the emphasis in classical philology should be on linguistic, rather than historico-antiquarian, research. Another distinguished Professor of this university was H.L. Fleischer under whom, as seen earlier, Blochmann studied from 1855-1857. As early as the fourth decade of the nineteenth century, Fleischer was freely acknowledged by all as the chief German orientalists. 'In fact, from that time on for a period of nearly half a century, he became the chosen guide of all Germans, and many foreigners, desirous of thorough disciplining in Arabic Mohammadan philology'.[94]

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Fleischer's influence on his students was very considerable. His students were required to acquire Arabic, Persian and Turkish, and to rid themselves of any tendency to superficiality. After that thay were prepared as far as their ability went to do independent and philologically accurate work in whatever special field any one of them might choose. His 'method of instruction possessed the advantage of at once ushering the student into the Mohammadan world of language and ideas, giving him a vivid conception of the wealth and pliability of the Arabic idiom, and most emphatically reminding him at every turn of the necessity of being accurate in the slightest detail'.[95] Blochmann, being one of Fleischer's own students for over two years, certainly felt the spell of his teacher's influence and became 'enamoured of the East' - particularly Muslim studies. His career in India bore ample testimony to this effect. Philology, scientific establishment of an accurate chronology, study of inscriptions and coins which he learned in his native country, were successfully applied by him in a different clime and a different country, a country of his adoption - India, in reconstructing and rewriting its medieval history, more accurately of Bengal.

'A historian has to reconstruct episodes when gaps in the continuous narration are noticed. With the help of the chronology, it was possible to detect these gaps'.[96] As a historian Blochmann exactly did this throughout his career. In this context his method of research may be summarised in two words : corroboration and chronology. As has been indicated earlier, his general superintendence of the semitic texts of the Bibliotheca Indica had been a determining factor of all his literary undertakings. As the Philological Secretary his keen and inquisitive mind could not but observe with interest the great gaps left by the Persian historians relative to the history of medieval Bengal.

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Here his technique can be compared with that of a mason. Like a mason, he first collected his materials to bridge over the intervening gaps and then started integrating them steadily which ultimately resulted in his magnificent literary edifice, 'Contributions to the Geography and History of Bengal'. In combination with the literary, numismatic, and epigraphic sources he fruitfully endeavoured to reconstruct and re-write the early medieval history of Bengal.

Blochmann started his efforts for reconstructing the history of Bengal early in 1870. During this time he read out a paper entitled 'Notes on Places of Historical Interest in the district of Hugli, Madāran, and Panduah' before the monthly meeting of the Asiatic Society. It was later published in the Society's Proceedings for April, 1870. Here he deplored the neglect shown to the history of Bengal by the early generation of historians. He was not ready to attribute such a neglect to a paucity of historical materials on the subject. He rather considered it to be due to the lack of initiative and interest.[97] According to him, Bengal towns were full of historical evidence 'A mere glance even at our Trigonometrical maps call to our minds the names of Bengal Kings and grandees, and of Muhammadan warrior saints who fell for the cause of the Prophet'.[98] His editing of the Akbarnāmah gave him many insights into the history of Bengal, which 'mentions at least six battles fought by Akbar's generals in the Hūgli district' alone[99], but those relevant passages were yet to be translated. Besides, he put especial exphasis on the village legends as clues to the country's past. 'I have often been surprised to hear villagers tell stories which, when carefully examined, are found to throw a faint, though in many cases unexpected light on the history of the empire of Dihli, or of the kingdoms of

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Bengal and Orissa, or even on periods for which we possess no historical records' - he stated.[100] He was frustrated to see that 'little, too little, has hitherto been collected' of those historical materials.[101] He, therefore, placed a request before audience that it was time 'that something should be done towards the collection of these stories, which are the true Annals of Bengal'.[102] He further emphasised that such an attempt would yield, 'like every other branch of inquiry into the past ages of this country, a rich and immediate harvest'.[103]

Blochmann's article, 'Notes on the Arabic and Persian Inscriptions in the Hūgli District', formed a sequel to his paper on 'Places of Historical Interest in the District of Hūgli'. The inscriptions given in this article were all of Muslim origin and were taken from Tribeni, Mullā, Simlā, Sātgānw, Panduah, and Dinanath.[104] An important discovery from one of these inscriptions was the name of Shamsuddin Abul Muzaffar Firūz Shāh Sultān. The name of this king was neither given in the Tabaqat-i-Akbari, nor mentioned by Firishtah. While thus utilising information supplied by inscriptions to fill in the gaps of the chronology of Bengal history, he made a fervent appeal to the members of the society to forward to Calcutta all inscriptions to be found throughout India. 'It is thus alone that our imperfect knowledge of the history of this country can be completed. For Bengal especially, inscriptions are of great value, because old histories have perished, and coins and local records are the only available sources' - he asserted.[105] He was of the opinion that any inscription with the name of a king and a date on it was of value because till then 'we do not even possess a correct and complete list of the Muhammadan Kings of Bengal and Bihar, and that no historian had yet attempted to fix the limits to which the Kingdom of Bengal, at various times, extended'.[106]

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Blochmann's appeal to others to forward inscriptions to Calcutta was effective. Members of the society started sending inscriptions from various parts of India. His article, 'Notes on several Arabic and Persian Inscriptions', was written on the basis of these inscriptions.[107] His insistence on the necessity for such collections continued and he implored the members to continue the process of collection further. He also gave them clues for additional explorations. He drew 'their attention to old Mosques and the Dargahs of Muhammadan saints. Shrines are rarely without inscriptions; but although almost every town in Upper India and Bengal has, if I may say so, its patron saint, few of the inscriptions and the legends regarding them have hitherto been collected'.[108] He again emphasised the unique importance of Bengal inscriptions. 'Bengal and Bihar inscriptions are doubly welcome, as they help us to fill up gaps in Bengal history' - he opined.[109]

What Blochmann did for the district of Hughli he also tried to do so for other regions of Bengal, and eventually for the whole of Bengal. He reconstructed the history of 'Koch Behār, Koch Hājo, and A'sam, in the 16th and 17th centuries, according to Akbarnāmah, the Padishānāmah, and the Fathiyah-i-Ibriyah'. The second instalment of 'Notes on Arabic and Persian Inscriptions' appeared during this time. His success in bridging over the gaps in the chronology of the history of Bengal continued in his next article. 'On a new king of Bengal ('Alauddin Firuz Shah), and notes on the Husaini Kings of Bengal and their conquest of Chātgaon (Chittagong)'. Till the writing of this article, 'Alauddin Firuz Shah remained to be a forgoteen monarch of Bengal. Credit goes to Blochmann that he was brought to the light of history. Inscriptions analysed in this article belonged to the Husaini Kings of Bengal.

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Blochmann's final series of articles on the history of Bengal had been 'Contributions to the Geography and History of Bengal'. A prologue to these articles was found in detail in the Proceedings of the Asiatic Society for January, 1873. Here he intimated to the members that a large number of Semitic and Sanskrit inscriptions had been sent to the Society by General Cunningham for publication. He took the charge of Semitic inscriptions, and deciphered few of them.[110] 'The Muhammadan inscriptions consist of 39 rubbings from Dihli, Ajmir, Badāon, Biānah, I'rich, Kanauj, and other places in the North-west; and of 65 from various places in Bengal and Bihār'.[111] He tried to utilise the information yielded by these inscriptions in reconstructing the history of Bengal. He repeated his views as to the unsatisfactory state of the then existing knowledge of the Muslim period of Bengal history. 'Though there can be no doubt that the courts of the independent Kings of Bengal attracted writers of distinction, not a single work dealing exclusively with Bengal history, has come down to us. Whatever we known we glean from incidental remarks made by the historians of the Dihli empire, or from the meagre extracts, given in the Tabaqat-i-Akbari and Firishtah - he informed.[112] He now intended 'to give with General Cunningham's inscriptions a comparative analysis of both sources'.[113]

Accordingly, Blochmann dwelt upon the written sources of the history of Bengal. Of these, he put on record Tabaqat-i-Nasiri, Tarikh-i-Firuz Shāhi, Tabaqat-i-Akbari, Riya-zus-Saltin and Charles Stewart's History of Bengal. He made a comparative analysis of these works, and viewed that none of them was all comprehensive, and put emphasis on coins and inscriptions for supplementary information. His researches confirmed him the fact that 'the historians of India assign to Bengal much narrower limits than we do at the present day : In the Tabaqāt-i-

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Naciri and the Tārikh-i-Firuzshāhi, the earliest Muhammadan histories in which Bengal is mentioned, the territories attached to the towns of Sātgānw (Hūgle), Sunārgānw (East of Dacca), and Lak'hnauti (Gour), are called Diyār-i-Bang, perhaps a verbal translation of the old term Bangladesh'.[114] He further observed that in the Mughal 'official documents Bengal is often mentioned under the title of Jannatul-Bilād, or the Paradise of countries; and Lak'hnauti was called Jannatabād-i-Bangālah, or Paradise town; but the Muhammadans gave it at an early period the nickname of Dozakhpur-i-Ni'mat, or "Hell town of riches". Lak'hnauti and Satganw had, moreover, a bad name with the emperors of Dehli, who in allusion to the frequent revolts of their governors, conferred upon these towns the titles of Bulghākpūr and Bulhāk Khānah (Akbarnamah) or House of Rebellion'.[115]

Blochmann could find only these snippets of information from the early Muslim histories about Bengal. Though Bengal towns presented many points of interest for the historian, the Persian histories yielded almost next to nothing in terms of a connected narrative history. 'These are the only written sources which we possess of the history of the governors and independent Kings of Bengal, i.e. for a period of 335 years, from 1203 to 1537 A.D. Our knowledge, therefore, is entirely derived from mere extracts and second-hand compilations, and it is no wonder that for several portions of that period we have no guide. The importance of Bengal coins and inscriptions thus becomes apparent'.[116] Of the coins and inscriptions, he observed, as the supplementary sources of Bengal history, the former attracted more attentions of the scholars than the latter. He saw that Marsden and Laidley had in 1823 and in 1846 published Bengal coins, 'which for the first time revealed the

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importance of their testimony'.[117] Further, Edward Thomas in 1863 made the most significant use of the Bengal coins, and his 'Initial Coinage of Bengal' refers to the years from 1203 to 1357 A.D. However, the remaining portion of the above period, that is, from 1357 to 1537, the coins had not been examined.[118] Therefore, he utilised this unexplored field together with inscriptions for reconstructing the history of this period.

Blochmann's endeavours in re-writing the history of medieval Bengal had a novelty of its own in comparison with the works of earlier scholars in the field. He first gave close scrutiny to all the available sources on the subject to find out the area of ignorance in the field of Bengal medieval history, and then tried to fill them with the help of data supplied by coins and inscriptions. 'The most obscure portion of Bengal history', he asserted in the Society's Proceedings for January 1873, 'at the present stage of research, extends over more than sixty years, from 1385 to about 1450 A.D.' To this period belonged the usurpation of the throne of Bengal by a Hindu Raja, variously called as 'Kanis', 'Kansa' or 'Ganesha', and the reigns of his son and grandson who became Muslims. He proposed to clear up the obscurities attending this period with the help of coins as no inscriptions belonging to this dark period of Bengal history had till then been discovered. 'For the clearing up of the final portion, from 1450 to 1537 A.D., though the coins have not yet been examined, many inscriptions have now come to hand; and it may reasonably be hoped that future discoveries of inscriptions will clear up the few doubts that are left' - he declared.[119] He made the historical value of all the Bengal inscriptions received by him

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very apparent when he concluded that 'the inscriptions hitherto received, besides affording valuable testimony to the correctness of facts known before, reveal one new king, one new prince, and correct the chronology of the reigns of six Kings of Bengal'.[120]

The first instalment of Blochmann's article 'Contributions to the Geography and History of Bengal' was divided into two parts. In part one he dealt with the geographical extent of medieval Bengal. On this subject the only help from written sources he derived was 'the impression that during the reigns of the independent Kings (A.H.739 to 944, or A.D. 1338 to 1538) the extent of Muhammadan Bengal was the same as what we find it in A.D. 1582, the year in which Todar Mall prepared his rent-roll of Bengal.'[121] Coins and inscriptions yielded to him additional particulars. After his study of Bengal coins, Edward Thomas could name seven mint-towns of medieval Bengal.[122] Blochmann added to them the names of three more mint-towns and they were Fathabad, Khalifatabad, and Husainābad.[123] Places mentioned on inscriptions that helped him in fathoming the extent of medieval Bengal were the following : Iqlim Mu'azzāmabād (Eastern Mymensingh), Thānah Laūr (north-western Sylhet), Sarhat in western Birbhum, Laopallah - east of the island in the Hughli opposite to Tribeni Ghāt, 'evidently in olden times an important place as lying at the point where the Jabuna leaves the Hūghli and commences her tortuous course, first easterly, then southerly, into the Sundarban'.[124]

For the purpose of delimiting the medieval geography of Bengal Blochmann also explored foreign sources. Here he used the works and maps of Portuguese historians, notably the classical 'Da Asia' by Joao de Barros, and the graphic descriptions of Caesar Frederick (1570) and Ralph Fitch (1583 to 1591). He even used Haft Iqlim, composed by Amén

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Rāzé, a Persian traveller and uncle of Nur Jahan, in A.H. 1002(1594 A.D.). But he was cautions in using its testimony because 'it is doubtful whether he [Amen Rāzē] visited Bengal, or merely wrote down what he heard at Āgrah'.[125] Blochmann's cautious and critical approach in the selection of source-materials for a particular purpose is very apparent here. Above all, he put primary reliance in Todar Mall's rent-roll of Bengal, a copy of which had been given by Abul Fazl in the Ain, It afforded 'by far the most interesting contribution to the geography of Bengal'.[126] He, therefore, took up this as the basis in his effort to fix up and re-limit the boundaries of medieval Bengal.

Once Blochmann had tapped the relevant materials, his task of demarcating the boundary of medieval Bengal became easy. Inscriptions revealed to him 'the important fact, that Bengal was divided into revenue divisions called Mahalls, over which, as in the Dilhi empire, Shiqdārs were placed, and into larger circles under "Sarlashkars", or military commanders, who have often also the title of Vazir (Diwan)'.[127] The Ain-i-Akbari provided him with the list of the revenue divisions, the distribution of which 'depended, as in the old Hindu divisions, on the courses of the Ganges, Bhāgirathi, and Megna, or, as the A'in expresses it, on the courses of the Padmāwati, Ganga, and Brahmaputra'.[128] He estimated 'the breadth of Bengal from Garhi to Chātgāon at four hundred Kos. From north to south, the largest line was from Koch Bihār to Chittūā in Sirkār Medinipur'.[129] Augmenting all these sources he could now ascribe a firm geographical entity to medieval Bengal, and previous to this, he claimed, no one knew, 'the limits to which the Kingdom of Bengal, at various times, extended'.[130]

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Blochmann, on the basis of his new findings, fixed up the western frontier of medieval Bengal from Teliagarhi Pass where from it passed along the Ganges to the south of Rajmahal, when it again turned westward to north-western Birbhum, passing along the boundary of the modern Santal Parganahs to the confluence of the Barakar and the Damudar to the neighbourhood of the town of Bardawān. The frontier than again took a westerly direction, and passed along the north-western and western boundaries of modern Hughli and Howrah districts down to Mandalghat, where the Rupnārāyan fell into the Hughli river.[131]

Blochmann demarcated the southern frontier of Bengal along the northern outskirts of the Sundarban, from Hatiāgarh, south of Diamond Harbour to Bagherhat in southern Jessore and to the Haring' hātā, or Deer-shore River, bordering southern mahalls of Sarkars Sātgāon and Khalifatābad. Beyond Haring'hātā, the frontier comprised Sarkars Baklā and Fathābād, the modern districts of Faridpur and Barisal. Sarkar Baklā included the islands of Dakhin Shahbāzpur and Sandip, at the mouth of the river Meghna. 'Tiparah, Bhaluah, Noakhali, and District Chātgāon, were contested ground, of which the Rajahs of Tiparah and Arakan were, at least before the 17th century, oftener masters than the Muhammadans. It was only after the transfer of the capital from Rajmahall to Dhākā, that the south-east frontier of Bengal was extended to the Phani River, which was the imperial frontier till the beginning of Aurangzib's reign, when Chātgāon was permanently conquered, assessed and annexed to "Cubah Bengālah".[132]

Then the demarcation of the eastern frontier of medieval Bengal followed. This, as Blochmann found, initially extended from Sonargaon

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and the Meghna, and from the time of emperor Shah Jahan from the Feni river to the northward, and then passed to the east including the district of Sylhet. 'The boundary passed along the southern slopes of the Jaintiah, Khāsiah, and Gāro Hills to Mahall Sherpūr in northern Maimansingh to the right bank of the Brahmaputra near Chilmārī, and from here along the river to Mahall Bhitarband, which formed the north-east frontier'[133] he wrote.

To round up the frontiers of medieval Bengal, Blochmann drew the northern line from Bhitarband, near the bend of the Brahmaputra, and in later times from Gauhate in Kāmrup to Mahall Pātgāon, west of Koch Behar, 'which is mentioned by Mughal historians as the frontier town in the extreme north'.[134] From here the line went along the hills and forests of Sikkim and Nepal to the northern portions of Pūrneah district. 'Thus by far the greater portion of what is now-a-days called the Koch Bihār division, did not belong to Bengal' - he discovered.[135]

In the second part of his 'Contributions', Blochmann tenaciously tried to reconstruct the political history of medieval Bengal. To do his job effectively, he divided the history of this period into five divisions, namely, the initial period or the reigns of the governors of Lakhnauti appointed by the Delhi Sultans from 1203-1338 A.D., the period of the independent sovereigns of Bengal from 1338-1538, Afghan period from 1538-1578, the Mughal period from 1576-1740, and finally 'the Nawabi period, beginning from the accession of Ali Vardi Khan in 1740 to the transfer of Bengal to the East India Company'.[136] Of these periods of Bengal history, the initial period (1203-1338) had been described in detail by Edward Thomas in his 'Initial Coinage of Bengal'.[137]

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Blochmann, 'therefore, with regard to this period, merely gives a few interesting inscriptions which have since turned up, and notes a few coins - second gleanings from the Koch Bihar trouvaille - which are in the society's cabinet'.[138] Consequently, the second period of medieval Bengal (1338 to 1538) became the main concern of his article. For this period he treated the kings one by one, and collected for each reign whatever new information he had 'been able to gather from the rubbings received from General Cunningham, Dr. J. Wise, and Mr. E.V. Westmacott, C.S., and from unpublished Bengal coins in the Society's cabinet'.[139] Here, with the help of 'mural and medallick' evidence, he may be said to have endeavoured for the first time to name the independent Sultans of Bengal in order of sequence. In this context, he 'also compared the corresponding chapter of the Riyāzussalātin with the statements given in the Tabaqāt-i-Akbari and Firishtah'.[140]

Blochmann, before concluding the first instalment of the 'Contributions', had promised his readers to put together shortly the collections of inscriptions belonging to the Pathan and Mughal periods of Bengal history. These inscriptions were also sent to the society by its members 'to whose unwearied exertions Bengal history owes so much'.[141] At the end, he did not forget to emphasise his oft repeated plea that Bengal lacked written history and 'in the absence of written histories it is only from mural and medallic remains that we can expect to gain a correct knowledge of the history of Bengal'.[142]

But instead of putting together the inscriptions belonging to the Pathan and the Mughal periods, Blochmann, in the second instalment of his 'Contributions' tried either to correct or to corroborate with the help of inscriptions, the written accounts of the history of medieval Bengal. He took here the pioneering attempts at correction of the pre-

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vailing misconceptions relative to the early medieval history of Bengal. He, in an excellent way, discovered 'the extraordinary error' into which both native and foreign historians fell while describing the events of the period between 1282 and 1331. In narrating the events of this period they, 'Confounded Nāciruddin Bughrā Khan, Balban's son upon whom the emperor conferred the government of Bengal with Naciruddin, second son of Firūz and grandson of Nāciruddin Bughrā Khān, and have extended the reign of Bughrā Khān from 681 to 726 (A.D. 1282 to 1326), whereas in reality he disappears from historical records as early as 691(A.D. 1292)'.[143] In favour of his arguments, he gave 'a connected account of this period' by utilising the information gathered from inscriptions, coins, and written documents.[144]

Blochmann's evidence disclosed to him the fact that in the beginning of Balban's reign (1266) Tatar Khan was the governor of Bengal. After his death Sher Khan was appointed to the post. He was succeeded by Amin Khan, 'whose naib was Tughril'.[145] After the suppression of Tughril Balban appointed his younger son Nāsiruddin Bughrā Khān as the governor of Bengal. He seemed to have died in 690 or 691 H. or A.D. 1291 or 1292, 'for in 691 we find that his son Ruknuddin reigned as King of Bengal under the name of Sultan Kai Kāūs'.[146] In support of his assertion he cited inscriptions 'found in Gangarāmpūr, near Dinājpūr, and Kāgol, near Lak'hi Sarai in Bihār'.[147] Further, he showed, with the help of coins and inscriptions, that Shamsuddin Firuz, Shihabuddin Bughra (Bughda), Ghiyasuddin Bahadur and Nasiruddin (Ibrahim) ruled over Bengal from 1302 to 1331 and afterwards it was totally annxed to the Delhi Empire by Mohammad bin Tughluq.[148] In this way he dispelled the prevailing 'extraordinary error' relating to the duration of Bughra Khan's reign.

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Similarly, he corrected, on the basis of the then extant evidence, the legends surrounding the 'Daskahāniā Bāzū' and the 'Dargāh of Shāh Kamāl'.[149]

Blochmann's attempt at corroboration was also unique. He used more than fifty inscriptions that belonged to the reigns of the independent Kings of Bengal in writing the second instalment of his 'Contributions'.[150] Of these inscriptions, one belonging to the reign of Alauddin Husain Shah had been specially mentioned by him. This inscription dated 907 H. or A.D. 1501-2 and was attached with a madrasah which, he guessed, was built by Husain Shah in commemoration of his conquest of Kāmtā and Kāmrūp. He, therefore, accepted this inscription as a 'contemporaneous record' of Husain Shah's conquests of this region. With this mural evidence he tried to confirm other sources on the subject such as 'the Ā'sām Būranji, which refers the conquest of Kamrup to 1498, i.e. 903-4 A.H.'[151]

In the third and final instalment of the 'Contributions', the principal concern of Blochmann continued to be 'chronology' and 'identification'. The conquest of Nadiya by Muhammad Bakhtyar Khilji constituted the first mile-stone in the history of medieval Bengal, but unfortunately no one knew definitely the exact date of this event. Contemporary historian Minhaj did not mention any date for the happening. Major Raverty, translator of the Tabaqat-i-Nasiri, referred the date to the year 590 H., or A.D. 1194, 'or one year after the occupation of Dihli as computed by him.'[152] Munshi Syām Prasad who compiled A MS.History of Gaur for Major Franklin, also appeared to have fixed 590 H. as the date in which Bengal was conquered, 'because it states that the life and the reign of Lakshman Sen extended from 510 to 590'.[153] However, Edward Thomas

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thought it to be the year 599 H., or A.D. 1202-3, 'his authority being', Blochmann thought, 'the Taj-ul-Maāsir, which states that the fort of Kālinjar was conquered by Qutbuddin in 599, and that he afterwards went to the neighbouring Mahoba, where Muhammad Bakhtyar paid his respects and offered presents from the Bengal spoils'.[154] This confusion relative to such an important date drew his attention. His handling of the primary sources of this period made him suspicious of both the dates. The year 1202-3 A.D. chosen by Thomas seemed to him 'a little too late' and the year 1194 A.D. fixed by Major Raverty was considered by him to be 'impossible as being too early'.[155]

Blochmann, therefore, by rationally analysing the available information, tenaciously endeavoured to determine the date of the conquest of Nadiya by Muhammad Bakhtyar Khilji. For this purpose, he arranged, in order of sequence, eight events of Bakhtyar's life. They were his (1) appearance before Qutbuddin Aibak in Delhi, (2) his sojourns to Badaon, (3) to Qudh and the conferment of jagirs, (4) his raids in the southern Behar and visit to Qutbuddin Aibak with spoils, (5) conquest of Nadiza, (6) administrative arrangements, (7) Tibet expedition, and finally (8) his tragic return and death at Devkot in 602H.[156] By allotting reasonable span of time to each of these events, he claimed to have safely assumed 'that the conquest of Bengal by Muhammad Bakhtyar took place about 1198-99 A.D.'[157]

Similarly, Blochmann tried to set aright the chronology of the reign of Mahmud Shah I (1433-34-1459-60). Previous to this, the chronology 837xHxx864H. of the reign of this King constituted one of the obscurest portions of Bengal history. He cleared up this obscurity with the help of 'a small but important trouvaille of eight silver

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coins struck by him [Mahmud Shah]'.[158] By deciphering these coins he found out A.H. 846, 852, 858, 859, 861, 862, and 863 as 'the ascertained dates of Mahmūd Shāh's reign'.[159]

The identification of historical places had been another concern of Blochmann. To start with, he identified Deokot, the place of Bakhtyar's death. He did not agree with major Raverty in locating Deokot to the north of Dinajpur. He, instead, identified it with Damdamah, a place south of Dinajpur. In support of his identification he put that Parganah Deokot was still in existence with old Muslim 'ruins at Gangarampur, near Damdamah, the large tanks, and the discovery there of the oldest Bengal inscriptions' and these helped him to fix the site of the ancient Deokot there.[160] The identification of 'Santosh', 'Masidhā' and 'Kangor' followed. According to him, 'the three places lie in adjacent parganahs, and lie all south-east of parganah Deokot, as Shewn on Sheet 119 of the Indian Atlas'.[161]

Blochmann's identification of Jajnagar was also commendable. This name was first mentioned by Minhaj in his <u>Tabaqat-i-Nasiri</u> 'as a country full of wild elephants'.[162] His account of Jajnagar might have left little doubt among the historians in identifying it with Orissa. But subsequent historian Barani caused confusion in the minds of modern historians regarding its location by mentioning it in different sequences. He, while narrating the events of Balban's suppression of Tughril's rebellion, first mentioned that at Balban's approach to Lakhnauti, Tughril retreated towards Jajnagar. Again, as Balban sought the help of Danuj Roy of Sonargaon to stop the flight of Tughril further to south-eastern Bengal, he mentioned that the latter once more slipped away towards

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Jajnagar. According to him, from Sonargaon Balban arrived, after a march of 60 or 70 Koses, at the confines of Jajnagar where Tughril was surprised and killed.[163]

From the above statement of Barani, some of the modern historians such as Stewart, Stirling, Thomas and Dowson concluded that Jajnagar corresponded 'to Tiparah; and the eastern parts of Hill Tiparah certainly lie about 70 Kos from Sunnargaon',.[164] But Blochmann's sources dissuaded him from agreeing with them. In Rājmālā, a genealogical account of the royal family of Tipperah, he never found the region to have been mentioned as Jajnagar. Further, his scrutiny of the other sources - Tabaqat-i-Nasiri, Afif's Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi and the Ain - led him to believe that the term Jajnagar denoted an area near south-western Bengal comprising 'the wild districts of western Orisā, Chutiā Nāgpūr, and the eastern portions of the Central Provinces'.[165] However, on the testimony of a single passage in Barani he also though of the existence of another Jajnagar in Tipperah. But he doubted very much of such a probability. He attributed this doubt to a mistake supposed to have been committed by Barani who mistakenly wrote Sonargaon in place of Satgaon and confused the modern historians. He, therefore, assumed 'that there was in reality only one Jajnagar, bordering on south-western Bengal, and that Barani in the above single passage wrote Sunnargaon by mistake for Satgaon, which would remove all difficulties'.[166]

Blochmann's attempts at correction, corroboration and identification also continued unabated even in his translation of the A'in-i-Akbari. While translating this work into English he was very careful in supplementing the wanting information, and clearing the complex and

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ambiguous narrative through painstaking research and copious notes. Few such examples would suffice to establish this point. On page 13 of his translation of the Ain it had been mentioned that one Itimad Khan was appointed by Akbar to the revenue department. Blochmann, by exploring alternative sources,[167] gave a full account of this man in the footnote. As a result, we came to know that 'Itimad' meant 'trustworthiness', that his original name was 'Phūl Malik' who served Salim Shah (1545-1553). The title of Muhammad Khan was bestowed upon him by the latter and he subsequently joined Akbar's service. He appeared to have performed his duties to Akbar's satisfaction and was rewarded with the title of Itimad Khan and a command of one thousand.Afterwards, he took part in the conquest of Bengal and distinguished himself in the battle. In 1576 he was appointed governor of Bhakkar. In 1578 he was murdered by a man named Maqsud' Ali.[168]

Again, in the course of translation, Blochmann explained and interpreted almost every technical words. Out of a number of such terms, 'Ahādis' and 'Yūzbāshi' may be cited as representative. According to him, 'Ahadis' corresponded to warrant officers of modern army. Most clerks of the imperial offices, the painters of the court and the foremen in Akbar's workshops, belonged to this corps. They were called Ahades or 'single men', because they stood under Akbar's immediate orders. The second term 'Yūzbāshe' was a Turkish word and signified a commander of one hundred men or a captain. Ahādis of distinction were promoted to this military rank.[169]

Further, Blochmann's supplentary notes on various important topics proved to be very valuable and revealing to the scholars in the field. To this effect, his note on the religious view of Akbar may be taken as an example.[170] For the preparation of this note, he ransacked

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all the extant sources on the topic. Besides the Ain, he used Muntakhab-ut-Tawārikh by Badaoni, the Dabistān-ul-Mazāheb by an anonymous writer, testimony of some of the Portuguese Missionaries whom Akbar called from Goa, as Rodolpho Aquaviva, Antonio de Moserrato and Francisco Enriques for the purpose. In addition, two articles on Akbar's religious views, one by Captain Vans Kennedy, published in the second volume of the Transactions of the Bombay Literary Society, and another by Horace Hayman Wilson, which appeared in the Calcutta Quarterly Oriental Magazine, Vol. 1, 1824, and finally, the Proceedings of the Portuguese Missionaries at Akbar's Court as described in Murray's Historical Account of Discoveries and Travels in Asia, published in Edinburgh, 1820, vol. II, were of great help to him.[171] In this way almost every page of this work is replete with similar explanatory, corroborative and complementary notes.

Blochmann did not merely translate the Ain with detailed and supplementary notes. He also evaluated the author and his work. For him the Ain was a unique creation in the whole range of Muslim literature. He found in it a picture of Akbar's government in its several departments, and of its relations to the different ranks and mixed races of his subjects. Where other Muslim histories narrated the endless turmoil of war and dynastical changes, and were only reminded of the existence of a people when authors made a passing allusion to famines and similar calamities, the 'Ain brought to the foreground the governed classes. Here 'men live and move before us, and the great questions of the time, axioms then believed in and principles then followed, phantoms then chased after, ideas then prevailing, and successes then obtained, are placed before our eyes in truthful, and therefore vivid, colours'.[172]

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Not only this, but other circumstances also rendered the 'Ain very valuable. Foremost of these, the trustworthiness of Abul Fazl attracted Blochmann most. According to him, his high official position gave him access to any document he wished to consult, and his long career and training in various departments of the state along with his marvellous powers of expression, fitted him eminently for the composition of a work like the Akbar-Namah and the 'Ain. 'His love of truth and his correctness of information are apparent on every page of the book, which he wished to leave to future ages as a memorial of the Great Emperor and as a guide for enquiring minds; and his wishes for the stability of the throne and the welfare of the people, his principles of toleration, his noble sentiments on the rights of man, the total absence of personal grievances and of expressions of ill-will towards encompassing enemies, shew that the expanse of his large heart stretched to the clear offing of sterling wisdom' - Blochmann viewed.[173]

Blochmann even discarded the accusals made against Abul Fazl by the European writers of flattery and wilful concealment of facts damaging to the reputation of Akbar. His minutest perusal of the Akbar Namah convinced him that the charges were 'absolutely unfounded'. He compared Abul Fazl's works with other historical productions of the East and found him praising 'infinitely less and with much more grace and dignity than any other Indian historian or poet'.[174] He could trace no native writer who had ever accused Abul Fazl of flattery. Bearing in mind the oriental practice of unconditional assent to the opinion of the King, whether correct or absurd, as the duty of man, and where the whole poetry of the East was 'a rank mass of flattery', at the side of which modern encomiums might be looked like withered leaves, Blochmann condoned Abul Fazl 'when he praises because he finds a true hero'.[175]

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Despite Blochmann's painstaking and serious researches, it has now been found that many of the confused historical facts or gaps in the chronology of the historical narratives which he had reconstructed, proved to be untenable. Subsequent discovery of source materials such as coins and inscriptions on the subject mainly caused it. Few such examples may be cited here. He, no doubt, did a pioneering job by demarcating the boundaries of medieval Bengal and before him no historian had ever tried 'to fix the limits to which the Kingdom of Bengal, at various times, extended'.[176] But this fixation, particularly the western frontier, was grossly deficient in the light of upto date information. He demarcated the western frontier of medieval Bengal from Teliagarhi Pass to the western boundaries of modern Hughli and Howrah districts down to Mandalghat,where the Rupnarayan fell into the Hughli river.[177] Whereas mural and medallic sources conclusively prove that it was extended far beyond to the west. The inscriptions of Ruknuddin Kaikaus (1291-1300) found in Munghyr district (Moheswar Inscription, dated 692 H. or 1291 A.D. and Lakshmi Sarai Inscription, dated 697 H. or 1297 A.D.) extended his territorial limit to Bihar in the West.[178] Similarly, Shamsuddin Firuz's (1301-22) two inscriptions (dated 709 H. 1309 A.D. and 715 H. or 1315 A.D. respectively) showed that Bihar was within the domain of the Bengal Sultan.[179] The next Sultan Shamsuddin Ilyas Shah (1342-58) appeared to have tried to consolidate his 'hold on the trans-Gangetic region with a view to guarding effectively the western approaches of Bengal'.[180] His conquest of Tirhut and control over Champaran, Gorakhpur, Bahraich and Benares mainly provoked Firuz Shah Tughluq to invade Bengal. Inspite of such invasions, 'the fragmentary Ghazipur inscription' showed that Ghazipur on the border of Uttar Pradesh formed an integral part of Bengal. This inscription

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bears 'the title and name of Iqrār Khān, who was governor over several places in succession under the Ilyās Shāhi ruler Bārbak Shāh'.[181] This epigraphic record, therefore, definitely indicates a westward expansion of Bengal Kingdom. Further, inscriptions of Husain Shah found at Munghyr, Bonahara and Saran make us believe that his kingdom 'included the whole of northern Bihar and a part of southern Bihar'.[182] Finally, Bengal's western frontier underwent changes in the reign of Nusrat Shah (1519-32 A.D.). The political instability in Northern India during this time gave him the opportunity to extend the frontier of his kingdom 'as far as Azamgarh the inclusion of which place is proved beyond doubt by the Sikandarpur inscription dated 1527 A.C.'[183]

Blochmann's identification of Jajnagar comprising the region bordering on south-western Bengal still holds the ground. But his attempted correction of Barani's text to the effect that he 'wrote Sunnargaon by mistake for Satgaon' does not stand the scrutiny of the scholars.[184] Relating to this Dr. K.R. Qanungo reasonably thinks that Barani committed no mistake of Sonargaon for Satgaon. According to him, details in Barani clearly show that Balban after having marched for 70 Kos was still at a considerable distance from the boundaries of Jajnagar, a general name for the whole of the tract, south of the then known Muslim dominion in Bengal, and Satgaon became a part of the Muslim territory about twenty years after.[185]

Again, Blochmann's reconstruction of the history of Bengal between the years 1282 and 1331 has been found to be faulty on some points. He very correctly discoved the 'extraordinary error' relating to the reign of Nasiruddin Bughra Khan and successfully showed, with the help of coins and inscriptions, that his name disappeared from

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historical records as early as 1292 A.D. But his depiction of Shamsuddin Firuz as a brother of Ruknuddin Kaikaus, a son of Nasiruddin Bughra Khan and grandson of Balban, and Firuz's son Shihabuddin Bughda, Ghiyasuddin Bahadur and Nasiruddin Ibrahim as the grandsons of Nasiruddin Bughra Khan and great grand sons of Balban - that is, as Balbani sultans has now been proved to be wrong.[186] Later historians have successfully showed that Balbani administration in Bengal ended with Ruknuddin Kaikaus in 1300 A.D., that Shamsuddin Firuz was not a Balbani Sultan and he established altogether a new dynasty in Bengal.[187]

Finally, Blochmann's assumption 'that the conquest of Bengal by Muhammad Bakhtyar took place about 1198-99 A.D.' is not at all tenable in the light of the latest finding.[188] Recent researches have conclusively disproved it. Now the date for the raid of Nadiya by Muhammad Bakhtyar Khilji is more or less settled. Professor A.H. Dani has suggested it to be in the winter of 1203-4 A.D.[189] However, Professor A. Karim, on the basis of a new find - the 'Gauda Bijoye' coin, has fixed the date to be in the winter of 1204-5 A.D.[190]

With all these short comings which were mainly due to the paucity of source materials, Blochmann unquestionably emerges as a scholar who steadfastly tried to discover the real gaps in the history and chronology of medieval India, particularly Bengal, and assayed unabated to bridge these gaps with the help of literary, medallic and mural sources. His pioneering efforts in collecting literary, epigraphic and numismatic sources on the geography and history of Bengal during the early medieval period and presenting them in his essays are still considered essential and indispensable for the research scholars in the field.

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The methodology he pursued in his studies exercised a tremendous influence on the scholars in the field whose cumulative efforts have almost completed the re-writing of the history of India. Above all, his fame mainly rests on his translation of the Ain-i-Akbari into English and in this sphere of scholarly pursuit he had set a standard which had scarcely been superseded by the subsequent scholars.

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1. JASB, Vol. 47 (Proceedings), 1878, P. 164.
2. Stark, A. Herbert, 'Some Principles of the Calcutta Madrasah in by-gone days', Muslim Review, Vol. II, April-June, 1928, P. 34.
3. DNB, Supplementary Volume, 1922, P. 220.
4. Stark, A. Herbert, Op.cit, P. 34.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid (It is not exactly known in which regiment of the British Army Blochmann was enlisted. However, from the general Monthly Return of Officers belonging to the several corps serving at the Presidency of Bengal under the command of His Excellency General Lord Clyde, G.C.B., it is seen that the 77th Foot was stationed at Fort William at the time of Blochmann's arrival. This observation is based on War Office Records : 17/1365, 1366; 12/8293,8294; 97/1616; and 25/3502, 3505).
7. DNB, Suplementary Volume, 1922, P. 220.
8. Stark, A. Herbert, Op.cit, P. 34.
9. Lees, W.N. (1825-1889) belonged to the 42nd Bengal Native Infantry. He was the Principal of the Calcutta Madrasah, Translator to the Government, and Secretary to the Board of Examiners, Fort William. He retired as Major-General. For further information see : Buckland's Dictionary of Indian Biography and DNB., Vol. XI.
10. Stark, A.Herber, Op.cit, P. 35.
11. It is observed in the quarterly returns of the Regiments that a private had to pay £ 20.00 as discharge fee (War Office Records, 12/8293 and 8294, Chancery Lane), London.
12. DNB, Suplementary Volume, 1922, P. 220.
13. Ibid.
14. JASB, Proceedings, Vol. 47, P. 166 (Obituary notice by Blandford).

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15. *The New Calcutta Directory*, 1862, Part VI, P. 14(I.O.L.)
16. *DNB,* Supplementary Volume, 1922, P. 220.
17. *JASB,* Proceedings, Vol. 47, P. 166.
18. *I.O.R.* Education Proceedings, (B) March, 1865, P. 2(Range 15, Vol. 74), No. 48.
19. Stark, A. Herbert, *Op.cit*.
20. *DNB,* Supplementary Volume, 1922, P. 220.
21. *JASB,* Proceedings, Vol. 33, 1864, PP. 213 and 216.
22. *DNB,* Supplementary Volume, 1922, P. 221.
23. *JASB,* Proceedings, Vol. 47, 1878, P. 166.
24. Stark, A. Herbert, *Op.cit*.
25. *JASB,* Proceedings, Vol. 47, 1878, P. 166.
26. *Ibid*, P. 165.
27. Hardy, P., *The Muslims of British India* (Cambridge, 1972), P. 79.
28. *Ibid*.
29. *Ibid,* PP. 79-80.
30. *Ibid*.
31. *Ibid,* P. 90.
32. *Ibid,* P. 91.
33. The Calcutta Madrasah was established by Warren Hastings in 1782.
34. *I.O.R.*, Range, 432, Vol. 8.
35. *Ibid*.
36. *Ibid*.
37. *Ibid*.
38. Stark, A. Herbert, *Op.cit*.
39. *Ibid*.
40. *I.O.R.*, Bengal Education Proceedings, Vol. 165 (Letter from J. Sutcliffe, Esq. offg. D.P.I., to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, General Department of the 2nd June, 1875).

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41. Blochmann's Publication outside JASB are the following : (i) Romanized School Dictionary, 1867; (ii) Calcutta During Last Century, 1868; (iii) The Prosody of the Persian, 1872; and (iv) School Geography of India and British Burmah, 1873.

42. JASB, Proceedings, Vol. 47, 1878, P. 165.

43. Blochmann, H., 'Badaoni and his works', JASB, Vol. 38, 1869, P. 105. (The Asiatic Society of Bengal rendered valuable services to the cause of oriental learning and literature through its Bibliotheca Indica series. This important series had been originally started out of a reqeust by the Baptist Missionaries of Serampore to the Society. They proposed the publication of a series of Sanskrit works with translations into english. The Society agreed to give the Missionaries the necessary aid. However, its patronage was limited at the time to a single work - The Rāmāyana. A similar idea was also put forward by Sir James Mackintosh, the then President of the Literary Society of Bombay. The Asiatic Society itself resolved on 2nd July 1806 to publish translations of short works in the Sanskrit and other Asiatic languages. The proposed series were to be named Bibliotheca Asiatica or a descriptive catalogue of Asiatic books. But this plan fell through.

It was not till 1835 that an attempt was made systematically to publish oriental works. This came as a paradoxical outcome of the controversy that had long raged between the Anglicists and the Orientalists as to the language best suited for the education of the people of India. The Anglicists finally won the battle. As a result, the Government put a stop to all oriental works which were then in the press on its account, and directed the printed sheets to be sold as 'waste paper'. At this juncture, the Asiatic Society intervened before the Government of India acted. It sent a strong representation to the Court of Directors and the Board of Control, and at last succeeded in securing a grant of Rs. 500/- per month for the publication of oriental texts. According to the terms and conditions of the grant, the society was expected to send an annual return to the Court of Directors stating the works published and accompanied by ten copies of each book for distribution in Great Britain.

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In 1847 a Committee was appointed by the Society to find how most appropriately to spend the Court's grant according to its wishes. The Committee proposed to start a monthly serial under the name of Bibliotheca Indica and the editorship of a competent scholar, aided by a staff of Pandits. This new plan was taken in hand at the beginning of 1848, and thus the series known as Bibliotheca Indica started. Again, at the close of 1850, the Council of the Society appointed a sub-committee to report on the publication of the Bibliotheca Indica Series. At its suggestion, the post of Chief editor was abolished. Further, the practice of limiting the publication of volumes to works which the editors were prepared at once to translate, was discontinued. Now any valuable manuscript, with or without translation, was to be published. All these gave a new impulse to the publication of oriental texts.
By 1855 the Society gave a further moulding, especially in the selection of Persian and Arabic texts, to the shape of Bibliotheca Indica Series. This it did in keeping with the wishes of the Court of Directors who desired that in the selection of texts, particularly Persian and Arabic, due consideration should be given so that they throw light upon the literature and history of India. These directives had generally been acted upon by the society. The practice since then was to divide the grant into two parts, one of which was devoted to Sanskrit, and the other to works in Arabic, Persian and other languages. According to the new principles, the Society worked out a plan to publish and translate Muslim literature of Indian origin. The object of this series was to place in the hands of the future historians the best original materials for compiling a history of the country. The Society further tried to arrange the publications in their chronological perspective so that a connected account of the Muslim dynasties in India could be obtained. This summary is taken from 'History of the Society, Oriental Publications', JASB, Centenary Volume, 1883-84.

44. Among Blochmann's most intimate friends and admierers were Nawab Sir Khaja Abdul Ghani, Nawab Sir Khaja Ahsanullah, Nawab Abdul Latif, Khan Bahadur Syed Azimuddin Hossain, Khan Bahadur Nawab Ameer Ali, Nawab Syed Ameer Hossain, nawab Sirajul Islam, and Nawab Abdul Jabbar (Muslim Review, Vol. II, PP. 35-36).

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45. JASB, Proceedings, Vol. 39, 1870, P. 115.

46. Here are some of the important texts : Amari'z Bibliotheca Arabo-Sicula; Juynboll's Abul Mahasin, the Makkari; Tornberg's Ibn-el-Athir; Wustenfeld's Jacut; Wright's Kāmil; Flugel's Fihrist; de Groeje's Bibliotheca Geographorum; and Jahn's Ibn Ya'ish.

47. 'Badaoni and his works', JASB, Vol. 38, 1869, P. 106.

48. The Asiatic Society of Bengal was established in 1784.

49. DNB, Supplementary Volume, 1922, P. 220.

50. Important historical texts of this series are the following :

(a) Tārikh-i-Feroz-Shāhi of Ziaa al-Din Barni, edited by Syed Ahmad Khan, under the superintendence of W.N. Lees and Maulavi Kabir-al-din.

(b) Tārikh-i-Baihāki, containing the Life of massud, son of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni, being the 7th, 8th and the 9th parts of the 6th and 10th volumes of the Tarikh-ial-i-Saboktageen of Abul Fazl Al-Baihaqi, edited by W.H. Morley, and printed under the supervision of W.N. Lees.

(c) Tabaqāt-i-Nasiri of Aboo'Omar Minhaj Al-Din 'Othman, Ibn Sirajal-din-al-Jawzjani, edited by W.N. Lees and Maulavis Khadim Hosain and 'Abd Al-Hai.

(d) Muntakhab al-Tawārikh of Abd al-Qadir Bin-i-Matuk Shah al-Badaoni, edited by W.N. Lees and Maulavi Ahmad 'Ali.

(e) Iqbālnāmah-i-Jahāngiri of Motamad Khan, edited by Maulavis Abd al-Hai and Ahmad Ali, under the superintendence of W.N.Lees.

(f) Ālamgirnāmah of Muhammad Kazim Ibn-i-Muhammad Amin Munshi, edited by Maulvis Kh'adim Hosain and Abd al-Hai.

(g) The Bādshāhnamah of 'Abd Al-Hamid Lahawre, edited by Maulvis Kabir al-Din Ahmad and Abd al-Rahim, under the superintendence of W.N. Lees.

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(h) The Muntakhbāt Al-Luhāb of Khāfi Khan, edited by Maulavi Kabir al-Din Ahmad.

(i) The Maāsir-i-'Almagiri of Muhammad Saqi Musta'id Khan, edited by Maulavi Agha Ahmad 'Ali. (This list is taken from Appendix C, Centenary Review of the Society's work, Calcutta, 1885, PP.102-103).

51. JASB, Proceedings, Vol. 35, 1866, P. 207.

52. Ibid, P. 208.

53. Ibid, Vol. 37, 1868, P. 126.

54. 'Badaoni and his works', JASB, Vol. 38, 1869, P. 105.

55. JASB, Vol. 34, 1865, PP. 171-75.

56. Ibid, Vol. 36, 1867, P. 85.

57. Ibid, Vol. 37, 1868, PP. 1-72.

58. Ibid, Vol. 38, 1869, PP. 104-144.

59. Ibid, Vol.. 39, 1870, P. 271.

60. Ibid, P. 280.

61. Ibid, Vol. 40, 1871, P. 111.

62. Ibid, P. 251.

63. Ibid, Vol. 41, 1872, P. 49.

64. Ibid, P. 102.

65. Ibid, P. 331.

66. Ibid, Vol. 42, 1873.
" Vol. 43, 1874.
" Vol. 44, 1875.

67. The Ain-i-Akbari By Abul Fazl 'Allami, Translated from the original Persian by H. Blochmann, Vol. 1 (Calcutta, Baptist Mission Press, 1873).

68. The remaining portion of the Ain had been translated by Colonel Jarrett in two volumes constituting vol. II and vol. III of the English Translation of The Ain-i-Akbari. Volome II contains Book III and Volume III contains Books IV and V of the Ain. They were

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published in 1891 and 1894 respectively from the Baptist Mission Press, Calcutta. The A'in-i-Akbari is the third volume of the Akbar Namah by Shaikh Abul Fazl. The first volume of this work contains the history of Timur's family as far as it is of interest for the Indian reader, and the reigns of Babar, the Sur Kings, and Humayun. The second volume is devoted to the detailed history of nearly forty-six years of the reign of Akbar. The third volume contains the A'in or mode of governing of Akbar, and is, in fact, the Administration Report and Statistical Return of his government, as it was about 1590 A.D.

69. JASB, Vol. 36, 1867, P. 86.

70. Ibid, Vol. 37, 1868, P. 72.

71. Ibid, Vol. 38, 1869, P. 105.

72. Ibid, Vol. 39, 1870, P. 288.

73. Ibid, Vol. 40, 1871, P. 111.

74. Ibid, P. 251.

75. Ibid, Vol. 41, 1872, P. 49.

76. Ibid, P. 102.

77. Ibid, P. 332.

78. Ibid, Vol. 42, P. 213.

79. The original text is divided into five books.

80. Mukhia, H., Historians and Historiography During the Reign of Akbar (Delhi, 1976), P. 64.

81. Gooch, G.P., 'Progress in Historical Studies', Birkbeck College Centenary Lectures 1823-1923' (London, 1924)' P. 137.

82. Ibid.

83. Ibid, P. 138. Of these historians Niebuhr (1776-1831) worked out the real history of Rome; August Bockh wrote scientific treatise on the social life and organisation of ancient Athens; Eichhorn (1752-1827) published a survey of the development of German law, connecting it with the life and growth of the people; Savigny

(1779-1861) introduced into the study of law the idea of organic evolution; and Ranke (1795-1886) founded a critical school to which young historians flocked from all parts of Germany.

84. Ibid.

85. Gooch, G.P., History and Historians in the Nineteenth Century (London, 1913), P. 41.

86. Ibid, P. 496.

87. Ibid.

88. Miiller, A., Memoir of H.L. Fleischer (Washington, 1892), P.510.

89. Gooch, G.P., Op.cit, P. 521.

90. Ibid.

91. Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol. III (New edition), P. 812.

92. For J.G. Hermann(1772-1848) see Encyclopaedia Britannica (New edition), Vol. IV, P. 1047.

93. Gooch, G.P., Op.cit. P. 34.

94. Miiller, A., Op.cit. P. 513.

95. Ibid.

96. Tikekar, S.R., On Historiography - A Study of the Methods of Historical Research and Narration of J.N. Sarkar, G.S. Sardesai and P.K. Gode (Bombay, 1964), P. 20.

97. According to W.W. Hunter, another of the historians included in this survey, it was due to the absence of a 'leisurely and lettered class; in Bengal 'to conduct such researches' (Annals of rural Bengal, Vol. I (London, 1868), PP. 10-11.

98. JASB, Proceedings, Vol. 39, 1870, P. 113.

99. Ibid, P. 114.

100. Ibid.

101. Ibid, P. 113.

102. Ibid, P. 114.

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103. Ibid, P. 113.
104. Ibid, P. 280.
105. Ibid, P. 303.
106. Ibid, Vol. 40, 1871, P. 246.
107. These inscriptions were obtained from Bardwan, Gaur, Atak, The Margalah Pass, Majherah, Murzuffarnagar, N.W.P., and Bare i.
108. JASB, Vol. 40, 1871, P. 251.
109. Ibid.
110. Babus Pratapachandra Ghosh, and Gaur Das Baisakh took the charge of the Sanskrit inscriptions.
111. JASB, Proceedings, vol. 42, 1873, P. 17.
112. Ibid, P. 18.
113. Ibid.
114. Ibid, Vol. 39, 1870, P. 109.
115. Ibid, PP. 110-111.
116. Ibid, Vol. 42, 1873, P. 18.
117. Ibid.
118. Ibid.
119. Ibid, P. 19.
120. Ibid, P. 20.
121. 'Contributions to the Geography and History of Bengal', No. 1, JASB, vol. 42, 1873, P. 213.
122. These mint towns were : Lak'hnauti, Firuzabad (Panduah), Satgaon, Shahr-i-Nau, Ghyaspur, Sunargaon, and Mu'azzamabad.
123. 'Contributions to the Geography and History of Bengal', No.1, JASB, Vol. 42, 1873, P. 214.
124. Ibid.
125. Ibid.
126. Ibid.

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127. Ibid.

128. Ibid, P. 215.

129. Ibid, P. 220.

130. JASB, Proceedings, Vol. 40, 1871, P. 246.

131. 'Contributions to the Geography and History of Bengal,' JASB, Vol. 42, 1873, P. 222. The following Mahalls, according to Todar Mall's rent-roll, constituted the western frontier area : Rajmahall, Kankjol, Kunwar Partab, Molesar, in Sarkar Tandah; Barkundah, Akbarshahi, Katangah, in Sarkar Sharifabad; Nagor, Sainbhum, Shilgarh, Champanagari, Mandaran, Chittua, and Mandalghat in Sarkar Madaran.

132. Ibid, P. 226.

133. Ibid, PP. 234-35. Sarkars that lay along this boundary were : Sonargaon, Bazuha, Sylhet and G'horag'hat. Neighbouring states to the east were : Tipperah, Kachar, States of the Rajahs of the Jaintiah, Khasiah, and Garo Hills. The Karibari Hills, situated on the left bank of the Brahmaputra, belonged to the Rajahs of Sosang.

134. Ibid, P. 239.

135. Ibid, Sarkars along the northern border were : G'horag'hat, Panjrah, Tajpur, and Purniah.

136. Ibid, P. 245.

137. Ibid, Vol. 36, No. 111, 1867.

138. Ibid, Vol. 42, 1873, P. 245. The following inscriptions he gave here : The Tughril Inscription of Bihar (1242), the Barahdari Inscription of Bihar (1265), the Kai Kaus Inscription of Ragol (1297), the Firuz Shah Inscription of Bihar (1309), etc.

139. Ibid, P. 251. Names of Sultan he mentioned were Fakhruddin Mubarak Shah, Alauddin Ali Shah, Ikhtiyaruddin Ghazi Shah, Shamsuddin Ilyas Shah, Sikandar Shah, Azam Shah, Saifuddin Hamzeh Shah, Shamsuddin, Rajah Kans, Jalaluddin Muhammad Shah, Ahmad Shah, Mahmud Shah, Barbak Shah, Yusuf Shah, Sikandar Shah II,

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Fath Shah, Sultan Shahzadah, Saifuddin Firuz Shah, Mahmud Shah II, Muzaffar Shah, Alauddin Hussain Shah, Nusrat Shah, Firuz Shah II, and Mahmud Shah III.

140. Ibid.
141. Ibid, P. 307.
142. Ibid.
143. Ibid, Vol. 43, 1874, P. 287.
144. Ibid.
145. Ibid.
146. Ibid, P. 288.
147. Ibid.
148. Ibid, PP. 288-291.
149. Iibd, PP. 281-287.
150. Ibid, P. 279.
151. Ibid, P. 280.
152. Ibid, Vol. 44, 1875, P. 275.
153. Ibid.
154. Ibid, P. 276.
155. Ibid, P. 277.
156. Ibid, PP. 276-77.
157. Ibid, P. 277.
158. Blochmann, H., Contributions to the Geography and History of Bengal (Asiatic Society, Calcutta, 1968), P. 151.
159. Ibid.
160. Ibid, P. 147.
161. Ibid, P. 148.
162. JASB, Vol. 42, 1873, P. 237.
163. Ibid, P. 238.

Dhaka University Institutional Repository

164. Ibid.
165. Ibid, P. 239.
166. Ibid.
167. Mainly Mathir 'I-Umara.
168. The 'Ain-i-Akbari(tr.), Vol. I, P. 13, 1939.
169. Ibid, PP. 20 and 22.
170. Ibid, PP. 176-223.
171. Ibid, PP. 167-68, 1873.
172. Ibid, PP. IV-V.
173. Ibid, P. VI.
174. Ibid.
175. Ibid.
176. JASB, Vol. 40, 1871, P. 246.
177. Ibid, Vol. 42, 1873, P. 222.
178. Karim, A., Banglar Itihas, Sultani Amal (Bangla Academy, Dhaka, 1977), PP. 147-48.
179. Ibid, P. 153.
180. Tarafdar, M.R., 'Epigraphic and numismatic notes bearing on the history of Pre-Mughal Bengal', JASB, Dhaka, Vol. XX, No. 3, Dec. 1975, P. 2.
181. Ibid.
182. Tarafdar, M.R., 'The Frontiers of Bengal under Husain Shahi Rulers', Bengal Past and Present, Vol. 77, Calcutta, 1958, P. 43.
183. Ibid, P. 44.
184. JASB, Vol. 42, 1873, P. 237.
185. Sarkar, J.N.(ed.), The History of Bengal, Vol. II (Dhaka, Second Impression, 1972), P. 66 (Foot-note).

Dhaka University Institutional Repository

186. JASB, Vol. 43, 1874, PP. 287-88.

187. Karim, A., 'Origin of Sultan Shamsuddin Firoz Shah', Sir Jadunath Sarkar Commemoration Volume, Part II.
Banglar Itihas, Sultani Amal (Dhaka, Bangla Academy, 1977), PP. 146-49.

188. JASB, Vol. 44, 1875, P. 277.

189. Dani, A.H., 'Date of Bakhtiyar's raid on Nadiya', Indian Historical Quarterly, 1954.

190. Karim, A., 'Date of Bakhtiyar Khalji's Conquest of Nadia', JASB, Dhaka, Vols. XXIV-VI, 1979-81.

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CONCLUSION

During the nineteenth century Indian historical writing was intimately connected with prevailing thought currents. The major intellectual assumptions of the period were reflected in the works of the historians included in this study. Thus Hunter's romantic vein expressed itself in an attempt to be the chronicler of the 'silent millions' who bore the English 'Yoke' and till his time 'found no annalist'.[1] Accordingly, his declared intention (probed to be pretended) was not to include in his writings the events that touched 'the governing race'; his 'business' was to be with the Indian people and their past.[2] His researches in this regard had enabled him to put the Indians on a par with the Europeans in the remote past. He saw a 'nobler race' from the north-west forced its way through the primitive peoples of India which belonged to 'the splendid Aryan or Indo-Germanic stock' from where the Brahman, the Rajputs, and the English alike descended.[3] His commitment to Utilitarianism made him insistent for the general welfare of the Indian peoples, and he was bent upon to bring this welfare 'by the resources of civilization'.[4] His positivistic attitude induced him to collect a mass of materials relating to the history of India. In the first Statistical Survey of the country he found a direction to that end and utilized the opportunity in a worthy spirit. As a result a solid 'foundation for a truer and wider knowledge of India in time to come' was established.[5]

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However, the theme of imperialism had been found to be dominating in the late nineteenth century and Hunter was overtaken by it. But he equated imperialism with 'paternalism', 'trusteeship', and 'civilising mission' and in his writing there was seldom reflected the 'pride in conquest and dominion'.[6] In keeping with the paternalistic ideals, he was shocked to discover the 'stagnation' and 'stalemate' of the Indian society. This state of affairs, he became convinced, could only be broken by the English, 'the Aryan brethren of the Indians'. This 'vicilizing mission' provided for him and his group a rationale and dispassionate justification for the continued maintenance of British rule in India and making it an integral part of British Isles.[7] He was, therefore, working in a way to make India 'flesh' and 'bone' of Britain.[8]

Beveridge, imbued with liberalism and agnosticism, tried to have a balanced view of India. His radical attitude even questioned the legality of the British domination of India. His findings and analysis led him to conclude that the English occupation of India was but an usurpation which 'wrought havoc' in the country.[9] As a specimen of such havocs, he took up the case of Moharaja Nanda Kumar who had been executed by the Supreme Court of Judicature, Calcutta, for forgery in 1775. He assiduously amassed evidence and analytically showed that Nanda Kumar was judicially murdered through a complicity between Impey and Hastings.[10] He, forgetting the hazards of a service career, boldly gave vent to his feelings towards the Ilbert Bill controversy, demanded for Indian self-government and Indianisation of the civil service.[11] He sincerely wanted the abolition of all types of discriminations that existed between the native and English

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civil servants.[12] He considered it to be embarrassing to have two sets of men working side by side and doing precisely the same work but on different rules of pay and promotion.[13]

In spite of the radical views, Beveridge, however, never wanted the outright withdrawal of the English from India. He condoned the English usurpation of the country by showing its practical achievements. He strengthened the point further by citing examples from history.[14] His coining of an analogy for the purpose proved to be very subtle. He accepted that the English wrongfully took possession of India but to leave her immediately would be, according to him, an act of a man-stealer who would kidnap a child and then in a fit of reprentance abandon it in a tiger jungle.[15] Therefore, from a paternalistic point of view, he advocated the continuation of the British rule in India, at least to the time when the country could be left to herself.[16] Here he reciprocated to the feelings of Gladstone who had great respect for the motives and sentiments of the Indians. However, his conception of British obligations led him to the conclusion that 'while British rule in India was possibly permanent, it was the chief duty of the British not to ensure that permanence but to train Indians to assume responsibility for themselves'.[17]

Blochmann's approach to the history of India was, on the other hand, distinct and different from that of Hunter and Beveridge. He selected and conducted his researches from a purely scholarly point of view devoid of any ulterior motive. The 'sensational' nineteenth century discovery of the ancient civilization in the East made him an ardent oriental scholar.[18] Being 'enamoured of the East',[19]

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particularly of Muslim studies, he undertook the arduous journey to India to study its history 'in situ'.[20] He had no bias other than philology, scientific establishment of an accurate chronology, and the study of inscriptions and coins. Throughout his short but vigorous career he assiduously busied himself in detecting gaps in the chronology of the history of his chosen field of study and collecting materials to bridge these intervening gaps. He did this steadily in combination with the literary, numismatic and epigraphic sources. All along, he maintained that 'inscriptions are of great value, because old histories have perished, and coins and local records are the only available sources'.[21]

Another distinguishing feature in the writings of the historians under review had been their analysis and interpretation of the events of Indian history in terms of Hindu-Muslim religious antagonism. Hunter may be said to have pioneered the issue of Muslim separatism and anticipated Jinnah's Two-Nation Theory that ultimately led to the birth of Pakistan. According to him, in British India the attitude of the Hindus and Muslims was bound to be distinct and different. For the Hindus, he observed, the English occupation of the country was never more than a change of masters and they adopted themselves with the changed circumstances. 'Under Muhammadan Rule the Hindus accepted their fate exactly as they have done under our own. At present, preferment depends upon a knowledge of English, and they learn English. Formerly, preferment depended upon a knowledge of Persian, and they learned Persian' - he stated.[22]

But on the contrary, Hunter found the position of the Muslims quite different. He saw that the Muslims were aggrieved because they had lost their political power. He entered into the depth of Muslim

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sentiment and showed how the new system of administration that had 'awakened the Hindus from the sleep of centuries, and quickened their inert masses with some of the noble impulses of a nation, is opposed to the traditions, unsuited to the requirements, and hateful to the religion, of the Musalmāns'.[23] As an ancient conquering race, the Muslims could not easily forget the traditions of their past glories. They, therefore, 'refused a system which gave them no advantages over the people whom they have so long ruled, a people whom they hated as idolaters and despised as a servile race'.[24] He further revealed that the Hindus possessed 'a high order of intellect' only under the British that enabled them to acquire a monopoly of the government appointments. Whereas, he discovered, the Muslims had possessed still higher qualities in the earlier period, and their present condition was 'in direct contradiction to their past history'. 'When the country passed under our rule, the Musalmans were the superior race [than the Hindus] and superior not only in stoutness of heart and strength of arms, but in power of political organization, and in the science of practical government' - he opined.[25] But because of the shifting of 'official preferment' the Muslims 'are now shut out equally from Government employ and from the higher occupations of non-official life' - he regretted.[26] He, therefore, pleaded for special treatment and separate arrangement for the Muslims.

Thus the theory of Muslim separatism was first put forward by Hunter in 1870 through the publication of his Indian Musalmans. The gist of the theory had been that 'the Muslims had been discriminated against by the British, had been slow in taking advantage of western education, and as a result had fallen behind in the competition for

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jobs and economic advancement'.[27] This theory of Muslim deprivation and backwardness was loudly repeated by Muslim leaders from that time on and culminated in Jinnah's Two-Nation Theory that led to the birth of Pakistan.

However, Hunter did not discriminate the Hindus against the Muslims. To him the Hindus were also equally good who sprang from 'the splendid Aryan or Indo-Germanic stock'.[28] But Beveridge viewed the Muslims to be superior to the Hindus in the art of government and in the protection of their subjects. He found 'a vigour and a power of organization among the Mahomedan rulers which were wanting among the Hindu princelings'.[29] Blochmann, however, studied the history of India without making any value judgement on the character of the two communities. He was drawn to the study of the Muslims 'with whose dialect and mode of thinking' he was more familiar.[30]

This projection of Indian history on communal basis was an innovation of the British period. In pre-British India the general people were, no doubt, devoutedly religious, but at that time religion seldom played a vital role in politics. Though there had been fightings between kings and kings, the masses, irrespective of religion, remained unconcerned about them. Even the alignments of the kings were mostly non-communal. It was often found that a Muslim monarch helping a Hindu prince against another Muslim Sultan and Vice Versa. If the process could continue, the nationalist historians think, there could emerge a secular Indian nation long before. Whereas the English deliberately imported communal elements in Indian politics. It was the direct outcome of their 'Divide and Rule' Policy which was expressed in a statement attributed to Elphinstone : ' " Divide et impera" was

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the old Roman motto, and it should be ours'.[31] The nineteenth century European historians projected this theme effectively through their writings. The Indian nationalist historians, therefore, quite reasonably 'accuse their imperial rulers of having broken an evolving synthesis of Hindu- Muslim culture'.[32]

But the most characteristic aspect of the writings of the historians under study was their contribution towards establishing the basis for the modern study of Indian history. They did it by collecting and interpreting source materials - archacological, numismatics and literary, and by translating Indian historical texts into English. The first statistical survey of India organised by Hunter caused the collection of mass of materials on Indian history. It reduced the 'element of unknown' and rendered 'the slowly acquired knowledge of the experienced few, the common property of the administrative body and the public'.[33] His researches also proved to be a memorable episode in the long battle against ignorance, prejudice, false opinions, 'and a foundation for a truer and wider knowledge of India in time to come'.[34] Beveridge and Blochmann follwed the tradition of Alexander Cunningham,[35] H.M. Elliot and John Dowson[36] in the collection, interpretation and English rendering of the source-books on Indian history. Their translation of the Akbarnāma, Maāthir-ul-Umarā and the Ain-i-Akbari set a new standard in this sphere of Indian historical studies.

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